



Searchlight Pictures presents



Starring
BROKEN LIZARD

**JAY CHANDRASEKHAR, KEVIN HEFFERNAN, STEVE LEMME,
PAUL SOTER, ERIK STOLHANSKE,
and ADRIANNE PALICKI**

Directed by..... Kevin Heffernan
Written by..... Broken Lizard
Produced by.....Richard Perello
Director of Photography.....Joe Collins
Production Designer.....Bianca Ferro
Edited by.....Frank McGrath
Music by..... Jason Akana
Costume Designer.....Kelly Kwon
Casting by.....Wendy O'Brien

<https://press.searchlightpictures.com/>

Running Time: 94 minutes

Rating: R

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QUASI

A hapless hunchback yearns for love, but finds himself in the middle of a murderous feud between the Pope and the king of France when each orders the hunchback to kill the other.

Searchlight Pictures presents, QUASI, a Broken Lizard Industries and Cataland Films Production. Directed by Kevin Heffernan and Written by Broken Lizard, the film is produced by Richard Perello and stars Jay Chandrasekhar, Kevin Heffernan, Steve Lemme, Paul Soter, Erik Stolhanske, and Adrienne Palicki. The director of photography is Joe Collins, production design is by Bianca Ferro, the film is edited by Frank McGrath with music by Jason Akana, costume design by Kelly Kwon, and casting by Wendy O'Brien.

A Note on QUASI

From Director Kevin Heffernan

About 25 years ago, we started writing a script for a Broken Lizard movie. It was actually right around the same time we started writing *Super Troopers*. It was based on a character Steve Lemme used to do, a down-on-his-luck guy, a lovable loser who gets pushed around...until he rises to the occasion. QUASI was a “zero to hero” story and we loved it. We worked on it for a while and then when we were shooting *Super Troopers* we put it aside. Over the years, we’d dust it off but there was always something that prevented it from moving forward. It was a period piece. It was off brand. There was another period piece comedy that had just underperformed. We were playing all the roles so there was no room to cast bigger actors who could sell tickets. Or we were simply busy doing other things.

But we kept revisiting and kept writing drafts. Finally, after *Super Troopers 2* came out and was a success, there was a new window. We had great partners in Searchlight Pictures who wanted to continue the fun. So we broke out the script and shared it with them – they got it and loved it as much as we did.

Then the hurdle was how, when and where do you shoot this period piece? At the end of 2021, Steve Lemme and I had a small window to shoot between seasons of our show ‘*Tacoma FD*’, which also meant we had access to our amazing Tacoma crew. Those two circumstances pushed the ball over the goal line and with an incredible amount of hard work, our crew was quickly able to turn a set in Santa Clarita, CA into a medieval French village... and we were off to the races.

All those years ago, I’m not sure we believed we’d ever make this film. Sometimes you write something offbeat and different and as you’re in the middle of it, you realize you’ll likely never shoot it. But you keep working on it because you love it. QUASI was one of those scripts.

So the first day the cameras rolled it was a surreal feeling... performing characters and jokes we’d been working on for so many years. And yes, most of those 20 year old jokes went bye bye, but some remained (The Mark Gastineau joke!). For us, shooting QUASI reaffirmed the reasons why we make movies. We got to play all kinds of characters, wear amazing costumes and funny wigs, speak in ridiculous accents... and we had a blast. Now I hope everyone has as much fun watching it as we did making it. So... ENJOY!

- Kevin

A Q&A with Broken Lizard

Kevin Heffernan, Steve Lemme, Jay Chandrasekhar,
Paul Soter, Erik Stolhanske



Q: *Can you talk about your history together, the longevity and why it works?*

Kevin Heffernan: We went to Colgate University together in upstate New York and Jay started a comedy group there. The longevity is based on the fact that we've known each other for so long. We weren't like a boy band that was put together. We went through the rigors of going to college together and so yeah, we've been together for just a long time. We moved to New York City afterwards and did live shows and started making films and here we are.

Jay Chandrasekhar: We were friends before we had ambition.

Chandrasekhar: Steve stole Kevin's coat when he was pledging our fraternity and Kevin was like, 'How can we let this guy in? He's a thief.' And it was not debated whether he'd stolen the coat because Steve wore the coat back down to the house a week later – he was busted. And so I had to talk Kevin into letting the thief into our comedy group and he said, 'Well, it's okay. He'll just play the scumbag roles. The same was true of our fraternity. I had to sort of sweet talk your way in Lemme, so you're welcome.'

Soter: And he also still really hasn't paid off on that scumbag promise. Lemme, when have you played a scumbag in any of our movies?

Lemme: I feel like Juan Castillo maybe from *Club Dread* could be the closest thing to that.

Q: *Is the coat long gone? The stolen coat?*

Lemme: Yeah, the coat is long gone.

Q: *Over the years, have people tried to join Broken Lizard? What are the rules and regulations?*

Lemme: We actually started off pretty big. I think the original group had 14 people in it.

