

ANDREW J. KATERS BENJAMIN PLESSALA RHYSS BECKER DALLAS SCHAEFER CEDRIC BENJAMIN WITH WES JOHNSON



A FILM BY GARRETT ADAMS

# SANCTUARY

TWO PATHS. ONE DESTINATION.

A PUZZLE PIECE PICTURES AND OWL ECHO ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

ORIGINAL SCORE BY DANIEL MCCORMICK CINEMATOGRAPHY BY ARTHUR CASTELLANO ART DIRECTION BY VICTORIA VIEIRA EDITED BY LEVI ALMANZAR

PRODUCED BY GARRETT ADAMS BENJAMIN MEHR AND KAREN "KAY" ROSS

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS GARRETT ADAMS KAREN "KAY" ROSS AND VIPER DAVE

WRITTEN BY PAUL KNAUER DIRECTED BY GARRETT ADAMS



WWW.SANCTUARYFILM.NET

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the short or the feature in  
development, contact:*

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[Instagram](#)

Karen “Kay” Ross  
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571-230-9963  
[Instagram](#)



# SANCTUARY

THE SHORT FILM

[www.SanctuaryFilm.net](http://www.SanctuaryFilm.net)

*Running Time:*

**14 minutes**

*Directed By:*

**Garrett Adams**

*Written By:*

**Paul Knauer**

*Produced By:*

**Garrett Adams**

**Karen "Kay" Ross**

**Benjamin Mehr**

*Production Company:*

**Puzzle Piece Pictures**

**[Owl Echo Entertainment](#)**

*Filmed on:*

**RED KOMODO**

*Edited on:*

**Davinci Resolve**

*Filmed on Location:*

**Randsburg, CA and**

**Los Angeles, CA**

*Budget:*

**\$150,000 Self &**

**Crowdfsource Funded**



# THE STORY

## LOGLINE

An unsuspecting yet willing accomplice drives his childhood friend after a robbery to escape a bleak future, but when things turn deadly, he must confront where his loyalties lie.

## SYNOPSIS

"Sanctuary" is a Neo-Western Coming-of-Age short proof-of-concept film that tells the story of two young boys, Johnny and Clint. They've escaped their abusive households and take refuge in an old, abandoned church. Things get especially bad when two bank robbers divert their path and head straight for the same church. We see the clash when these two moments collide, and explore the question - *What do you do when your best friend is dying? Do you try to save them or do you honor their final request?*

# Director's Statement

“How can I take what I learned on my last project and one-up myself.” This is the question I typically ask myself when embarking on a new film. “Sanctuary” was no different. Hot off the heels of my last short, ‘Forever Red’, I was excited to direct something different, something crazier, something to really challenge myself. I began to search for projects that would honor my style and push the boundaries well beyond what I’d previously been able to accomplish. During my search, I found myself becoming enamored by the coming-of-age genre.

The more I watched, the more embedded I became in this newfound fascination of the wit, chemistry, and nostalgia this amazing genre can create. I found myself going back and watching some of the classics, “Stand by Me”, and “The Goonies,” and exploring more lesser-known pieces such as “L.I.E” and “Mysterious Skin” and thoroughly enjoying newer pieces that paid homage to the classics such as “Stranger Things” and “IT”. I began to gravitate towards telling a story that showed how past abuse/trauma/etc can affect not just the adult life of a childhood victim but how it can become a cycle manifesting itself differently across generations. I knew I wanted to use this film to speak to those who experience this and use this as the emotional core, the heart of this story.

We’ve assembled a truly amazing team, and I’m honored to be leading the creative direction of such a heartfelt story. We’ve come a long way since I first came across the original draft of “Sanctuary”, but now in it’s finished form, I can wholeheartedly say I have fulfilled my goal of crafting a film that tells a human story which far exceeds the ambition previously sought after by my previous work.

# OUR STORY



**The story behind the story?** We are a team of East and West Coast independent filmmakers leveling up our production skills in a big way! On this short film, we had driving scenes, a car chase, fight scenes, prop guns, filming on location (which required permitting, hiring CHPs, and cast & crew travel and overnight accommodations), building a set and filming in studio, working with named actors, working with SAG actors, working with child actors - WHEW! It was a huge undertaking. If we had added animals, it would have been the whole chimichanga!

