

YOYOS



(You're On Your Own)



LOGLINE

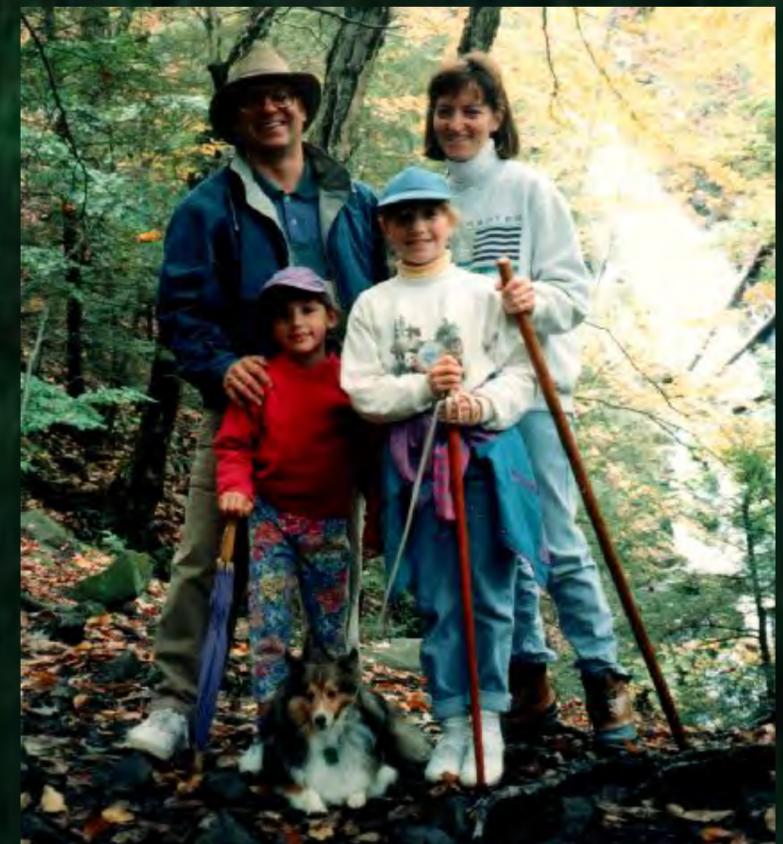
Liberal sisters Dinah and Abigail return to their childhood homestead in rural Virginia after a long estrangement to pay their respects to their (supposedly) dying conservative father - and get bamboozled into running the survivalist camp for kids that their parents founded after the sisters flew the coop.



WRITERS' STATEMENT

Michal: My mom was a single parent. She, like Dinah, experienced physical abuse from her husband / my father before they split. She took me to my first Pro-Life / Anti-Abortion rally when I was five. My brother Isaac has a mixed race little boy. Ishaan, my nephew, was born around the time Trump was in office the first time. When my conservative Aunt who voted for Trump sent Ishaan children's books for his birth, Isaac sent her a scathing letter about his horror regarding kids in cages – and donated the books to a children's immigration non-profit. Isaac and Aunt Ellie haven't spoken since. A year and a half ago, my husband and I sold our house in NYC and bought a house on six acres in Virginia, my home state. Lexi and I wrote YOYOs with our new land in mind. We wanted to tell a story that could take place in this very conservative rural community where I had landed after being a lifetime liberal and living in NYC and LA exclusively as an adult.

Lexi: While I am not estranged from my parents, we have been on opposite sides of the political spectrum for quite some time. It's been a pain point in my life and I have been on my own journey with how to relate to, debate, argue with, tolerate, and still love my parents. Knowing that I am not alone in the struggle, I had wanted to explore this topic and this pain artistically. At one point I even thought of asking my dad to do a podcast with me, where we could argue publicly. After meeting Michal and deciding to write something together to film on her property, it wasn't until months of brainstorming that our storyline snapped into place, and I knew it felt right. I knew that this topic was beckoning me, and what better way to explore it than with the backdrop of nature and the mirror of children. I find that life is a series of small meaningful moments, and it was an honor to excavate these characters and their small meaningful moments. I hope it resonates with people who feel paralyzed by differences right now.



