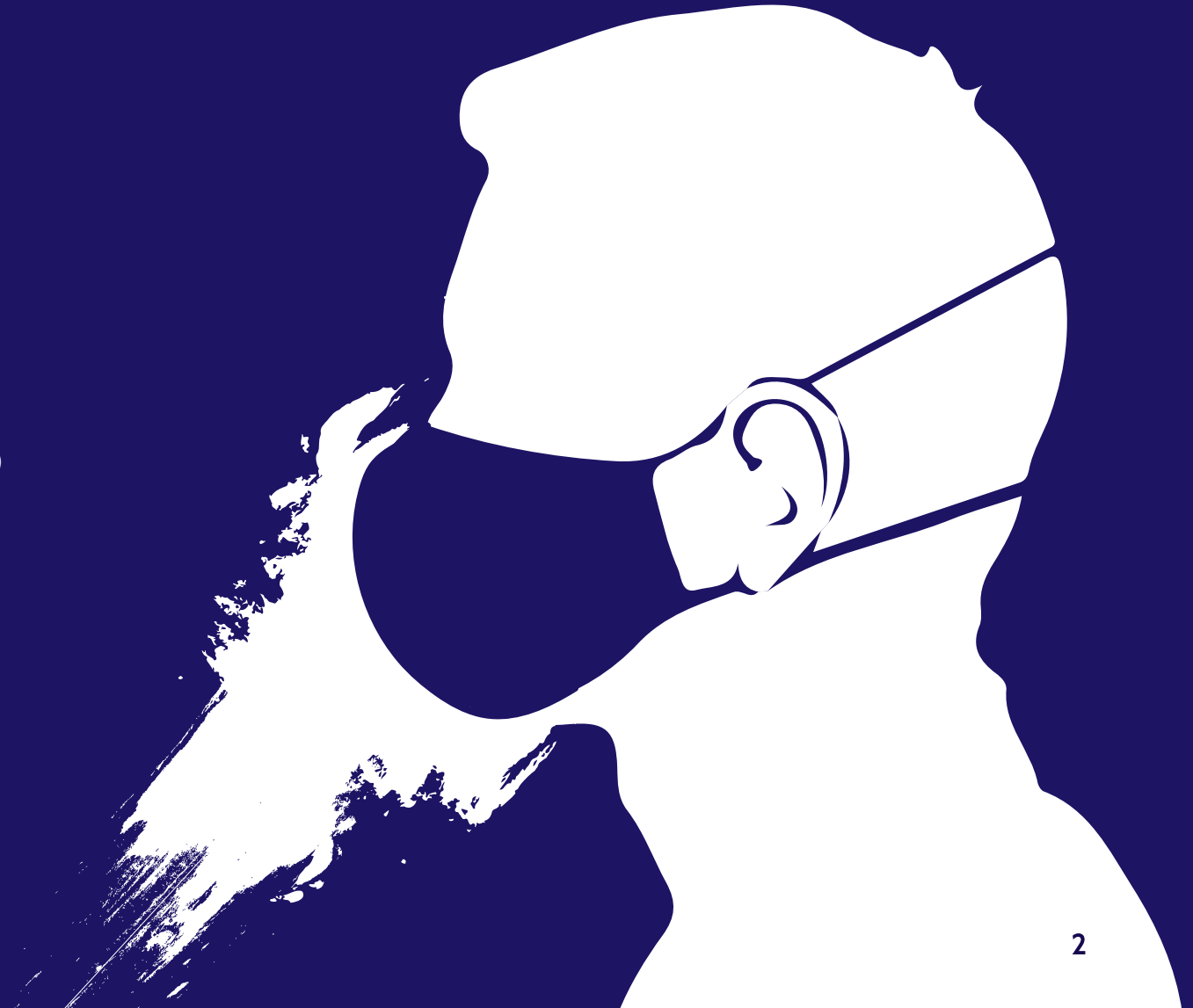




ANIMAL CRUELTY

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INTRO

2020 will be remembered as the most disastrous year in modern American history. Through the story of two fractured families faced with a dangerous and unusual situation, the film **ANIMAL CRUELTY** will examine what American life has become in the midst of a once in a century global pandemic.

