

DEDZA FILMS

Presents

WHO WILL START ANOTHER FIRE A 9 Film Anthology by Emerging Filmmakers

130 Minutes / Israel, Nigeria, Philippines, Uganda, USA / 2021

Press Contact:

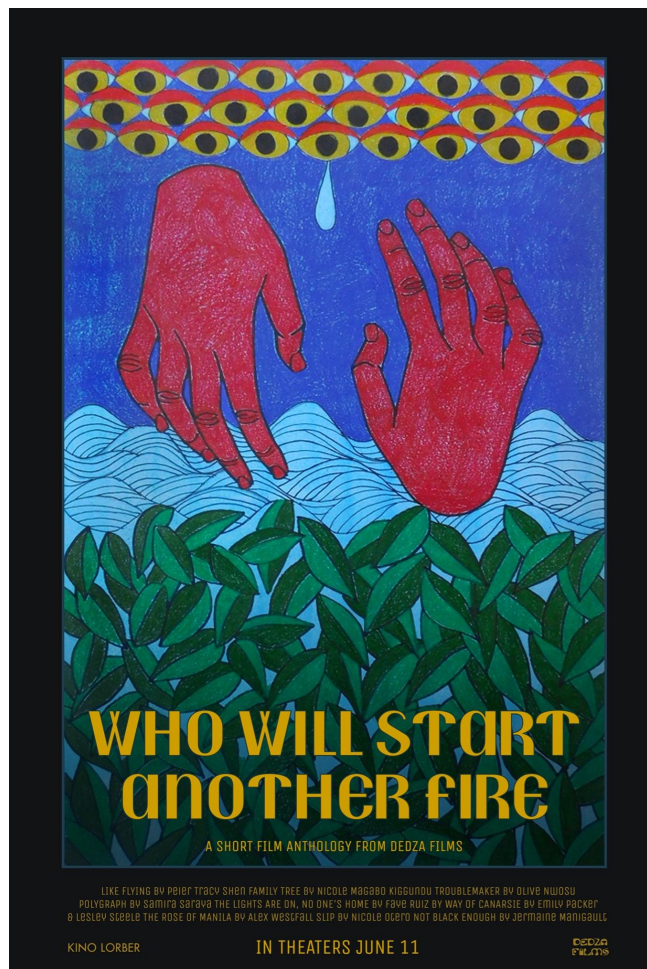
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Press materials can be found [here](#).



INTRODUCING:

[*Like Flying*](#)

Directed by **Peier Tracy Shen**

[*Family Tree*](#)

Directed by **Nicole Amani Magabo Kiggundu**

[*Troublemaker*](#)

Directed by **Olive Nwosu**

[*Polygraph*](#)

Directed by **Samira Saraya**

[*The Lights Are On, No One's Home*](#)

Directed by **Faye Ruiz**

[*By Way of Canarsie*](#)

Directed by **Lesley Steele & Emily Packer**

[*The Rose of Manila*](#)

Directed by **Alex Westfall**

[*Slip*](#)

Directed by **Nicole Otero**

[*Not Black Enough*](#)

Directed by **Jermaine Manigault**

ABOUT DEDZA FILMS:

Dedza Films is a distribution initiative dedicated to curating & facilitating the distribution of films from the next wave with a focus on underrepresented communities and early works of emerging storytellers.

Dedza aims to treat these stories in a way that is often reserved for features and help filmmakers who were impacted by COVID-19, which affected festival and release plans. Our mission is to curate, community build, and partner with other initiatives and organizations focusing on changing the landscape.

Who Will Start Another Fire is Dedza's first release, which will have its virtual cinema run on June 11 and then be released as a limited edition DVD distributed by Kino Lorber.

For DEDZA Scrapbook, a supplementary initiative, we have found aspiring film critics of color to write about each film in *Who Will Start Another Fire* to further build a community of emerging talent whose work and discourse can uplift each other.

ABOUT *Who Will Start Another Fire*:

The title *Who Will Start Another Fire* alludes to Malawian poet Jack Mapanje's *Before Chilembwe Tree* (1981), in which he asks, "Who will start another fire?" By omitting the question mark and retaining his language, we propose an answer to his question.

Like Flying

Directed by Peier Tracy Shen



15 Minutes / USA / 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Nashville Film Festival 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Palm Springs International Shortfest 2021

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Cinequest Film Festival 2021

SYNOPSIS:

A young Chinese-American girl navigates her childhood through her parents' broken relationship.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

I wanted more,

I wanted more voices, more hugs, more kindness.

If I had been

Angrier, Cleverer, Dearer, Easier, Funnier, Gentler, Hungrier, Idler, Jauntier, Keener, Louder, Madder, Nicer, Obtuser, Prettier, Quieter, Rowdier, Stronger, Tamer, Unrulier, Vainer, Yappier, Zanier

Better or just a Winner,

I would've had more.
Maybe then, I would've grown up,
Wanting less.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Peier Tracy Shen | Director

Peier "Tracy" Shen is a Chinese writer-director currently based in Los Angeles. Her shorts were selected to GSA BAFTA Student Shortlist and Oscar-qualifying festivals such as Cleveland, LA Shorts, St. Louis, Nashville, and Cinequest, among others. Her feature screenplay, *A Graduation*, is selected to participate in the Cine Qua Non Script Revision Lab, sponsored by IMCINE and the Academy. She is also a member of the BAFTA LA Newcomers Program 2021. She graduated with honors from Columbia University, with a double major in English and Film & Media Studies, and recently obtained her MFA in Directing from the AFI Conservatory. She's drawn to the incommunicable— the unexamined memories that shape a person, the nebulous connections between strangers, and the unconquerable distance between cultures and classes. Her characters, somehow always out of place, are set to embark on the challenging task of finding themselves in the world.

Peier is currently in development of the feature *Like Flying*, a coming-of-age dramedy about a young Chinese girl confronting her first heartbreaks at an English language camp in the U.S.

Gregory M. Schroeder | Producer

Gregory M. Schroeder completed his MFA in Producing from AFI Conservatory in 2019, where he produced 2 thesis films. The first of these, *Progeny*, has won over 25 awards and screened at Sitges and Fantasia in 2020. The second, *Witchin'*, has won multiple awards and screened at LA Shorts in October 2020. Gregory has also produced independent short films, music videos, and spec commercials with his company, First Light Productions LLC, since 2016.

