

**WAITING
FOR
THE LIGHT
TO
CHANGE**





FILM INFORMATION

Runtime: 01:28:55

Language: English, Mandarin

Genre: Drama

Format: Color, 1.66:1, 5.1 Surround Sound

Year: 2022

A photograph of two young women sitting on a sandy beach. They are both wearing dark green puffer jackets and white sneakers. The woman on the left is wearing light blue jeans, and the woman on the right is wearing dark blue jeans. They are both looking down and to the right with serious, thoughtful expressions. The background shows a wooden fence and some dry grass. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

LOGLINE

Over the course of a week-long beachside getaway, Amy, having recently undergone dramatic weight loss, finds herself wrestling between loyalty to her best friend Kim and her attraction to Kim's new boyfriend.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I was in fourth grade, I always looked at the fifth-graders in my elementary school with admiring eyes. Soon I'd be them, having everything figured out, having solved all these annoying fourth-grade math problems. And I got to fifth grade and nothing changed. Math was still difficult and the teachers still thought of us as children (because we literally were, ha!).

The same kind of thoughts went through my head when I was in college, looking at all these graduates, now starting real life. One day I'll get there. Now I'm 28 and still don't think I am there yet. I'm still making mistakes left and right, struggling with life's relationships, with being happy, being comfortable, having goals, comparing myself to other people. Part of me wants to be an adult, the other part wants to stay a kid forever. Sometimes I wonder if I even know myself, if I'm actually the person I have always thought of myself to be. Maybe I'm just a little more disturbed, a little pettier, a little meaner than that.

I have packaged all these sentiments into the characters of *Waiting For The Light To Change*. I let each of the three women in the film carry some aspect of myself in them. Events of the films were taken from real-life experiences (my life and my actors'). I was once that girl who thought someone I loved would never feel the same way about me because I was heavy. "It's easier to long for something than to actually have it," I thought. I lost 40lbs after the pandemic started, I united with my best friend in college after that, she bought me a plane ticket because I was "a starving artist". Et cetera et cetera.

We made *Waiting For The Light To Change* during the pandemic, with a ten-person crew, and a five person cast. It was an intimate experience that allowed us to experiment with a lot of things, and let our limitations be our liberation. The film is meant to be a vacation, an escape from reality. But sometimes when you're most determined to escape, you're driven right back to face the demons that live inside.

INTERVIEW

With Linh Tran | Director

What inspired the story for Waiting for the Light to Change?

When DePaul SCA Indie Studio was looking for their 3rd edition candidates, DePaul had a few scripts that they optioned for us to choose from, and I actually picked a script that was a coming-of-age. However, COVID-19 broke out shortly after the pitch, everything quickly got shut down. Our shoot was pushed to late summer, then pushed again to the winter. By the end of 2020, we just had to come to terms with the fact that we didn't have enough resources to produce a story of that scale during COVID time.

In December 2020, we decided to push the shoot one more time to March 2021, and write a whole new script for it. *Waiting for the Light to Change's* first draft was finished in January. A couple of revisions later, we went and shot it. A lot of the writing was done during production as well. When we started writing the script, I had just come back from a Friendsgiving trip. My best friend from college had bought me a flight ticket to come spend the holiday with her and her circle in NYC. I have always been interested in women friendships, and at the time I did a lot of reflection on myself and my relationship with my best friend and other people (especially after I had lost 30lbs during COVID, just like the main character in the film). At the time, I was reading the Neapolitan Novels by Elena Ferrante, which revolved around a very complex life-long friendship between two women. All of these became inspiration and eventually material for *Waiting for the Light to Change*.





Can you talk a little bit about your experience directing this film as part of SCA Indie Studio? What resources at DePaul did you find most helpful?

I think the concept of SCA Indie Studio itself is really brilliant because it teaches young filmmakers like us that if we have a story to tell, we could somehow manage to do it with very little money and resources. All it takes is everyone's commitment and stamina. Because we were a crew of students, both grad and undergrad, and we were all learning, it felt sort of like a weird form of liberation, it was up to us to create whatever we believed in. The school was supportive of our crazy idea of writing a brand new script and shooting it so quickly, without much control from their end other than some safety protocols. I think that was the most helpful and encouraging thing that DePaul has done to help our production, on top of the equipment and other logistical affairs of course.

Because of COVID-19, we bubbled ourselves during production, there were 15 of us living in this small town, in isolation, filming for a month. It was honestly both very fun and very tough at the same time. I think the film feels so intimate because of this. I am very happy with the performances in the film, and I think it was a result of the relationships between myself, my crew with the cast members, and their relationships with one another.