SYNOPSIS

White liberal thirty-somethings Dinah and Abby haven't spoken to their conservative parents in over a decade. Political arguments reached a boiling point at the same time as Dinah found herself pregnant from a one night stand. She decided not to include her parents in raising her mixed-race child. At the same time, Abby moved 3,000 miles away and found herself producing a political podcast. When their mother Susan calls them home to visit their dying father, they return with Dinah's son. Michael has been told that his Grandparents died a long time ago. Jeb and Susan don't know he exists. When they arrive to their rural Virginia childhood home, their father is alive and well. It was all a ruse to get them to return.

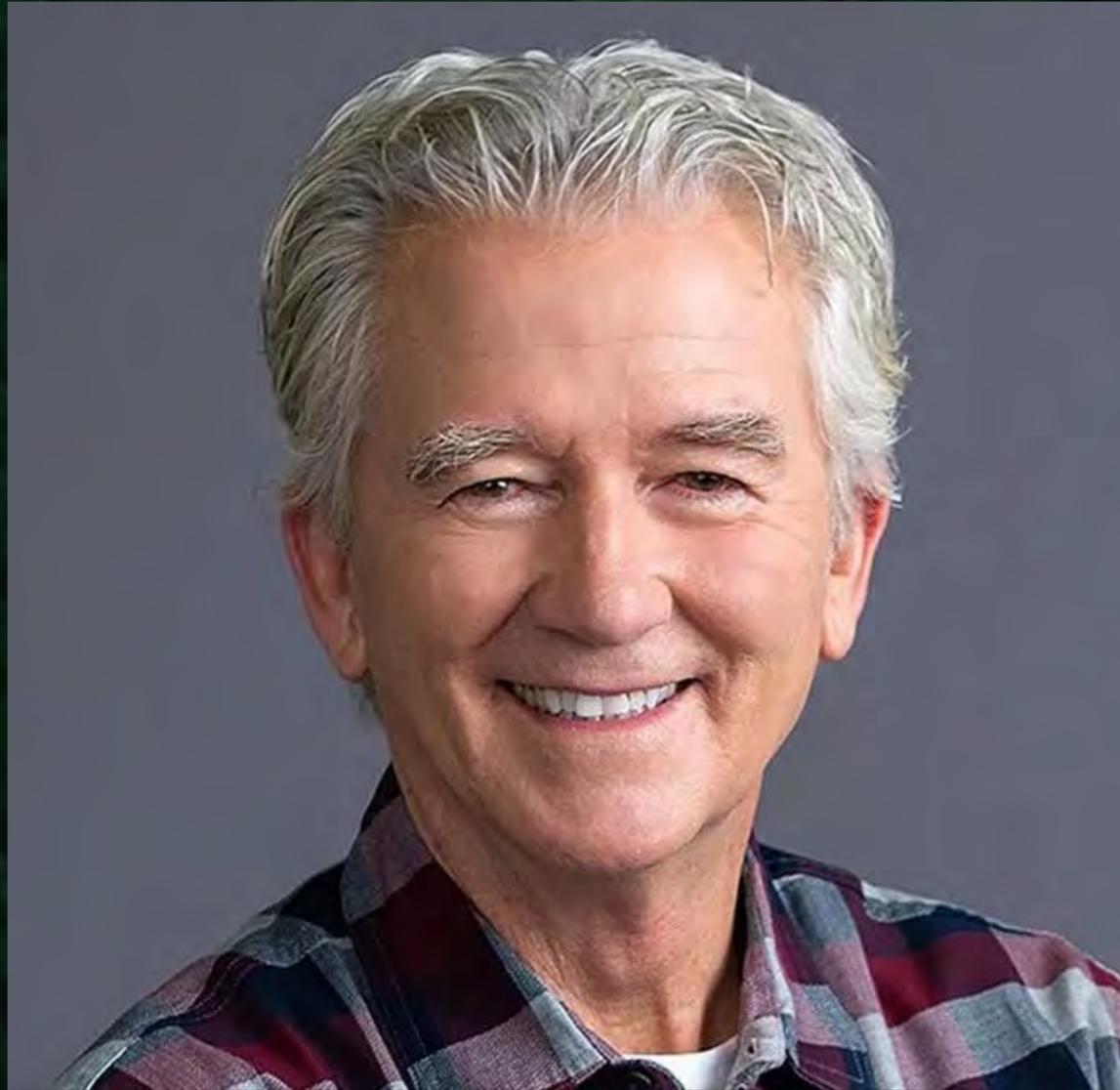
Since they became estranged, their parents have run a successful survivalist camp for tweens. Susan and Jeb explain that while Jeb isn't dying, they are drawing up their will on their 100 acre property. In order to inherit their land and fortune, their daughters must prove they retained the survival skills and values they were raised with by running one successful week-long session of the camp. If either sister refuses to participate or they fail the mission, their parents will donate their entire inheritance to the NRA.

