



# MAYYA

*FIND THE COURAGE TO BREAK THE CYCLE*

a feature film created to raise awareness on  
child trafficking, domestic abuse, alcoholism and the danger of online predators



**When a teenager seeking an escape from her alcoholic mother's abusive boyfriend is lured into a trafficking scheme, she must realize the difference between love and manipulation to return to those who truly care.**

# why talk about trafficking?

Human trafficking is the **2nd largest criminal industry** in the world reaping an estimated **\$32 billion** in the trade of human beings.

In 2018, **over half (51.6%)** of the criminal human trafficking cases active in the US were sex trafficking cases **involving only children**.

Child sex trafficking is reported in **all 50 states**.

There are 27 million victims of human trafficking globally. **4.5 million** of them are trapped in **forced sexual exploitation**. Research suggests that **only .04%** survivors of human trafficking cases are identified, meaning the **majority of cases are undetected**.

70% of females that have been trafficked are previous victims of domestic abuse

# synopsis



15-year-old Maya is being raised in a household stricken by her father's abandonment. Her mom, Camila, is an alcoholic, struggling to make ends meet by cleaning houses and waitressing. Camilla's boyfriend, Diego, is an abuser who takes advantage of Camila, stealing her money and landing her in the hospital.

When Maya is followed on social media by an attractive, seemingly nice guy named Ray, she begins to chat with him about her chaotic life. Ray and Maya start meeting up in person, and he quickly becomes her confidant.

When Diego's abuse escalates at home and Camila refuses to see the truth, Ray encourages Maya to run away with him to Vegas. After initially being spoiled by Ray with new outfits, beauty treatments, and art supplies, Maya slowly begins to realize he has another agenda when he starts using her to make money. Ray persuades her to cooperate by holding everything he has done for her over her head and claiming that he loves her. Maya complies and starts being set up for appointments with Ray's "clients", being brought along to various hotels and motels with his other girl Kayla.

As Ray continues to pimp her out, Maya finds herself trapped in a sex trafficking ring with no way out. Meanwhile, her mother Camila, falls into despair after losing her daughter. After an overdose, she agrees to get sober in order to get her daughter back. When Camila gets a call from the police saying that Maya is in their custody, she is overjoyed. However, the trauma that Maya has been through does not make her return as easy as Camila had hoped. Ray is determined not to lose his money-making asset while Camila is intent on not losing her daughter ever again.

**Can Camila help Maya get back on her feet, or will Maya be forever lost to the dark world she has fallen prey to?**

There are an **estimated 100,000 child victims** of sex trafficking in the United States, and 300,000 American children are at risk.

The average age a child enters the commercial sex trade is **11-13 years old.**

Source: ECPAT USA and US Department of Justice

## Social Media is The New Link to Human Trafficking

The U.S. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) reported a **98.66% increase** in online enticement reports between January and September 2020 compared to the same period in 2019, and reports to their CyberTipline doubled to **1.6 million.**

Many people have shifted online due to Covid-19, including human traffickers. Social media sites have allowed traffickers a faster and more effective way to recruit young victims. Online recruitment and grooming increased as children spent more time online for virtual learning, often with little parental supervision. This led to dramatic increases in online commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, including online sexual exploitation of children, and demand for and distribution of child sexual exploitation material.

Source: Trafficking in Person Report 2021, US Department of State

**Maya** is a call to action for the audience to mobilize against the epidemic of child sex trafficking and support the work of organizations already involved in the fight.

Maya's story touches into many social issues that cause problems for youth today:

- divorce
- uninvolved parents
- alcohol and drug abuse in the home
- sexual abuse
- domestic violence in the home
- online predators

Maya tells the story of a young girl who is experiencing all the above and as a result, falls prey to a predator. According to research from UNICEF, ‘...domestic violence at home may become a 'push factor' that causes someone to become vulnerable to trafficking.’ These traumas that Maya goes through enables Ray to exploit her vulnerability and groom her. Teenagers need to understand the clever ways traffickers approach their victims. Engaging with strangers online can lead to a predator gaining the trust of a young victim.

In the film, we also see Maya's mother, Camila, struggle with alcoholism and an abusive relationship. We watch the journey of her recovering her faith, self-esteem and identity. We also see how through her own recovery, she is able to re-connect and help her daughter find her way back.

**Maya**, as both a film about human sex trafficking, domestic violence and alcoholism, has the potential and opportunity to inspire viewers to find their own inner strength and make improvements in their own life.

When I volunteered at a shelter for runaway teens, I was shocked by how many of them were convinced that their traffickers loved them, and that they would come back to rescue them. The whole idea of the Stockholm syndrome type of relationship with a captor has always intrigued me. I was inspired to write Maya after hearing many stories from survivors about the Stockholm type relationships they had with their traffickers. In talking to detectives on trafficking task forces, they noted that it is very difficult getting trafficked teenagers to tell their story and name their pimps so they can be taken off the streets. The refusal to talk about their abusers or cooperate with law enforcement allows the traffickers to continue their lucrative business activities. This is due to the traffickers having convinced their girls that the police are untrustworthy. The victims have been tragically manipulated in a way that has them believing that their trafficker is the only person they can trust and truly cares for them.

Former abuse and abuse at home is a common thread seen amongst young victims of trafficking, which has led them to have vulnerabilities that traffickers see and exploit. Kids and teens learn from what they experience at home. In this story, Camila, Maya's mother, has been abandoned by her husband and is struggling as a single mother. Her loneliness and low self-esteem is what makes her vulnerable to her abusive boyfriend Diego. Diego takes advantage of that and uses Camila, often taking her hard-earned money. As a result, Camila becomes overwhelmed in all areas, and self-medicates with drugs and alcohol, even though she cares deeply for Maya.