STORY

In Chicago, in the summer of 2020, Kate Lee has had enough. A full-time nurse and part-time alcoholic, burned out by the COVID-19 pandemic, she is barely getting by and sliding into alcoholism. Although divorced, she is not alone, as the pandemic has forced her to shelter-in-place with her miserable husband Craig until lock down ends. However, her bad luck is about to get worse, as Miles, a criminal associate of Craig's, shows up late one night, bleeding, hurt badly and with a large stash of money in tow. Despite Craig's objections, Kate lets Miles in to tend to his wounds. But Miles has been followed by his accomplices, Nick, a professional criminal, and his son and partner Jimmy. Following Miles, Nick and Jimmy break in, only to collide with Kate and Craig. A cold-eyed pro, Nick and Jimmy are determined to get that money at any cost. Unable to call for help and cut off from the outside world, Kate must now band together with the one man she hates the most in this world, her ex-husband, and the two of them must learn to trust one another once more, if they hope to survive the night.

Set against the backdrop of one of the most tumultuous years in American history, **ANIMAL CRUELTY** is a meditation on how we live now and a thrilling psychological thriller about trust, family, and survival.



WRITER & DIRECTOR BIO



JOHN LIANG

DIRECTOR/WRITER

Born and raised in Chicago, John is an honors graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. After graduating, he relocated to Los Angeles where he formed the production company, Lonely Devil Films. He then went on to produce, co-write and direct the psychological thriller **RECOVERY**, which was released on DVD/VOD in 2019. **ANIMAL CRUELTY** will be his second feature film.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS



KATE LEE

Early 30s, Kate Lee is a full-time nurse and a parttime alcoholic. Already pushed to the brink by her divorce, working in the COVID unit at the hospital by day and sheltering-in-place with her ex-husband at night is slowly driving her mad and quickly driving her to the bottle. The pandemic has taken a terrible toll on her, but above all else, Kate is a survivor.



CRAIG CAUTHORN

A superficially charming man in his early 40s, Craig outwardly is handsome and charismatic in a “high school jock” kind of way. He resents his ex-wife Kate for making something of herself, while he himself has passively watched his life drift by. He comes from money but is so odious, his wealthy family has cut him off and now he has nothing except his nasty cocaine habit. Now he resents her for leaving him. He is a weak man, but dangerous in his weakness and prone to psychological violence.



NICK ZIELINSKI

A professional criminal in his late 50s, Nick knows that he is too old for this game, but at his age, it's the only one he knows how to play. He was supposed to be out by now, but life had other plans. He is furious at Miles for betraying him and his son Jimmy, after he brought him in, and he does not care that Kate and Craig have nothing to do with this. If they stand between him and his money, he will stop at nothing to remove them.

Nick will be played by actor Mike Starr.



MILES MATTHEWS

A small-time crook and Craig's dealer in his late 20s, Miles is trying to just get enough money to provide for his family. Injured grievously, he knows he may die tonight, but even if he does, he is determined to do right by his family no matter what.



JIMMY ZIELINSKI

In his 20s, Jimmy worships his father Nick, and models his actions and choices after his father. Jimmy embraces the outlaw life and believes himself to be street-smart and tough. But he is not as hardened as he would like to think.



AMY DANIELS

A cheerful, chipper woman in her early 20s, Amy and her next door neighbor Kate would not seem like natural friends, but pandemics make strange bedfellows. Caring and considerate, Amy tries to look out for Kate, but she may be too nosy for her own good.

Amy will be played by Liz Fenning.



CAST



CASTING DIRECTION

ANIMAL CRUELTY intends to cast a Chinese or Chinese American actress to play the lead role of Kate Lee. Some potential actresses for this role include Awkwafina, Gemma Chan, Meng'er Zhang, Poppy Liu and Stephanie Hsu. This creative direction will be spearheaded by writer and director, John Liang. Liang is of Chinese descent and has curated this role to spotlight a strong female Chinese lead. In filmmaking, Liang actively prioritizes Asian representation via casting and character creation in his upcoming features.

