

PLANT PEOPLE

A SHORT FILM



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

GENRE - QUIRKY DRAMA

RUNNING TIME - 5 MINUTES

LOGLINE - PHOEBE, A SUPERMARKET CASHIER, IS THE LONE HUMAN IN A WORLD OF PLANT PEOPLE.

STORY SYNOPSIS

PHOEBE WORKS IN A GROCERY STORE. EVERY DAY IS PRETTY MUCH THE SAME: WAKE UP ALONE IN HER SMALL APARTMENT; WALK TO WORK, PAPER OR PLASTIC? CASH OR CREDIT?; THEN WALK HOME. SHE’S NEVER LATE; SHE’S POLITE; BUT IT’S CLEAR FROM THE FAR-AWAY LOOK IN HER EYES, SHE FEELS DISCONNECTED FROM THE WORLD AROUND HER. PHOEBE IS LONELY. SHE FEELS LIKE SHE DOESN’T BELONG...AND FOR A GOOD REASON: SHE IS THE ONLY HUMAN IN A WORLD FULL OF PLANT PEOPLE (AND THEY ARE NOT PARTICULARLY WELCOMING).

SHE’S WORKING TO MANAGE HER FEELINGS OF ISOLATION, TRYING TO CONNECT -- MAYBE THEY WILL NOTICE THE PLANT PIN ON HER LAPEL? BUT NO, TO THE PLANT PEOPLE, SHE MIGHT AS WELL BE INVISIBLE.

LATER, IN HER APARTMENT, SHE WATCHES THE NIGHTLY (PLANT PEOPLE) NEWS,

OBSERVING LIKE A PERSON TRYING TO UNDERSTAND A LANGUAGE SHE DOESN’T SPEAK. IT’S FRUSTRATING. AND PAINFUL. SHE GIVES UP AND GOES TO BED.

THE NEXT DAY, AFTER WORK, PHOEBE STANDS IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR, PLACING LEAVES IN HER HAIR AND ON HER FACE. IT’S A DESPERATE ENDEAVOR THAT ENDS WITH HER EXHAUSTED, COVERED IN LEAVES, AND ON THE FLOOR.

NOW, IT’S CLOSING TIME AT THE GROCERY. PHOEBE SWITCHES HER LANE LIGHT FROM “OPEN” TO “CLOSED,” WHEN A VOICE STARTLES HER. PHOEBE WHEELS AROUND. SHOCK FILLS HER FACE AS SHE SEES A PERSON - A REAL PERSON, WITH REAL EYES AND HAIR AND A FACE - STANDING IN FRONT OF HER. PHOEBE IS SPEECHLESS, UNSURE HOW TO PROCEED.

A UNEXPECTED EXCHANGE FOLLOWS:

JEAN
(REFERRING TO THE PLANT PIN ON PHOEBE’S LAPEL)
I LIKE YOUR PIN.

BEAT.
JEAN (CONT.)
I’M NOT REALLY A PLANT PERSON, MYSELF.

PHOEBE
(UNEASY)
TWELVE-FIFTY-FOUR, PLEASE.

JEAN
I’M JEAN.

PHOEBE
I’M...

JEAN
(POINTING TO HER NAME TAG)
PHOEBE!

PHOEBE NODS.

JEAN
NICE TO SEE YOU, PHOEBE.
BEAT.

PHOEBE
NICE TO SEE YOU, JEAN.



WITH THIS VERY SIMPLE, KIND, HUMAN EXCHANGE - IF ONLY BRIEFLY - PHOEBE’S PERSPECTIVE HAS CHANGED.

WE NOW SEE THE WHOLE STORE: THERE ARE NO MORE PLANT PEOPLE. ALL THE SHOPPERS AND EMPLOYEES ARE HUMAN.

FILM THEMES

PERCEPTION V. REALITY

LONELINESS



FEELING SMALL



KINDNESS



CONNECTION



MENTAL HEALTH THEMES

CLIQUE



WHEN YOU FEEL LONELY, ALL YOU SEE ARE CLIQUES YOU DON'T BELONG TO. THE FILM EXPLORES THIS THEME THROUGH ALLEGORY: PHOEBE AS THE ONLY HUMAN LIVING IN A PLANT PEOPLE WORLD.