In order to represent the realities of child trafficking in the most realistic and authentic way possible, I made sure to meet with anti-trafficking groups, trafficking task force detectives and survivors of trafficking. This includes Alan Smyth and Jessica Midkiff of Saving Innocence, Kay Buck of Cast LA, Lieutenant Andre Dawson, who supervised both the LAPD's Human Trafficking Task Force and the FBI's Innocence Lost Task Force, and retired LA County Detective Ray Bercini, a leader of the LA Regional Human Trafficking Task Force. I learned that it is becoming increasingly common for traffickers to target and befriend vulnerable youth who have a difficult home life on social media as part of their recruitment strategy. Incorporating that into this film, we see innocent teen Maya get initially contacted by a trafficker via social media.

Another heartbreaking aspect of a situation like this that I wanted to explore in detail was the impact of a tragedy like this, not only on the victim themselves, but also their family. In this case, the effect of Maya's disappearance on her mother, Camila. Many parents work long hours to provide the best social and educational opportunities for their children, but the long hours and consistent absences are a factor in what makes children most vulnerable to traffickers. In the aftermath of a child being trafficking, these parents have to deal with their own feelings of shame and guilt.

# director's vision



Julia Verdin

My goal was to create a commercially viable, social impact thriller that was full of conflict and emotional resonance. I built my story around Maya (16), who is befriended online by a stranger who quickly becomes her confidant. Maya feels abandoned by her mother, who is spending more time with her abusive boyfriend and constantly leaves Maya to pick up the pieces when things go wrong. Beyond the family dynamic, I hope to shed light on the lack of available resources in combating trafficking—an issue both the police and non-profit organizations have to deal with regularly.

In terms of production design, each of these characters' environments will have a distinct and telling personality, reflecting their different agendas and influences on Maya. For example, Maya's apartment will start out drab and uncared for, Maya's room will be filled with childhood memorabilia, providing a sense of former innocence and evidence of her creativity. Once Camila starts her recovery journey, she starts to take care of her environment and the apartment becomes warm and inviting. The shelter in Oakland will have a frayed look (pointing towards their lack of funding) but also a homey feel, touched by spots of brightness and warmth that the case workers and volunteers have created to help the survivors. The police precinct will be cluttered with case files and missing person reports piled high—indicating the detectives' lack of time and lack of support. When Maya first arrives in Vegas, I wanted her to be impressed by all the glamor and glitz and then show as she's pulled deeper to Ray's world, all gets drabber and a little desaturated as she starts to numb out.

In terms of shooting style, my goal was to situate Maya in a world that you want to pluck her right out of. I wanted her to seem very alone and out of place. I worked with my DP to develop a plan and find ways to show Maya's innermost world with its private agonies and power struggles. We used a lot of push-ins to find the truth on Maya's face. It was important to find key emotional moments to gut punch the audience, like when we witness the first time Maya is handed over to a client in Vegas. We see her POV of Ray and the client's face in a distorted way as she, and the audience, sees the ugliness of the situation.

I also focused on the parallel journeys of Maya and her mother, Camila. At the beginning of the movie, Maya is very much, albeit unwillingly, her mother's caretaker. After a near-fatal overdose following Maya's disappearance and a chance meeting with a stranger, Camila finally becomes willing to get help and get sober. She is then able to share her healing process with Maya once she finally is rescued and be the mother that she has always wanted to be.

I was very lucky to be able to cast wonderful actors for all of the roles. Patricia Valesquez was a perfect Camila and really played the layers needed. We had many long talks about mother-daughter relationships prior to our shoot. Funnily enough, she actually has a teenage daughter called Maya. It really helped to create a relationship that felt authentic and real. For Maya, I needed to find an actress who was over 18 but could play 15/16 and have the courage to go to the emotional depths needed for the role. Isabella Feliciano had only done a small part in one film when we cast her and was about to graduate from college. I use a lot of improvising when auditioning to really get a sense of the actors range and I immediately knew she could do this. With Diego, I wanted to make sure that the character felt real, rather than being a stereotype. I had seen Gian Franco Rodriguez's amazing performance as Victor Hugo in Halston and so immediately knew he would be perfect. Ray was a tough role to cast as I needed an actor that had the charisma to keep a woman on the hook and an inner darkness. Billy Budinich had an energy about him as well as a great look. Kayla was a character that needed to be real and authentic while also having a fragility about them. I had seen Rumer Willis' work on Empire and I knew she had the emotional range required for this role.

This was a film that was made thanks to a lot of love and community support. My hope is that it will help educate teenagers and parents as to what trafficking looks like today. I also hope it will open the public's eyes to being vigilant and reporting it when they see a situation that doesn't look right.

When people join their voices on an issue, change is possible!

## director's vision cont'd



# in the news

DEADLINE

## Patricia Velasquez, Rumer Willis & More Set For Social Impact Film 'Maya' From Director Julia Verdin

By [Matt Grobar](#)  
May 17, 2022 12:37pm



Patricia Velasquez, Rumer Willis  
Courtesy of Marta Elena Vassiliakis; Dillon Buss

**EXCLUSIVE:** Patricia Velasquez (*The Mummy*), Gian Franco Rodriguez (*Halston*), Rumer Willis (*Sorority Row*), Billy Budinich (*Frank and Penelope*) and newcomer Isabella Feliciano will star in the social impact film *Maya* from director Julia Verdin (*Angie: Lost Girls*), which has entered production in Los Angeles.

[Deadline](#)

La Semana

## PATRICIA VELÁSQUEZ prepares a project with the daughter of Bruce Willis

Movies · Entertainment · Bruce Willis · Rumer Willis  
25 May 2022 +1 more



Patricia Velásquez has a new film project on her hands. The Venezuelan actress and model will be one of the protagonists of "Maya", by Julia Verdin ("Angie: Lost Girls"), the specialized portal Deadline reported.

Rumer Willis, the eldest daughter of Bruce Willis and Demi Moore, is also part of the cast of the film. Gian Franco Rodriguez ("Halston"), Billy Budinich ("Frank and Penelope") and newcomer Isabella Feliciano are also part of the project, which Deadline describes as "a film with social impact."