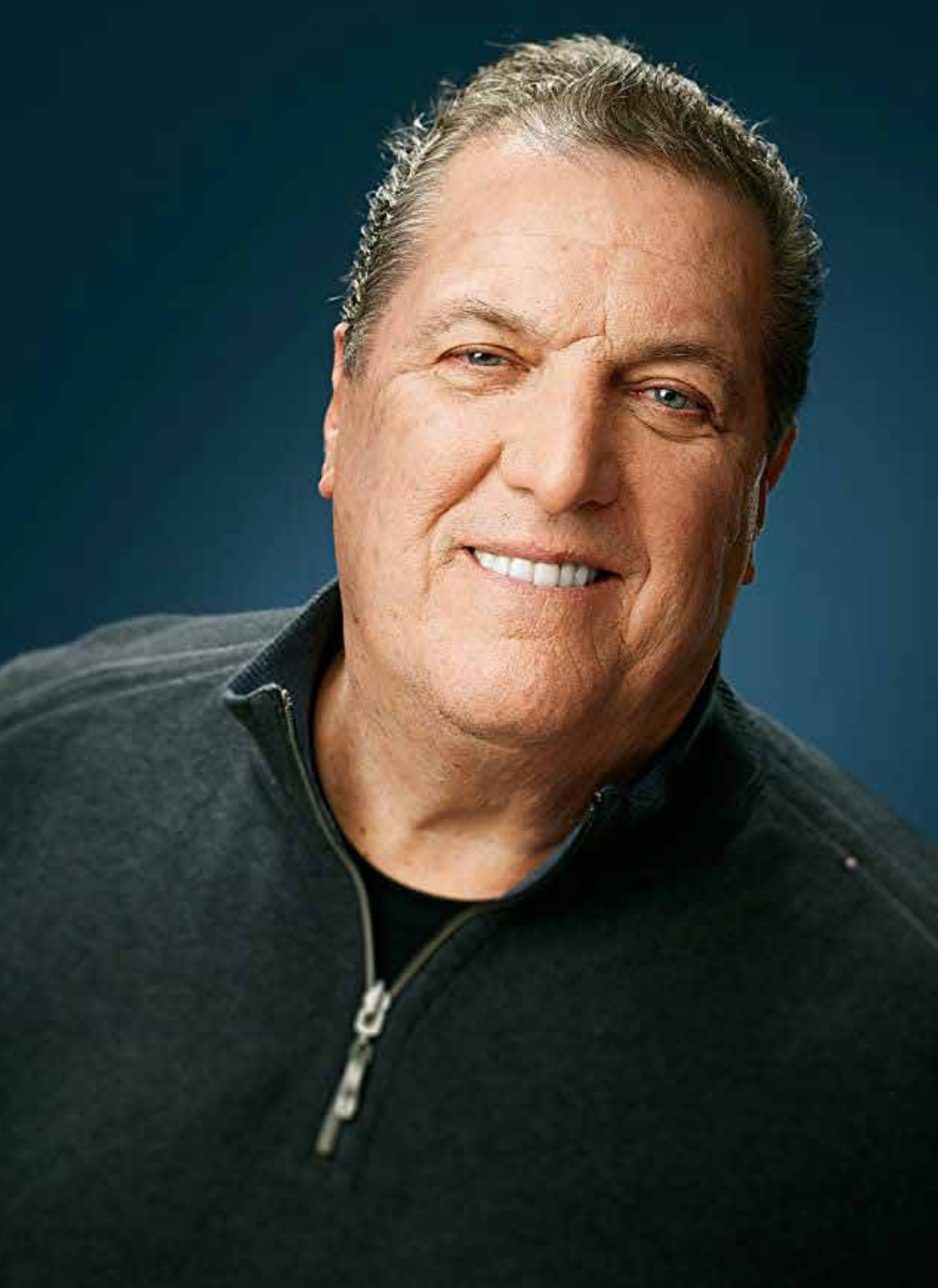




LIZ FENNING

PLAYING AMY

Liz Fenning has studied at the University of Rome , the Groundlings School in Los Angeles, and Carnegie Mellon University. She has appeared in HBO's *Califonication*, *Atlantic Rim 2*, *Lady Macbeth in the Wilderness*, *Funny or Die's The Seth and Avi Show*, Amazon's *Ghost Hunters*, *The Living*, *Deadly Alibi*, LIONSGATE'S *The Ghostmaker*, Lifetime's *Sinister Minister*, SyFy's *Flight 666*, *Fuseli*, a nd *Nightmare*. She also previously collaborated with writer-director John Liang on *RECOVERY* (2019). *ANIMAL CRUELTY* will be their second project together.