So Dinah, Abby, and Michael head into the woods with six paying campers between the ages of 9 and 13: Chloe, Penelope, Kat, Bonnie, Tucker, and Raghu. Our diverse, motley crew flounder and triumph over the course of the week. As the adult sisters witness each camper go on their own journeys of self-growth and community, they too have transformations. When Abby and Chloe ingest poisonous berries while foraging, Jeb and Susan swoop in to save the day. Will everyone finally put their egos and political differences aside and come together in the end?



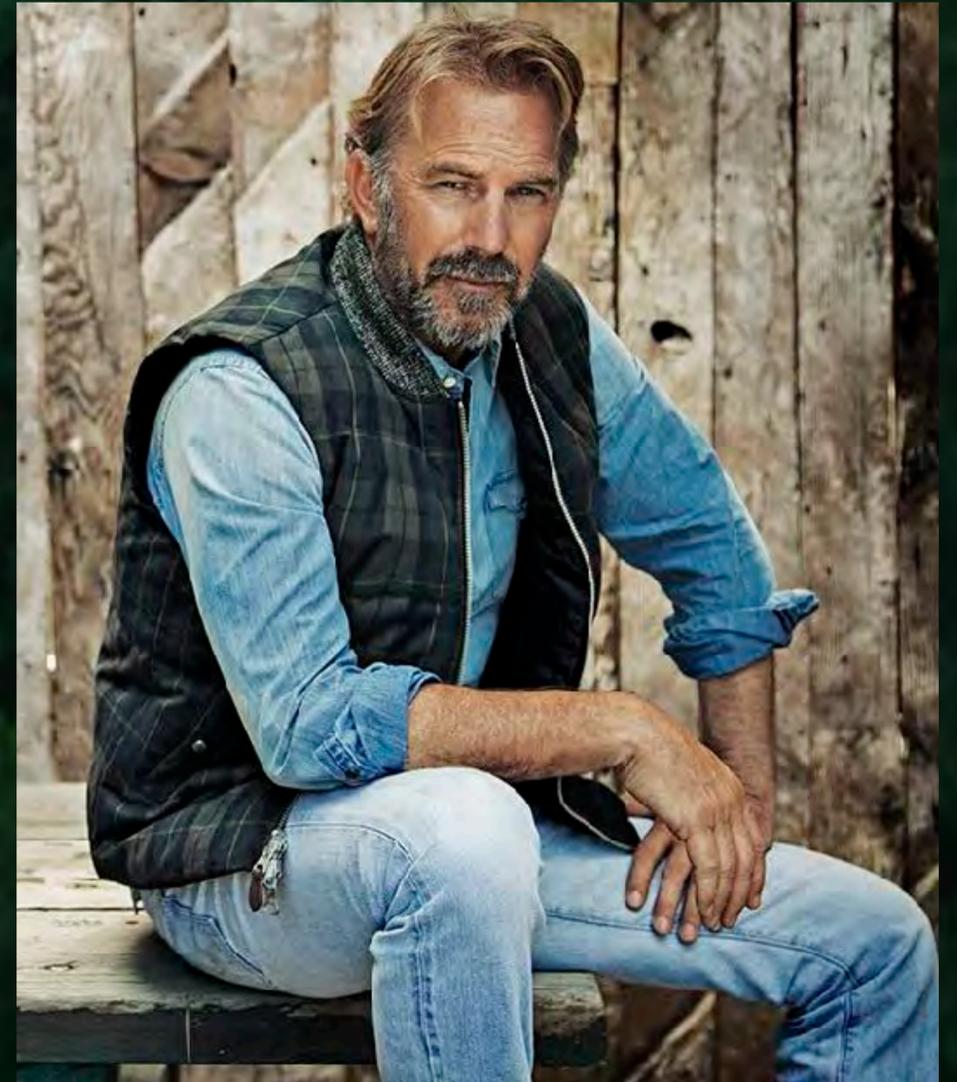
An aerial photograph of a dense, lush green forest. The trees are tightly packed, creating a textured canopy of various shades of green. The lighting is soft, highlighting the individual crowns of the trees. In the center of the image, the word "CAST" is written in a white, serif, all-caps font. The text is centered both horizontally and vertically, standing out against the dark green background.

