



THE DIRECT LINE PRESENTS

# COHETTES





# REAL TEXANS. REAL PYRO

THOUGH NOT A TRUE STORY,  
MANY OF THE EVENTS FROM COHETES ARE  
INSPIRED BY THE DIRECTOR/CO-WRITER'S WIFE  
(A LICENSED PYROTECHNICIAN  
AND CONSULTANT ON THIS FILM),  
THE OCHOA FAMILY,  
& THEIR LIVES ON THE COASTAL BEND OF TEXAS





## **LOGLINE**

**A ROOKIE PYROTECHNICIAN ASSEMBLES A GROUP OF TOWNIES TO TRANSPORT A TRUCKLOAD OF VOLATILE, ILLEGAL FIREWORKS DOWN THE TEXAS COAST ON THE 4TH OF JULY WITHOUT GETTING CAUGHT OR KILLED.**

## **SYNOPSIS**

**ARI GUZMÁN is from a family that loves to blow shit up. Professionally, it's fireworks, but sometimes, it means relationships. After a failed attempt to establish herself in the city, Ari returns to her coastal Texas hometown to assist her father with the annual fireworks show. However, a tragic explosion involving the sponsor's son leaves her father critically injured and uninsured. Desperate to cover medical expenses, Ari strikes a deal with the sponsor to transport illegal, and highly dangerous fireworks in exchange for a huge payday. She assembles an unlikely group of locals, including friends, family, and strangers to execute the dangerous task all while evading law enforcement.**

**Timely, tense, and entertaining as hell, our story explores common ground among people from diverse backgrounds as they navigate the challenges and risks that come with their pursuit of the American dream.**



# THE CHARACTERS

AND THE TYPE OF ACTORS TO PLAY THEM

THE LEADER



**MICHELLE ORTIZ**

## ARI

Ari isn't the first (or even the second) person you'd want to lead a team, but she's determined and will do anything for her family.

THE HEART



**HARVEY GUILLÉN**

## MEMO

Superstitious, always the mediator, and underappreciated by his family, Memo is Ari's close-in-age uncle who was *supposed* to be in charge until Ari showed up.

THE ROCK



**STEVEN MICHAEL QUEZADA**

## MANUEL

Amiable and hardworking. After the death of his wife, his daughter, Ari, cleared out of town leaving him and his much younger brother, Memo, to pick up the pieces



# THE CHARACTERS

AND THE TYPE OF ACTORS TO PLAY THEM

THE VETERAN



JESSE PLEMONS

PAUL SPARKS

## TYLER

Tyler is his own worst enemy. A veteran with PTSD who has trouble holding a job and refuses to get the help he needs. He loves his little girl and would do anything to make her life better.

THE KAREN



ADRIANNE PALICKI

## TAMMY

Being the rich wife of the County Sheriff, she usually gets what she wants, but recently, as in yesterday, her situation changed.

THE WEIRDO



MARTHA KELLY

## PAIGE

A tugboat captain. Paige is a mess and the closest thing to comic relief this film has. Though resourceful and enthusiastic, when she isn't pounding coney islanders, she's feeding seagulls.

THE KID



THALIA TRAN

## MICHELLE

Michelle is jacked and loves cars. When she's not helping her mom take care of their donut shop, she's out back lifting weights and customizing her prized car. Or she used to...before it was stolen.

THE BENEFACTOR



MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY

SCOOT MCNAIRY

## KILGORE

The wealthy sponsor of the town's annual fireworks show. Doesn't play fair with anyone who gets in the way of his recognition or his money.

THE ATF AGENT



DEMI ADEJUIGBE

## KRAFT

A by the book rookie ATF agent. This is his first big case, and he's determined to follow every lead.

THE ATF AGENT



ALLISON TOLMAN

TIG NATARO

## LEON

A veteran of the ATF. Adept at observing and listening, Leon is easily swayed by suspect's circumstances.



