

# Young Artist Academy™ Awards

## Nominee Written Interview

*Hudson Hensley*

---

**Project:** The Wildman of Shaggy Creek

**Trailer Link:** [https://youtu.be/v4\\_TPiq3cu4](https://youtu.be/v4_TPiq3cu4)

**Directed by:** Jesse Edwards

### **Website / Social Media Handles**

**Hudson Hensley:** @thehudsonhensley

**Film Website:** [thewildmanofshaggycreek.com](http://thewildmanofshaggycreek.com)

---

### ***How would you describe the plot of this project?***

Based on the children's book, The Wildman of Shaggy Creek is a coming-of-age family adventure film, filled with heart, humor, and a thrilling mystery.

I play Scott — a kid who moves to a new city and a new neighborhood and has to start over. He meets some new friends, and one of them is Hailey. Pretty quickly, he hears the local story about a Wildman in the woods, and as a character, Scott doesn't believe any of it. Then Bryson's character dares him to spend the night out there. I won't spoil it, but let's just say there are some encounters with a hairy beast. You've got to stay on edge — you never know when the Wildman is going to jump out and get you. Go watch it for yourself to see what happens.

### ***What was your fondest memory from working on the project?***

My fondest memory was the day we all met for the final callback together. The whole final cast was in the room for about thirty minutes, and we just clicked. Everybody was so kind to each other, and we got along right away. I remember thinking, "Okay — this is the one. This has to be what they cast." And it was. That feeling in the room is something I'll always remember.

### ***Were there any cool locations or sets that were fun, different, or strange?***

So much of our filming was in the woods — half the movie is basically me running through trees — and that was one of the coolest places to work. But the most unforgettable thing on set was the Wildman costume itself. It took about thirty minutes to put the makeup on and almost an hour to take it off, and the detail was incredible. The first time I saw him in full costume, I jumped back about ten feet. I was like, "Whoa — this is too real. This is scary." I loved it.

Another really cool location was when we filmed at an actual school. We had to wait until everyone was out of the building to shoot in the cafeteria and outside. By the time we got to the

outdoor scenes, the sun was setting fast, so we ended up standing on stacks of about five apple boxes just to keep the light on our faces and get the shot before we lost it. That kind of problem-solving on set was so cool to be part of.

***Do you recall any particular memories with castmates or crew that were impactful?***

I made a lot of friendships on this project — not just with my castmates, but with the crew. They put up with me asking a thousand questions. The audio team especially was so patient. I remember asking them, "Why does this boom mic have to be fuzzy and that one doesn't?" and they explained that when there's more wind, you want the heavier, bigger cover on the boom. I thought that was so cool. I asked them about a thousand more questions after that, and they were kind to me every single time. That meant a lot.

***Did the project inspire you to see the world differently? Or did you learn anything new about the production process?***

It completely changed the way I watch movies now. When I see a scene, I think about how many takes it took to get that one shot. I really appreciate how much work goes into it — even a three-second monologue can take an hour of studying.

I also can't help picturing the director when I watch anything now. On our shoot, Jesse was the one following me through the woods with the camera, so whenever I see something with movement on screen, I imagine the director right there off-camera, moving with the actor. That perspective is something I never had before this project.

***What stands out to you from working on this project?***

What stands out most is how much I learned by being curious. Between the cast chemistry from that first callback, the scale and detail of the Wildman costume, and the crew taking the time to actually answer my questions, this project taught me that a film set is full of people who love what they do — and they're willing to share it with you if you ask. I came in as an actor and left understanding so much more about how a movie actually gets made.

***If you were to produce a sequel or a continuation of this project, what would that be like?***

Hear me out — I'd want to do the sequel from the Wildman's point of view. So you'd see another kid going into the woods, and the Wildman is watching, thinking, "Okay, this kid was attacking my kid — I have to get rid of him. And what are these lights coming from the other side of the forest? Let me go check that out." And then you realize: oh my gosh, the creepy Wildman is actually watching over me. Then a phone dings, and he's like, "Wait — what is that?" And I'd have Walter narrate the whole thing. That would be really fun.

***What do you love most about the Entertainment Industry? What do you wish could be better?***

What I love most is how different every project is. Every movie, every TV show, every commercial is a completely different experience — different people, different worlds, different things to learn. That variety is what makes me love it.

What I wish could be better is that kid actors got treated more like actors. We come in with instincts and ideas too, and sometimes I wish directors and crew would be a little more open to that — be willing to try a take where the kid brings something to the scene, instead of being locked into the picture they already had in their head. They do that with adult actors, and I think kids deserve that same trust.

---

*Thank you to the Young Artist Academy for this nomination.*