"I am very happy to be part of this film," commented the maracucha mannequin on his Instagram profile, where neither the name nor the characteristics of his character.

[La Semana](#)

According to Deadline, the film is already in production in Los Angeles. Beyond that, the medium does not reveal details such as the start of filming or the possible release date.

A wake up call

The film, which has a script written by Verdin herself, seeks to raise awareness about key issues such as child trafficking, domestic violence, alcoholism and child abuse, highlights the aforementioned portal. The story told in it is inspired by real events, and will show how predators use social networks to attract vulnerable teenagers.

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IMPACTO VENEZUELA

## Patricia Velásquez protagoniza nueva película de Julia Verdin

19 DE MAYO DE 2022

Patricia Velásquez prepara un nuevo proyecto. Foto AFP

Carmela Longo  
Periodista especializada en la fuente de entretenimiento.

[Impacto Venezuela](#)

THE WHITE FEATHER FOUNDATION

## Replace Human Trafficking Vulnerability with Vigilance Through Art and Awareness

July 30, 2022  
By Julian Lennon and Tassoula Kokkoris

[TWFF](#)

## Isabella Feliciano as Maya



Isabella can be seen in the role of Sara in the Lifetime movie *Killer Grades*. She most recently was Isa in the webseries *Ghost Club* directed by Rachel Myers and produced by Effie Brown.

She has an extensive background in theatre, most notably playing Nina in *In the Heights* at the Strub Theatre and Amy in *Little Women* the musical at the Del Rey Players. She studied at Loyola Marymount University where she trained in voice and scene study with Stacey Cabaj, Dana Resnick, and Katharine Noon. While at Loyola Marymount she received the sustained achievement in acting award in 2020 and the Virginia Barnelle Acting scholarship in 2021.

Isabella just booked a principal role in a commercial for Yoplait. She currently trains at Zak Barnett Studio with Michael Connors and Christian Durso.

## Patricia Velasquez as Camila



Award-winning actress, history-making supermodel, staunch philanthropist, conscientious activist, author, and loving mom Patricia Velásquez applies an eternal creative spirit to everything she does-whether it be starring in blockbusters a la *The Curse of La Llorona* or launching the Wayúu Tayá Foundation and participating on the UNESCO Board.

Patricia's success represented a turning point in fashion as she drew industry attention to South America for the first time. She experienced a big break upon becoming "the first model Karl Lagerfeld ever photographed" and going on to walk in shows, star in editorial spreads, and front ads for Chanel, Fendi, Cover Girl, and Victoria's Secret, to name a few. Simultaneously, she ignited an impressive acting career. Not only did she star in *The Mummy* and *The Mummy Returns*, but she also appeared on *The L Word*, *Arrested Development*, *CSI: Miami*, *Ugly Betty*, and *Rescue Me*.

In 2002, she founded the Wayúu Tayá Foundation. This non-profit preserves the culture of indigenous groups throughout Latin America by way of support and the drastic improvement of living conditions.

In the end, Patricia's creativity always leaves a lasting impression.

## Billy Budinich as Ray



Billy Budinich is originally from the Jersey Shore and somehow escaped to Hollywood without any tattoos. During his time in Los Angeles, Billy has starred in numerous stage productions with his theater company The GGC players. From Shakespeare to John Patrick Shanley, he had tackled the classics, as well as contemporary pieces. In 2018, Billy was nominated for a Broadway World award for Best Leading Actor in a Play for his portrayal of Jackie in Stephen Adly Gurigis' Pulitzer Prize Winning play *The Motherf\*\*ker with the Hat* (he lost the role to Tom Hanks).

Billy has recently made his big screen debut with *Frank and Penelope*, directorial debut of Sean Patrick Flannery, playing the title role. Billy was thrilled to be a part of *Maya*, to play such a role and to shed some light on topic that unfortunately evades front page news.