Diego Trenas | Cinematographer

Born in a family of filmmakers, Diego Trenas was raised in the magical world of movie sets. His love for cinematography came from admiring the work of his father, a renowned Spanish cinematographer. Diego was granted an all-expense-covered Obra Social "la Caixa" Fellowship to receive his MFA in Cinematography at the AFI Conservatory. He has worked as a professional DoP in a wide variety of documentaries, commercials, shorts, music videos, indie films and TV shows throughout Spain, Switzerland, Peru, Colombia, Chile, Panamá, Jamaica, Mexico and the United States. He is a co-owner of the production and camera equipment rental company FTF Cam.

Arndt Werling | Editor

Arndt Werling is an award-winning producer working for TWO DUDES, a Glendale-based production company, which he co-founded in 2017. Before attending the editing program at

AFI, he worked in the production department for numerous short and feature films. His decision to pursue a Master's degree in editing was to step back to the very roots of his fascination for film: the telling of a story. Since then, Arndt has worked on projects in the US, Europe, and China and recently got granted membership in the German Editors Guild BFS.

Chedi Chang | Cast (Ming)

Chedi Chang (b. May 20, 2012) has already demonstrated a tremendous range as a young actress and is fluent in both Mandarin and English. After starring in many award-winning short films, Chedi is currently acting as a guest star on *The Resident* on FOX. Besides acting, Chedi also has extensive training in ballet, ballroom dancing, and music, including Chinese Opera. She is also a talented rhythmic gymnast and drummer.

Grace Chang | Cast (Mother)

Grace Chang is an Asian-American performing artist who feels at home while on stage, as a puppeteer, behind the camera, and starring in award-winning films. Ms. Chang was born and raised in Beijing and studied theater in the United States. Part of the third generation of a Manchurian show business family— her father and uncles were the “Abbott and Costello” or the “Marx Brothers” of China— she grew up watching them perform and learned to perform at a young age. Performing professionally at age thirteen as a “Cirque du Soleil” type magician ultimately brought her to film acting in New York City. Known from her role as the “Notorious Mistress” from the 1993 film *The Joy Luck Club*, Grace has been featured in numerous short films for decades.

FULL CREDITS:

Director/Writer: Peier Tracy Shen

Producer: Gregory M. Schroeder

Executive Producers: Grace Chang, Qiuping Guo & Kaushik Subramanian Venkatesan

Cinematographer: Diego Trenas

Editor: Arndt Werling

Production Designer: Mboni Maumba

Unit Production Manager: Patrick Estberg

Production Sound Mixers: Jason Edward Allen & Christian Lainez

1st Assistant Director: Gabriele Di Sazio

2nd Assistant Director: Kyung Sok Kim

1st Assistant Camera: Thomas J. Thickett

2nd Assistant Camera: Jay Cheng

Art Director: Wynne Reneau

Set Dressers: Ruby Cruz & Emeline Moquillon

Art Production Assistants: Eilish Conlon & Brianna Hernandez

Key Hair & Makeup Artist: Chloe Kelsch

Script Supervisors: Qiyu Zhou

Studio Teacher: Amber York

Production Assistant: Jazmin Benavides

Assistant Editor: Yufei "Skylar" Zhang

Gaffer: Leonel Escobar

Key Grip: Aakash Raj

Swing: Kishan Patel

Post Sound Services Provided By: Ascension Post

Sound Designer/Re-recording Mixer: Michael Archacki

ADR Recordists: Liyanbing He & Zachary Aaron Klein

ADR Mixer: Michael Archacki

Colorists: Alberto Cayuela & Anthony Rubino

DCP Created By: Two Dudes

Motorcycle Stunt Driver: Patrick Mulderrig

Cast:

Chedi Chang as *Ming*

Grace Chang as *Mother*

Zita Bai as *Katie*

Gary Liu as *Father*

Gabrielle Cordero as *Radio Host*

Nicole Vanden Broeck as *Radio Host*

Family Tree

Directed by **Nicole Amani Magabo Kiggundu**



17 Minutes / Uganda / 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Pan-African Film Festival 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Ngalabi International Shorts Film Festival 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Capitol Hill Film Festival 2020

SYNOPSIS:

We meet Nagawa, an 8 year old schoolgirl, whose day is almost like any other. She's presenting a school project about her family tree to her classmates and teacher. According to Nagawa, her family consists of just herself, her Mum, and her Dad, who she only gets to see once a week. This is her normal. When her mother Margaret picks up Nagawa from school, she doesn't have the heart to tell her daughter that her beloved father has been in a terrible accident. They arrive at the hospital to pay vigil. Her father, an Honourable in the Ugandan parliament is widely popular, and a few people are assembling outside the private ward—including his mistresses with his and their children. Nagawa doesn't know any of these people

and they don't know her. What follows for Nagawa is an awkward, confusing and heartbreaking afternoon as her parents' betrayal sets in.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

To a great extent, our behaviour is influenced by the nature of our relationships. More often than not, it is our family– or lack thereof– that has a prevailing influence in our day to day engagement with other people. I believe there is an under-reported link between the state of our mental health and our fractured family dynamics in Uganda specifically. Unresolved issues, especially those that remain shrouded in secrecy for weeks, months and often years, can hold generation after generation hostage.

Polygamy is a silent, but potent theme in *Family Tree*. In portraying a day, albeit tragic one, in this polygamous father's life, I hope to paint the picture as is, not to condemn or praise, but to present a scenario and leave it to the audience to draw informed conclusions from. This story is inspired by my own father's accident that resulted in the exposure of his secrets. While I gained loving siblings from this episode, the effects of these revelations presented challenges for how my siblings and I viewed ourselves. *Family Tree* is told through the almost exclusive perspective of an 8 year old girl. While she is able to absorb information happening around her rapidly, her ability to process what exactly it all means is delayed by her childish concerns. Such as: is my father going to die or not? All other things seem unnecessary.

I chose to use film as the medium to reintroduce this delicate topic into people's conversations because it provides a multi-sensory approach to convey the story. While most of the story is fiction, certain aspects are lifted directly from my own life. I decided to set the story in 1998, the same year that I found out about my family, because it would give the film a sense of being a memory from this girl's life. We set the aspect ratio to 16:9, mimicking the aspect ratios commonly used in TVs back then. Even with the film's color grading, we decided to stick to the slightly over-saturated, rust-like palettes of the 90s, and especially like the visual output of most colour TVs in Uganda.

