TESSERACT FILMS

Presents

A documentary by Thomas G. Miller

RUNNING TIME: 81 minutes
RATING: Unrated
OFFICIAL WEBSITE: www.onebadcat.net

Representation:
Thomas G. Miller
Tesseract Films
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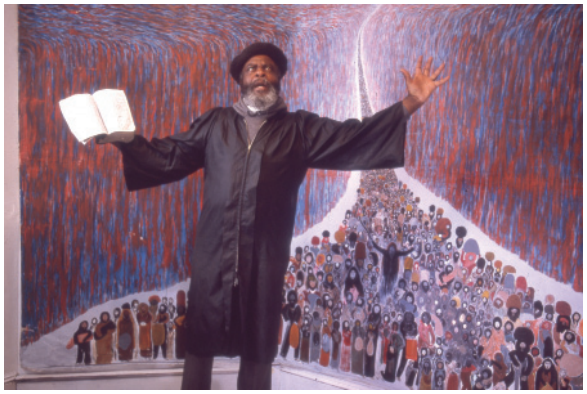
"ONE BAD CAT"
PRODUCTION INFORMATION



Renowned outsider artist Reverend Albert Wagner is outrageous and unforgettable. Miraculously transformed by religion at age 50, Albert was called by God to paint and used this gift to renounce a life of sin and inspire others. Still, controversy surrounds the Reverend's work, which at times provokes unexpected racial tension. Judge for yourself...this is *ONE BAD CAT*.

ONE BAD CAT is about the transformative role art plays in the tumultuous life of Reverend Wagner who has been a lightening rod for controversy his entire life. Racism, ego and lust led him to the brink of ruin. Miraculously, he was inspired by God to paint, "God and art saved the Reverend Albert."

Influenced by his racist Southern upbringing and now living in an impoverished neighborhood of Cleveland, Ohio, his controversial artwork sometimes rails against the lifestyles of African-Americans. While encouraging them to strengthen their spirituality and live up to their potential, he simultaneously accuses the community of self-oppression, a disregard for familial responsibility, and a weakness for sexual gratification.

Are the subjects portrayed in Albert's paintings and sculptures a consequence of internalized racism? Might his choices be influenced by a need to please his mostly White patrons who Albert believes must validate his work in order to attract Black buyers?

ONE BAD CAT explores why, during Albert's pursuit of salvation, he creates as many detractors as champions and how an ailing Albert comes to terms with his checkered past.

About the Production...

Nancy Dickenson, the executive producer of *ONE BAD CAT*, has had an interest in folk art since receiving her BFA in Fine Arts from Cornell University, and studying Art History in a Master's program at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

In 1982, during her five-year tenure as director of the Mather Art Gallery at Case, she met the gregarious Reverend Albert Wagner. He was moving another artist's paintings into the gallery and told Nancy that he too was an artist, and that one day his artwork would reach the four corners of the earth. In 1984, when Dickenson's gallery put on a "Black Folk Art In Cleveland" exhibition, Wagner was one of the featured artists in his first show and ended up being the star of the exhibition.

Over the ensuing 33 years, Wagner painted and sculpted and made over 3500 pieces of art. His work is now on display in many publications and collections around the world. Two of his masterpieces are part of the permanent collection of the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. During that same period of time Nancy Dickenson started Folkways, the first contemporary folk art gallery in Northern Ohio, before moving to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Just as the recollection of civil right's worker Viola Liuzzo's tragic death in 1965 inspired Dickenson to executive produce the award-winning, feature documentary *Home of the Brave*, so has the memory of Albert Wagner's life struggle to becoming a renowned outsider artist motivated her to make a film about him.

It was during the making of *Home of the Brave* that Dickenson met the director/producer of *ONE BAD CAT*, Thomas G. Miller. He was the editor of that film and also a native Clevelander, who had practiced pediatrics for nine years at two hospitals within a few miles of Albert's studio. The two have been collaborating on this film for the past two years.

Filming commenced in Cleveland on October 21, 2005 and continued for a total of 32 shooting days over a 20-month period. The Los Angeles-based crew of Director/Producer Thomas G. Miller, Co-Producer M.R. Stiff and Director of Photography Shana Hagan, made six trips to Cleveland and one trip to the east coast including New York City and Baltimore during that time span. Noel Dannemiller, in charge of Production Sound, was based in Cleveland. The production wrapped on June 5, 2007. The film was shot with a Panasonic SDX900 digital video camera, using DVCPRO50 videotapes.