## Rumer Willis as Kayla

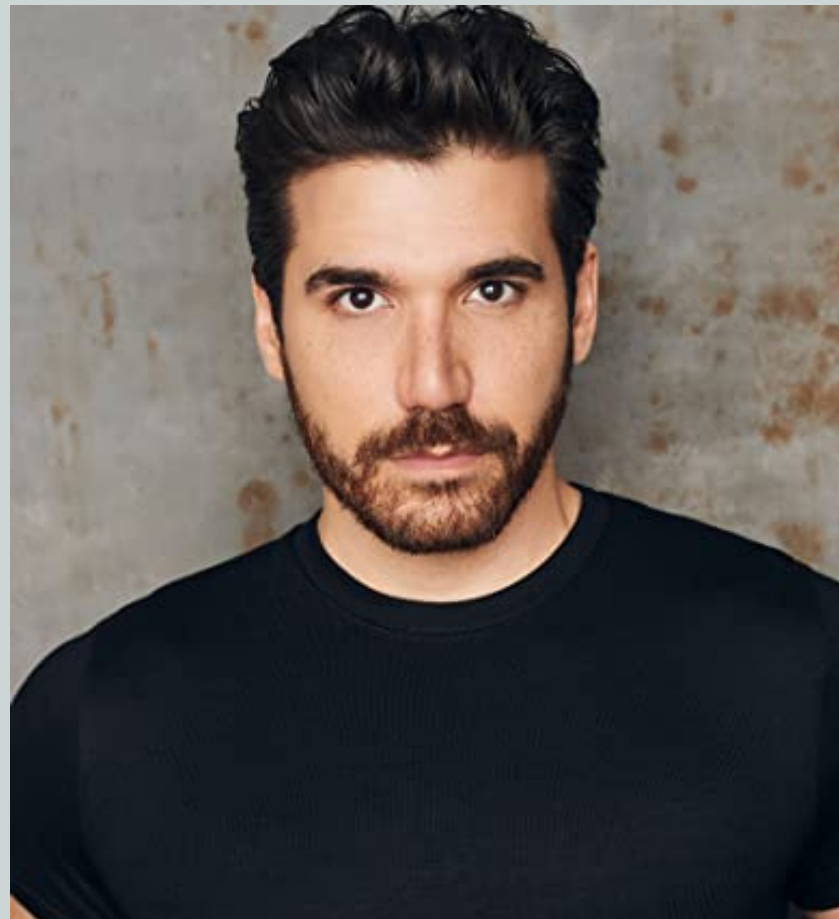


Rumer Glenn Willis is an American actress and singer. She is the eldest daughter of actress Demi Moore and actor Bruce Willis. In 1995, Willis made her film debut alongside her mother in *Now and Then*. She portrayed Joanne in the comedy film *The House Bunny* alongside Emma Stone, Colin Hanks and Anna Faris. She played Natalie Wilburn in the horror film *From Within*, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival. In 2009, she appeared in two films, the slasher film *Sorority Row* and the high school comedy film *Wild Cherry*. She won "Breakthrough Performance Female" award at Young Hollywood Awards for her performance in *Wild Cherry*. In 2013, Willis landed the lead role of Maya in the drama film *The Odd Way Home*. She also appeared in films *There's Always Woodstock*, *Return to Sender*, *The Escort* and *Hello Again*.

Willis portrayed Gia Mannetti in teen series *90210*. In May 2013, *The Hollywood Reporter* announced that Willis will portray Zoe in the fourth season of *Pretty Little Liars*. In 2015, Willis and Valentin Chmerkovskiy won season 20 of ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*. Willis starred as Roxie Hart in *Chicago* on Broadway. *W* magazine noted the past 6 months have been "a major breakout" for Willis."

She had a recurring role in the third season of FOX's musical drama series *Empire* as Tory Ash. She became a series regular in *Empire* during the show's fourth season. Most recently, Willis portrayed Joanna Pettet in the comedy-drama film *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019) written and directed by Quentin Tarantino.

## Gian Franco Rodriguez as Diego



Gian Franco Rodríguez is a Venezuelan actor who caught Hollywood's attention with his standout performance playing Victor Hugo, Halston's boyfriend, in the 2021 Ryan Murphy-produced, Emmy-nominated, Netflix miniseries **Halston**, opposite Ewan McGregor.

Other credits include the 2018 Venezuelan film *Simón* and short film *Safe*.

## Rena Owen as Sandy



Rena Owen is an international award-winning Actor & one of only 6 in the world & the only female to date to have worked with both filmmaking legends; George Lucas & Steven Spielberg during her illustrious career that spans 35 years working in Theater, Television, Film & Voice work.

The Kevin Reynolds/Kevin Costner film, *Rapa Nui* in 1993 was her first film role followed by the leading role in the cult-classic NZ film, *Once Were Warriors*. Her electrifying performance garnered her universal rave reviews. *Once Were Warriors* was voted one of *Time Magazine's* top 10 films in 1994. In 2000, Rena set up a base in Los Angeles. She played beloved Taun We in George Lucas's *Star Wars Attack of the Clones* followed by a cameo role in Spielberg's *AI*. Lucas cast her again as Nee Alavar in *Star Wars Revenge of the Sith*.

As a series regular, Rena played the matriarch opposite Brian Cox's patriarch of a multi-ethnic crime family set in the Torres Strait Islands. Rena played a role in NZ film, *The Dead Lands* which enjoyed a Special Presentation Premiere at the TIFF. In the USA, she had recurring roles for A&E's TV series *Longmire* & Sundance's TV series *The Red Road*, & the coveted role of Glaeser in *Vin Diesel's, The Last Witch Hunter*. Rena was cast as a series regular in Freeform's series, *Siren*, which enjoyed 3 seasons. She played a Military Major in film *Escape & Evasion*, was a series regular in Stan Australia & ABC's mini series, *The Gloaming* & played a recurring role in Seth McFarlane's TV series, *The Orville*.

Rena renewed her *Star Wars* role as Taun We in the *Bad Batch*. In 2021, she completed work on S3 of *The Orville* & was cast as Sarge in Netflix's animated series, *Super Giant Robot Brothers*. Throughout her remarkable career besides television & film, Rena continues to work in Theater globally & has served on multiple international Film Festival Juries.

## Anthony Montgomery as Detective Dawson



Anthony can currently be seen in a recurring role on the B.E.T. show *The Family Business*, based on the New York Times Best Selling novel series by Carl Weber. Anthony portrays Brother Elijah, second in command of the Muslim Brotherhood, a fictionalized radical faction of Islam, in the second season which airs on B.E.T. Plus.

Born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, Anthony Montgomery received a B.S. in Performance Theatre and Drama from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

In 2001, Anthony landed a series-regular role on *Star Trek: Enterprise* as Ensign Travis Mayweather. For the next four years and 98 episodes, Anthony piloted *Enterprise*'s NX01 into many adventures and into the hearts of loyal *Star Trek* fans around the world. *Star Trek: Enterprise* ended in 2005.

In 2015, Anthony joined Daytime television landing a contract role on *General Hospital*. Anthony portrayed expert psychiatrist and government profiler Dr. Andre Maddox. In 2016, Anthony became an Emmy Nominee for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series for his portrayal of Dr. Maddox. In December 2018, Anthony filmed a supporting role in the independent feature film, *Angie: Lost Girls*, where he portrays detective Chase Dawson who fights to save young girls who have been trafficked.

In 2019, Anthony filmed his first holiday movie, *Carole's Christmas*, in which he plays Marcus Jordan opposite leading lady Kimberly Elise. The film aired on OVN during the holiday season as part of their festive yuletide line-up.