**TONE**

**VISUALLY STRIKING AMERICANA**

**WITH**

**HIGH STAKES TENSION**

**TWISTER**



**HELL OR HIGH WATER**



**MUD**





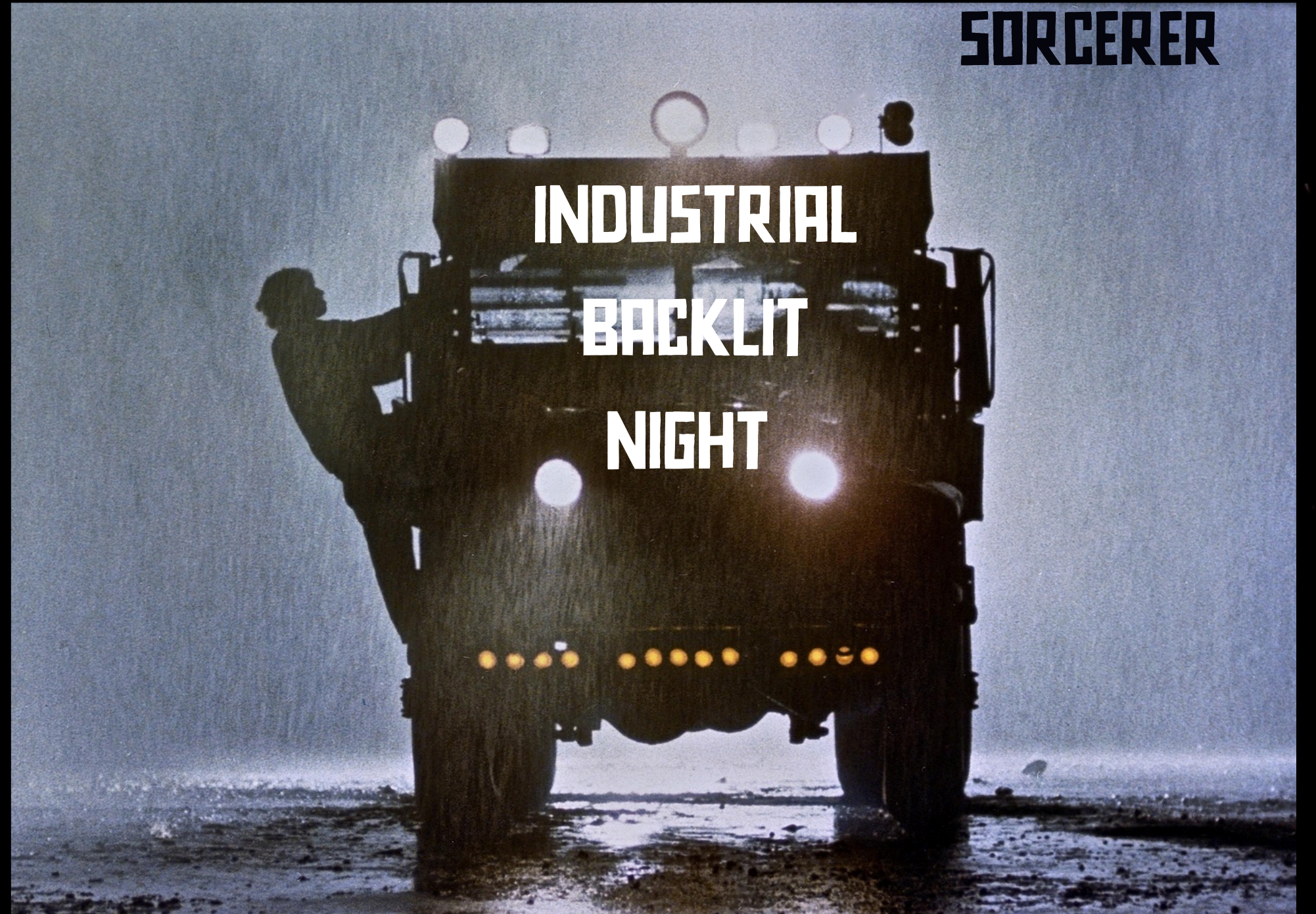
# LOOK



**BRIGHT**  
**SHADOWLESS**  
**DAYS**  
**SICARIO**



**MANHUNTER**  
**LONG GRADIENT**  
**EVENING**



**SORCERER**  
**INDUSTRIAL**  
**BACKLIT**  
**NIGHT**



# DIRECTOR | CO-WRITER | PRODUCER

## DREW SAPLIN



**Drew Saplin** (he/they) is an Austin, Texas writer/director and co-founder of The Direct Line, a narrative production company.

For the last seven years, Drew has written and directed full time; with over 10,000 hours in the director's chair Drew has crafted multiple YouTube shorts and series with over a million views; creating brand-integrated content with the likes of Meow Wolf, Omen Computers, and State Farm.

Drew has written, directed, and produced shorts that have played at LAFF, Mammoth, Hill Country, and Rockport Film Festivals. He's also co-produced a podcast about filmmaking in Texas, aptly titled "How to Texas."

Prior to his directing career Drew worked as a 1st AD shepherding many first time directors through the rigors of production. He's an alum of The University of Texas.