ECHO CHAMBERS



LONELINESS CAN MAKE YOU FEEL INVISIBLE, BUT IT CAN ALSO MAKE YOU FEEL AS THOUGH THERE IS A SPOTLIGHT ON YOU, ILLUMINATING HOW DIFFERENT YOU ARE. THIS CAN CREATE AN ECHO CHAMBER IN YOUR OWN MIND, PREVENTING YOU FROM SEEING THE WORLD AS IT REALLY IS AND REINFORCING ONLY NEGATIVE THOUGHTS. THE FILM USES PHOEBE'S SINGULAR POINT OF VIEW TO EXPRESS THE EXPERIENCE OF THIS FEELING.

SELECTIVE EXPOSURE



PHOEBE CANNOT BREAK FREE OF HER THOUGHTS, AND AS A RESULT OF HER ISOLATION, SHE CREATES A BARRIER TO THE WORLD AROUND HER THAT IS AFFECTING HER MENTAL HEALTH.



WHY NOW?

RECENT FINDINGS BY UNITED STATES SURGEON GENERAL VIVEK H. MURTHY CONCLUDE THAT WE ARE LIVING IN AN “EPIDEMIC OF LONELINESS.” AROUND ONE-IN-TWO ADULTS IN AMERICA REPORTED EXPERIENCING LONELINESS, AND THAT WAS BEFORE COVID-19 FURTHER ISOLATED US FROM OUR FAMILIES, FRIENDS, WORK-PLACES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS. THE STUDY ALSO FINDS THAT MORE THAN EVER, PEOPLE FEEL ALONE, ISOLATED, INVISIBLE, AND THAT THESE FEELINGS CAN HAVE A SERIOUS EFFECT ON OUR MENTAL HEALTH, ANXIETY LEVELS, SELF-WORTH AND OUR ABILITY TO FEEL HAPPINESS.

AS FILMMAKERS, THIS DEEPLY RESONATES WITH US, AND IT’S OUR BELIEF THAT THE UNDERLYING LONELINESS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY HAS CREATED MASSIVE ECHO CHAMBERS THAT WILL FURTHER DRIVE US APART AS A SOCIETY. WE FEEL THAT NOW, MORE THAN EVER, IT’S IMPORTANT TO TELL STORIES ADDRESSING THESE THEMES BY TRANSLATING LIVED EXPERIENCE INTO ART.



“LONELINESS IS LIKE AN ICEBERG - IT GOES DEEPER THAN WE CAN SEE.”

JOHN CACIOPPO
NEUROSCIENTIST

WHY THIS FILM?

PLANT PEOPLE SEEKS TO EXPRESS HOW IT FEELS TO BE LONELY, AND HOW THOSE FEELINGS LEAD TO ECHO CHAMBERS THAT DEEPLY IMPACT OUR MENTAL HEALTH.

WE HAVE CHOSEN A SURREAL ALLEGORY, VISUAL METAPHOR, AND HEIGHTENED FILMMAKING STYLE TO REPRESENT THE EXPERIENCE OF SOCIETAL DISCONNECTION (VIS-À-VIS CLIQUES, AND THE LONELINESS THEY GENERATE).

FOR OUR MAIN CHARACTER, PHOEBE, AN UNEXPECTED INTERACTION HELPS HER BREAK FREE OF AN ECHO CHAMBER. WE HOPE THAT THE FILM BEGINS CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE CLIQUES WE MAY BELONG TO (OR DECIDEDLY NOT BELONG TO); THE ECHO CHAMBERS THEY (AND WE) CREATE; HOW THIS AFFECTS OTHERS; AND SIMPLE WAYS WE CAN FOSTER CONNECTION IN OUR COMMUNITIES.



“OUR INDIVIDUAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE AN UNTAPPED RESOURCE—A SOURCE OF HEALING HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT.”