MIKE STARR

PLAYING NICK

A native of Queens, Mike Starr has over 200 film and television credits to his name, and has worked with most of the great American filmmakers of the past 30 years, including Sidney Lumet, the Coen Brothers, William Friedkin, Brian De Palma, Spike Lee and Martin Scorsese. He has also previously collaborated with writer-director John Liang on *RECOVERY* (2019). *ANIMAL CRUELTY* will be their second project together.

CREW





CONROY KANTER

PRODUCER

Productions, Inc., CEO of Trafficked, LLC, an Executive Member of LA Women in Film and a 30-year SAG Member. In addition to cherishing her role as a mother, she is an award-winning producer, actress, speaker, and now—activist. Her latest independent dramas are, **TRAFFICKED** which was inspired by the book “Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery” by Siddarth Kara. Trafficked stars Ashley Judd, Elisabeth Röhm, Anne Archer, Patrick Duffy and Sean Patrick Flannery.



CARRIE MORGAN

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Carrie was born and raised in Bozeman, Montana. Her love of animation as a child is what originally drew her to the film industry. After picking up her first film camera at the age of 13, she became enthralled with photography. Merging her two loves of photography and motion pictures, Carrie attended film school at the University of Colorado Boulder. Carrie has worked in various mediums as a Director of Photography, but her true passion lies with telling honest stories of human nature. Whether exploring a dynamic family connection in “The Performance”, or immersing the audience in the heartbreaking world of body dysmorphia in “The Fix”, Carrie’s visuals work hand in hand with the story to enhance the audience’s experience.



JOSH LONG

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Josh Long is a filmmaker and film lover raised in North Carolina. Since 2009 he has been working as a 1st Assistant Director (DGA), working primarily on feature films. His experience as a 1st Assistant Director spreads across a wide range of genres – from drama to horror to action to comedy. In addition to working as an AD, Josh is the writer of the comedy feature *Man Camp* and the upcoming thriller *Some Other Woman*. In addition to film, he enjoys literature, 70s rock, and Ultimate Frisbee. He lives in Los Angeles, with his wife and three boys.



RICH MENTO

CASTING DIRECTOR

Rich is an award-winning casting director, and producer, who counts himself fortunate to have successfully worked in film, TV, theater, and new media, in both New York City and Los Angeles. Select film and TV/digital casting credits include: *Remember Me*, *Warm Bodies*, *The Wackness*, *The Step Up Movie Franchise* (all 5 films!), *Dear John*, *Chloe*, *Safe Haven*, *Youth in Revolt*, *Cedar Rapids*, *Take Me Home Tonight*, and *No Strings Attached*. He's worked for Blumhouse Productions, casting both their first horror/comedy series, "12 Deadly Days" and as Casting Producer on the pilot of their first horror game show, "Hellevator."



FRANK MAYOR

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Frank Mayor operates a number of businesses in the music, television, and film industries. Active in global commerce, he was one of the first individuals to open up China for entertainment-related business and has close relationships with a number of high-level government contacts, representing both the Music Copyright Society of China and China Record Corporation outside of China. He specializes in marketing Chinese content internationally and creating content specifically for the Chinese market and has an output deal with China Central Television.



JOHN YIU

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

John Yiu is a lawyer who graduated from the University of Hong Kong with a degree in Law and later obtained his two Masters of Law from the University of London and Beijing University respectively. After spending over 20 years working for a few international law firms, he became a Litigation Partner of a renowned U.S. law firm in Hong Kong and specialized in commercial litigation work.

He produced and acted in two short films, “My Dear Banquet” and “The Unknown Mother”. He made his feature film acting debut in “Million Loves in Me”, which earned him twenty-four Best Actor awards and a number of Best Lead Actor nominations from film festivals worldwide.



GRIFFIN DEVINE

EDITOR

Griffin likes to get involved in the editing process as soon as possible. He knows how important it is to plan ahead for all aspects of production, including post. Whenever possible Griffin will come on set to log and review footage in real time, catch mistakes, and make suggestions that will work better for the edit. His goal is always to show directors how the footage is coming together so that they can mold the final product into the best representation of the script in a convenient and timely manner. Griffin has been editing features for nearly a decade and also served as the editor on John Liang's first feature RECOVERY. This will be their second collaboration.