**Why all the fuss? “Sanctuary” is more than a proof-of-concept. It is a proof-of-workflow.** As filmmakers and future job-creators, we wanted to explore what it would take to make a feature film, soup to nuts. That way, when we produce the feature, we are prepared for duplicating the process. So, we approached this proof-of-concept short film like any other independent feature film: everyone was paid an acceptable reduced day rate (except for two college interns), we arranged for overnight accommodations and trailers while filming on location, hired an on-set teacher for our child actors - we even coordinated a build crew while filming on location! There was a lot learned, and we're eager to share both the film and our reflections on the process with you!

**“Sanctuary” is the first shining example of the Owl Echo Entertainment Mission - creating stories that inspire audiences and impact lives, on and off camera. We are dedicated to exploring and implementing a new standard of Ethical Filmmaking.**

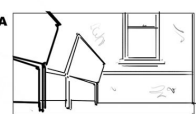
# Why “Sanctuary”?


So much of American cinema focuses on violence, but it is less frequent that such stories bring up discussions around the consequences of poor decisions. As conscientious storytellers, we don't just want to highlight the issues in our society. We want to be part of the conversation that introduces solutions.


"Sanctuary" the Short Film focuses on the themes of friendship and loyalty, but it also touches on the subject of abuse. The two young boys, Johnny and Clint, escape from their respective abusive home situations, and in their limited way, attempt to escape the generational trauma brought about by learned behavior. When they run away to an abandoned church, their journey further begs the question - how would their story change if the church were *not* abandoned? What would their story look like had they had a supportive mentor or community to run to for help?


**SANCTUARY**  
storyboardpg # **02** scene # **04**

**ONER W/COVERAGE**  
LOW ANGLE OF CHURCH  
FLOOR NEAR PEW

**A** 

**B** 

**C** 

**D** 

GLASS SHATTERS  
ON TO THE FLOOR

FEET STEP INTO FRAME

cut to:  
OVERHEAD SHOT OF  
SLEEPING BAG ROLLS OUT


TRACK


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**SANCTUARY**  
storyboardpg # **03** scene # **04**

**ONER W/COVERAGE**  
CLINT ROLLS OUT BAG  
& KNEELS DOWN DIRTY IN FRAME  
JOHNNY DUMPS BACKPACK ITEMS

**A** 

**B** 

**C** 

**D** 

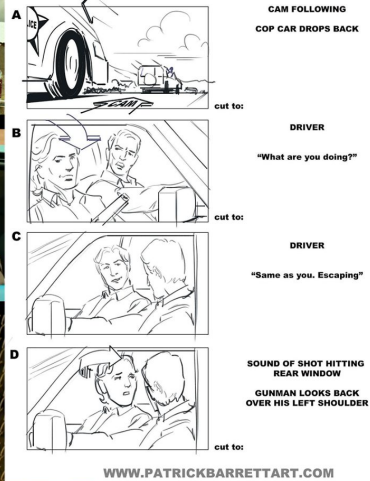
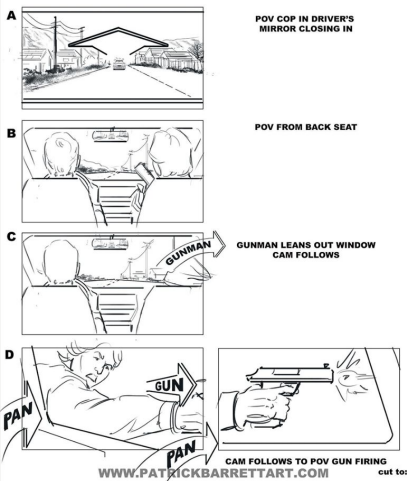
JOHNNY GRABS CARD

JOHNNY  
"For helping me get out  
of there."

cut to:  
HE TOSSES THE CARD

cut to:  
UPSHOT OF CLINT  
CATCHING CARD

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The adult storyline focuses on DRIVER and GUNMAN after what appears to be a bank robbery that turns into a heated car chase. When things turn deadly, their story explores how and when to honor a friend's last request. Do you do what you feel is best for them, or do you do what they ask? How far would you go to honor a friend's dying wish?

**Is this a Faith-based Film?** We like to refer to it as faith-adjacent... While there is no statement of religious theme, there is a young character that asks, "Do you think there's a hell?" This is an important question lots of young people explore when faced with real world problems. While "Sanctuary" the Short Film does not attempt to answer this question in any religious way, it does allow the characters to explore their version of the answer as a coming-of-age film.