## THE DIRECT LINE





# PRODUCING TEAM

CONSULTING PRODUCER



**STEVEN J. BERGER**

Steven Berger (he/him) is the co-founder of Number 19, Inc. He serves as the co-creator and Executive Producer of the acclaimed Hulu series SASQUATCH, which premiered at the SXSW Film Festival. Previously, he co-created and Executive Produced the four-part Amazon Prime documentary series LORENA, alongside Jordan Peele, premiering at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival. He also produced the Netflix Original Documentary BOB ROSS: Happy Accidents, Betrayal, and Greed with Melissa McCarthy. Berger's narrative projects include the Black List script THE PRETTY ONE, sold to Sony Pictures, and THE FEELS starring Constance Wu. He currently has forthcoming projects in production with Netflix, HBO, Hulu, and others.

PRODUCER



**MORGAN POLLITT**

Morgan Pollitt (she/her) began her journey as the assistant to Academy-Award nominated producer Sarah Green on Terrence Malick's visionary THE TREE OF LIFE and Jeff Nichols' emotionally charged TAKE SHELTER. Morgan continued her career Associate Producing projects like Jorge Perrugoria's AMOR CRONICO, Nichols' MUD, and multiple Terrence Malick productions including TO THE WONDER, VOYAGE OF TIME and KNIGHT OF CUPS. Beyond traditional cinema, Morgan's work extends to television, contributing to ABC/Shondaland's THE CATCH, project development with immersive art installations like Meow Wolf and audio with the immersive science fiction project EMINENT DOMAIN for Audible Originals. Morgan's upcoming projects include films by the Holden Brothers and Kyle Smith.

PRODUCER



**VIA BIA**

Via Bia (she/her) was raised in a multi-generational Puerto Rican and Jewish family. A NALIP member. She is the proud Producer of La Juana (dir: Anayamel); Bridge. (dir: Cristina Wolf); and Development (dir: Chloe Caudillo) - a selected project for the 2023 LALIFF/Netflix Inclusion Fellowship, starring Haskiri Velazquez ("Saved By The Bell" reboot; The 40-Year-Old Version). As a Writer/Director, her screenplays have been selected for labs at Sundance, Stowe, and Cine Qua Non, with her first film, These Colors Don't Run, finding distribution with HBO/MAX. Via resides in Los Angeles and loves working on projects about cursey Latinas who say they don't give a shit... yet totally do.

PRODUCER



**FRANCIS ROMÁN**

Francis Román (she/they) is a second generation Ecuadorian-American director, writer, and producer. She is the Senior Film & TV Festival Programming Manager at SXSW and leads their Shorts Programming curation. She is also a NALIP and AFS member. Her experience has led her to serve as a jury member and panelist for various Film Festivals. As a creative, she co-founded The Direct Line production company. She also co-hosts and produces How to Texas, a podcast spotlighting crew in the Texas film industry. Making art with friends and watching films brings her immense joy and she would love to do it forever.

PRODUCER | CO - WRITER



**SAMANTHA BENNETT**

Samantha Bennett (she/her), Producer, Co-founder of the Direct Line, Sam is a jack-of-all-trades filmmaker concentrating on writing, directing, and producing with a passion for queer stories. She spent many years as a script supervisor, an editor, and motion graphics artist, currently working at Austin Community College. Sam is co-host/co-producer of the podcast How to Texas. Her creative work has screened at SXSW, Hill Country, Deep In the Heart, and Rockport Film Festivals. Originally from the SF Bay Area, she's a graduate of UC Berkeley, and now resides in Austin.

CASTING | PRODUCER



**ALAN LUNA**

Alan Luna (he/him) is a first-gen Mexican-American Casting Director and Producer for TV, Film, and Animation. Alan is a partner with ABL Casting, founded by him and fellow Casting Directors Michelle Adams & Natalie Ballesteros. With over a decade of casting and development experience, Alan has collaborated on projects with Netflix, HBO Max, Disney, Nickelodeon, Hulu, Marvel Studios, Amazon, and more. Some of his recent projects are Jenni (dir: Gigi Saul Guerrero) about the iconic Mexican-American singer and activist, Jenni Rivera; The Long Game (dir: Julio Quintana), which premiered at SXSW in 2023; and Aristotle & Dante Discover The Secrets of the Universe by Aitch Alberto, which was produced by Lin Manuel Miranda, and premiered at TIFF in 2022.