This film has a handful of shots done in one take. For most of these scenes, we wanted to create the feeling of uninterrupted horror that was taking place for the adults. We wanted the audience to "hold their breath" just as our characters were doing, as the realization of the father's betrayal sinks in.

My hope is that *Family Tree* sparks conversation within people to ask questions about the state of their own affairs. Living in our truths is easier said than done, especially when these truths (as they often are) are difficult to bear. But above all, this film– and many more like it that tackle fractured family dynamics– shows that no matter where we are geographically located, we face identical conundrums. At the very least, let's find camaraderie in our shared humanity.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Nicole Amani Magabo Kiggundu | Director

Nicole Amani Magabo Kiggundu is a Ugandan-American writer, director, producer and journalist. *Family Tree* was inspired by the ambivalent nature of family. Nicole is currently writing a play about a past Ugandan president and his prime minister, and is developing her first feature, *Good Girl*, about a woman's struggle to choose between her truth and family.

Afsa Umutesi | Producer

Afsa Umutesi is a concert and film producer. She is a sucker for the arts and dreams of the day that East African music and film will be genuinely appreciated globally. Afsa comes from a large family and is the fifth of ten children. She is your everyday Third Culture Kid– born and raised in Congo, of Rwandan origin and currently living in Uganda.

Ntshepeng Motema-Alexandra | Executive Producer

Ntshepeng Motema-Alexandra is a South African producer with ten years of experience in broadcast journalism and documentary film. She has worked for Al Jazeera English in the Middle East and two of South Africa's biggest TV stations (eNCA and SABC) as a news and current affairs programmes producer. Ntshepeng holds a Master's degree in Journalism (Columbia University) and recently co-founded Fertile Grounds Films.

Chloe Kabuye | Cast (Nagawa)

Chloe Kabuye is a 12-year-old primary school student based in Kampala, Uganda. *Family Tree* is her first ever film acting role following a string of student theatre productions at her school, Victorious Primary School. Chloe has since nabbed another lead role in a local feature film, *Countless Misfortunes*. Her dream is to travel all over the world.

Esteri Tebandeke | Cast (Margaret/Maggie)

Esteri Tebandeke is a Ugandan film and theatre actress, dancer and visual artist. Recent films include *Imperial Blue* (2018) and *Queen of Katwe* (2016). A notable stage actress, Esteri's plays have showcased in Uganda, Rwanda, Ivory Coast, and New Orleans among other locations. Theatre credits include *Cooking Oil*, *The Body of a Woman as a Battlefield in the Bosnian War*, *Maria Kizito*, *The Marriage Chronicles* and her own creation *Conversations With My Mother*.

Gladys Oyenbot | Cast (Theresa)

Gladys Oyenbot, also known as G'dah, is a Ugandan actress, singer and producer. Her theatre, film and TV credits include *Queen of Katwe*, *Kafa-coh*, *Yatmadit*, *Mpeke Town*, *Desperate to Fight*, *Ga-ard*, and *The Body of a Woman as a Battlefield in the Bosnian War*, among others. For five years, G'dah toured with the internationally-acclaimed Watoto Children's Choir and Restore Tour: Child Soldier No More to cities in Africa, USA, the UK, Europe and Canada. She produced the award-winning short film *Kyenvu* (2017).

FULL CREDITS:

Directed/Writer/Producer: Nicole Amani Magabo Kiggundu

Co-Producers: Afsa Umutesi & Sean Adam Kagugube

Executive Producers: Anna Nation Kähler, Ntshepeng Motema-Alexandra, Lillian Peace Magabo, Vincent Mugisha, Gordian Kyomukama, Gilbert J. Kimanzi, Sean Adam Kagugube & Ali Musoke

Production Manager: Efelese Kyaze

1st Assistant Director/Script Supervisor: Veronica Sserabidde

Director Of Photography: Ali Musoke

Editor: Esther Kintu

Music: Peter Muhire

Production Design: Kenneth Kawiso

Sound Recordist: Adnan Ssenkumba

Costume Design/Hair & Makeup: Grace Kateete

1st Camera Assistant: Ivan Muwanga

2nd Camera Assistant: Arnold Mugasha

Digital Imaging Technician: Joshua Alibet

Motion Graphics Animator: James Doherty

Graphic Designer: Olivia D'cruz

Boom Operator: Abubaker Isisiko

Sound Utility: Rosco Bukenya

Re-recording Mixer: Andrew Ahurra S.a.e.g

Foley & Sound Design: Timothy Tonny Kassoma & Lillian Keishanyu

ADR Supervisor & Dialogue Editing: Paul Kazibwe Sekyeru

Costume Assistants: Lillian Maximillian Nabaggala & Sheila Lukwanzi

Casting: Yvonne Sewankambo, Afsa Umutesi, Nicole Amani Magabo Kiggundu & Sean Adam Kagugube

Gaffer: Emmanuel Gashumba

Electric: Michael Mujimba

Grips: Kenneth Ssentamu

Art Department: Rita Babirye & Ali Kisiriko

Location Manager/Jinja Casting: Job Mudanga

Production Intern: Jemima Edmead

BTS Photo & Video: Shari Asianut Mwanika Storyboard Artist: Derrick Muhiirwa

Publicist: Yvonne Sewankambo

Cast:

Chloe Kabuye as *Nagawa*

Esteri Tebandeke as *Margaret/Maggie*

Gladys Oyenbot as *Theresa*

Aziz Kibazo as *Hon. Jones Kabugo/Father*

Tayo Shonubi as *Sanyu/Daughter*
Brommie Abrahamz as *Young Fianceé*
Felix Bwanika as *Doctor*
Irene Nakitto as *Teacher*
Paris Kyambadde as *Nosy Schoolgirl*
Caleb Kabuye as *Nosy Schoolboy*
Patriq Nkakalukanyi as *Journalist*
Juliet Nyakato as *Female Journalist*
Louis Kabyemera as *Videographer*
Nodryn Evanci Kabuye as *Nurse*
Ramson Muhairwe as *City Slicker (In Soap Opera)*
Rebecca Tusiimire as *Village Girl (In Soap Opera)*