**More than a Short Film:** Through the process of making this proof-of-concept film, we also decided we wanted to share what we learned with other up-and-coming filmmakers so that we can all come together to continue to improve how we approach independent filmmaking. We hope our contributors find our film entertaining and our behind-the-scenes enlightening.



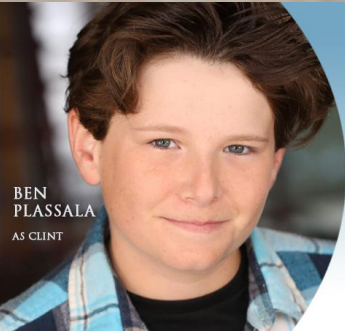
# Why Now?

The story of “Sanctuary,” the Short Film, is incredibly relevant to today’s generation of young people who are struggling to overcome their own generational trauma while finding meaningful connection and their place in the world. While we do not intend for our characters to be a model for good behavior, we also fully recognize the way people struggle when they feel like they have no other choices. At the very least, we hope audiences walk away considering their options so they never have to feel as cornered as Johnny and Clint.

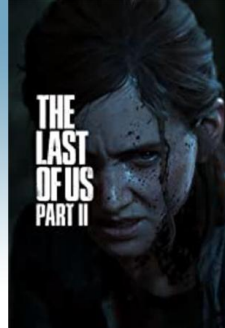
From the beginning - the biggest challenge wasn’t driving, stunts, building a set, or even pursuing named actors. Our biggest challenge was treating this short film the same way we would a feature so that it would be scalable as a proof-of-concept. “Sanctuary” is a short film, but it is also a case study to see how we can resurrect independent filmmaking and make it into a financially sustainable business model.

Often the compromise to make a film profitable is to pull resources during production to the detriment of the crew. [After the tragic shooting of Halyna Hutchins on the set of Alec Baldwin's Rust in 2021](#), we hope our example of preparation and set safety will help to encourage a new standard in ethical, fiscally sustainable filmmaking.

# CAST BIOGRAPHIES



BEN PLASSALA  
AS CLINT

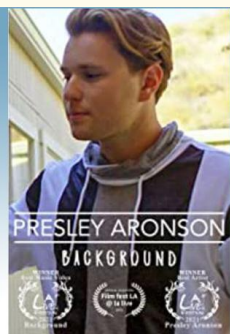
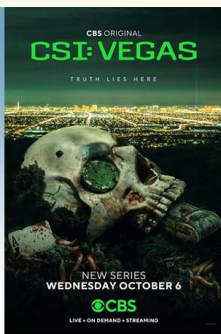


## Ben Plassala as *Young Clint*

Benjamin "Ben" Plessala started working in the entertainment industry at the age of five and has been working ever since in Television, Film, Commercial and Voice Over. Ben is a member of the voice casts of *Minions: the Rise of Gru* (2022), Disney Pixar's *Turning Red* (2022). When he is not performing, Ben plays high school baseball.

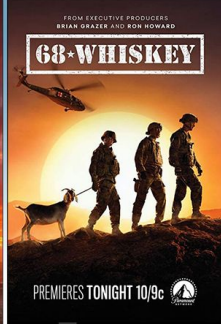


RHYS BECKER  
AS JOHNNY



## Rhys Jackson Becker as *Young Johnny*

Rhys Becker discovered his love for performing at the age of seven when he was cast as young Philip Carlyle in a musical theatre production of *The Greatest Showman*. In Oct 2021, Rhys booked the supporting role of "Will", Gina Carano's son in the Western film, Terror on the Prairie (2022). When he is not performing, Rhys can be found enjoying nature or playing the Ukulele,



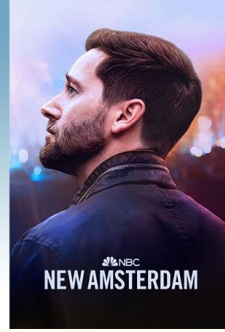
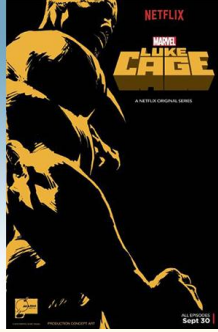
## Andrew J. Katers as *Driver / Johnny*

[Andrew J. Katers](#) was born and raised in Colorado. With a background in martial arts, Andrew quickly found his niche as an “action actor” and producer. His work in stunts has lead him to work in motion capture with big-name games such as *Star Wars: Jedi Survivor*, *Call of Duty*, and *Gotham Knights*, as well as several other to-be-released games.