Director's Statement...

As a first time director, I am interested in telling stories about people who have undergone major upheavals in their lives. Whether they were self-induced or random acts-of-God, how people respond to these challenges has always been of a personal interest to me.

I was a pediatrician in Cleveland, Ohio for almost nine years. When I was 35 years old I developed arthritis in my vocal cords, necessitating a permanent tracheotomy. I tried practicing for a year, but I kept picking up respiratory infections from my patients, eventually losing my voice for three months. My physician told me that I needed to consider another occupation, as I was physically unable to continue practicing medicine. At 35, after many years of study, my life was at a crossroads. At that point I had two choices, either wallow in depression or accept my current circumstances and create a new life. I did what any sane person would do, I applied to the USC School of Cinematic Arts. I got an MFA in film production and begin working on documentary films. I discovered I possessed a stronger "voice" than I ever had before.

When Reverend Albert Wagner was 50, he also came to a turning point in his life. He was a highly successful, talented, gregarious man who let his indulgences lead him to the edge of the abyss. Like me, Albert had to choose how he was going to survive the rest of his life. This is one of the main reasons I wanted to make *ONE BAD CAT*, to tell this unique story about Albert's spiritual and artistic transformation during his personal quest for salvation.

In addition, Albert lived and painted only a mile from the two hospitals where I practiced, yet I had never heard of him. As a White man, I was afraid to venture into that impoverished, African-American neighborhood where the Hough riots broke out when I was a teenager. By making this film, it was a chance for me to overcome yet another obstacle, my own fear of the "hood." I discovered a community that mirrored my life and Albert's, one that was trying to rebuild and overcome decades of neglect, drugs, poverty and violence. I witnessed how racism, institutional and internalized, is still playing a major role in Albert's life, art and community. I encountered racism at work among the White clientele that purchased the majority of Albert's art. These collectors truly cared about Albert and found value in his work, yet while interacting with him, many of them harbored and expressed racist views. This may have limited their full appreciation of the significance of Albert's artwork. While making this movie it has been sobering to re-evaluate my own heretofore unrecognized prejudices while conquering my insecurities about filming in Albert's East Cleveland neighborhood. Albert Wagner, his art and his story serve as a microcosm for how complex race relations remain in our society.

ONE BAD CAT operates on many levels, introducing an audience to a world-renowned artist, questioning and examining racial relationships within our society and ultimately telling a story of redemption and salvation. It continues to be rewarding to introduce people to the exceptional paintings, sculptures and stories of the talented artist, Reverend Albert Wagner.

Bios...

THOMAS G. MILLER (Director, Producer, Writer, Editor) a native of Cleveland, Ohio, has worked on documentaries and in public television for the past thirteen years. He associate produced the Sundance award-winning film *Licensed To Kill* (POV-PBS), and co-produced and edited *Fender Philosophers* for PBS and *Camp Out* (Logo). He has edited the feature documentary films, *Rock the Boat* (HBO), *Good Kurds, Bad Kurds* (Slamdance, Independent Lens-PBS), and *Home of the Brave* (Sundance, Court TV). Other credits include producing television films for Discovery, and WNET's series on disabilities, *People in Motion*. Tom is also a board member of the International Documentary Association and has been teaching editing at the USC School of Cinematic Arts for four years. He is also a pediatrician and has served as medical consultant for *Sesame Street* and other film and television series. He graduated with a BS degree in zoology from The University of Michigan, an MD from the Medical University of Ohio and an MFA from the USC School of Cinematic Arts.

NANCY DICKENSON (Producer), a Cleveland native, graduated from Cornell University with a BFA in Fine Arts and completed graduate studies in Art History at Case Western University. She directed the Mather Gallery, for five years and opened Folkways, the first contemporary folk art gallery in Northern Ohio. She directed the Cleveland Black Folk Art Exhibit and Festival in 1984, for which she received the Northern Ohio Magazine Visual Arts Award. As a producer, she began her documentary work with *Home of the Brave* that premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2004. Dickenson has been successfully supporting arts and human rights projects for over 20 years.