Heffernan: We were in at Colgate, it was a big school.

Lemme: And then the New York City one was like, seven, right?

Heffernan: And then it's a war of attrition. People just tire of us, they tire of our bad jokes, they tire of our whatever and they drop off.

Lemme: The first guy quit because he said our pre-show mom jokes gave him a headache and wished us luck and quit the group.

Soter: But didn't somebody try to join the group? Jay? Didn't you almost get the guy from *Orgasmo*? Didn't he try to join the group and you offered him, maybe drunkenly offered him...

Chandrasekhar: He was a funny guy, but I don't think so I mean, the thing is, some of the people who quit, left or were fired, it was just that their senses of humor didn't overlap perfectly with ours. Now we all have a little bit of a different sense of humor. Paul is sort of the old time comedy guy. Steve's the dirty joke guy, but some of these people were pitching ideas and you're like, it's just not quite lined up with what we're trying to do. It's too risky to add somebody else and turn them down if their jokes don't fit.

Q: *How did you decide to share credit? Because I love that the credits are shared amongst the group.*

Chandrasekhar: We had the foresight to look down the road. I mean [Monty] Python did that, right? They wrote the movie and they're in the movie.

Heffernan: It became a good exercise too, and part of the longevity also is that once you start fighting over who wrote what joke or whatever it is, then you get into problems. So it was kind of like, here it is. We all wrote it. We all did it.

Soter: Yeah when I listen to a band, and I see the writing credits as 'everybody,' I'm always like, ah yeah, that's cool. One guy, two guys, you start to lose that excitement about this band as being a united gang of friends.

Q: *Has your creative process evolved?*

Heffernan: I think it changes from project to project, but I mean obviously we've kind of moved out past that time where we all would live in the same apartment and now we have families in our own places and so I think stuff is not generated so much from the day-to-day hanging out. It's more of, you know, you come together to get the job done and that's a little different, but it always makes it a pleasure when we

do. In shooting QUASI, we had all been working on different stuff and then we came together for that and it was a blast to come together and relive and revisit that group dynamic that we have.

Q: *What made you want to delve into this period with QUASI? This fable, fairytale?*

Stolhanske: From a long time ago. Didn't it kind of originate with you, Lemme?

Chandrasekhar: Yeah, that's where it came from.

Lemme: There was a guy that worked at my record store.

Heffernan: This is in the nineties.

Stolhanske: I think the record store will help define that.

Lemme: Yeah, A vinyl record store. The guy who ran the jazz and blues department spoke out of the side of his mouth and he was kind of a lonely guy and we used to riff on that guy. We would all do the voice and talk about how, I hate to say it, how lonely this guy was...

Chandrasekhar: How funny it was that he was so lonely.

Lemme: I can't remember if that was the impetus for the movie or we had the idea for this, the movie about a hunchback and we thought that would be a nice match. That jazz guy seemed like a hunchback to us. If I remember correctly though, we were writing it. We wrote that script back around the same time we were writing *Super Troopers*.

Lemme: And it was like we had different budget levels of movies that we wanted to write, and this was in the medium budget range.

Soter: Right. But it shows you that early on the idea was very much that we would do movies that would be like what we did as a sketch comedy group. It would feel Python-esque, it would have guys playing multiple characters, costumes, much more sort of broad. That was always the intention early on.

Chandrasekhar: And some of us were history majors. We came to this one through the books of Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. We incorporated the real king and the real pope into a fictional story.

Q: *How do you decide who gets to direct if it's someone that is passionate about it and how do you decide what characters you play?*

Stolhanske: Height, wasn't it height? Tallest?

Chandrasekhar: In terms of the directing, Kevin and I have been spending a lot of time in the editing rooms of these movies, putting together these films from a post perspective and eventually he directed the film *The Slammin' Salmon* and then it felt like time to do another one.

Heffernan: This one came together pretty quickly and Jay was directing another movie when this thing was kind of happening and so it just kind of fell that way.

Q: *What do you all enjoy about Kevin as a director?*

Stolhanske: He's cuddly. Yeah. Very easy to talk to great listener.

Lemme: He smells good.

Heffernan: Thank you.

Chandrasekhar: Well, he doesn't have to, but he seems to think that he has to be nicer when he is a director.

Q: *What about the casting?*

Heffernan: Well from early on, I think what we tried to do in terms of the casting was to cast really late in the process because we'd found that when you're writing it and you know what part you're playing, inevitably you're going to kind of be drawn to thinking about that character. This project was a little different because it was based on this character that Lemme did, and so he was going to be at that center. But then it became just kind of fun to figure out who was going to play the king and who's going to play the Pope and all the roles, really.

Q: *Kevin, how'd you go about directing yourself?*

Heffernan: I mean that was the funny thing is that you're directing and not only you're directing, you're directing yourself against yourself and it got little bit weird. I mean that's when your mind would get turned around a little bit. But that's the other beauty of working with the group and guys that you've known for so long – people can be on set and people can be there and help you navigate through those kind of weird situations.