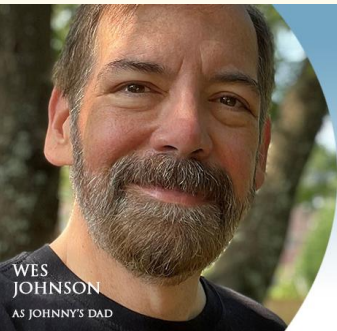
## Dallas Schaefer as *Gunman / Clint*

[Dallas Schaefer](#) was born and raised in North Dakota. After graduating from College, Dallas traveled throughout Australia and New Zealand where he discovered his passion for acting. In 2018, Dallas moved to Los Angeles where he has appeared in film, television, and commercials. He currently writes, produces, and is the lead actor in his own web-series: [Boytalk](#).



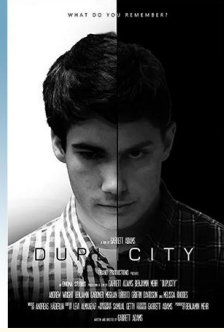
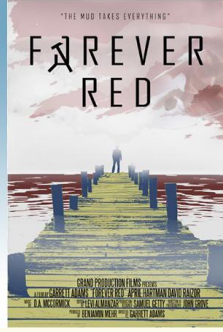
## Cedric Benjamin as *Policeman*

[Cedric Benjamin](#) is a bicoastal actor and writer from Southern Florida, who served in the United States Military. After serving, he moved to New York where he cultivated and nurtured his passion for the film industry. This led to him taking on groundbreaking roles in TV, Film, and Theater all over the U.S. He is also often seen doing stand up comedy in New York and Los Angeles.



## FEATURING: Wes Johnson as *Johnny's Dad*

[Wes Johnson](#) was born in Arlington, Virginia, and is an acting student of the late George Robert Allen. Wes is a frequently heard voice on many video games, most notably *The Elder Scrolls* series, *Fallout* Series, for Bethesda Softworks and *Star Trek: Legacy*. He recently voiced a Mag'Har Orc Noble in *World of Warcraft*. Notably, Wes was the first PA Announcer for the Washington Wizards.



## Garrett Adams, *Director*

Originally from a small town outside of Baltimore, Maryland, [Garrett Adams](#)'s dreams of becoming a filmmaker have been anything but small. His first feature film was completed while still in high school and his short films have all gone on to win awards. Garrett Adams' directorial work is defined by his need to always push the limits. His films captivate audiences with edgy stories and strong characters.



## Paul Knauer, *Writer*

[Paul Knauer](#) is a produced screenwriter working out of the Kansas City area. After a career in broadcasting, Paul turned his focus to screenwriting, writing dozens of shorts, with produced projects by directors around the globe, the most recent of which just made its big screen debut at the 2023 LA Shorts International Film Festival.

# PRODUCERS' BIOS



KAREN "KAY" ROSS  
PRODUCER & EP

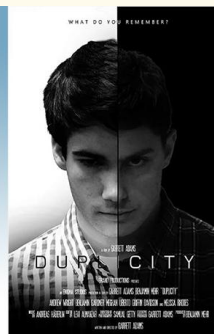


## Karen "Kay" Ross, *Producer and Executive Producer*

Originally from the D.C. area, [Kay](#) is a writer, director, actor, and producer with a passion for storytelling and an extensive development and production portfolio, including shorts, features, and podcasts. Kay loves to give back to the film community, including weekly "watercooler chats" to build a community culture of cooperation and inclusivity.



BEN MEHR  
PRODUCER & EP



## Ben Mehr, *Producer*

Also from Maryland, [Ben](#) has been making films with Garrett since high school. After attending Towson University, Ben moved into commercial work with his company Bmore Grand with clients like Final Draft, Kodak, and Screencraft. Ben Mehr's passion is to evoke emotion from his viewers in order to enact a positive change for both his audience and the world.