CAST



JEBEDIAH (Jeb) - 65, white, conservative, tall man with a grounded presence. He is a good Christian boy from rural Virginia whose family has lived in the area for generations. He is great with kids, a skilled hunter, and has a mind for business.

PATRICK DUFFY





LINDA PURL

SUSAN - 62, white, conservative, rugged, capable, and a member of the DAR. She is always put together, even after feeding the chickens. She grew up in Richmond but moved out to the country after meeting Jeb in college. She is the perfect wife. She is extremely organized. Everything in her garden and her bunker is labeled and accounted for on a spreadsheet.



DINAH



DINAH LOUISE - 38, nurse, tough, liberal, white, brunette, single mother, grew up on a farm in Virginia with conservative parents who identify as survivalists and keep a well maintained bunker. She has not spoken to her parents since before she got pregnant. Her son Michael is now ten years old and she has never told anyone who his father is. She is generally very private.



MICHAL SINNOTT



ABIGAIL

ABIGAIL ANNE (Abby) - 35, Dinah's younger sister, even more liberal with a punk hippie vibe. She is a political podcast producer living in Los Angeles. She is argumentative, passionate, intelligent, and outspoken. She has not spoken to her parents in a decade in solidarity with her sister, and due to political arguments that got out of hand.



LEXI GRABOSKI







MICHAEL



MADDOX MITCHELL

MICHAEL LOUIS - 10, half African American, close to his mother, and raised in Richmond. He is empathetic, a good student, and wise for his age. His own political views are more influenced by his classmates than his mom.

CHLOE



ZOEY ALOISIO

CHLOE -10 going on 30, full face of makeup, thick eyeliner, has 1M followers on YouTube where people watch her play video games. She's a true New Yorker and a classic bully with a nanny she controls and parents who are never around.

PEN



LARA AZUPURUA

PENELOPE (Pen) - 11, Latina, southern accent, hair always pulled into a messy low ponytail, dresses like a tomboy but lives with God-fearing parents who decorate her room in pink. She often regurgitates Republican and Christian phrases she hears from her parents.

KATARINA



LUCCA LASCELLES

KATARINA (Kat) - 9, huge Hunger Games fan to the point of only dressing like Katniss, incredible archer. She's cute and would be popular if it weren't for the weird Hunger Games obsession.

BONNIE



ABIGAIL WHITTAKER

BONNIE - 13, plump and in the thralls of puberty, could really use a bra but doesn't wear one. She's an excellent girl scout with impressive survival skills who recently lost her mother and feels lost.

RAGHU



JAI SOUNDAR

RAGHU - 10, Indian, British accent, from wealthy parents who recently moved him to the middle of nowhere Virginia to purchase an Alpaca farm. He's a bit of a class clown / rebel with a London street vibe.