Q: *Who do you think has the best costume or what did you like most about your period pieces?*

Heffernan: Oh, the king and the Pope. Jay, some of that stuff you wore was just unbelievable. Kelly Kwon, our costume designer made these unbelievable robes and fantastic accessories.

Lemme: These guys, a lot of them look very regal. Soter as the Pope, nice flowing robes and Jay had baubles all over him. Jewels and baubles. I just wore a burlap sack.

Soter: Very bejeweled.

Chandrasekhar: And furs and different crowns, fantastic.

Soter: Costumes are a great way to get into the spirit of it. For instance, those costumes for *Super Troopers*. You put on the highway patrol outfit and that obviously makes you feel like you're acting, but robes and a wig and a crown, you are like, 'Holy shit, I am acting' and it's a blast. It's a blast. I think everybody came away from this feeling we have to do more costume-y stuff.

Stolhanske: I was going to say, didn't you have to have a lot of handlers with your costume.

Soter: Yes. Because you can't dress yourself and again, if you're playing a pope and I'm sure Jay, when you're a king, it is helping like ramp you into a performance when you have a team of people getting you dressed and putting on your hat and putting jewelry on you. And for me it was a great way to start to feel like, 'Okay, I'm the Pope. I'm an incredibly important person.'

Heffernan: By the way, I knew the wardrobe designer and I asked her to always put a breath strip pocket in my tattered robes. So I always had a mint on me.

Chandrasekhar: It's good to be the boss.

Lemme: But we've nicknamed Kevin 'Minty' now because he's so refreshing.

Q: Is there something about that setting the time period that lends itself to more comedy?

Heffernan: I feel like there is an opportunity to be more ridiculous for some reason. I think maybe it's just because when we make a movie like *Super Troopers* or in the world that we're in, there is a feeling of trying to hold onto the reality of the world. This I think lets you loosen the reins a little bit and get a little sillier and a little crazier, which makes for more comedy I think.

Lemme: Well you can also make things up because nobody really knows what was happening back then and you know, can make fun of people and things and what the social norms were of the time.

Stolhanske: To think that there were torture chambers and torturing heretics and stuff. That's easy fodder.

Q: Did Kevin allow improv on this one?

Lemme: Kevin doesn't allow anything. He runs a tight ship.

Stolhanske: But he's nice about it.

Heffernan: No, I think also as we've gotten older and made more movies, we've been much more comfortable in improving and improvisation and yeah, this movie had plenty of it. I mean just you start talking in these silly accents with these wigs and stuff's going to come out of your mouth that's not on the page.

Lemme: If you look back at our first movie *Puddle Cruiser* though, we didn't have the money when we were shooting on film. We couldn't do more than a couple of takes for each scene. And so improv was a no-no, never. Because if you were going to improvise and possibly mess up a take, it was bad. That would be like a \$40,000 mistake.

Chandrasekhar: Well, not quite, but yes.

Soter: That's how you made us feel, Jay!

Lemme: That's what he told us at the time.

Chandrasekhar: Well, I was putting all that film on my credit card, pal.

Heffernan: Now we just make [our editor] Frank sift through 20-minute takes of improv. That's really, really what it comes down to now.

Q: Can you go through and talk about the characters you all play?

Heffernan: Yeah, Lemme, you start - you're the titular character.

Lemme: Okay. Well I play Quasimodo, a down on his luck Hunchback, who's...

Chandrasekhar: Lonely?

Lemme: A lovelorn, lonely virgin who has come to terms with his place in this world, sort of put upon - he's just a sad sack. He's about to get hit with a stroke of incredibly good luck though, that is actually from a Pandora's box of bad luck for him. And then I also play the Court Jester who's really not too far off that character either. He's in the King's court, but that's probably a shittier situation because he's got to entertain Jay. And I don't know if the Jester is funny or not, but the king certainly doesn't get his jokes. That's kind of like trying to join Broken Lizard. You got to be on the same page as the guy.

Soter: Lemme, did you do character work on that Jester? Did you get into this guy's head? Like, what does he do when he takes the makeup off, what's his background, any of that? Did he go to school?

Lemme: Yeah, no, I imagined it was very much like when you perform, you go out and bomb and then you go home and you try really hard to write a new set for tomorrow night's audience, and last minute though. And then you come out and you try it again and you realize it's just a tough tough room. And additionally for the Jester, each time he messes up, the stakes are high, he gets punished. Which probably led to my least favorite day ever on a set, which is when I'm tarred and feathered and I was covered in feathers. It was pretty rough, but woe was me, I'm just a poor actor...

Q: *By the way - what did they use for the tar?*

Soter: Nutella, what was it?