# OUR TEAM

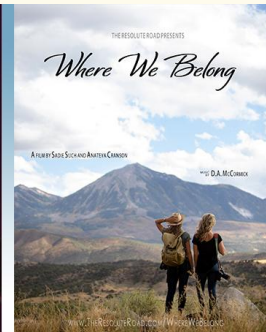
ARTHUR  
CASTELLANO  
CINEMATOGRAPHER



## Arthur Castellano, **Cinematographer and Co-Producer**

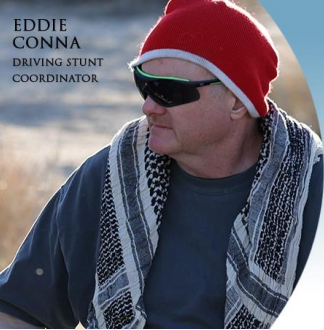
[Arthur Samuel Castellano III](#) has a growing list of 30 plus film and television credits for his work as a 1st camera assistant, writer, producer and Cinematographer. Arthur's camera work can most recently be enjoyed on the BET TV Series “À La Carte” as “A” Camera Operator as well as on the Hulu TV series, “Bite Sized Halloween”.

D.A.  
MCCORMICK  
COMPOSER



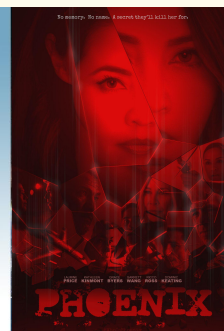
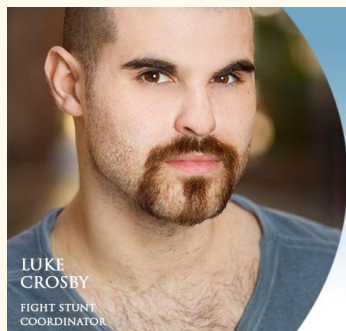
## D.A. McCormick, **Composer**

[Daniel McCormick](#) is an award winning composer. His works have been featured in theaters across France, Finland, Scotland, India, Mexico and U.S.A. He composed for the Emmy winning documentary *Tending The Wild* (2016) and has scored films that have premiered at Sundance, SXSW, Tribeca and many other film festivals across the world.



## Eddie Conna, *Driving Stunt Coordinator* & *Gun Safety Specialist*

Industry veteran [Edward Conna](#) has been integral in successful stunt teams for over 30 years. With experience in both film and television, stunts and stunt coordination, Eddie now looks forward to more opportunities to produce and mentor the next generation of filmmakers.



## Luke Crosby, *Fight Stunt Coordinator* & *Gun Safety Specialist*

[Luke Gregory Crosby](#) was born on February 1, 1995 in Los Angeles County, California, USA. He is an actor and writer, known for Maximum Ride (2016), The House (2017) and Devoured (2015).





VICTORIA VIEIRA  
ART DIRECTOR

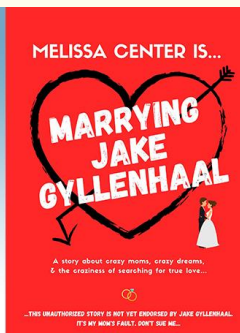


## Victoria Vieira, *Art Director*

Victoria is a passionate artist, photographer, and filmmaker. Born and raised in a dynamic Brazilian household in the Washington DC metropolitan area, Victoria has always been drawn to capturing the extraordinary moments of everyday life. As founder of [Vieira Productions](#), she brings heart and finesse to documentary and narrative storytelling alike.

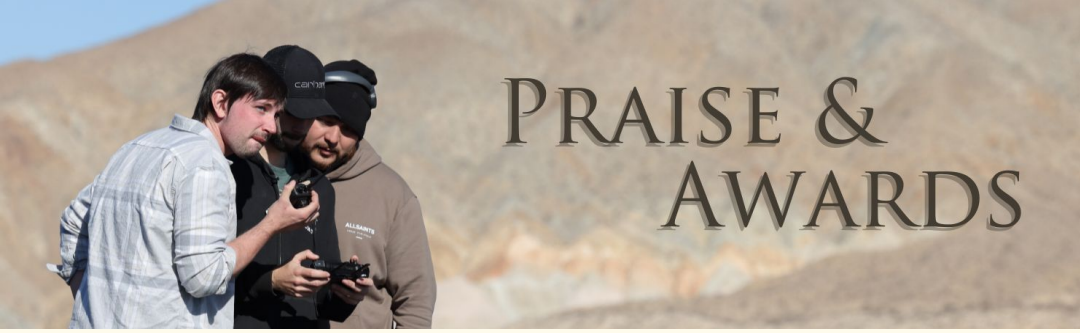


MELISSA CENTER  
CONSULTING PRODUCER



## Melissa Center, *Consulting Producer*

Stage and Screen actress, [Melissa Center](#) also consults on social media marketing, crowdsource funding, and leveling up the independent filmmaking business model. Through her work with Greenlight Yourself, she assists other up-and-coming filmmakers to reach a greater audience and increase engagement on all platforms.