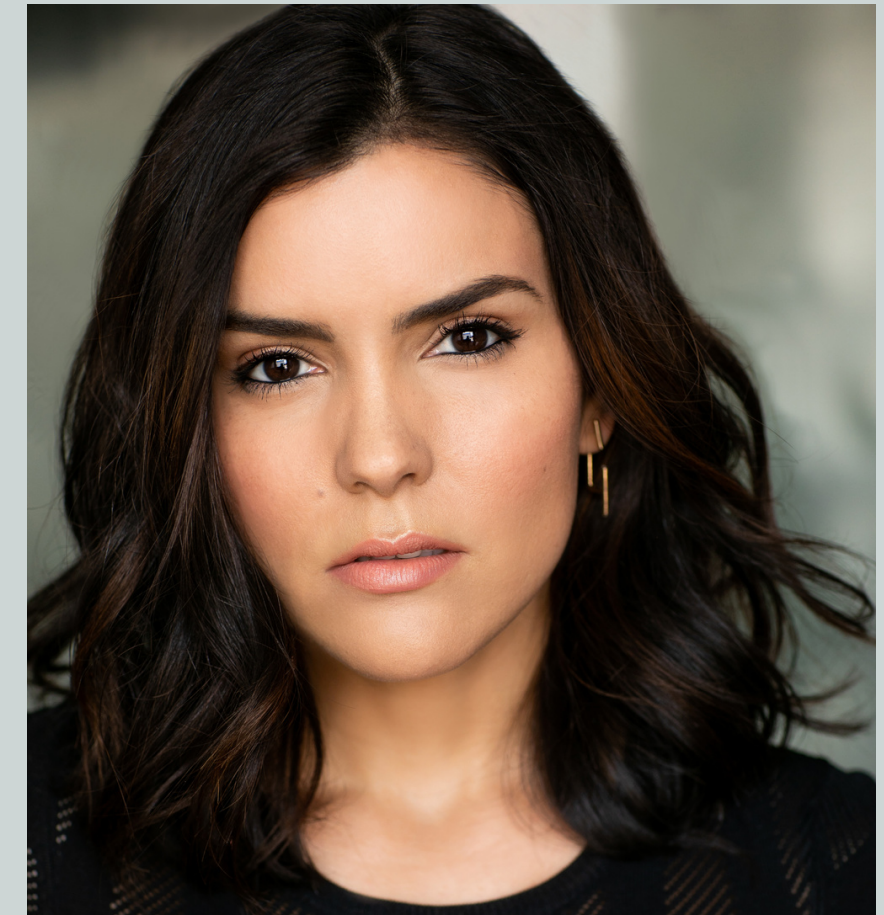
Anthony has two children and resides in Los Angeles.

## Cherie Jimenez as Rachel



Cherie is known for her role as Marissa in the television series *Pretty Little Liars*. Additionally, she has appeared in other TV series such as *Nova Vita*, *Banshee*, *NCIS* and *The Newsroom*. Cherie is also an activist and survivor that used her own experiences to develop and direct the EVA Center, a survivor-led exit program for women who are caught in systems of prostitution and sex trafficking. She attended both The Professional Performing Arts School and SUNY Purchase Acting Conservatory in New York.

## Betzaida Landin as Detective Warren



Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Landin has been entertaining audiences since her days as the youngest member of her church choir at only age three. At the age of nine, her family moved to Orlando, Florida where despite the initial language barrier, she continued to perform locally. Upon graduating Rollins College, Landin continued her music and acting career, going on to perform in shows for Universal Studios and Walt Disney World until landing the role of dolphin trainer Kat in the hit Warner Bros. film "*Dolphin Tale*."

Soon after, Landin moved to Los Angeles to pursue acting full time. In 2014, Landin went on to reprise her role as Kat for the film "*Dolphin Tale 2*" and has worked alongside Robert DeNiro in the upcoming family film "*The War With Grandpa*" as well as Showtime's hit series "*Ray Donovan*" opposite Liev Schreiber. Betsy has also starred in independent films such as the thriller "*Deceived*" and dramas "*Time In Between*" and "*Angie: Lost Girls*" with director/producer Julia Verdin. Most recently, Betsy was featured as Maya Prinz in her first action feature "*Live!*" starring Aaron Eckhart. Betsy has also expanded her career into writing and producing with the feature film *Secondary Effect* and is currently writing 70's war time action *Cobra Gold* based on the book *Cobra 405* by Damien Lewis and the reboot of 80s karate franchise *Best of the Best*.

## Atiana De La Hoya as Leila



Atiana is an American reality TV star, model and social media influencer with a 450k following on Instagram. She is best known for her appearances on shows like Meet the Barkers and Growing Up Supermodel. As a model, Atiana has worked with different high-end magazines such as Galore. She is the daughter of Shanna Moakler and Oscar De La Hoya and step-daughter of Travis Barker.

## Basilio Cerdan Jr as Ezekiel



Basilio Cerdan Jr is a 21 year old from Houston, Texas who rose to fame for his variety of skits and Hispanic lifestyle content which he uploads to his TikTok account, @basii\_17. Now, his audience on TikTok has grown to 4.8 million and 175K on Instagram. Basilio also creates fun videos for YouTube and has over 100K subscribers.

## Sidney Nicole Rogers as Cassie



Sidney just shot the feature film LUMINA, an awesome alien thriller and she can be seen in a lead role opposite Vivica A. Fox in the film The Wrong Cruise playing her daughter, which premiered on Lifetime and played Jasmine in the series V/H/S. Marc Hirschfeld hand picked her to be the understudy for two roles in the much revered live performance of THE JEFFERSONS. She has been featured in numerous stage plays, films, and commercials.

# Julia Verdin

writer/director/producer

Veteran British filmmaker Julia Verdin is a multi-hyphenate – she is known as an accomplished producer, award-winning director and has written a number of award-winning screenplays. Julia's directorial debut, *Lost Girls*, starring Bar Paly, Marisol Nichols, and Jamie Harris did well on the festival circuit and won several awards including Best Social Impact Film at The Culver City Film festival. The film has also been broadcast as part of an educational program on sex trafficking of minors and has been screened by organizations and communities while being currently in distribution.