Lemme: Yeah, it was Nutella and molasses. It was s'mores really. That was delicious. But–

Lemme: Surprisingly I actually don't feel like I was too grumpy for that scene! I came to a mature place. I just kind of meditated and just stayed calm and didn't move too much.

Chandrasekhar: In contrast, I played the King of France who killed his former wife so he could marry the young princess of England and get her armies folded into my power structure and I have a long running feud with the Pope which sort of goes back to the sort of history about the crown versus the church. And then I also play a rough and rascal-y bartender.

Heffernan: Now I guess I'll go, I play various sidekicks in the movie. I'm Duchamp Rousseau who is QUASI's buddy. He's kind of like if you took Samwise Gamgee and made him into a real petty asshole...

Soter: Even more of a petty asshole than that Samwise Gamgee [of *Lord of the Rings*].

Heffernan: He's the best friend who is a petty asshole.

Stolhanske: Yeah, and I play Michel, who while on the clock getting tortured, befriends QUASI and Duchamp, and ultimately reveals to them the true meaning of their friendship. Michel is a good-natured wide-eyed culinary student. In order to make some extra francage to become a saucier, he takes a job as a 'torturee' at the royal torture chamber – where Frances's King Guy tests his latest and greatest devices, including... 'the rack'.

Heffernan: And then the other side, I'm the sidekick to the king Henri François, who's kind of a sneering sniveling bad guy, which was a lot of fun to play. Kind of a Christopher Guest and Princess Bride-type of character. So I was servicing the two major characters on either side of the kingdom.

Lemme: You did service them. I felt like you really got into the skin of Henri François.

Heffernan: Oh, it was great. I mean I had a big beard and the hair and the accent. Great.

Stolhanske: It did come very natural for you, Kevin.

Heffernan: Yeah, it's a good director look too.

Q: *Paul, how about you and your characters?*

Soter: Yeah, for me, it has two levels of villainy. I play Pope Cornelius, who is the really diabolical villain of the movie, the most powerful person in the Holy Roman empire and yet lascivious and scummy and slimy. To me [he's] an amalgamation of every great villain in every period piece. And then I also play a torture chamber supervisor, Lucian who's buffoonish bad guy, low-level bad guy, classic, just sort of middle management. And almost everyone suffers a horrible fate, which is a lot for a Broken Lizard movie.

Chandrasekhar: *Club Dread*?

Soter: Yeah, there was a lot of horrific fates in *Club Dread*.

Stolhanske: So I too played two different characters. My upstairs character, as we like to call it, was Cardinal Claude. I was the right-hand man to the Pope, a real kiss-ass, who secretly was hoping the Pope would bite it so I could take over. And then I also played a gentleman named Michel who came into the torture chamber to make a couple of bucks. I got tortured for a job and helped prove to QUASI and Duchamp that they are best friends. I like to think that I was the catalyst to show them what is true friendship.

Soter: True. You're the heart of the movie. You really are.

Q: *How committed were you all to the accents as far as authenticity or playing for comedy?*

Heffernan: We had a dialect coach, Michael Yurchak?

Stolhanske: Yeah, Shakespearean.

Heffernan: We had dialect coach come in and work with us, I mean some of it probably went out the window, but we did take it seriously. Although I don't know if the end product says that!

Soter: I don't know if we'll win a BAFTA. I don't know that they'll appreciate all of our vocal stylings, but we tried.

Lemme: I think the Crown, the Royal family and the Vatican are going to love this movie.

Heffernan: Oh, you do? Okay.

Lemme: Yeah.

Soter: When they get together for movie night. Yeah. I think they'll pop this up on Hulu, yeah.

Lemme: They'll do a group, you know you can do these streaming parties now where everybody watches the thing. I think it's going to happen. Yeah. [In an English accent] Good show. Good show. This QUASI is excellent.

Heffernan: Well the other thing [about the accents] is that we've never really done that. I mean Lemme I guess did it in *Club Dread*? But we've never really kind of, had everyone have an accent through the movie, so it was kind of a funny exercise.

Q: *I would love to talk about Miss Adrienne Palicki. How was she to work with?*

Heffernan: She's great. She was such a trooper. She came in, it's hard to come in. I mean, we've known each other for a long time and she had been doing "Orville" and so her comedy chops were great. She looks like a queen or princess and she sparked, she got the comedy and she improvised with us and she was just a fantastic addition.

Stolhanske: Yeah, she sat down for that first cold read and just fit in immediately. Lots of great laughs. Just nailed it.

Heffernan: And I think she just also wanted to cut loose like that too. She also did the accent and worked on it, and her wardrobe was amazing from scene to scene. They created these amazing gowns and things for her and hairdos and I think she embraced that and loved playing dress up and cracking jokes.

Q: *Are there any Easter eggs for fans in this one?*

Heffernan: God. I'm sure. I mean, that's all we do. We sit around and joke about our old movies.

Chandrasekhar: There is a 'What's up, Soapy?' in there, right?

Heffernan: Yeah there is.