DR. VIVEK H. MURTHY
US SURGEON GENERAL

CONNECTION WITH THE CONTENT AREA

“I REMEMBER IT STARTING AROUND THIRD GRADE. THIS FEELING OF ANXIETY, FEAR, INABILITY TO CONNECT AND BE MY OWN SELF THE WAY IT SEEMED LIKE ALL THE OTHER KIDS COULD. MAYBE IT WAS CHEMICAL (I WAS DIAGNOSED MUCH LATER WITH PANIC ATTACKS AND SEVERE ANXIETY), BUT SOMEWHERE AROUND THEN, AROUND EIGHT OR NINE YEARS OLD, I TALKED LESS AND LESS. I TOLD MYSELF I COULDN’T FIGURE OUT HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS OR TRUST THAT THERE WERE EVEN FRIENDS OUT THERE FOR ME TO MAKE.

IT BECAME HARD TO SPEAK AROUND OTHER PEOPLE. LITERALLY TO OPEN MY MOUTH AND HAVE SOUND COME OUT. I RETREATED INTO MY IMAGINATION, PREFERRING THAT TO THE “OUTSIDE” WORLD.

BY THE TIME I WAS OUT OF COLLEGE, THE INERTIA OF MY THOUGHTS WAS UNSTOPPABLE. MY PANIC AND FEARS KEPT GAINING SPEED, AND THE WORLD ONLY FELT MORE LONELY AND INTIMIDATING WITH EACH PASSING YEAR. I TOLD MYSELF THAT FOR SOME REASON I DID NOT FIT IN. THAT THE WORLD HAD BECOME A PLACE THAT HAD EXCLUDED ME. EVERYWHERE I LOOKED, I SAW EVIDENCE OF IT, REAL OR NOT.

I WAS MY OWN “CONFIRMATION BIAS” AND IN THIS WAY, MY MIND BECAME ITS OWN ECHO CHAMBER.

I HAVE COME THROUGH THESE AND OTHER MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES, CHANNELLING A LOT OF IT THROUGH MY ART, BUT IT NEVER FULLY DISSOLVES.

WHEN I EXPRESSED THESE EXPERIENCES TO MY CREATIVE (AND LIFE) PARTNER, JASON, HE COULD RELATE THROUGH HIS OWN PERSONAL JOURNEY. WE BECAME INSPIRED TO TELL A UNIQUE STORY, IN BOTH OF OUR VOICES, THAT ILLUMINATES HOW IT FEELS TO BE LONELY, HOW THAT AFFECTS MENTAL HEALTH, AND HOW WE MIGHT SEE A WAY THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE.”

-KINCAID WALKER, ACTOR PLAYING PHOEBE/PRODUCER

IT’S OUR HOPE TO BE CONNECTED WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS, AND WORK IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS SPECIALIZING IN LONELINESS AND ANXIETY. WE WELCOME ALL VOICES THAT HELP TO FURTHER OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE MENTAL HEALTH THEMES WE ARE PRESENTING SO THAT THIS FILM WILL BEGIN DEEPER, AND TRULY MEANINGFUL, DISCUSSIONS.

VISUAL REFERENCES



FILMMAKING TECHNIQUES

THE FILM WILL BE MADE IN 6K, USING ATLAS ANAMORPHIC LENSES IN COMBINATION WITH THE RED KOMODO DIGITAL CINEMA CAMERA. WE WILL UTILIZE THIS CAMERA'S UNIQUE **ANAMORPHIC PORTRAIT MODE**, FILMING IN A SQUARE (1:1) ASPECT RATIO THAT PRODUCES CAPTIVATING, ORIGINAL AND HIGHLY PERSONAL IMAGES. THIS TECHNIQUE WILL ALLOW US TO VISUALLY REPRESENT PHOEBE'S EMOTIONAL POV, AND CREATE A SENSE THAT THIS IS UNLIKE OTHER PLACES. WHEN PHOEBE BREAKS FROM HER ILLUSIONS AT THE END OF THE FILM, THE ASPECT RATIO WILL EXPAND TO 2.40, REVEALING THE "REAL" WORLD.



THE CAMERA WILL REMAIN MOSTLY STATIC AND HIGHLY COMPOSED UNTIL THE FINAL SCENE. AS IF RESPONDING TO A SHAKING LOOSE OF SOMETHING FROM INSIDE HER, THE CAMERA WILL SWITCH TO HANDHELD, GIVING A LESS RIGID, MORE ORGANIC FEEL.