CHRIS RANIER

COMPOSER

Chris Ranier is an avid composer, producer and guitarist with over seventeen years of professional experience and twenty six years of playing experience. He has studied a variety of music styles, from traditional to contemporary and has a degree in composition and theory from the University of Miami's Frost School of Music. Chris writes and records music for a variety of projects including film, theater, dance, commercial release, video games etc. Past clients have included NBC, Verizon, and the Center Theater Group.



ROBERT STRONGER

SOUND MIXER

After graduating with honors from Philadelphia's Temple University, Robert moved to Los Angeles in 2014 and mentored under Union Sound Mixers until he struck off on his own. Today he has almost 100 sound credits on IMDB, and has recorded stars like Danny Trejo, Jude Law, Whiz Khalifa, and the Green Power Ranger himself - Jason David Frank. When he's not recording audio on set, Robert also produces and directs his own independent films.



TALIA RANIER

HEAD MAKEUP ARTIST

Talia Ranier is a multimedia artist and art educator living in Los Angeles. She has had a diverse educational and career history, which has afforded her the opportunity to work in a wide variety of media. She attended the Maryland Institute College of Art and studied painting and sculpture, but pivoted and graduated with a BFA in Photography. In 2012, she moved to LA and earned a teaching credential and Masters of Art in Art Education at California State University Northridge. She is passionate about sculpting prosthetics, character design, injury makeup, and SFX makeup. She is inspired by horror films from all decades, fantasy art, anatomy, art history, and camp.



SARA LINVILLE

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

After studying film at Columbia College in Chicago, Sara relocated to Los Angeles and began working as a Set Dresser and Prop Master for commercials, short films, and features. Since moving on to the role of Production Designer, Sara has worked on short films ranging in genre from comedy to drama to horror. She loves digging into the psychology of the characters and using that to inspire her designs. She completed her first feature film, “Cherry Raisins,” in 2022 and is looking forward to “Animal Cruelty” being her second feature as Production Designer.



BIANCA GOODLOE

ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER

Bianca Goodloe is a member of the California Bar Association, the New York Bar Association and a Foreign Registered Advocate with the European Union. She's worked with top global and magic circle law firms such as Weil, Gotshal & Manges, LLP and Linklaters (in Prague, Berlin and London). Ms. Goodloe has years of experience in film finance, entertainment law and intellectual property, having also worked in development and production prior to practicing law. She founded her law practice Goodloe Law in 2003 and has represented Lonely Devil Films for the past 4 years.



CINEMATOGRAPHY



The cinematography will heavily feature hand-held camerawork and natural lighting in the style of a documentary film. The intricate use of color, depth of focus, and naturalistic lighting will build a sense of urgency and intimacy as the story progresses.



VISUAL AND PRODUCTION DESIGN



The film will feature bright whites, dark greys and blacks and streetlight oranges, bright blue nurse's scrubs, blood reds.

MAGNOLIA (1999), Paul Thomas Anderson

THE SHINING (1980), Stanley Kubrick

THE GIRLFRIEND EXPERIENCE (2009), Steven Soderbergh

CAMERA AND LIGHTING DESIGN



The camerawork will be naturalistic, hand-held. Documentary style. The lighting will be harsh, with a stark contrast between the brightly lit rooms Kate and Craig occupy and the dark space Nick and Jimmy lurk in.

MAGNOLIA (1999), Paul Thomas Anderson
Shadowy, Deep Focus Shots, Backlighting, Subdued Color Palette,
Pops of bright colors

THE SHINING (1980), Stanley Kubrick
Exterior Lighting, Diffused Lighting, Strategically Placed Reds,
Bright colors against dark tones

THE GIRLFRIEND EXPERIENCE (2009), Steven Soderbergh
Dark backgrounds, subdued colors, diffused lighting, Dark
yellows, low light, somber color palette

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

2020 began like any other year. The clock struck midnight, the champagne corks popped and sweethearts kissed to mark the beginning of the New Year. Unlike any year before it though, it changed into something darker and more frightening than any of us could imagine. **ANIMAL CRUELTY** aims to embody the American experience in this dark and tumultuous year. For what seemed like just another night for Craig and Kate, turns into a nightmare that will change their lives forever.