Lemme: Who did 'What's up, Soapy?' this time?

Heffernan: Mr. Soter did it.

Soter: First time ever. Finally.

Q: *And I heard there are sometimes ADR jokes?*

Heffernan: Yeah, yeah. Yep. Soter got a chance to do it this time for this movie.

Chandrasekhar: The ADR jokes are when we do the TV versions of our movie - none of us believe you should watch our films on network television. And so we do one take and we do a word that clearly doesn't fit the mouth. So if you're trying to replace a 'What the fuck?' you go, 'What the ship?' and you move on so that anybody will look at it and go, wait a minute, I better watch the real thing.

Lemme: Yeah, 'fuck you' is 'forget you.' I actually would love to watch one of those TV versions. I think it would be hysterical, but I've actually never seen one.

Chandrasekhar: Our films are too dirty to go on real tv. Although I think *Super Troopers* has been on network. Anybody know?

Heffernan: *Super Troopers*. It's been on Comedy Central. I know that.

Soter: Yeah, they've cleaned it up on Comedy Central.

Q: *What else do you want to make sure is mentioned? Anything in the making of the film or about your co-stars, your friends?*

Chandrasekhar: Brian Cox does a voiceover in this movie.

Heffernan: That's an Easter egg.

Lemme: Yeah, he's the narrator.

Chandrasekhar: And then there are a couple guys from 'Tacoma FD' in this movie.

Heffernan: Yeah, we have some Easter Eggs with some cast, so it's a crossover with 'Tacoma FD'.

Lemme: Actually all the cast of Tacoma.

Chandrasekhar: Yeah, they're all in it, right? A whole bunch of 'em. Yeah.

Q: *Do they work for scale?*

Heffernan: Oh yeah. You kidding me? They get a chance to be in our movie, put on a costume.

Lemme: It's funny because three of them are in prominent roles in the trailer.

Q: *How in contact are you all, is there a group thread? Is there daily contact now?*

Chandrasekhar: There's several group threads, both on email and text and they just heat up every now and then. And then there are all sorts of side conversations that are decades old.

Heffernan: But we're working on, we have projects that we're working on altogether. We're working on the *Super Troopers* three script. So we are, we're in contact regularly working on that stuff.

Q: What do you hope people discover or enjoy about QUASI?

Heffernan: Well, I think it's a different movie for us and I think people are going to like that. This kind of period piece thing is something that we haven't done before and playing multiple characters, so I think it's going to show some range and some variety to the movies that people have seen from us before. Hopefully they like that.

Lemme: I think also something that I've heard from people who've seen the movie is that it's actually, it's kind of our first movie that actually feels more like a traditional story. I mean we're always making movies about five guys who do stuff, and in this case obviously we're playing multiple roles, but we're following one story the whole way, which they've never seen from us before.

Heffernan: We made a real movie. All grown up.

Lemme: Yep, you made a real movie.

Stolhanske: It was also kind of fun, Soter kind of hinted at the costume thing, but it made us feel like we went back to our roots of sketch comedy a little bit, playing multiple characters and dressing up and I dunno, we wrote this long time ago and it kind of reminded me a lot of our early days when we were doing sketch comedy for years in Greenwich Village. So it kind of brought me back to those years, which was a lot of fun.

Soter: Yeah and I think that's true that fans can see this as a glimpse into where we started in a lot of ways or what our tastes were, the kind of thing we thought we wanted to do when we were right out of school.

Q: So you talked about writing it so long ago. How much rewrite went into it? Did you guys visit it over the years?

Heffernan: Yeah, we would dust it off every few years. I mean, if you read something that you wrote in the nineties, they're all kinds of different jokes and cultural references and things like that – those kind of fall by the wayside.

Q: What is the writing process? Everyone has access to a Google Doc? Are you meeting altogether to work on it or how does that work?

Chandrasekhar: There's a point person on each project and we will meet for weeks at a time usually to break the outline and then each person takes a chunk of the outline and writes it and then we put this Frankenstein thing together and the point person smooths it out. And then we do that two or three more times where you're revising your own section and then you turn it over to the point man and then they run with it for the next 32 drafts.

Lemme: But we stop after 32. 32 is the magic number.

Chandrasekhar: It's generally about where we go. I mean generally I think *Super Troopers* is 36, or Beer Fest was 37.

Lemme: I like it when you throw out those draft numbers, Jay, because I have no idea how many we've done.

Chandrasekhar: I know. I look at it, I'm like, that thing is well written. We put all our polish onto it.

Stolhanske: We have a lot of other scripts that are written that we hope to get a chance to try some interesting things out there.

Q: *Can you dig in a little bit more about how your sketch comedy has changed since the early days?*

Lemme: Well, it's funny because the very first show we did there were 14 of us and I remember it was just willy-nilly, like I'd be at a party and Jay would show up and be like, 'Hey, we're going to rehearse.' And we'd be like 'No, come on.' And then you could see, Kevin, he was a dog walker. He had assembled people from various parties, all different people.