TUCKER



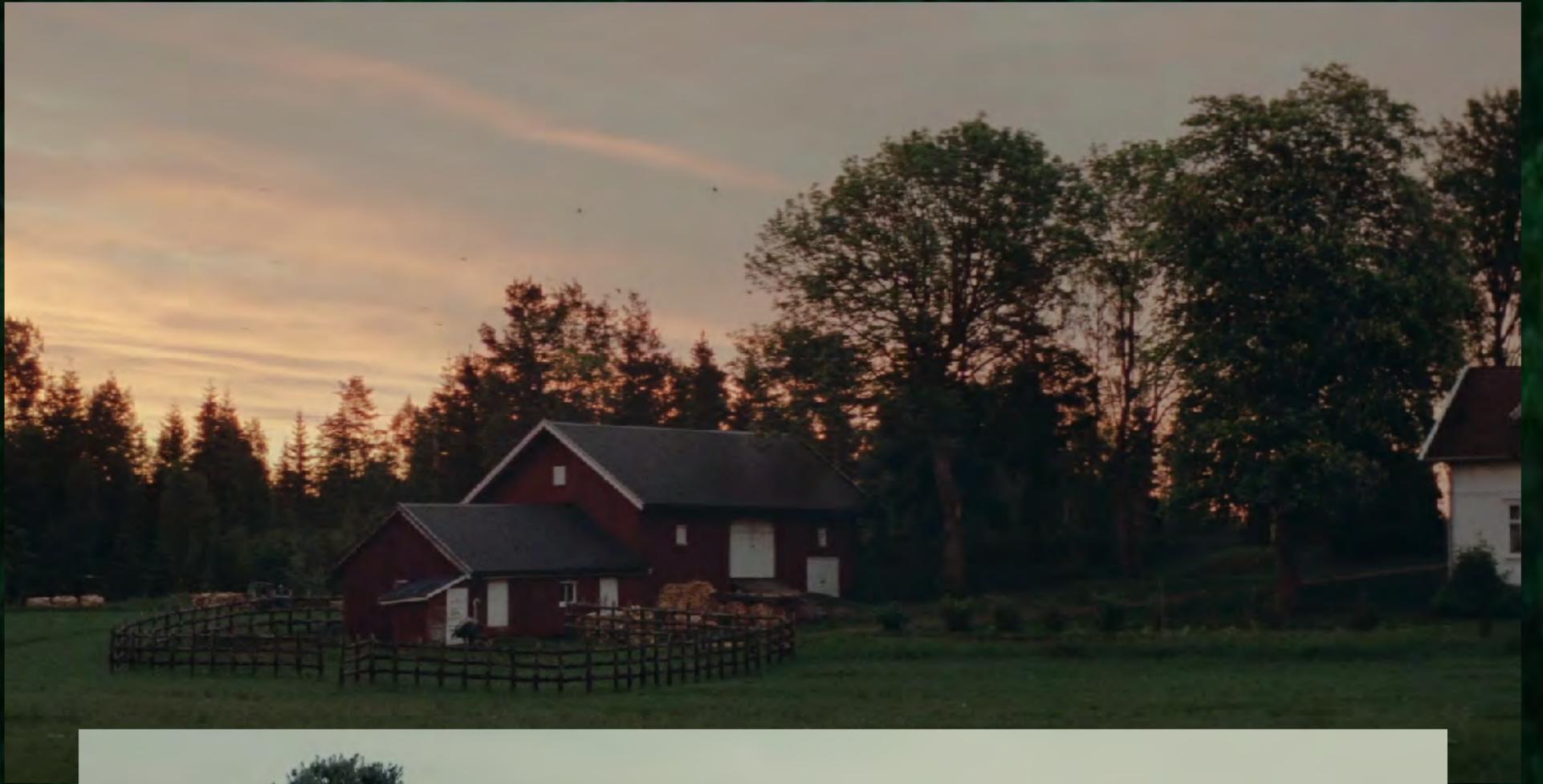
TUCKER - 13, tall and scrawny, autistic, encyclopedic knowledge of bugs and other random trivia, often interjects to correct people.

LIAM JAMES BURKE

An aerial photograph of a dense, lush green forest. The trees are tightly packed, creating a textured canopy of various shades of green. The lighting is soft, highlighting the intricate patterns of the foliage. In the center of the image, the words "VISUAL TONE" are written in a clean, white, serif font, standing out against the dark green background.

VISUAL TONE















DIRECTORS STATEMENT

On the surface YOYOs is a film about a family reuniting and a group of misfit kids coming together. But the deeper story is ultimately about acceptance. Acceptance within families and within society. Our country has become a place of division and exclusion, so the making of this film feels so timely. According to the Constitution, Americans have unalienable Rights - these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. YOYOs shows us that even if 'You're On Your Own,' you have the right to be on your own in any way you choose and celebrate that everyone else has this right too. It's a story about learning to come together despite our flaws and limitations.