M.R. STIFF (Co-Producer, Editor, Writer) graduated from NYU with a B.F.A. in Dramatic Writing and a minor in Gender and Sexuality Studies. In May of 2005 she received her M.F.A. in Film Production from the University of Southern California. Her first film, *Porcelain*, which she wrote, directed, and produced, has screened in over 20 festivals. M.R.'s most recent documentary, *Walk in the Light*, won a Cine Golden Eagle Award in 2005. As an editor and producer, M.R. has worked on both narrative and documentary films including *Hope's Choice* (Showtime) and *Brooklyn's Bridge to Jordan* (Showtime).

SHANA HAGAN (Director of Photography) has photographed over 30 documentary and narrative films, shot countless hours of documentary and reality-based television programs, and has worked with such distinguished filmmakers as Michael Apted, Kirby Dick and Jessica Yu. Her work includes *Breathing Lessons*, which won the Oscar for Best Documentary Short at the 1996 Academy Awards, an IDA award and an Emmy. Other recent works include *Shakespeare Behind Bars*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2005 and *After Innocence*, which won a Special Jury Prize at Sundance 2005. Shana also shot the award-winning PBS documentary *Homeland* which received several critical mentions for its cinematography.

MIRIAM CUTLER (Composer) has scored numerous documentaries for PBS, HBO, IFC, and other TV networks, and many film festival favorites including: *Lost In La Mancha*, *Pandemic: Facing Aids*, *Stolen Childhoods*, *Scouts Honor*, *Licensed to Kill*, *Thin* (Sundance), *Absolute Wilson* (Berlin) and *China Blue* (Toronto, Amsterdam). She has also scored numerous indie films and provided music for studio films like *Arlington Road*, *Bachelor Party*, and *Grandview USA*. Since 1988, Cutler has been resident composer Circus Flora, featured at Charleston's Spoleto Festival and The Kennedy Center.

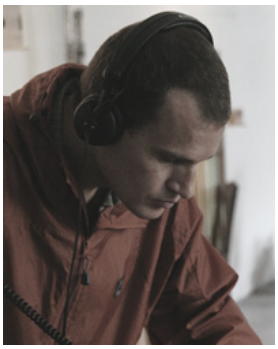
She has co-produced live jazz albums on Polygram/Verve for Joe Williams (nominated for 2 Grammys), Nina Simone, Shirley Horn, and Marlena Shaw and has produced independently released albums of her own songs and soundtracks. She has served on Documentary Film Festival juries for the SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL, AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE, the INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS, and the INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION and has been a mentor for the SUNDANCE INSTITUTE'S Documentary Film Composer Lab.

LILLIAN E. BENSON, A.C.E. (Editor) has edited a number of documentary and feature film projects. She collaborated with director Debbie Allen on *The Fantasia Barrino Story- Life Is Not A Fairy Tale* for Lifetime. Lillian was one of the editors for the first season of the Showtime series, *Soul Food*.

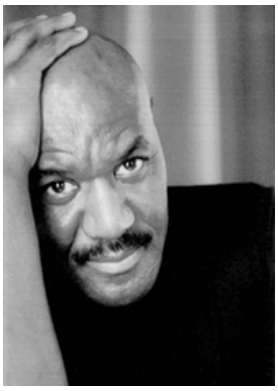
In 1990, Benson received an Emmy nomination for the acclaimed PBS series, *Eyes on the Prize*. Additional documentary editing credits include: *Beyond the Steps- Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater* (WNET/NBPC 2006), Troop 1500 (POV 2005), *Shared History* (ITVS 2004),

Trumpetistically Clora Bryant (NBPC 2004) *Smothered- the Censorship Struggles of the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* (Bravo 2002), *The Silent Crisis-Diabetes Among Us*, (Discovery Health 2002), *Conscience and the Constitution* (PBS 2000) *A Century of Living* (HBO, 1999); *Death by Hanging* (HBO, 1998); *Out at Work* (HBO, 1998); *Buildings, Bridges, and Tunnels* (Discovery, 2000); *Motown 40th, a Retrospective* (ABC, 1998); *Great Quakes* (TLC, 1999); *The Massachusetts 54th Colored Infantry* (WGBH, 1992), and numerous episodes of A&E's *Ancient Mysteries and Biography* series.