ALL EFFECTS WILL BE DONE IN-CAMERA, INCLUDING **HAND BUILT PLANT HEADS**. THE FILM WILL HAVE A SPECIFIC COLOR PALETTE, BEGINNING ON SET WITH LIGHTING, COSTUME AND PRODUCTION DESIGN. THAT AESTHETIC WILL BE CARRIED THROUGH TO, AND REFINED IN THE FINAL COLOR GRADE.

OUR TEAM



JASON EKSUZIAN —
— WRITER / DIRECTOR

JASON IS AN AWARD-WINNING DIRECTOR/ PRODUCER / WRITER, WHOSE WORK HAS BEEN SEEN AT SXSW FILM FESTIVAL, TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL, AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL, ATLANTA FILM FESTIVAL, SERIES FEST, LA COMEDY FESTIVAL AND ON MAJOR NETWORKS SUCH AS BRAVO, DISCOVERY+ AND MTV. HIS FAVORITE HOUSE PLANTS ARE SUCCULENTS.



KINCAID WALKER —
— ACTOR / PRODUCER

KINCAID HAS APPEARED OPPOSITE ROSARIO DAWSON IN UNFORGETTABLE, WITH MINNIE DRIVER ON SPEECHLESS, WITH AZIZ ANSARI AND NICK OFFERMAN ON PARKS AND RECREATION, AS WELL AS MANY NATIONAL COMMERCIALS, SHORTS AND INDEPENDENT FILMS. SHE ALSO WROTE, PRODUCED AND STARRED IN THE MULTI AWARD-WINNING DIGITAL SERIES, HUG IT OUT. HER FAVORITE HOUSE PLANT IS THE STRAWBERRY SYNGONIUM.



MICHAEL KELLOGG —
— CINEMATOGRAPHER

A NEW-YORK BASED CINEMATOGRAPHER, MICHAEL HAS LENSED MANY SHORT FILMS, COMMERCIALS AND MUSIC VIDEOS. HIS TWO PREVIOUS COLLABORATIONS WITH JASON AND KINCAID, DINKS AND HUG IT OUT, WON TOP HONORS AT MAJOR FILM FESTIVALS. AS A DIGITAL IMAGING TECHNICIAN, HE'S CREDITED ON FILMS SUCH AS THE MULE, PEANUT BUTTER FALCON, RICHARD JEWELL AND WORTH. HIS FAVORITE HOUSE PLANT IS THE PEACE LILY.



DARCIE SOSA —
— PRODUCER

AS THE FOUNDER OF SOSA MEDIA, DARCIE WORKS WITH CLIENTS ON DIGITAL MARKETING, SOCIAL MEDIA, BRAND STRATEGY, GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS/PR NEEDS, AND CONTENT CREATION. SHE IS ALSO COMMUNICATIONS, PRESS AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR OF THE NAACP, BERKSHIRES. HER FAVORITE HOUSE-PLANT IS THE ONE SHE CAN KEEP ALIVE.

RESUMÉ

JASON EKSUZIAN

HUG IT OUT - DIGITAL SERIES - DIRECTOR/EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

AWARDS: WINNER, SERIES FEST - WINNER, LA COMEDY FILM FESTIVAL - WINNER, KNOXVILLE FILM FESTIVAL - WINNER, IMAGINE THIS FILM FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL SELECTION: AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL, ATLANTA FILM FESTIVAL, LONDON COMEDY FILM FESTIVAL, CINDEPENDANT, PILOT LIGHT FILM FESTIVAL,
DENVER FILM FESTIVAL, STUDIO CITY FILM FESTIVAL, PORTLAND COMEDY FESTIVAL, CHICAGO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL

THE GROWN-UP MERMAID - SHORT FILM - WRITER/DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

AWARDS: BEST PARODY, INDIE SHORT FEST - BEST COMEDY SHORT, FLICKFAIR
OFFICIAL SELECTION: LA COMEDY FILM FESTIVAL, PORTLAND COMEDY FESTIVAL, LA SHORTS, GEEKFEST FILM FEST, WE MAKE MOVIES INTERNATIONAL FILM FEST