Julia's latest feature film, *No Address*, a feature she wrote and directed about a group of homeless people bonding together as a family, struggling to survive the streets while fending off a harassing gang, an unforgiving community, and the local authorities in hopes of finding their humanity again, is currently in post-production. It stars Billy Baldwin, Beverly d'Angelo, Ashanti, Xander Berkeley, Kristanna Loken, Lucas Zumann and more. Julia also co-directed a documentary companion piece to this film entitled *The Making of No Address*.

Julia's directorial debut, *Lost Girls*, starring Bar Paly, Marisol Nichols, and Jamie Harris has been broadcast as part of an educational program on sex trafficking of minors and has been screened by organizations and communities while being currently in distribution.

Her first feature film that she directed, wrote and produced, *Angie: Lost Girls*, was set around the world of child sex trafficking again, this time focusing on a victim's difficulty re-integrating with her family, re-finding her self-worth whilst combating ongoing threats to herself and loved ones from traffickers. The film stars Olivia d'Abo, Dylan Sprayberry, Anthony Montgomery, Randall Batinkoff, Jane Widdop, M.C. Lyte and Amin Joseph. It was picked up by Lifetime in Spring 2022 and had a Saturday night premiere, engaging millions of viewers.

Other directing work includes 3 short films in partnership with non-profit Kids in The Spotlight. *Brown*, *The Inheritance*, and *Scripted* are stories Julia directed that were written by and acted in by foster youth.

Julia transitioned to directing from a successful producing career. She has produced 38 films, including theatrical releases “*Merchant of Venice*” with Al Pacino and Jeremy Irons, “*Stander*” with Thomas Jane and Deborah Unger, and “*2 Jacks*” with Sienna Miller, Danny and Jack Huston and Jacqueline Bisset, which played in many major film festivals including Sundance, Toronto, Venice, AFI, Montreal and London film festivals.

As well as holding an MA in Film, she has also trained as a director with Joan Scheckel, Judith Weston, John Osborne, and John Penney. Julia holds both US and UK passports and is based in LA.



# producers

## Jason Piette



Jason Piette is a producer and film financier with over 50 movies and TV series to his name, including the \$25M *The Merchant Of Venice* starring Al Pacino and Jeremy Irons; *Head In The Clouds* (\$20M) starring Charlize Theron and Penelope Cruz, (both for Sony Pictures Classics); the \$33M *Napoleon* TV series for A & E in the United States; *Perfect Creatures* (\$11M) for Twentieth Century Fox; independent American features such as Mark Pellington's; *I Melt With You* for Magnolia Pictures and cult classic in the making, part crowdfunded *Iron Sky* for Entertainment One. He executive produced *Berlin I Love You*, the anthology movie starring Helen Mirren and Keira Knightley, and is producing a \$30M adaptation of Jack London's *White Fang* in Canada and China.

In 2016, Jason formed *Disrupting Influence* with Glenn Kendrick Ackermann, a boutique media advisory practice to leverage his deep industry network and experience to make financing, production, and distribution TV and film deals for a carefully selected client roster.

*Disrupting Influence* is a production, sales and consultancy company based in the United States and in Germany, which represents films and TV shows on a worldwide basis and which actively raises equity for film from the European equity markets.

## Robert Craig



As the founder of North America's leading gutter guard manufacturer, *Gutterglove*, with offices in California and Tennessee, Robert Craig was focused on growing this highly successful business. However, even though Robert has over 20 patents in the gutter industry, to placate a lifelong passion to participate in the movie industry, he carved out time after hours and on weekends for years to evaluate a number of potential film projects, attend key film industry functions and even have a screenplay written.

While he grew *Gutterglove* to become one of the most trusted gutter guards in North America and even being rated #1 by *Consumer Reports Magazine*, his passion to produce and act in movies won out at the end of the day and he founded *Robert Craig Films* in 2019.

One of his first projects was to oversee the development of a screenplay, *The Almighty Yes*, co-written by award-winning screenwriters, John Graham and Alexandra Boylan. That screenplay will soon go into production and feature Robert Craig, both as producer and an actor. As *Robert Craig Films* continues to grow, Robert has been able to leverage his experience in building a successful company to avoid the pitfalls that have derailed many hopeful start-ups.

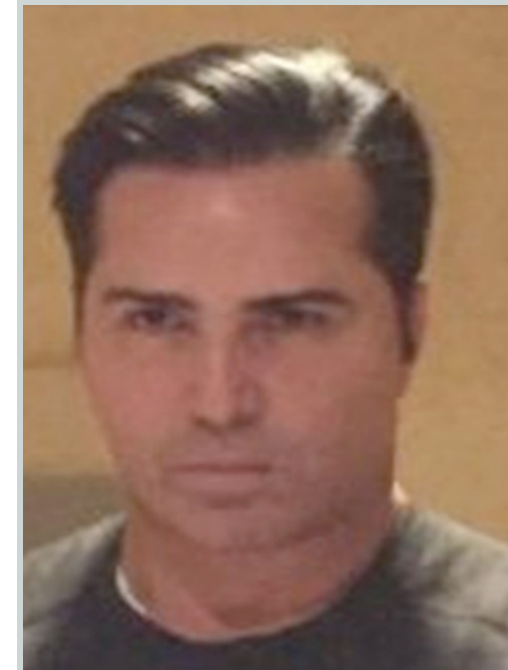
Robert has a long history of taking start-ups and guiding their growth to become successful companies. He looks forward to applying his creativity, business acumen and passion to making movies that inspire people to think about life with eternal perspective.