Her feature credits include: *Au Pair Chocolat* (2003); *Soliloquy* (2002); *The Old Settler* (2001) *All About You* (2000); *Alma's Rainbow* (1993); and *Twisted* (1986). She is also the first African- American female member of the honorary editing society American Cinema Editors and a member of their Board of Directors.



NOEL DANNEMILLER (Production Sound) graduated from The Ohio State University with a B.F.A. in Media Arts. He started working in Television in 1990 and then toured as a sound system technician for various musical acts such as Boyz II Men, Tony Bennet, and The Ramones. Noel currently records audio on location for commercials, corporate videos, documentaries, feature length movies, and television shows. He just completed working for the Emmy-nominated reality television show, *The Amazing Race*. Recent productions have included Cisco Systems, Discovery Channel, Miracle Dogs, National Geographic, and NFL Films.



DELROY LINDO (Narrator) Delroy Lindo has had many memorable film and television roles. Lindo garnered critical acclaim for his role as Rodney in Spike Lee's drama *Clockers*, and also worked with Lee on *Crooklyn* and *Malcom X*. He's appeared in a diverse range of films including, David Mamet's *Heist*, Mr. Rose in *The Cider House Rules*, *Wondrous Oblivion*, *The Core*, *Gone in 60 Seconds*, *Ransom*, *A Life Less Ordinary*, *Get Shorty*, *Feeling Minnesota*, and *Romeo Must Die*. On TV, Lindo was recently seen in a variety of shows including, the NBC series, *Kidnapped*, *Lackawanna Blues* (HBO) and in *The Exonerated* (Court TV). Mr. Lindo has also recently been seen in the London stage production of *The Exonerated*. On Broadway, Lindo appeared as Herald Loomis in August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, receiving Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations; and *Master Harold and the Boys* (Broadway & National Tour), and as Walter Lee in the Kennedy Center and Los Angeles productions of *A Raisin in the Sun*.

DELROY LINDO
Screen and Stage Actor
Narrator of the film

LYNELL CALLOWAY
Albert's son by his former secretary Lena. Lived in Albert's house and took care of him.

AARNE ANTON
Art Dealer, NYC.
American Primitive Gallery, featuring contemporary outsider art.

NIK COHN
Writer, journalist, collector and friend of Albert. Wrote articles about Albert for The (London) Telegraph Magazine (1993) and Life Magazine (1998).

CAMILLE BILLOPS
Curator Hatch-Billops Collection, NYC. It is an archive collecting black American art, drama and literature.

JOHNNY COLEMAN
Professor of African-American Studies and Fine Arts at Oberlin College in Ohio. He is also an artist, a collector, and a close friend of Albert's.

LENA CALLOWAY
Second Mistress and former secretary of Albert. She had two children with him and Albert molested one of her daughters from a previous relationship.

BERNICE UPSHAW DANIELS
First Mistress of Albert. Met when Albert was moving furniture into her house and had two daughters with him.

NANCY DICKENSON

Former director of the Mather Gallery in Cleveland, Ohio. Placed Albert in his first art exhibition and is also executive producer of ONE BAD CAT.

PATRICIA HANDAL

NYC collector. Purchased "Flee From Egypt" and donated it to the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore.

ABE FRAJNDLICH

NYC Photographer, collector and friend of Albert. Took many still photographs used in the film and championed Albert very early in his artistic career.

LATEEFAH WAGNER HASAN

Albert's oldest daughter by his wife Magnolia. Helped care for Albert and managed his artistic business affairs.

ROBIN GREENWALD-GILBERT & TERRY GILBERT

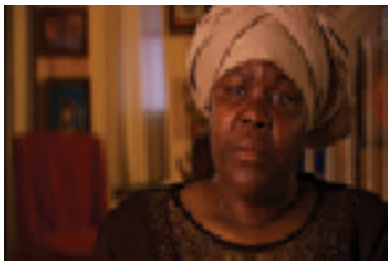
Cleveland art collectors and friends of Albert. Terry is an attorney and former civil rights activist.

REBECCA A. HOFFBERGER

Founder and Director of the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore, MD., the national museum for outsider art.