# ATTACHED CREW

CINEMATOGRAPHER



**CARMEN HILLBERT**

Carmen Hilbert (she/ her) is a Cinematographer based in Brooklyn, NY and Austin, TX. Her documentary work has been featured in New York Magazine and PBS, and her most recent feature, *Lousy Carter*, premiered at Locarno in 2023. Her commercial projects include clients such as Southwest Airlines, Starbucks, Toyota, and New York Fashion Week. Carmen has been the Director of Photography for numerous shorts and music videos that have screened at festivals across the globe

SPECIAL EFFECT SUPERVISOR



**BOB TREVINO**

Bob Trevino (he/him) is a Emmy nominated special effects supervisor and technician who has worked on such films as *Alita: Battle Angel*; *Predators*; *Open Range*; *Shanghai Noon*; and television shows "From Dusk Till Dawn"; "The Good Guys", and "Walker, Texas Ranger," to name a few. Bob's degree in electronic engineering and experience in mechanical engineering/robotics made him an important part of an established Dallas special effects group that was led by FX veteran, Jack Bennett. Many television shows, commercials, and features later, Bob has built a career that utilizes invaluable experience from film and trades craftsmen alike.

STUNT COORGINATOR



**JEFF SCHWAN**

Jeffrey P Schwan, (he/him) has worked on over 150+ films as a Stuntman, Stunt Coordinator, Actor, Driver and Leadman in the art department. His credits include; *Miss Congeniality*, *The Alamo*, *Sin City*, *We are Heroes*, and "Queen of the South." Jeff was nominated for an Emmy for his work on the NBC series "Friday Night Lights." He is currently working on his fifth screenplay.

COMPOSER



**CHUKWUDI HODGE**

Chukwudi Hodge (he/him) is a multi-discipline performer and producer. Originally from Oakland, his African-influenced, Bay-area-bred tastes inform his contemporary take on music production, creating scores that are undeniably unique and relevant. Kwudi's credits include *Black Panther* as well as collaborations with Daveed Diggs, Childish Gambino, Kyle, Logic, Watsky and more. While he'd rather be fishing or riding motorcycles too fast, music will do for now. Kwudi is based in Los Angeles.



# CONSULTING TEAM



**PYROCHOA: BLOWING STUFF UP SINCE 2008**



# MISSION

## MAKE SUSTAINABLE, EQUITABLE ART

WE WORK 10 HOUR  
DAYS,  
5 DAY WEEKS,  
THAT'S IT

CAST AND CREW ARE  
PAID THE SAME.  
SAG SCALE FOR  
EVERYONE.  
THERE ARE NO SIDE  
DEALS.

UP-FRONT SWEAT  
EQUITY MEANS CAST  
AND CREW ARE  
MOTIVATED TO MAKE  
THE BEST PRODUCT  
POSSIBLE.

Traditional model, without benefits:

**1,439,4000**

Equitable Art Model w/ benefits:

**1,055,618**

A **25%** savings

CAST AND CREW RECEIVE 40%  
AND INVESTORS RECEIVE 60% OF  
NET REVENUE IN PARALLEL UNTIL  
INVESTORS REACH 120%. AT  
THAT TIME IT GOES TO AN EVEN  
SPLIT.

A RADICALLY  
TRANSPARENT BUDGET  
KEEPS ALL  
STAKEHOLDERS  
INFORMED.

CAST / CREW EQUITY IS  
DISTRIBUTED BASED ON  
WHEN THE PROJECT IS  
JOINED.



# EQUITY MODEL

## CASE STUDIES

A24

BLACK BEAR



Our equity model has precedence. We consulted directly with Clint Bentley and Greg Kwedar, an Austin filmmaking duo who have used this model for their last two films.

*Jockey*, their first foray into this model, starring Molly Parker and Clifton Collins Jr., was purchased by Sony Pictures Classics at Sundance in 2021.

Their follow up film, *Sing Sing*, had a 1.2M budget and was financed by Black Bear Pictures, who also produced *The Imitation Game*. This film stars Coleman Domingo and was purchased by A24 at the 2023 Toronto Film Festival.



Ben Affleck and Matt Damon have recently adopted a similar equity model for their company, Artist's Equity, having implemented their version for their recent film *Air*.



An egalitarian set creates more collaboration, and more collaboration creates a better product



Shooting along the Coastal Bend offers an additional 2.5% Tax Credit on top of the standard 5% for being a Texas production



This model lowers the overall budget, as it offsets higher day rates through shared equity



Our film qualifies for a diversity in casting initiative, lowering the SAG - AFTRA rates



# PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR LUCKY EIGHT FILMS

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCE STARTING AT 100K AND UP.