10,000 HOURS - DIGITAL SERIES - WRITER/DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

MADE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SHORT-FORM STREAMER, RIZZLE, TO LAUNCH THEIR FIRST EVER ORIGINAL SERIES PROJECT. SURPASSED 225K STREAMS IN IT'S FIRST 24 HOURS

I MISS DRUGS - DIGITAL SERIES - WRITER/DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

AWARDS: VIMEO STAFF PICK
OFFICIAL SELECTION: VIMEO AT SXSW FILM FESTIVAL, LA COMEDY FILM FESTIVAL

DINKS - DIGITAL SERIES - WRITER/DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

DINKS IS A 6 EPISODE DIGITAL SERIES THAT WAS FEATURED ON FUNNY OR DIE AND WAS OPTIONED BY FURST FILMS FOR TELEVISION DEVELOPMENT

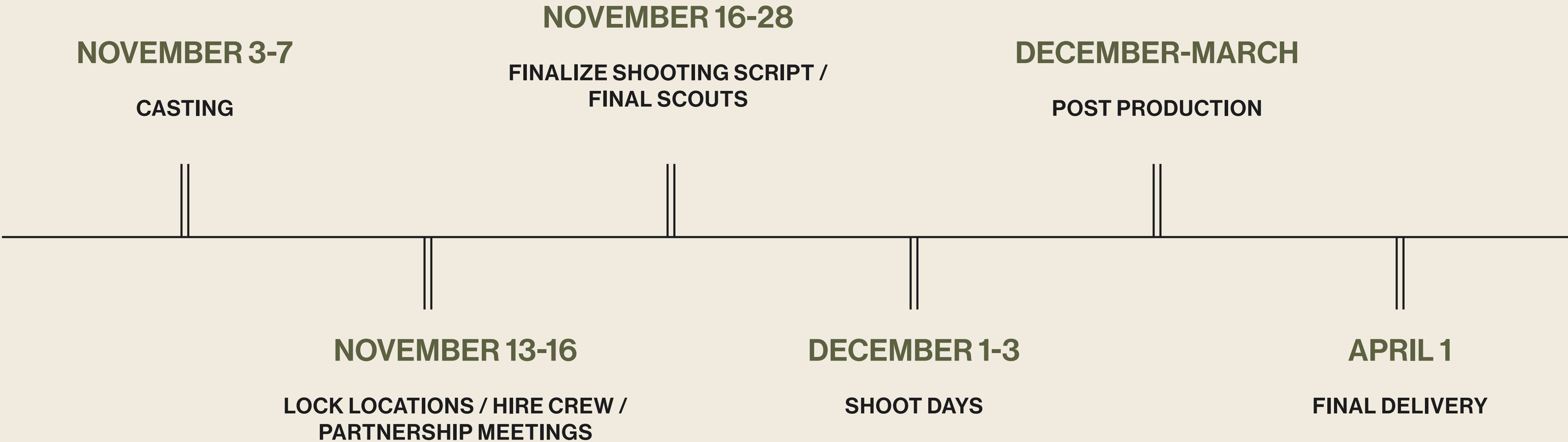
MISSION: JOY - FINDING HAPPINESS IN TROUBLED TIMES - FEATURE DOCUMENTARY - CINEMATOGRAPHER

A FILM THAT SHARES THE HUMOR, WISDOM AND FRIENDSHIP OF TWO OF THE WORLD'S MOST BELOVED ICONS: HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA AND ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU.
OFFICIAL SELECTION (AND WORLD PREMIERE): TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

ADDITIONALLY, JASON IS THE DIRECTOR / CINEMATOGRAPHER ON SEVERAL UNSCRIPTED TELEVISION PROJECTS INCLUDING:
VANDERPUMP RULES, REAL HOUSEWIVES OF SALT LAKE CITY AND SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY FOR BRAVO; GENERATION DRAG FOR DISCOVERY+;
LIFE UNDER RENOVATION FOR HGTV, AND MANY MORE.