Troublemaker

Directed by **Olive Nwosu**



11 Minutes / Nigeria / 2019

WINNER - BEST STUDENT FILM AWARD - Discover Film Festival 2019
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival 2020
WINNER - BEST DIRECTOR AWARD - Queens World Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Aspen Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Carmarthen Bay Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Albany Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Tel Aviv International Student Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Barcelona International African Film Festival 2020
NOMINEE - BEST SHORT AWARD - Raindance Film Festival
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Ciné Regards Africains 2020
NOMINEE - BEST SHORT AWARD - Africa in Motion Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - New York African Film Festival 2020

SYNOPSIS:

Obi is hot, bored, and desperate for something to do. When his best friend, Emeka, gives him a packet of firecrackers, the boys decide to have some fun. However, things escalate in unexpected ways, as Obi learns for the first time that actions have consequences, and that there are still things he cannot understand.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

My father lived through the Nigerian Civil War. He was only a boy when it happened, and it is an event he rarely speaks of. Still, the war lurked in my own childhood– a dropped comment by Dad about how his family had to flee their ancestral home; a burdened silence whenever the

war was brought up in conversation; knowing looks within the extended family, loaded with hidden meaning.

This silence has gnawed at me for as long as I can remember. Children pick up cues faster than we give them credit for, and without anyone saying anything about it, I learned not to speak of the war myself. It wasn't until I was a teenager, and away from my home country, that I began to learn about the Civil War that killed over two million of my own people.

This silence is where the beginnings of *Troublemaker* lie. As an adult, I continue to question the reticence around an event that so obviously shaped, not only the personal lives of my family, but those of an entire nation. I question our leaders' choice of a silence that threatens to render the implications of history mute, even as its consequences shape the deep tribal tensions that exist today.

And so, *Troublemaker* is about a young boy who too is subconsciously angered by the silence of those he trusts. It is about generational trauma, and the great harm it can cause on those without agency or understanding. The film was shot with a group of entirely non-actor, local people from a small village that lived through the war themselves. It is an attempt to ask questions about how we deal with old wounds.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Olive Nwosu | Director

Olive Nwosu (born in Lagos, Nigeria) is a BAFTA LA 2020 scholar, Alex Sichel Fellow at Columbia University School of the Arts, and one of four 'African Promises' directors selected for the Institut Français' Africa-2020 program. Olive studied documentary filmmaking in Prague and worked in advertising in London, before moving to New York to attend Columbia University School of the Arts, where she will receive an MFA in Screenwriting and Directing.

Her short film, *Troublemaker* has received the Best Student Film Award at Discover Film Festival in London, and played as part of the African Perspectives Section at Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival.

Olive's work is generally informed by the fragmentary nature of her experiences across various continents and identities. Themes typically focus on the place of the outsider and the African, challenging the status quo of whom and what we have grown accustomed to seeing on screen.

Blessing Bondy Onyekwere | Producer

Bondy Onyekwere is a Lagos-based producer and Creative Director at Purple Dove Entertainment. Born and raised across Nigeria, her passion is for telling nuanced, character-driven stories about her country. She has produced several feature-length documentaries, television shows and feature films for The MultiChoice Group, Africa Magic and IrokoTV.

Tom L. Wier | Cinematographer

Tom L. Wier (originally from New Zealand) has worked in the UK, Africa and the UAE as a Director of Photography for commercials including Dove and GMC; corporate shorts, including Dubai Tecom and DP World; and documentaries, including BBC– History of the UAE. More recently, he has stepped into the Director role on projects as *Malawi Mangoes*, *Challenge* and *Raza*.

Previously, he has worked in the camera department for blockbusters, such as *Star Wars: Episode VII The Force Awakens*; UK TV dramas (*Mr. Selfridge*, *DCI Banks*); music videos (HeyMama, Nicki Minaj) and documentaries, including BBC– *Women of the War of the Roses*.

Tom trained as a documentary filmmaker at the Prague Film School, and that remains his passion. He has a refreshing eye for framing and composition stemming from years of experience with stills photography. He and his Leica M6 have travelled the world, from Nepal to Sri Lanka, from the UK to Indonesia.

Cast

The entire cast of *Troublemaker* are locals from the village of Ugbenu, Anambra State. In preparation for the short film, they took part in a one-week acting workshop with director Olive Nwosu. During this week, the entire script was re-written based on improvisational exercises they participated in. As such, the cast played a pivotal role in the creation of the story, primarily because many of them too were affected by the Biafran War.

FULL CREDITS:

Director/Writer/Editor: Olive Nwosu

Producer: Bondy Onyekwere

Associate Producer: Tim Judd

Assistant Director: Ojerinde Gbenga

Cinematographer: Tom L. Weir

Art Director: Emma Hall-Martin

Sound Mixer: Tzvi Sherman

Colorist: Adewale Olukayode

Cast:

Chidera Chidume as *Obi*

Ebube Ndubisi as *Emeka*

Ukamaka Ekwenye as *Obi's Mother*

Innocent Nwueke as *Obi's Grandfather*

Amarachi Okoye as *Emeka's Mother*

Leen Uba as *Young Man at the River*

Polygraph

Directed by **Samira Saraya**



20 Minutes / Israel / 2020

WINNER - HONORABLE MENTION AWARD - Tel Aviv International LGBT Film Festival 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Queer Screen Film Festival 2021

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Rose Filmdagen 2021

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Wicked Queer: Boston's LGBT Film Festival 2021

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Kashish Mumbai International Queer Film Festival 2021

OFFICIAL SELECTION - MIX Milano Festival 2021

SYNOPSIS:

Based on a true story, Yasmine, an openly lesbian Arab nurse living in Tel Aviv, finds out that her lover Or, an intelligence officer in the Israeli army, has been reporting on their relationship. Their liaison is further strained by the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict and by Yasmine's sister's visit, who arrives from the West Bank not knowing that she is going to meet the occupying enemy at her own sister's house.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

My passion for filmmaking stems from a desire to bring awareness to the reality in which I live. *Polygraph* is based on real events from my life. All components of my identity are in an almost-constant state of struggle and resistance to the oppression they face. I am a woman living in a patriarchal world, a Palestinian-Israeli who lives in a place that denies my existence,

and an Arab lesbian woman in a conservative, homophobic society. All these layers and intersections are a part of me and give me a unique perspective to share with my audience.