# PRAISE & AWARDS

## Praise

*"This movie is so good, I don't need to*

*see anymore*

**COMING SOON!**

*just THAT good. I mean, it's not*

*Deadpool good, but nothing is that*

*good. Except Deadpool. I love*

*Deadpool."*

*"I've never found me to watch this*

*but boy do I love*

*this movie."*

*Tommy Cola, GOLDEN IDOL AWARDS*

## Awards WEEKLY





# CREDITS

*Directed by:*

**Garrett Adams**

*Written by:*

**Paul Knauer**

*Produced by:*

**Garrett Adams  
Karen "Kay" Ross  
Benjamin Mehr**

*Executive Producers*

**Garrett Adams  
Karen "Kay" Ross  
Viper Dave**

*Director of Photography*

**Arthur Castellano**

*Edited by*

**Leviticus Almanzar**

*Original Score by*

**Daniel McCormick**

*Costume Designer*

**Victoria Vieira**

*VFX Supervisor*

**Mayon Denton**

*Co-Producers*

**Roz Wolf  
Debra De Liso  
Arthur Castellano**

*Associate Producers*

**Carol Stoil  
Gabrielle Nehring  
Christian R. Cardenas  
Lara Ayad  
Brooklynn Fields**

*Driving Stunt Coordinator*

**Eddie Conna**

*Fight Stunt Coordinator*

**Luke Crosby**

# CAST

*DRIVER / Johnny*

**Andrew J. Katers**

*Young Clint*

**Benjamin Plessala**

*Young Johnny*

**Rhys Becker**

*GUNMAN / Clint*

**Dallas Schaefer**

*Sheriff*

**Cedric Benjamin**

*Young Johnny's Father*

**Wes Johnson**

*Deputy Sheriff*

**John Fantasia**



# CREW

*First Assistant Director:*

**A.K. Moore**

*2nd Assistant Director:*

**Alexandra Harrell**

*Production Coordinator:*

**Emily Piesens**

*Production Assistants:*

**Roly Garcia**

**Valerie Ybarra**

**Olga Leyman**

*Script Supervisor:*

**Tiffany Herbert**

*Studio Teacher:*

**Michele Rick**

*Art Director*

**Victoria Vieira**

*A Camera Operator:*

**Arthur Castellano**

*B Camera Operator:*

**Michael Cardenas**

*1st Assistant Camera:*

**Castor Gil**

*B Cam 1st Assistant Camera:*

**Matt Lemus**

*Stadicam Operator*

**Michael Cardenas**

*Drone Camera Operator*

**Benjamin Mehr**

*DIT:*

**Leviticus Almanzar**

*Chief Lighting Technician:*

**Kyle Thor**

*Best Boy Electric:*

**Travis Brasher**

*Key Grip:*

**Lance Gegner**

*Swing Grip:*

**Gavin Samples**

*Best Boy Grip:*

**Travis Brasher**

*Lead Man:*

**Syd Richardson**

*Construction Intern:*

**Christian R. Cardenas**

*Sound Mixer:*

**Jonathan Millett**

*Additional Sound Mixer:*

**Jim Blank**



# CREW

*Firearms Safety Supervisor:*

**Eddie Conna**  
**Luke Crosby**

*Health and Safety Supervisor:*

**Dana Toporek**

*Process Trailer Provided by:*

**[Camera Cars Unlimited](#)**

*Process Trailer Driver:*

**Brandon Keck**

*B Process Trailer Driver Trainee:*

**Christopher Morden**

*Sheriff's Car Provided by :*

**[Picture Cars Los Angeles](#)**

*Set Builders:*

**Danielle Bacanskas**  
**Allison Dean**  
**Kia Sofia Borst**  
**Dan Maisonet**

*Property Master:*

**Victoria Vieira**

*Key Hair & Makeup:*

**Victoria Vieira**

*SFX Makeup:*

**Lexie Almanzar**

*Transportation Coordinator:*

**Benjamin Mehr**

*Visual Effects Artist:*

**Ethan Montgomery**

*ADR Recorded at:*

**[Studio City Sound](#)**

*ADR Engineer:*

**Marcus Colbert**

*Colorist:*

**Jason Maydick**

*Podcast Consultation:*

**Ben Gardner**

*Marketing Consultant:*

**Melissa Center**

*Social Media Consultant:*

**Brooklyn Fields**

*Poster Designer:*

**Lakshika Nissanka**