Chandrasekhar: And it was a set time to rehearse and some people decided to stay at some party a little longer. And so I had to go fetch him and bring him to rehearsal. It wasn't like, 'Hey, let's rehearse now.' It's like we already had a time set. And *some people* didn't show up.

Lemme: Have you ever heard the Robert Evans saying, 'There are three sides to every story. There's your side, my side, and the truth, and they're all right.' That's what I have to say to that comment. But it was awesome. We'd get together and first, we'd play an improv game.

Heffernan: But you were drunk when you first auditioned for Broken Lizard, correct?

Lemme: Correct. I was at a football tailgate and my girlfriend at the time said, 'Hey, there are these auditions going on for... what was it? The Kinetic Theater Company was like a Colgate student run theater organization, a theater group. And this guy, Jonathan Glatzer, who founded it, has worked on...

Chandrasekhar: He writes for 'Succession' now.

Lemme: Yeah, he's on 'Succession' now, 'Bloodline'. He left to go away for a semester and asked a few people to direct shows. Jay was one of them. And Jay decided to do the sketch comedy group. So yeah, I was drunk when I went and auditioned for that. Jay had me play a number two pencil and I think he knew what Kevin's opinion of me was. I was the cheating number two pencil. And I was talking with Ted Griffin, who's a prolific screenwriter and he was the good pencil who didn't want to cheat and I had to talk him into cheating, drunk. But that was really cool cause I remember we did this show with 14 people and the first night we did four performances. And the first night there were probably 20 people in the audience and we were reviewed the next day in the school newspaper as being this great original show. Because we were doing parodies of things that were happening on campus and stuff. And then the next night, I think we were almost full. And then the third night they had to bring in extra chairs. And then the fourth night they were turning people away and we really, I think it was like a lightning bolt. We all knew we had something special. And also because we had such a fun time writing that show. And then in New York City...

Heffernan: From there it was all self-taught in that sense that we figured out how to put together a show. And then we figured out how to write scripts and we figured out how to shoot things and Jay took some classes and I think it was all kind of that learning process as it went on and that now we know how to shoot things. That's the difference is that when you first wrote that QUASI script, which was in the nineties, I mean, we had shot one movie at that point. We didn't even know how to shoot a movie then. And now you look at it and you're like, okay, here's how we shoot it and here are the sets that we need and here's the crew that we need. And you attack it in a different way than you used to.

Lemme: It's funny. I was thinking just now also the next step was how we came to New York City and we decided to start the group up in New York City.

Heffernan: And we had to go corral you from being drunk in various places.

Lemme: This is so rude, Kevin. So rude.

Stolhanske: Truth hurts.

Lemme: Well, I was sleeping on you guys' couch every night and the only place they would take us was a gay cabaret club, the Duplex in the village in the West Village. And I think it's just because we were a bunch of guys who wanted to come do this show and they gave us three Monday nights, or maybe three Wednesday nights to establish ourselves.

Chandrasekhar: Monday nights.

Lemme: Monday nights. And the very first show we had all these friends in New York who had just graduated from college. Our friends came down and literally sold the place out of beer. And when the show was over, every single table was - and this is a 70-seat kind of upstairs, two drink minimum club - and the place was covered in empty beer bottles. And they immediately gave us Saturday nights and Monday nights. And then after the next show, they extended us for three months, I think for the rest of the summer. And then after that they extended us for two years. And that was how we learned the value of the commerce side of the business.

Chandrasekhar: You got to sell beer.

Q: *Your sketch comedy back then, were you just yourselves, were you in costume? What did that sketch comedy look like, what you see in Super Troopers?*

Chandrasekhar: No, where Kevin and I lived, we had a closet that had a mermaid costume.

Stolhanske: I lived there too.

Chandrasekhar: And a Pacman costume and all sorts of patriotic superhero costumes, tights, lots of tights, wigs.

Heffernan: It does definitely look more like the world of the QUASI. Where we just had massive amounts of costumes and stuff like that that we would carry around in bags and you'd get dressed up and you'd put wigs on. And then I think when we started making movies like *Super Troopers* and we started going more into the reality world that things changed a little bit there. But it used to be all ridiculous wigs and outfits and the shock value of a costume.

Stolhanske: And don't forget the mermaid costumes.

Chandrasekhar: Yeah we were trying to do what Monty Python did, but what they did looked too expensive for what we were doing in New York City. We were like, we can't obviously do castles and kings and all (which eventually now we did) but at the time we were like, well, what can we do? And what we could do was shoot films where we played real people and we'd have to create a sketch kind of comedy version of that. So we decided to go in that direction and make movies with real people and make them funny.