This story takes place mostly in Yasmine's apartment to give a sense of the bubble the heroines of the film choose to live in – particularly Yasmine's. Outside the confines of her home, she struggles with the reality she encounters. But even when she remains secluded in her apartment, the outside world sneaks in; people knocking at her door, sounds of TV and radio, and the sporadic air raid sirens compromise her bubble.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Samira Saraya | Director

Samira Saraya is a Palestinian actor, writer, and director currently based in Tel Aviv. In her early twenties, Saraya began performing in drag as an LGBTQ+ activist, and was making her living as a hospital nurse. Saraya's first career breakthrough occurred in 2011 when she landed a lead role in the successful Israeli TV show *Minimum Wage*, and has since continued acting in critically acclaimed films and TV shows— most notably, *Fauda*, the hit Israeli TV drama. For her 2017 performance in *Death of a Poetess*, Saraya won the Best Actress Award at the Jerusalem Film Festival and won the Honorable Mention award for her short *Polygraph* in 2020 at TLVFest, Tel Aviv's International LGBT Film Festival. Saraya has a graduate degree in directing from Tel Aviv University, and made her directing debut with *Polygraph* in 2020, which features the first openly lesbian relationship in Palestinian cinema.

Eli Laszlo Berger | Producer

Born in Budapest, Hungary in 1970, Eli Laszlo Berger has worked as a Line Producer since the turn of the millennium on feature films and TV commercials for international clients in Eastern Europe and Israel. In 1995, he was trained in the camera and electric departments of IATSE669 in Canada, before moving on to lensing feature films, documentaries and broadcast programs as a cinematographer in North America and Europe. In 2013, Eli established Sarieli Films in Israel with his wife Sari Ezouz Berger to develop and produce feature films, documentaries and short films.

Sari Ezouz Berger | Producer

Sari Ezouz was born in Israel in 1973 and is a graduate of the film program at the Camera Obscura Art School in Tel Aviv. For many years, she lived and worked in Paris, and later in Berlin. Today she is a leading Israeli Scriptwriter and Film Editor. She has won international prizes for editing and scriptwriting for both feature and documentary films. In 2013, Sari and her husband Eli Laszlo Berger established Sarieli Films in Israel to develop and produce feature films, documentaries and short films.

FULL CREDITS:

Director/Writer: Samira Saraya

Producers: Eli Laszlo Berger & Sari Ezouz Berger

Production Manager: Nimrod Wolovelsky

Cinematographer: Talia (Tulik) Galon

Editor: Sari Ezouz Berger

Sound Recorder: Roey Mula

Sound Design: Ronen Nagel

Composer: System Ali

Production Designer: Oren Adaf

Cast:

Samira Saraya as *Yasmine*

Hadas Yaron as *Or*

Fidaa Zidane as *Jahan*

The Lights Are On, No One's Home

Directed by **Faye Ruiz**



10 Minutes / USA / 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - BFI Flare: London LGBTIQ+ Film Festival 2021

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Outfest Fusion Film Festival 2021

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Long Distance Film Festival 2021

SYNOPSIS:

Mar, a trans woman who left home years ago, returns to her old neighborhood to find her childhood home. Upon her return, she's confronted with the changes that gentrification has brought to the place she once knew so well. With all her old paths back home gone, she wanders the streets aimlessly. Memories of her early transition, the places she went, her family, her best friend and a drug addiction she can't seem to shake resurface in unexpected and painful ways. Forced to contend with the ways in which she has remained static in a place that has seemingly changed overnight, she searches for a way to make peace with these changes or maybe just a familiar place to rest her head.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

My initial inspiration for making this film arose from seeing the ways in which the neighborhood I've lived in my whole life was slowly starting to change in significant ways. I would never be

able to capture the neighborhood that lives in my memory, but I could capture what was left, and what was starting to encroach on it.

All the scenes in the film and the photos we see were all filmed or taken within a 5-mile radius of the house I grew up in. They were places I spent time at or had some special attachment to. I felt this overwhelming sense that one day I would leave and come back to find myself lost among everything that had changed. This feeling of imminent loss is what drove me narratively.

Loss is hard to measure. In a physical sense, it's easy to think about it simply as something that is no longer there, but surrounding that physical absence are a series of much smaller and personal losses that are only tangible in the way they weigh on your chest.

I wanted to explore the periphery of a major loss and how one can move forward. Mar so desperately holds onto her old life and places her redemption in finding it still intact that she doesn't realize the tight grip she has on it is just her nails digging into her palms.

As someone who finds it difficult to accept change, I'm always drawn to the small shifts that occur within someone that opens them up to change. Something that feels very much in line with the trans experience is chasing after things that'll never belong to us, at least in the way we thought they would. Mar starts to understand this at the end of the film. Walking through her home, she realizes that her past is lost to her forever and that everything she hoped to get back or correct with her homecoming is gone too. But all alone when calling out for acceptance of her new name, she can give herself time. And maybe that means she can give herself the other things she needs one day too.

BIOGRAPHY:

Faye Ruiz | Director

Faye Ruiz is a filmmaker based in Tucson, AZ. Her filmmaking is guided primarily by her experiences as a Latinx trans woman. Her interests lie first and foremost in telling the stories of trans women of color by unraveling the stereotypes, falsities and all things that flatten the lives of these women as they exist in fiction. In her work, she aims to express all the things that are contradictory, messy, fun and human about the trans experience. Finding new ways to push the boundaries of what trans narratives can mean is what drives her to make films.