PAM GILL

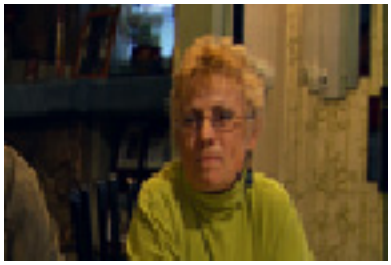
Cleveland collector and longtime friend of Albert's. Helped him archive his work and prepare for open houses.



BONITA WAGNER JOHNSON

Albert's daughter by his wife Magnolia. Assistant pastor of Albert's church, The People Love People House of God. She wrote and sang the final song in the film, "Zimbey Ooh Ooh."

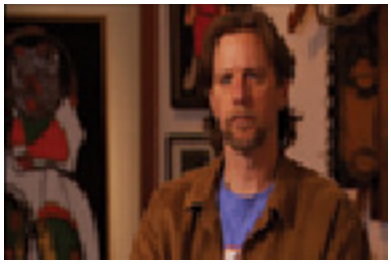
GENE KANGAS
Retired Art Professor at Cleveland State University in Ohio. Also an artist, collector and longtime friend of Albert and his family.



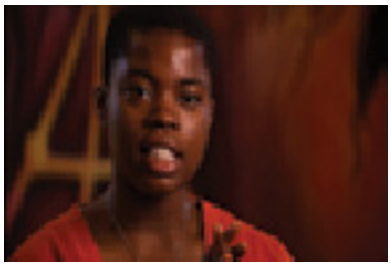
LINDA KANGAS
Cleveland collector, married to Gene Kangas. Longtime friend of Albert and his family.

MICHELANGELO LOVELACE
Cleveland artist who was mentored by Albert, and considered him a father figure.

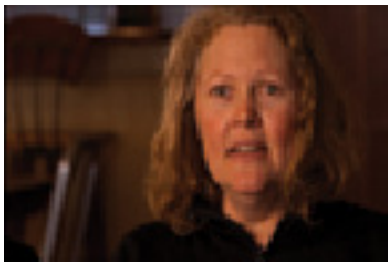
ALEX PETE & SANDE ROBINSON
Wisconsin art collectors and student advisors at Marquette University, who came to Cleveland to purchase Albert's artwork.



BILL SCHUBERT
Cleveland, Ohio art dealer who runs "Headfooters Art Gallery" specializing in primitive, outsider art.



KANTARA SOUFFRANT
Oberlin College student in Ohio, who had difficulty with the subject matter and messages in some of Albert's artwork.



AMY SPARKS
Cleveland collector, journalist and longtime friend of Albert's. She wrote many articles about him in local papers and art magazines throughout his career.

MAGNOLIA WAGNER
Albert's estranged wife and mother of 16 of his children, including Lateefah and Bonita. She passed away in July 2005, the day before we asked Albert about making this film.

Credits for
"ONE BAD CAT: The Reverend Albert Wagner Story"

Director and Producer
Thomas G. Miller

Writers
Thomas G. Miller
M.R. Stiff

Producer
Nancy Dickenson

Co-Producers
M.R. Stiff
Lorraine Gallard

Narrator
Delroy Lindo

Director of Photography
Shana Hagan

Editors
Lillian E. Benson, A.C.E.
Thomas G. Miller
M.R. Stiff
Paul Wiesepape

Production Sound
Noel Dannemiller

Composer
Miriam Cutler

Post-Production Sound
David Crocco

Music Supervisor
Tony Thornton

In Association with
Ostrow and Company

Co-Producer
Page B. Ostrow

Graphic Design	**Wade Lageose**
	Doug Whitney
Additional Photography	**Andy Adamovich**
	David Litz
Additional Production Sound	**Jonathan Andrews**
	Marlowe Taylor
Additional Graphic Design	**Jerry Witt**
Online Editor	**Christopher Gray**
Consultants	**Mark Harris**
	Robert Hawk
	Lisa Leeman
	Gail Silva
Production Assistants	**Joseph Miller**
	Noel Maitland
	Ben Frankenhauser
	Rhiannon Hyde
	Jennifer Martin
	Adam Miller
	Amy Morrison
	Michael O'Neill
Still Photography	**Janet Macoska**
Motion Control	**Media Composer's Group**
Transcriber	**Grace Rutledge**
Website Designer	**Xander Brenan**