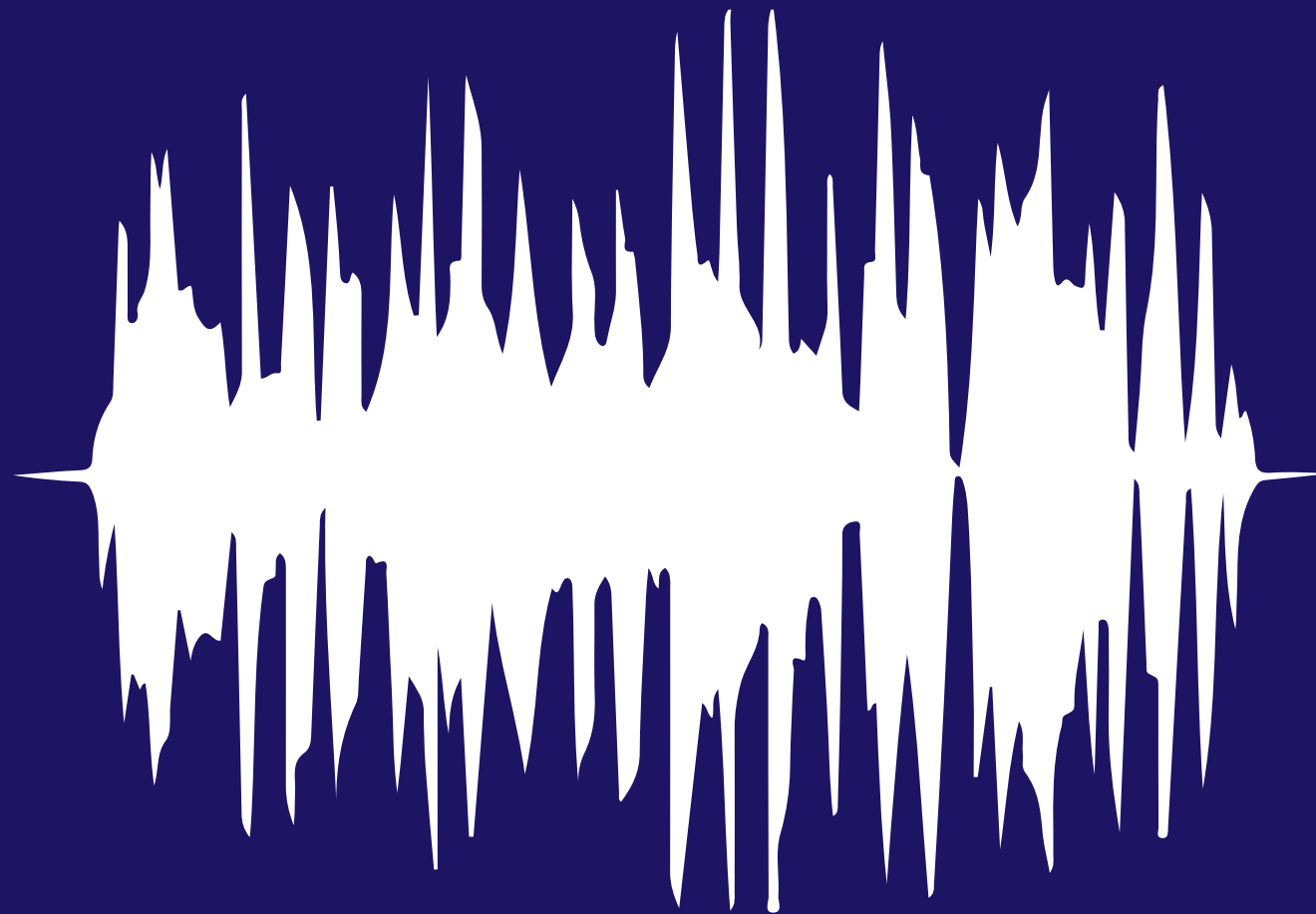
--John Liang, Writer-Director

MOOD REEL



<https://vimeo.com/686132117>

ORIGINAL SONG



<https://melagrana.bandcamp.com/releases>

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