FULL CREDITS:

Writer/Director: Faye Ruiz

Producer: Ramani Menjugas

Editor: Emma Sinex

Cinematography: Martin Somoza & Zach Lovvorn

Cast:

Faye Ruiz as *Mar*

Adriana Acedo Campillo as *Sasha*
Grisel Wilson as *Maribel*

By Way of Canarsie

Directed by **Emily Packer & Lesley Steele**



14 Minutes / USA / 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - BlackStar Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Twin Cities Black Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Better Cities Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - DOC NYC 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Prismatic Ground Film Festival 2021
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Third Horizon Film Festival 2021

SYNOPSIS:

A wandering portrait of an oft-neglected shoreline community, *By Way of Canarsie* imagines possible futures at odds with a peaceful present. Through brief encounters, observational mise-en-scene, and expressive use of analog film, we begin to understand this predominantly black New York City neighborhood's shared desires for recognition and respect. As some community members advocate for a commuter ferry at the local pier, others reflect on the current use of natural resources, the indigenous history, and the impending environmental concerns that encompass Canarsie's relationship with the water as it exists today. The competing futures for Canarsie Pier present complications about how and for whom this public space serves.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT:

Filmmakers Emily Packer and Lesley Steele thought it was strange that neither of them had ever been to Canarsie. Steele, a NYC native, and Packer, a resident who lives along the L train line, never had a reason to travel to a neighborhood so far away and closed off from the rest of the city. When we heard about the grassroots campaign for a commuter ferry in Canarsie, we saw a need to document the story of an isolated community's desires for recognition and a better future. We immediately began investigating ancient and contemporary histories of Canarsie in order to familiarize ourselves with the neighborhood and put these desires into context. Through multiple days on the ground, in the water, in libraries, and in conversation with leaders in the community, we began to understand the competing and complex interests of the various local groups.

In our research we found many communal anxieties in Canarsie about identity, physical isolation, gentrification, rising tides due to climate change, recreational access, and potential for ecological neglect. Water ties all of these together and we wanted to iterate a vision of Canarsie that addressed these interconnected issues. So, we chose to forgo the traditional path of a character-led documentary and instead focus on Canarsie Pier and the neighborhood's relationship to the water. As the future of the pier remains uncertain, we showcase and document this specific place as it exists today, forefronting the feeling of the space itself and brief encounters with engaging characters as a part of that portrait. Combining both digital and analog film formats stems from an effort to fully capture and visualize the essence of these places and people in time. Our film is centered around an imagination of Canarsie's future; the 16mm and Super-8 helps us imagine the space as different, more dream-like, than it is today. Specifically, we used it to illustrate the possibility of a ferry that doesn't yet exist. This framework allowed us to explore both how a ferry might respond to the communal desires and interact with future complications to the space such as gentrification, climate change, and interference with existing pier culture. We began to connect Canarsie's history as a largely underserved community to the use of film, a format also typically overlooked that has unique, transcendent visual qualities.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Emily Packer | Director

Emily Packer is an experimental non-fiction filmmaker with an interest in border culture and geography. Emily was a fellow in the 2018-2019 Collaborative Studio at UnionDocs in Brooklyn, and is a proud alumna of the anomalous Hampshire College. Her work has been screened across the country, including at Anthology Film Archives, BlackStar Film Festival, DOCNYC, and others, including a three-day border art event that she organized in San Diego-Tijuana called "Arte on the Line". In addition to her independent work, Emily is a freelance editor, producer, and serves on programming committees for film festivals in New York City. Emily collects voicemails for future use; consider yourself notified.

Lesley Steele | Director

Lesley Steele is a visual storyteller with a background in video & film production and digital design. Originally a New York City native from The Bronx, Lesley obtained a BFA in Design Technology from Parsons The New School for Design, as well as a Masters in Directing from the School of Visual Arts. She writes, directs and edits short and long-form videos. Inspired by Avant-Garde experimental film, her work reflects the juxtaposition of mediums, including 16mm and analog tape, to explore new meaning in the moving image. Previously, Lesley has worked as a Shooter and Editor for Genius News, and a Digital Designer at MTV & Nickelodeon, BuzzFeed and HB.

Shirin Ghaffary | Producer

Shirin Ghaffary is a reporter and filmmaker from the San Francisco Bay Area who moved to New York a year ago. Her first documentary, “Cloyne Court” is about 150 UC Berkeley students living together in the nation’s largest student commune, and the challenges the historically radical house faces. When she’s not making documentaries she works as a reporter for Recode covering how technology is impacting the way people work and live. In the past, Shirin has worked for BuzzFeed News and PBS Digital making videos.

FULL CREDITS:

Directors/Editors/Cinematographers: Emily Packer & Lesley Steele

Producer: Shirin Ghaffary

Sound Mixer: Vodou

Composer: Iglooroyalty

Title Designer: Simón Santana

Executive Artistic Director and Collaborative Studio Director: Christopher Allen

Project Mentor: Jem Cohen

Featuring:

Dorothy Lee

Theresa Cervera

Maria Garrett

Jeffery Strong

Curtis Zunigha

Joslyn Carter

Matthew

Tyrel

The Rose of Manila

Directed by **Alex Westfall**



12 Minutes / Philippines / 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - San Diego Asian Film Festival 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - National Film Festival for Talented Youth 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - BFI Future Film Festival 2021

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Ivy Film Festival 2021

OFFICIAL SELECTION - CineYouth - Chicago International Film Festival 2021

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Athens International Film and Video Festival 2021

SYNOPSIS:

An imagining of the formative years of Imelda Marcos, who, as one half of the Marcos regime, would become infamous for embezzling billions from the country to sustain her extravagant lifestyle. Here, the fate of a young girl and an entire nation become entangled as the absent mother of a country is born.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

In the 1980s, the Marcos dictatorship threatened my mother's family, resulting in her exile from Manila to Los Angeles. That's where she met my father. Whether I like it or not, there exists a strange, cosmic entanglement between myself and Imelda Marcos.

Flash forward to 2018, when at the library, I uncovered a book-length transcript of an interview with Imelda. The story of her participation in a beauty pageant in 1953— and the extraordinary outcome of that competition— caught me. I sensed a parallel between Imelda’s quest for the pageant crown and the way she treated her public role— obsessed, consumed, oblivious.

These questions of scales of destiny, whether evil is innate or learned, and how history unfolds, are what compelled me to make this film. While the line between history and fiction is fragile, cinema for me exists as a site to grapple with the complexity of a person and a culture. *The Rose of Manila* is an experiment in enlivening the archive, as well as in testing its limits.

In re-familiarizing myself with the place cradling my identity, I began to picture young Imelda inhabiting the same landscape defining my conception of home— the lush, muggy, tropical air, the acute cicada hums, the picture-perfect school uniforms.

BIOGRAPHY:

Alex Westfall | Director

Alex Westfall (b. 1997, Manila, Philippines) is a visual artist interested in constructing inner worlds, interrogating cultural histories, and the relationship between dreams and memory. She graduated from Brown University in 2020 with a BA in Modern Culture & Media and is an alumna of the Telluride Film Festival Student Symposium.