Funding is held in a project specific escrow account and isn't spent until we formally launch pre-production currently slated for early October 2024

**1.1M RAISE**

**TAX DEFERRAL**

### ASK YOUR CPA ABOUT TAX CODE 181

Tax code 181 is a deferral for investing in film that you can claim on your taxes. Ask your CPA about it!

**THREE OPTIONS TO PARTNER:  
CO-PRODUCTION  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCE  
DONATE**

## MIX AND MATCH STARTING AT 100K

Donate to the project and drive down the amount of money we need to recoup, then invest in the project to lower your overall risk.

## NON-TAXABLE DONATIONS 100K AND UP

Our film has been awarded a fiscal sponsorship through Film Independent. That means you, or a corporation can make a charitable donation that is considered a tax write-off. These fiscal sponsors then take a small percentage and give our team the rest to make our movie!

**TAX FREE**

**LOWERS  
RECOUP**

Donating lowers the overall recoup amount, thereby lowering the risk of the investment and increasing the likelihood of seeing profit.



# COMMUNITY IMPACT



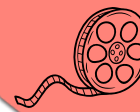
Using Corpus Christi as a production hub to shoot in the surrounding areas brings over \$400,000 to the Coastal Bend.



Our equity model and commitment to community brings well-paying production jobs to the area, with on-the-job training.



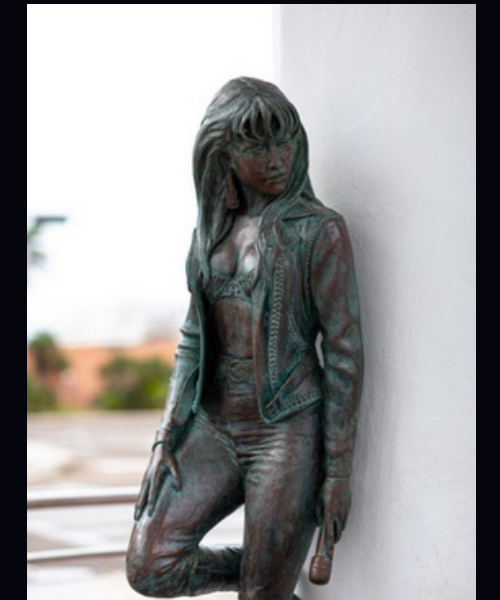
While many of our 70 person cast and crew will be sourced from the area, some will be from Austin and LA, requiring housing for our month-long shoot.



4 weeks of pre-pro and 4 weeks of production in the Coastal Bend mean a need for catering, locations, region-specific art and props, rental vehicles, actors, and extras. All sourced from the South Texas Coast.

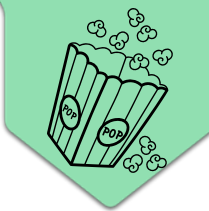


This film seeks to accurately reflect the specific and vibrant culture of the Coastal Bend, its regional dialects, art, and people.





# DISTRIBUTION AND TIMING



**Theatrical:** The Film is bought at festival by a distributor for most of its budget and then given a marketing budget with a limited theatrical release



**Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD):** A distributor packages the film with other similar films and sells them to a subscription streaming service like Netflix, Hulu, MAX



**In Flight Entertainment (IFE):** A distributor sells the film with similar films to an airline



**Advertising Video on Demand (AVOD):** Similar to SVOD but the streamer is profitable through advertising. i.e. Freevee, Tubi, RokuTV



**Transactional Video On Demand (TVOD):** A rental that is available on streaming platforms but at a cost to the consumer.



With a 2024 production schedule our festival run is expected to commence in late 2025. Distribution and then release would happen, at the earliest mid 2026.

Based on the film's initial success at the time of release we'll be able to forecast the likelihood of profitability.

Within the first year of release you will see the majority of the money that the film will make.



A person is seen from behind, standing on a dark, flat surface at night, setting off fireworks. A large, bright fireball is visible at the base of the fireworks, with a thick plume of white smoke rising from it. The fireworks themselves are exploding in the dark sky, creating a shower of bright, streaking light trails. In the background, there are some faint lights and structures, possibly an airport tarmac or a construction site.

# THANK YOU.

**ADDITIONAL MATERIALS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST:**

- **TRADITIONAL BUDGET**
- **EQUITY MODEL BUDGET**
- **SCRIPT**
- **PRODUCTION SCHEDULE**

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