Heffernan: There's also a convenience to that too. When we went and did the live touring it got to what, 2008, 2009 when the writer's strike happened, and we decided we'd go back and do our stage stuff. And we had a following by that point so we were able to set up a show and we were able to do theaters and travel around the country. We started out on that tour in that same mindset that we used to have. We used to go around [with] giant bags of costumes and props and a bag of dildos, it was a whole bunch of stuff. And then eventually you realize it was just a fucking pain in the ass to carry all that stuff around. So you start dialing that back into reality a little bit more.

Lemme: The one consistent thing over the years has been the bag of dildos.

Heffernan: True.

Soter: Never go anywhere without a bag of dildos. And trying to be 'Saturday Night Live'. And so you had stage sketches and then our earliest films were taped sketches, but showing that to a live audience meant having the biggest TV you could get at the time, which weighed a fucking ton and was a tube diode. This was all before flat screen TVs.

Heffernan: A 32 inch tube TV, that's the best you could do.

Soter: The biggest pain in the ass factor was like getting it out of an apartment, down a flight of stairs, up to the upstairs to the stage at the Duplex down into a van. This thing just gouging into in your skin. Four guys to move a fucking gigantic TV. And that's always, when I look back on it, when I try to explain to my kids what we did, that's always where they're like, 'What the hell are you talking about?'

Stolhanske: Chandrasekhar would have to get his car out of a garage, try to find a parking spot in Greenwich Village, drive to a busier place where the club was, go park his car, run back to the club,

Soter: Grab your bag of dildos, grab your big TV.

Chandrasekhar: You know how my dad pronounces Greenwich Village? 'Green-witch Will-age.'

Stolhanske: I'll just add that QUASI kind of takes us back to the stage in New York. I mean, it was fun it was like, we started as a sketch comedy group in New York City and it felt like it kind of took us out of Los Angeles and back to being a sketch group in New York. Yeah.

Q: *Have you guys been back to the Duplex?*

Chandrasekhar: I was back there two months ago. I took a picture in front of the Duplex.

Lemme: Is Karavas Pizza still across the street?

Chandrasekhar: Amazingly, I think it is. I just don't remember looking. I just have the sense that it was right there, but I'm not sure.

Lemme: We would usually go to Karavas Pizza after a show and get gyros, or we would go over to the Corner Bistro and I think we only got kicked out of the Corner Bistro one time.

Stolhanske: Yeah, \$2 McSorleys is what we could afford at the time.

Chandrasekhar: They're \$2.50 now, I went there.

Q: *If you guys can just pick one person to say something nice about – why you like working with them.*

Lemme: I have to tell you I had a great time working with Paul Soter on this movie. I've always said that I think Paul Soter is the Roberto Benini of Broken Lizard, a jolly wildman. On this movie, Paul had our characters in each the upstairs and the downstairs. When I'm QUASI and he's the head of the torture chamber, it was more he was always talking down to me and then I'd fight back. And then with the Pope and QUASI it was the way he treated me that was adorable. And sometimes I would look at Soter in the eyes in the middle of a scene, I could see delight in his eyes. And I don't know, I had a great time acting with you, I thought you did great.

Soter: Thank you, Steve. I will pay it forward to talk about Stolhanske, who plays Cardinal Claude and Michel. When you write scenes where you're going to kind of have somebody on your shoulder the whole time, it means you're going to spend your time on set bullshitting with that person trying to make each other laugh. And Cardinal Claude being the Pope's sidekick was to me the most laughable looking person. So it was always hard not to laugh just looking at him. But by the same token, you also start to mirror your dynamic. And having him by my side as my kind of my bitch, also meant that I had an underling and a

henchman on set with me. And I think he put up with a lot of me being Pope-ish. He was very patient with my probably increasingly diva-esque behavior. Thank you, Erik.

Chandrasekhar: Having been involved in so much of the editing of these films, I always used to say to Kevin: Steve Lemme is the best actor in Broken Lizard. Every time I'm like, this motherfucker did it again. And this time, I was watching him and then he's got a hump and he's got dirt all over him and he's wearing a potato sack as his clothing. And I'm like, good, great actors are natural charisma machines. And this dude's got it.

Lemme: Ah, Jesus. Well, it's funny, it's funny. Acting with Jay in this one was also complex. Cause when he's the king, I mean, he didn't smile at me once and I was like, Jesus, this motherfucker. Although he and I have, I think one of my favorite scenes in the movie, which when we're discussing these disgusting paintings he's showing me of the Pope. Also, I had a great time acting with Jay when he was Blouin because he was wearing prosthetic facial hair, which is one of my favorite things to have these guys subjected to, because you can't smile at all when you've got the prosthetic facial hair on.

Heffernan: Especially Jay, I think he can smile a little bit more than he thinks.

Chandrasekhar: I don't like to pop the mustache off because then the crew have to come in here and retape it. I mean, I had a situation where my wig popped off in the middle of the scene too, and that was my worst nightmare.

Lemme: Which made it into the outtakes, by the way.

Chandrasekhar: It's my only blooper.

Q: We still have to do Kevin...