FULL CREDITS:

Director/Writer/Editor: Alex Westfall

Producers: Miguel Jimenez, Enzo Razon

Cinematography: Moises Zee, Alex Westfall

Production Designer: Paul Jatayna

Music: Didier Luceus

Sound Design: Dan Timmons

Project Advisors: Ariella Azoulay, Jennifer Montgomery, RaMell Ross

Cast:

Polly Cabrera as *Imelda*

Thalia Villaflores as *Estrella*

Joshiene Sagun as *Lucita*

Carlton Josol as *Pageant Host*

Laurie Westfall as *Imelda’s Mother*

Andie Ong as *Young Imelda*

Alayson Arguelles

Fredrose Bacolinao

Krizsa Ormisa

Jade Lumien
Mae Mandigal
Kit Mallari
Butch Jimenez
Miguel Jimenez
Jerry Robles
Matthew Westfall

Slip

Directed by **Nicole Otero**



11 Minutes / USA / 2019

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Indie Memphis Film Festival 2019

SYNOPSIS:

A woman arrives home at the end of a regular day, but as she begins to turn in for the night, she is overcome with a sense of restlessness. Unable to fit inside her own world, she goes back out into the night. Her journey around a mostly vacant city, obscured by darkness, cascades in space and time, away from one feeling and in search of another.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

A story of body and of perception. Going beyond the traditional use of sound in film, *Slip* explores the way nighttime alters and misdirects our perception and senses. In darkness, what we hear is often disembodied from its source. And what we perceive is often misled by heightened senses. Even how we experience time diverges from daylight hours. In the midst of this refracted sensorial journey is a woman who wanders through the night alone. Her nighttime sensory experience transfers to the viewer. In turn, our learned expectations or sensory anticipation are projected onto her and the world around her. But how and where she is at any moment is less tangible as the night carries on. The film moves with her, sometimes in step, or else trying to keep up.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Nicole Otero | Director

Nicole Otero is a writer, director and editor. Her directorial debut *Slip* screened in the shorts program at the 2019 Indie Memphis Film Festival. Nicole also shot and edited an experimental documentary on artist and founder of the Underground Museum, Noah Davis in 2016. *Untitled: In Process* was exhibited at the Frye Museum in Seattle and the California College of the Arts in San Francisco. Nicole has also edited several works for major museum exhibitions including the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the New Museum in New York, the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, and more.

Alex Ashe | Cinematographer

Alex Ashe is a director, cinematographer and gaffer. His short film, *Mr. Parker*, screened at the 2019 BAMCinemaFest. In addition to *Slip*, he has lensed music videos and fashion portraits. Alex has also gaffed several narrative and documentary works including HBO's award-winning series, *Random Acts of Flyness*.

Jackie Zhou | Sound Designer

Jackie Zhou (she/they) is a Los Angeles-based sound designer and artist who is keen on blurring the lines between formats and disciplines. From music videos to documentaries, her directorial work aims to explore and celebrate human experiences. Her sound design work has been Emmy-nominated and credits include: Janelle Monáe's *Dirty Computer*, HBO's *United Skates*, and live work presented at the Walt Disney Concert Hall. She began her sound design career under veteran Wiley Stateman, as a sound editor on *The Hateful Eight*, *Deepwater Horizon*, *Warcraft: The Beginning*, and *Godless*. Jackie especially thrives with collaborative projects which defy the standard borders of traditional formats. She believes good humans make great storytellers.

Valerie Teicher | Cast

Valerie Teicher Barbosa, better known by her stage name "Tei Shi", is a Colombian-Canadian singer, songwriter and producer. Val released her debut studio album *Crawl Space* in 2017. She also recently appeared on Blood Orange's critically-acclaimed album, *Negro Swan*. *Slip* marks Val's narrative acting debut.

FULL CREDITS:

Director/Editor: Nicole Otero

Producers: Nikkia Moulterie & Nicole Otero

Cinematographer: Alex Ashe

Sound Designer: Jackie Zhou

Cast: Valerie Teicher (AKA Tei Shi)

Featured Extras: Myron Donley & Vincent Ticali

1st AC: Cheryn Park

2nd AC: Julian Tran

Gaffer: Mitch Perrin

Key Grip: Dwane Harris

Steadicam: Devon Catucci

Camera PA: Jason Chandler

PA: Rochelle Rose

Sound Mixers: Edwin Diagon, José Villaman & Anna Wozniewicz

Hair & Makeup: Kayla Fenwick

Additional Casting: Emily Fleischer

Colorist: Andrew Geary @ Co3

Not Black Enough

Directed by **Jermaine Manigault**



19 Minutes / USA / 2020

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Flatpack Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - L.A. Shorts International Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Aesthetica Short Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Hollyshorts Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival 2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION - Emerging Lens Cultural Film Festival 2021

SYNOPSIS:

A young African-American man struggling to find his identity within his community meets a persuasive relic of the past.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

On June 2nd, 2018 while finishing up the screenplay to this film, I traveled down to South Carolina to visit the Joseph Manigault Museum, which is the plantation where my direct ancestors were owned, lived, and died as slaves. On that soil, this script was written.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Jermaine Manigault | Director

Jermaine Manigault (b. 1991, Queens, New York) is an African-American director, screenwriter, and producer. The son of a New York dancer and a Philadelphia writer, Jermaine studied Psychology and Film Studies while working on sets as a production assistant. While a PA, Jermaine began to write and experiment with visuals and courted investors for his debut short film, *Language is Dead* (2017). Starring James Physick and Academy Award® Nominee Kim Krizan, the film follows a man who seeks the aid of a therapist after questioning the validity of words when they fail to describe his emotions. It went on to win the Audience Choice Award for Best Short Film in New York at the Kew Gardens Festival of Cinema, and Best Screenplay at the Sydney Indie Film Festival in Sydney, Australia. After returning from the European Premiere of *Language is Dead* at the Four Seasons Film Festival in London in 2018, Jermaine traveled to Charleston, South Carolina to visit multiple slave plantations while writing his second short film, *Not Black Enough* (2020). The film garnered a mention in The New York Times before its debut last fall and has thus far screened at 5 international festivals (3 Oscar & 4 BAFTA-Qualifying). In 2018, Jermaine launched 30 Hours Productions, a production company dedicated to illuminating the stories of underrepresented groups. As an active NAACP member, he created the Young Black Creators Initiative, a mentorship program for Black youths who will be invited to the set of all films produced by the company in an attempt to educate them on the wide range of roles behind the camera to help empower them when deciding a career path. Jermaine is currently writing the script for his debut feature film.