PROJECT TIMELINE



DETAILED SCHEDULE ON FOLLOWING PAGE

SCHEDULE IN DETAIL

OCTOBER 2023

PRE-PRODUCTION / CONTINUED SCRIPT DRAFTS / EARLY PLANNING MEETINGS
EARLY LOCATION SCOUTING WITH DIRECTOR, MASSACHUSETTS PRODUCER & CINEMATOGRAPHER
EARLY COSTUME DESIGN MEETINGS
CAMERA TESTS

NOVEMBER 2023

- 1 PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE
- 3 CASTING NOTICES POSTED / TEAM PLANNING MEETING
- 6-7 CASTING SESSIONS
- 8 PRODUCTION MEETING
- 10 CASTING FINALIZED / BOOK MAIN TALENT / HOLD EXTRAS
- 13 HIRE CREW
- 14 PARTNER MEETINGS & FEEDBACK
- 15 FINAL COSTUME DESIGNS / BEGIN BUILDS
- 16 LOCK LOCATIONS
- 17 FINALIZE SHOOTING SCRIPT
- 20 PRODUCTION MEETING
- 27 LOCATION TECH SCOUTS
- 29 CAMERA PREP
- 30 PRE-LIGHT

DECEMBER 2023

- 1-3 SHOOT DAYS



SCHEDULE IN DETAIL

(CONTINUED)

DECEMBER 2023

- 3-8 MEDIA TRANSCODE / POST PRODUCTION START
- 11-23 EDIT

JANUARY 2024

- 2 SCORING / EARLY MUSIC PLACEMENTS

FEBUARY 2024

- 8 FIRST CUT FOR PARTNER FEEDBACK
- 16 SECOND CUT / TRUSTED GROUP SCREENING FOR FEEDBACK

MARCH 2024

- 4 MUSIC CLEARANCES / LEGAL
- 11 LOCKED CUT / SOUND MIX START
- 12 COLORIST START / FINAL TITLING AND CREDITS CHECK
- 18 DELIVERY REVIEW

APRIL 2024

- 1 FINAL DELIVERY



PROJECT BUDGET

CATEGORY	TITLE	ESTIMATED TOTAL		NOTES
LOCATIONS	GROCERY STORE	\$2,000		
LOCATIONS	APARTMENT	\$1,500		
LOCATIONS	PARKING LOT	\$0.00		AT GROCERY STORE
LOCATIONS	EXT. STREET	\$0.00		
	SUB TOTAL		\$3,500	
PRODUCTION	INSURANCE	\$500		
PRODUCTION	MEALS	\$1,200		
PRODUCTION	CRAFT SERVICE	\$150		
PRODUCTION	PARKING	\$0		
	SUB TOTAL		\$1,850	
EQUIPMENT	CAMERA	\$100		PRIMARILY DONATED BY CINEMATOGRAPHER
EQUIPMENT	GRIP AND ELECTRIC	\$50		
EQUIPMENT	SOUND	\$500		
	SUB TOTAL		\$650	
ART DEPARTMENT	SET DEC	\$300		
ART DEPARTMENT	PROPS	\$100		
	SUB TOTAL		\$400	
COSTUME DESIGN	PLANT HEAD BUILD	\$600		
	SUB TOTAL		\$600	
CREW	DIRECTOR	\$0		
CREW	AD	\$0		
CREW	DP	\$0		
CREW	PRODUCTION DESIGNER	\$0		
CREW	SCRIPT SUPERVISOR	\$0		
CREW	CAMERA OPERATOR	\$0		
CREW	AC	\$0		
CREW	SOUND SUPERVISOR	\$0		

PROJECT BUDGET (CONT.)

CATEGORY	TITLE	ESTIMATED TOTAL		NOTES
CREW	GAFFER	\$0		
CREW	KEY GRIP	\$0		
CREW	COSTUME DESIGNER	\$0		
CREW	HAIR & MU	\$0		
CREW	SET PHOTOGRAPHER	\$0		
CREW	PA	\$0		
	PA	\$0		
		SUB TOTAL	\$0	
POST PRODUCTION	EDITOR	\$0		
POST PRODUCTION	MUSIC LICENSING	\$500		
POST PRODUCTION	HARD DRIVES	\$0		HOUSE DRIVES
POST PRODUCTION	TRANSCODE / DIT	\$0		
		SUB TOTAL	\$500	
	GRAND TOTAL		\$7,500	