## Morris S. Levy



Morris S. Levy is a renowned film and TV producer and philanthropist. He is the founder and President of M.E.G.A. Films (Morsly Entertainment Group and the Arts), a New York-based production company. His films have appeared in the Sundance Film Festival (*The Ten*-starring Paul Rudd, Winona Ryder, Jessica Alba and Liev Schreiber), the Cannes Film Festival (*Seduced and Abandoned*-starring Alec Baldwin, Ryan Gosling and Jessica Chastain), and the Tribeca Film Festival (*Descent*-starring Rosario Dawson) amongst other festivals. His film *A Novel Romance* won the Audience Award and Best Picture Award at the New York International Film Festival. His TV series, *Cop Show* (starring Colin Quinn, Jerry Seinfeld, Amy Schumer, Chris Rock and Seth Meyers) won best comedy, among other awards at the 2015 New York City Webfest. His 2020 critically acclaimed film "*Angie: Lost Girls*" won Best Picture at the Moving Parts Film Festival and also won an Award of Excellence from the Accolade Global Film Competition. Mr. Levy is a producer of the Off-Broadway show *My Life on a Diet* starring Renee Taylor (Emmy Winner and Academy Award Nominee), which received rave reviews from the NY Times, NY Post, LA Times, and was nominated for a 2019 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Solo Show. Before entering the entertainment business, he was a principal in a ladies' clothing company and was also prominent in the New York nightlife business as a promoter/owner.

## Sean Acosta



Sean Michael Acosta is a successful businessman, philanthropist, and entrepreneur, who currently manages his own multimillion dollar real estate asset portfolio.

Some of his early business successes include the creation of a unique *Marina and Dock Rental Brokerage*, which was based in Newport Beach. Sean's unique business model and success in this new niche market gained him, and the new market, a considerable amount of attention. He has been mentioned in publications such as the *WALL STREET JOURNAL*, *LA TIMES*, and *SEA MAGAZINE*, and his business model is still copied today.

Sean is passionate about film in particular those shedding light on social issues. He served as an Executive Producer on *LOST GIRLS* directed by Julia Verdin and starring Marisol Nichols, Bar Paly, Siena Goines, and Jamie Harris, and as a Co-Executive producer on *THE UNWILLING* starring Lance Henriksen, Dina Meyer, Austin Highsmith, Bree Williamson and Jake Thomas. *LOST GIRLS* has been a success on the festival circuit and won several awards including best social impact film at the Culver City Film Festival. Sean was also a producer on latest award-winning *Artists for Change* film *ANGIE: LOST GIRLS*.

# executive producers

## John Jacobs



John Jacobs is an American film and television producer. He is best known for producing four number one movies including Anger Management starring Adam Sandler and Jack Nicholson (2003), Blades Of Glory starring Will Farrell (2007), Beverly Hills Chihuahua starring Drew Barrymore (2008), and Ted starring Mark Wahlberg (2012). John has also produced the very successful female centric Boy Next Door (2015) starring Jennifer Lopez as well as Ted 2 (2015) which grossed almost a quarter of a billion dollars. He's also been very successful in TV, serving as a producer for Family Guy, which is now in its 20th year and American Dad on TBS which just started its 16th season.

Several of Jacobs' films have received industry awards. Mississippi Burning was nominated for an Academy Award for best picture and won the award for Best Actor. Blades of Glory won a BMI Film Music Award, a Costume Designers Guild Award, and a Teen Choice Award, while Ted received two Behind The Voice acting awards and an ASCAP award.

While his most notable successes have been on the production side, he has stated that his favorite parts of the film business are working with great stories and talented people. Jacobs' most recent projects include Dashing Through The Snow, a Disney-backed action film starring Kevin Hart, Ricky Stanicky, with director Peter Farrelly at Lionsgate, and Happily Ever After, with Reese Witherspoon. He is the President of Smart Entertainment and splits his time between New York and LA

## Victoria Hill



Victoria Hill produced First Reformed (2017) through the newly-founded Fibonacci Films where she serves as Principal and Head of Production. Directed by the iconic screenwriter/director Paul Schrader, the film wowed critics at the 2017, Venice, Telluride and Toronto International Film Festival. Ethan Hawke, Amanda Seyfried, Cedric Kyles and Hill star.

Hill followed up on her dual-role as producer/actress in First Reformed with The Chaperone, based on Laura Moriarty's best-selling novel and adapted for the screen by Academy Award®-winning writer Julian Fellowes (Gosford Park, Downton Abbey). The film stars Academy Award®-nominated actress Elizabeth McGovern, Haley Lu Richardson (The Edge of Seventeen), Miranda Otto, Campbell Scott and Golden Globe nominated actress Blythe Danner and Hill. Michael Engler directs. The Chaperone was released theatrically by Vertical and as an Amazon original in UK in 2020.

Hill also served as Executive Producer on Verdin's last film, Angie: Lost Girls, which gained a lot of traction for raising awareness of child trafficking. Most recently, she has been an executive producer on films like Breaking News in Yuba County starring Mila Kunis and Alison Janey, Lionsgate's Voyagers as well as continuing her acting career in films like Paul Schrader's Master Gardener.

## Greg Clark



Entrepreneur Greg Clark is best described with a contradiction of terms: he is a low-profile, Silicon Valley maverick recognized as one of the world's leading experts in cybersecurity. He is the former CEO of the American company Symantec, known globally as the leading pure-play cybersecurity company as well as founder and Chairman of independent film company Fibonacci Films, created to develop, finance and produce quality, character-driven stories that cross genres. In February of 2018, Clark's Fibonacci Films partnered with Stuart Ford, founder and former CEO of IM Global, as a founding investor in Ford's newly announced international film and television production and licensing company, AGC Studios.

Previously CEO of Blue Coat, Inc., he brought the company to the #1 market share leader and share gainer in Web Security. The company was then acquired by Symantec. Clark has a long history of successful acquisitions with a portfolio of Fortune 500 companies

## Julian Lennon



Julian Lennon is an award-winning humanitarian, singer/songwriter, fine arts photographer, New York Times Bestselling Author and filmmaker. In 2007, Julian founded The White Feather Foundation after being asked by Elders of The Mirning People to help use his voice to preserve their indigenous culture. He produced the compelling documentary Whaledreamers about their group, which earned eight International Film Festival Awards. Since then, he has organized countless projects to give clean water to underprivileged communities, provide education and health care to at-risk youth, support our natural environment and protect indigenous cultures. He was elected as a member of The Explorers Club in 2020. His creative pursuits also continue with new music and photography on the horizon.