Casting will be crucial; the kids are all such individuals. I want to make sure that we find young actors who already embody much of what makes each character distinctive. This is especially important when working with child actors, as you want the performances to be as organic as possible. The improvisational nature of montages gives me lots of room to show each of their characters and the spontaneous interaction between them.

Because of the depth in this story and its dramedy nature I want it to have a much more 'cinematic' feel than the normal 'kids at camp' movies. The landscape will become a character, and shooting style will be more 'drama' driven as for me this gives the humor much more room to breathe. With the cinematography I am usually quite specific, but this project feels different. I want the locations to speak for themselves and the magic to happen organically. At the camp the camerawork will be mainly handheld or steady cam, and the equipment setup will be lightweight and unobtrusive to allow us to move quickly between setups. To get the timeless feel I am looking for, I propose shooting with vintage spherical lenses. We will steer towards warm, atmospheric images, using shadow and contrast. The lighting and colors should be natural daylight for the daytime and a warm tungsten feel for the night work, enhancing the light from the fires and lanterns.

Spatial Sound will be an integral part of YOYOs as it enables a richer narrative experience by carefully positioning sound to guide the viewer's attention. This will be a wonderful tool to use in the forest and camp. The sound of the wind, leaves, grass, insects, birds and the crackling of the campfires all around will make us really feel that we are with the characters on their journey.

I am excited to be able to add my voice to this wonderful story.

An aerial photograph of a dense, lush green forest. The trees are tightly packed, creating a textured canopy of various shades of green. In the center of the image, the word "BIOS" is written in a bold, white, serif font, standing out against the dark green background.

BIOS

DIRECTOR



Lynda Reiss, who was born in New York and raised in England, is a multi award winning director. Her short films show range from drama to dark comedy and one of them was Oscar qualified in 2019. Her entire career has been a 25 year Master Class in prep, production, and finding rapid solutions to last minute requests while still telling the story, on such projects as *American Beauty*, *American History X*, *Stranger Things*, *True Detective*, and *Winning Time*. Lynda is a fellow of the Sony Pictures Diverse Directors Program, the Black Magic Collective Filmmaker Advancement Initiative, and a fellow of the Women in Film Transitioning Creatives Mentor Program. Irrepressible and hilarious, Lynda is who you want to be working alongside when you are shooting in some grotty alley at three in the morning, making movie magic, completing the day and having fun doing it..

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOTGRAPHY



Jarrod Russell was raised in Richmond. He recently DP'd the feature film *Tapawingo* starring Jon Heder and Billy Zane. He cut his production teeth on film, television and commercial projects in and around the mid-Atlantic region. Jarrod's skill set was honed working simultaneously in both camera and lighting which was an advantage to an up-and-coming Cinematographer. Now based in NYC Jarrod has gaffed shows such as Amazon's *The Peripheral*, AMC's *Walking Dead*, *World Beyond*, and Apple TV's *Lady in the Lake* in addition to features films that are awaiting release. Jarrod has worked under the tutelage of ten ASC cinematographers including John Toll, Janusz Kaminski, and Lachlan Milne. He's shot commercials for companies such as Walmart, Tiger Fuels, TEDx, and Hamilton Beach. Grateful for the opportunities he has received, Jarrod looks forward to furthering his role as a cinematographer and continuing his artistic journey.

WRITER - PRODUCER



As an actress, Lexi Graboski's TV & Film credits include *American Crime Story* on FX, the pilot *Dirty* written / directed by Jeff Meek, the horror feature *The New Hands* written / directed by Brandon Scullion, and several short films and web series. She has performed around southern CA with *Will & Company* and across the country with *Playfair*. Behind the camera, Lexi wrote and produced several comedy shorts with her all-female sketch team *The Sissy Space Cats*, as well as her short film *Uphill* which screened at the Reel Recovery Festival in 2015. In 2016 she produced *Reasons to be Pretty* and *Reasons to be Happy* at the Two Roads Theater. Lexi interned at the Ellen DeGeneres Show to learn TV and Indy Entertainment to learn feature filmmaking. She has further industry experience as an associate talent manager, PA, crafty, social media manager, and more. Her hobbies include woodworking, painting, photography, and hiking.