Stolhanske: Kevin. Oh, Kevin. I'll talk about Kevin all day long. I mean, wow. You go to a baseball game and everyone's always yelling 'Farva!' Everyone loves everything that Kevin does. It's funny because as a director, even when Jay's directing, they have to be so serious. But when he gets in character, all of a sudden he can flip it on so easily. I remember one time we were at a charity event. We were just goofing around on a piano with a bunch of people, and Heffernan is just hitting this one key on the piano, and he was commanding the whole room. There are things he can do with just an expression, silly things, just playing one note on a piano. Kevin has something special about him and every time he was performing on Quasi, he always had the attention of everyone in the room.

Lemme: Kevin is a complex person because he played Farva. That's currently his iconic role that he's done and people don't realize that that guy, Kevin, is a lawyer. He passed the bar in two states and so you're like, okay, here's this incredibly smart guy. When we have writing sessions, he's also the guy. He's got to have a dumb fidget, he's probably doing it right now. Like these days, he's just shuffling a deck of cards and he's always playing with lighter now, but I've seen him with a poster tube on both arms. We're having these writing sessions and he's got a half -

Soter: A paper bag over the head.

Lemme: Yeah, tons of things he puts on his head. He sucks on things. He's got things in his mouth.

Soter: Right, the original carrot top. He is the prop comic.

Lemme: And yet what I'll say about Kevin is I think he's the best of us. We all have Broken Lizard meetings and all of us – with the exception of Kevin – has shown up at one time or another without having read the script, we're less prepared than we should be. We might miss a meeting or fuck off a little bit, but Kevin always, he never has not done the work, so he's always leading by example.

Stolhanske: He's never one of us, let's just say that. He actually makes the script better.

Q: *Can you also talk about why audiences are so loyal to you, have stuck to you? Were you guys called Broken Lizard when you were working in New York? Where did that name come from?*

Chandrasekhar: Well, I wanted it to sound... well okay, so we spent about three days smoking weed and trying to come up with a name. And we sat in Kevin and mine's living room and came up with a million ideas and settled on, because we had a show coming up and we had to make a poster and we settled on the name 'Five Whiteys and an Injun – remember, this is years ago'. And I went to the poster guy with that name and he goes, 'You sure you want that name?' I'm like, 'I don't know why you don't like it?' And that kind of rattled me a little bit and I sort of was like, well, I want people to think of Monty Python when they think of us, and I wanted it to be syllabically, the same python broken lizard raps. And so we just, I came up with it last second there and came back with the posters and the guys are like, 'Where's 'Five Whiteys and an Injun?' And I'm like, ah, we're Broken Lizard now. And everyone's like, 'all right, fuckin' asshole'. So there you go.

Lemme: But the intention was, do you remember, I still have it on a flier, that we wanted everyone to pronounce it 'Lith-ard' with a lisp.

Chandrasekhar: Yes. We wrote it. 'Pronounced lith-ard.'

Heffernan: That didn't last.

Stolhanske: We had women in the group at that point, right?

Chandrasekhar: We did.

Heffernan: Another thing is we've tried very hard over the years just to create a feeling that if you're watching our movies, you're hanging out with your friends. So it's a feeling like you're a part of a group of people who are having a good time. And that means we can be as crass as we want, but we're not mean-spirited. It's more inviting like, 'Hey, come hang out with us, hang out with your friends and have some fun.' And that has always been a very intentional thing that we do so that people feel like they can be a part of it. And I think that's paid off and that's who we are anyway. Let's keep it a place where people can be happy to come hang out. It's always paid off.

Lemme: In terms of where we started and where we are now, one thing that has remained pretty consistent is in those early days back at Colgate, we'd get together and we'd start riffing on ideas. And a lot of times we'd go out and party after our work sessions and we're just laughing and getting random with each other and these ideas are going out into the stratosphere and we're like, 'God, that's a great idea up there'. And those are jokes that were coming from hanging out with your best friends. Even when we've been filming a movie, like shooting *Super Troopers* at night, we'd hang out after we shot and start riffing on tomorrow's scene and how to make it funnier.

And the ideas, those out there ideas are things that when any group of friends is hanging out with each other and they're laughing about something so stupid, they're like, man, we should write a movie together. Isn't that what a lot of group of friends say? And that's what we get to do.

About Broken Lizard

**Kevin Heffernan, Steve Lemme, Jay Chandrasekhar,
Paul Soter, Erik Stolhanske**

Formed in 1989 at Colgate University, Broken Lizard is a five-man comedy, filmmaking group that previously partnered with Searchlight Pictures on *Super Troopers* and *Super Troopers 2*, as well as *Club Dread*. Other film credits include *Beerfest* with Warner Bros. and *The Slammin' Salmon* with Anchor Bay. They are currently in development on the highly anticipated *Super Troopers 3: Winter Soldiers*. Heffernan and Lemme are also the creators and stars of TruTV's hit comedy "*Tacoma FD*".