Isaiah Violante | Producer

Isaiah Violante is a lifelong New Yorker, born and raised in Brooklyn. He discovered a passion for music and film as a child, writing songs, short-stories and film scripts throughout his formative years. His love for the performing arts prompted him to start an audio production studio, and it was this business that ultimately led to him crossing paths with director Jermaine Manigault, handling sound mixing on Jermaine's 2017 short film, *Language is Dead*. Isaiah's work garnered him an Award of Merit for Achievement in Sound Design at the 2017 Southern Shorts Awards. Jermaine and Isaiah subsequently founded the independent motion picture company 30 Hours Productions and developed *Not Black Enough* together over the next two years along with a bevy of other projects. Isaiah lives in New York City with his wife.

Daniel Arena | Editor

Daniel Arena grew up in Rochester, NY. In 2010, Daniel attended Film School at the Art Institute of New York. In 2012, Arena served as Editor for the first time the short film *Tethered* with director Genevieve Leonard. Later that year, Arena collaborated as editor with film school friend Melissa Fortunatti on the short film *Klepto*. Daniel has since worked on major TV shows and commercials with VICE Media, The New York Times, and MTV Productions *Wild 'n Out*.

Lara Aqel | Cinematographer

Born in Jordan, Lara Aqel is an Arab-American narrative and commercial cinematographer. Her cinematography has garnered global attention. *Sweet Parents*, a feature film, took home top awards at the Brooklyn, Lower East Side, and Montreal World Film Festivals. The short film *A My Name Is* was nominated for Best Cinematography at the Madrid International Film Festival. Most recently, the short film *Pozole* took home Best Narrative Short (Comedy) at Cinequest, qualifying it for the 2020 Academy Awards. Lara's diverse body of commercial work has represented networks and brands such as HBO, Comedy Central, Lifetime, History Channel, CoverGirl, JP Morgan Chase, and Vogue, among others.

Patrick Gregory Decile | Cast (Oreo)

Patrick Gregory Decile was born in Miami, Florida. Patrick attended Carol City Middle School and later graduated from North Miami High. In addition to his work as an actor, Patrick is also an avid poet and vocalist (performing under the stage name Pat Pandoe). While attending Florida Memorial University, Patrick's indomitable talent caught the eye of world-renowned filmmaker Barry Jenkins, and he was subsequently cast in the pivotal role of "Terrel" in *Moonlight*, winner of the 2017 Academy Award for Best Picture. Patrick has also starred in short films *78 on 79th*, *Broken Branches* and *Honk for Jesus. Save Your Soul*. Patrick is currently attending Broward College while actively developing simultaneous careers in acting and music.

Corey Knight | Cast (J.P.)

Born and raised in East Flatbush, Brooklyn and the child of Jamaican parents, Corey Knight is a formidable young acting talent who is rapidly making a name for himself. In his early teens, a stint with the Moving Mountains Theatre Company, a theatre production group directed by Jamie Hector, Chad Coleman and Michael Kostrof, enabled Corey to discover his passion for the stage. After acceptance into the American Musical and Dramatic Academy as a drama major, Corey entered the 2015 Church of God's International Teen Talent competition, winning a drama award. Corey garnered critical attention for his lead performance in the webseries *Nobodies*. Most recently, Corey appeared in the highly-rated EPIX series *Godfather Of Harlem*, starring Forest Whitaker. In 2019, Corey also spent several months in Italy working on Luca Guadagnino's upcoming HBO series *We Are Who We Are*.

Felipe Galganni | Cast (AI)

Born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Felipe Galganni discovered his passion for tap dancing at age 15 and the artform has led to his engagements as a choreographer and pedagogue for nearly two decades. Opting to pursue a career in tap dance abroad, Felipe relocated to New York City in 2010, and his prodigious talent soon garnered the attention of numerous dance critics, including the New York Times. In 2017, Felipe choreographed and directed the show *TAP&TOM*, blending American tap and his Brazilian roots in a tribute to the Brazilian composer

Antonio Carlos Jobim. In 2018, Felipe was awarded the prestigious Machado de Assis medal from the Brazilian Endowment for the Arts in recognition for his work in disseminating Brazilian culture in the United States.

FULL CREDITS:

Director/Producer/Writer: Jermaine Manigault
Producer: Isaiah Violante
Executive Producer: Wanda Manigault
Cinematographer: Lara Aqel
Editor: Daniel Arena
Costume Designer: Melanie Swaffar
Composers: Billy Kennedy & Marcell Lane
1st Assistant Director: Jacob Kessler
1st Assistant Camera: Phoenix Flix
2nd Assistant Camera: Aksa Arevola
MoVi Gimbal Operator: Ryan Hamelin
MoVi Remote Operator: Erin Trout
Stills Photographer: Maksim Axelrod
Sound Mixers: Edward Peterlin & Jalen Tompson
Boom Operator: Deanna Williams
Gaffers: Jonathan Alvarado & Leroy Prompakdee
Best Boy Electrical: Karli Kopp
Key Grip: Mike Kim & David Reichman
Best Boy Grip: Leroy Prompakdee
Projectionist: Farkas Fulop
Prop Master: Alannah Moncada
Makeup Artist: Natalia Grabczynska
Hair Stylist: Bryan Pachon-Cristo
Production Assistants: Tayana Brumaire & Sean Concannon
Colorist: Mary Perrino
Cast:
Patrick Gregory Decile as *Oreo*
Corey Knight as *J.P.*
Felipe Galganni as *Al*
Anwar George as *Token*
Yohance Barton as *Lupe*
Rashead Anderson as *Bryan*
Andrew Manning as *Justin*
Darius Fryar as *G.Q.*
Kristian Alleyne as *Stick Up Kid*

Darryl Bobb as *Runner*
Duvall Smith as *Shooter*
James Chase as *Red Shirt*
Timothy Digs as *Red Shirt*
Barkim Logan as *Red Shirt*
Dwayne Richardson as *Red Shirt*
Matthew Sanders as *Red Shirt*
Xander Steel as *Cop*
Philip Trossarello as *Cop*