Original Score by
Miriam Cutler

Soloists

Concert & Celtic Harps	**Stephanie Bennett**
Electric & Acoustic Guitar	**Ira Ingber**
Piano	**Louis Durra**
Electric & Acoustic Bass	**Carl Sealove**
Woodwinds	**Charlie Adelphia**
Harmoica	**Stevie Gurr**
Strings	**Pasa Doble**
Pre-Mixing Engineer	**Ira Ingber**
Music Preparation	**Desha Dunnahoe**
Music Mixing Engineer	**Les Brockmann**

Archival Footage and Photos
Courtesy of:

Abe Frajndlich
Access Video
Linda Cass
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Albert Kraus
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Sanford L. Smith and Associates
Smithsonian Institution: Archives of American Art
Sylvia de Swaan
Telegraph Media Group
Time, Inc.
Western Reserve Historical Society
WVIZ: Ideastream

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Johnny Coleman
Bernice Daniels
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Terry Gilbert
Pam Gill
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Patricia Handal
Lateefah Wagner Hasan
Rebecca A. Hoffberger
Bonita Wagner Johnson
Gene Kangas
Linda Kangas
Michelangelo Lovelace
Alex Peete
Sande Robinson
Bill Schubert
Kantara Souffrant
Amy Sparks
Albert Wagner

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Keith Brooks
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Helen Feldman
Elie Gardner
André Jackson
Richard Martin
Bob Miller
Dr. Joseph Miller
Mary Miller
Sherry Miller
Amanda Pope
Linda Schneider
Bruce Schwartz

Tina Mabry
Regina Maple
Emily Martin
Dorie Sopher
Dr. Steven Sorin
Bonnie Venable

Thanks

Kate Amend
Ellen Borenstein
Mark Borenstein
American Primitive Gallery
American Visionary Museum
Barbara Babcock
Andrea Bailey
Wendy Hurlock Baker
The Beck Center
Boyd Funeral Home
Kathie Brown
Randy Brown
Lynda Cass
Cleveland Film Society
Cleveland Food Co-Op
Jed Dannenbaum
Sylvia de Swaan
Doug Dickason
Paola diFlorio
Elizabeth Dorosin
Katie Dougherty
Eddie Creekside Restaurant
Winston Emano
Chris Evans
Regina Feiler
Howard Friedman
Kathy Galvin
Leigh Gensler
Frankie Glass
Susan Goldberg
Marcie Goodman
Larry Grossman
Bill Guentzler
Becky Haberacker
Headfooters Gallery
Pete Hilsee
Elizabeth D. Hochberg
House of Blues
Cliff Hsui
Nancy Huffman
Huron Hospital
Kathleen Jarnagin
John Carroll University
Richard Levy
Lisa Lewis
Richard O. Lewis
Tracie Lewis
Michelle Kort
Brian Lowe
Meredith Lue
Karen Mack
Chi Keat Man
Marlise Malkames
Nicola Marsh
Doe Mayer
Diane Meuser
Rita Montlack
Moe Muldaur
Oberlin College
Barbara Osborne
Nancy Passikoff
Navis Pack & Ship
Corinne Nguyen
Carl Pfirman
Riverside Cemetery
Mark Rosenberger
Vicki Randle
Luise Ross
Mike Roth
Shelley Roth
Anne Schleider
Shelley Schumacher
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Lee V. Stiff
Renee F. Stiff
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Binnur Kaerevli
Alan Lazar
Lisa Leff
Heather Lenz
Sim Video Los Angeles, Inc
Video Pro
Western Reserve Historical Society
Mark Vega
Charles Whelan
Tom White

"Little Feet"
Traditional
Performed by Sergio and SirMarcus Darling

"Mary Don't Weep"
Traditional
Performed by Reverend Albert Wagner

"Wade in the Water"
Traditional
Performed by Bonita Wagner Johnson
Arranged and Produced by Miriam Cutler

"Zimbey Ooh Ooh"
Lyrics and Music by Bonita Wagner Johnson
Performed by Bonita Wagner Johnson
Arranged and Produced by Miriam Cutler

With Gratitude to the
Extended Wagner Family

www.onebadcat.net

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