WRITER - PRODUCER



Michal Sinnott is an award winning, classically trained actor / writer / director / storyteller. Her first narrative feature, *Unpacking*, as a co / writer-director-producer-actor wrapped the 2024 festival circuit. 'Unpacking' screened 25 festivals globally (including Cinequest, Richmond International, & Sedona International) and won 17 awards (including Best Actress (Michal), Best of the Fest, Best Ensemble, Audience Choice, & Rising Star Director). She was the lead Producer on the Tanzania unit of production that shot drone footage with the Maasai for *The Universe(s) of Us*, formally *Born That Way* (Sundance Screenwriting Lab finalist), a magical realist feature she wrote and is still developing. SAG-AFTRA and Equity, she's appeared in dozens of plays and 50+ principal / starring roles for radio / tv / film, including companies / institutions as diverse as ABC, Sundance and The Whitney Museum of American Art. She's best known as the performance capture artist for Tracey De Santa, one of the main characters in the billion dollar phenomena *Grand Theft Auto V*. A former flight attendant and three-time cancer survivor, she's traveled to 35+ countries on six continents.

PRODUCER



Heather Waters is an award-winning producer, director, and writer known for her visionary leadership in film and music. She has shaped hundreds of compelling narratives in the writing and development process and countless others through industry positioning, production, festival circuit, and distribution process. Waters is the Founder & Producer of the Richmond International Film Festival (RIFF), one of the largest in the region and Co-founder of Creative World Awards (CWA), a leading development company serving writers worldwide. A forward-thinking entrepreneur, Waters is on the cutting edge of industry technology with The Indie MIX, an online platform that connects creators, facilitates project funding, and streamlines production management. Waters' body of work spans narratives and documentaries. Her most recent film, *A Mother's Promise*, is an award winning 1920's film making its run on the festival circuit with an accompanied feature in development.

LINE PRODUCER



Chelsea Fenton, a Canadian-American Producer and member of the Producers Guild of America was born in Toronto, raised in Dubai, and is now based in Los Angeles. She has produced nine features and multiple shorts, music videos and brand content spots with budgets ranging from \$50,000 to \$5,000,000. She has successfully navigated production logistics such as working with a bear, pyro and explosives, extensive VFX and stunts, cast/crews of 200+ people, aerial filming with helicopters, and working within various states to acquire tax credits and rebates towards production. In addition to producing, Chelsea has an extensive background in production management and support. Most recently, Chelsea was placed in the 2024 Women in Film Physical Producer Fellowship. Chelsea continues to champion projects from underrepresented voices, telling important, thought-provoking stories through a lens of entertainment.

CO-PRODUCER



Julia Cassidy is an Emmy Award-winning producer with a track record of over 25 years in the industry. Beyond specializing as a showrunner in unscripted series, she spent 11+ years in development and over six years as Head of Creative at (Sony-owned) Embassy Row. In addition to leading a production company, she has a genuine love of story-telling, teamwork, and cultivating the growth of individuals. She brings creativity, innovation, and industry knowledge to every project she undertakes. Additionally, she is a dedicated advocate for the autistic community.

SCOTT VERNON - SURVIVALIST ADVISOR - ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

After over a decade's search into living with the natural world, Scott Vernon founded the non-profit Sustainable Homestead Institute to inspire leaders in sustainable development, ecological land design, and nature reliance education. His goal is to give students the firsthand knowledge of what it takes to create self-enriching abundant agricultural systems through environmental connection and ancestral skill immersion. The campus sits on over 140 acres of serene southwest Virginia farmland not far from the Blue Ridge Parkway. Pasture, forest, orchard, creeks, hideaways, and permaculture gardens dot the rolling hills and showcase integrated systems farming and resource management. Pasture, forest, orchard, creeks, hideaways, and permaculture gardens dot the rolling hills and showcase integrated systems farming and resource management. The installations and natural beauty allow students from around the world to better understand our common connection to the Earth. We are very lucky to have Scott on board with us as our survivalist advisor. With his incredible knowledge and teaching ability he will be a huge help in getting everyone prepared to go out into the woods and shoot.



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