In 2018, Lennon was executive producer of the documentary film Women of the White Buffalo, which chronicles the lives of women living on the Lakota Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. In 2020, Lennon was executive producer of the Netflix documentary Kiss the Ground about regenerative agriculture.





## Aakash Raj director of photography

Aakash Raj is a cinematographer based in LA, earned his MFA in cinematography from American Film Institute. He is known for his work in the films like TEEN AUR AADHA where he won Dadasahab Phalke Best Cinematographer award and the film is playing on NETFLIX, ARABIAN ALIEN which premiered at Sundance Film Festival and the film YUNTUM.

Born and raised in Mumbai, India, Aakash Raj found his love for making images by sketches and illustration in his childhood. He carried this passion to convey stories on bigger canvas as a gaffer and AC on 11 features and over 250 commercials before graduating to cinematography. In his highly decorated eight years as a director of photography, Aakash has shot six feature films, multiple shorts and commercials. His recent short Arabian Alien was premiered at Sundance. He won The Dadasahab Phalke Best Cinematography award for the film TEEN AUR AADHA and won best cinematography award at Pride Film Festival US and Genre Celebration Festival for his short STALLS and VINCENT respectively. He shot the ad campaign for BAJAJ V INVINCIBLE INDIANS, garnering him the award for The Most Effective Ad Campaign 2017 at The Brand and Leadership Conclave. His short films have won awards and nominations at the Clermont Ferrand Film Festival-France and Digital Box Office Awards-Los Angeles, among others.



## Tom Wallerstein editor

Born and raised in Los Angeles. Tom joined the film industry back in 1998, starting out working for Spelling Entertainment. Over the years, he's worked as an editor for Warner Brothers on shows such as Second Chances, Going to California, Charmed, 7th Heaven, Titans, Big Apple, Zeke and Luther, Charlie's Angels, The Good Wife, Eastwick, The Doctor, Chase, Everwood, Greek, Kyle XY, Arrow, Sequestered and Batwoman. Tom has been a member of MPEG since 1999.



## Michelangelo Sosnowitz composer

Michael's notable credits include the teaser music to HBO's Generation Kill and the opening theme music to The History Channel show Battles BC. He wrote the theme and score to the award winning comedy series Cop Show, written by and starring Colin Quinn. Notable feature film scores include the Dan Fogler directorial debut 'Hysterical Psycho', the Deborah Kampmeier films 'SPLIT' and 'Tape', the Allie Dvorin film 'A Novel Romance'. Along with film and tv music, Michelangelo has written commercial music for Animal Planet, Garnier Fructis, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, and many more. He has also written music for film shorts, plays, musicals, ballet, documentaries, video games. He has won awards for original music in film and theater including Best Score at the First Run Film Festival and Best Score at the Midtown International Theater Festival. Michelangelo is also a prolific recording artist, writing and producing albums and songs for several artists across different styles of music. He has placed songs high on the CMJ charts as well as satellite, domestic and internet radio.



## Camille Jumelle costume designer

Camille Jumelle is a member of The Costume Designers Guild (CDG) who has costume designed a bevy of movies and worked with top Hollywood talent such as Amy Adams, Scarlett Johansson, Bruce Willis, Jason Patric, and Willie Nelson, and John Travolta, just to name a few.

Some of her credits of note include Spare Room (with Virginia Manson and Alicia Witt), Mothers and Daughters (with Selma Blair and Mira Sorvino), The Great Illusion (with Selma Blair and Graham Greene).

She has a passion for everything she sets her mind to especially social issues and cares about making the world better and safer place. When she's not working on a film set she keeps busy designing for her company, "Couture Junkie," which consists of a luxury line of cashmere, t-shirts, handbags, and shoes.



## Eddie Perez stunt coordinator

Eddie Perez is a Los Angeles based Director, 2nd Unit Director, and Stunt Coordinator. He is a multiple award winner for his short-film The Test of Time and a "4-time nominee 3-time Emmy winner" for Shameless. He also won the SAG Award for "Outstanding Performance by a Stunt Ensemble" on Star Trek Into Darkness. Working on over 300 projects as a director, stunt coordinator and/or performer, recent notable projects include Snowfall, Perceptual Grace, Once Upon A Time In Hollywood, Deadpool and Sicario. Eddie's goal is to put the scripted vision on film using the most creative techniques available to fit the story.

Eddie was born in New York and is of Puerto Rican decent. He graduated with a degree in education and a minor in biology focusing on Athletic Training from CW Post Long Island University. He studied under stuntman Paul Stader, Greg Elam and studied acting under Peter Flood.



## Joseph P. Zubor production designer

Growing up in a small town in Michigan, Joseph P. Zubor longed for a career in movies. Needing a creative outlet he would build sets and film shorts in the garage with the family video camcorder. After graduating from college with a BFA, he worked in visual merchandising at the GAP and on various film projects in the city.

In 2005, Joseph decided to pursue opportunities in Los Angeles. He took a job at Trailer Park Entertainment as a DVD/Blu-ray Creative Producer, but could not ignore how much he yearned for set life and the rush of making movies. So he jump-started his dream career in the art department on a few small films and music videos. Utilizing his keen eye for design, and consummating his love of film, Joseph's passion came alive. Joseph took a job as an Art Director at Indigo Films. There he worked on award-winning shows for Discovery Channel, Investigation Discovery and Discovery Life. Over his four years at Indigo, Joseph advanced to Production Designer and work on seven different shows including multiple seasons of "I (Almost) Got Away With It" and "Wives with Knives." Moving on from Indigo, Joseph explored opportunities as a Set Decorator in film and Television.

Joseph is extraordinarily hard working and driven, as well as extremely organized, and a quick thinker who thrives under pressure. Joseph enjoys a deep knowledge of and affection for 60s, 70s and 80s design. He is also team oriented, affable, and a pleasure to work with.

# Artists for Change

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Artists for Change is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission to create high impact film, television, and multimedia projects to inspire individuals, organizations, and communities to bring about positive social change.



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