Is this your first feature film? Would you say your style is the same whether directing short or feature films?

Yes, it is my first feature film. I actually don't think that much about my style, because that is something you do retrospectively. Before making a film, I just look forward and listen to my gut feelings. Of course, I think I am more drawn to certain aesthetics and rhythm, but since I haven't been making films for that long, I don't even know if my style and voice are fully formed yet. I'm still trying to figure it out. Sometimes, what you perceive as style might have emerged as a result of very specific circumstances during production, or even limited resources, and as a filmmaker, I just have to own it.



LINH TRAN | DIRECTOR, CO-WRITER

Born and raised in Vietnam, Linh Tran moved to the United States to pursue her higher education in 2013. Starting out in theater acting, she went on to direct and edit films. Linh's editing spans across multiple genres. Her directing works, which include both documentary and fiction films, are deeply personal, exploring memories of childhood and early adulthood.

Linh's films have been selected by Dublin International Film Festival, One Country One Film - Apchat-Isoire International Film Festival, Heartland International Film Festival, Bushwick Film Festival, Indy Shorts International Film Festival, Cordillera International Film Festival, Pittsburgh Shorts Film Festival, Berlin Lift-off Film Festival and Omeleto.



SAM STRALEY | PRODUCER

Sam was born and raised in Cincinnati OH, where his passion for film and performance began early on due to frequent trips to the movie theater with his grandfather, a local film critic. This love and dedication led him to participate in every opportunity he could as a youth, primarily acting in school plays or films he and his friends would make on weekends. In 2013 he moved to Chicago to train as an actor at The Theater School at DePaul University (BFA - 2017). While at school, he guest-starred on Chicago P.D. (NBC) and co-starred on Philip K. Dick's Electric Dreams (Amazon). Since graduating, he's worked on a number of feature films, including Sundance darling Hala (Apple TV), and Film Movements Once Upon A River. His TV series regular credits include The Kids Are Alright (ABC), Welcome To Flatch (Fox), and The Dropout (Hulu). He is repped by UTA and Impression Entertainment. Waiting For the Light to Change marks his producing debut.



JEWELLS SANTOS | PRODUCER, CO-WRITER

Jewells Santos is a Puerto Rican filmmaker and producer based in Chicago. She graduated from DePaul with a degree in playwriting. In 2020, she co-wrote and produced her first feature film, "Waiting for the Light to Change" which premiered at Heartland International Film Festival. She produced the short film, "Dirtbag" which premiered at Chicago International Film Festival this year. She has directed over 15 music videos, most recently, "Girls" by Lexy Panterra. Her narrative work explores womanhood, body image, intimacy, mental health, and POC femme narratives. She is a co-founder of Fatfish Films.



JAKE ROTGER | PRODUCER

Jake Rotger was born in the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan. After appearing as an actor in a number of independent features while in high school, Jake relocated to Los Angeles in 2015, where he wrote and produced a number of short films before eventually attending DePaul University in Chicago. While at DePaul, Jake produced two independent feature films: Waiting for the Light to Change, which premiered at Heartland International Film Festival, and Local Band, which is scheduled to premiere summer of 2023. Currently, he's located in Los Angeles working at United Talent Agency.

JAMES CHOI | EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



James Choi is a prolific, award-winning filmmaker with over a decade of film industry experience in Los Angeles having worked in representation (Innovative Artists and The Firm), production (Sarkissian Productions, Rush Hour) and digital media (Ifilm.com/MTV Networks).

As an independent filmmaker, James Choi has produced two feature films from first time directors that have premiered at SXSW. "Made in China" winning the Grand Jury Award and Best Female Director and distributed by IFC Films and "Saint Frances" the Audience Award and Jury Award for Breakthrough Voice and distributed by Oscilloscope Films. Saint Frances was also nominated for two Gotham Awards and the John Cassavetes Award at the Independent Spirit Awards in 2021.

James made his directorial debut with "Empty Space," a multi award-winning feature film written by Judi Krant. The story centers on a young man bullied for his excessive weight and whose life majorly shifts after falling in love with a blind girl. This micro-budgeted feature was released theatrically in South Korea through cMovie Asia and is available on most digital platforms through Cow Lamp Films.

Having been in the forefront of the micro independent film movement in the last decade, James has produced and directed numerous films that have screened widely all around the world, winning awards and receiving distribution.

Mr. Choi also teaches film at DePaul University's School of Cinematic Arts in Chicago..





CAST



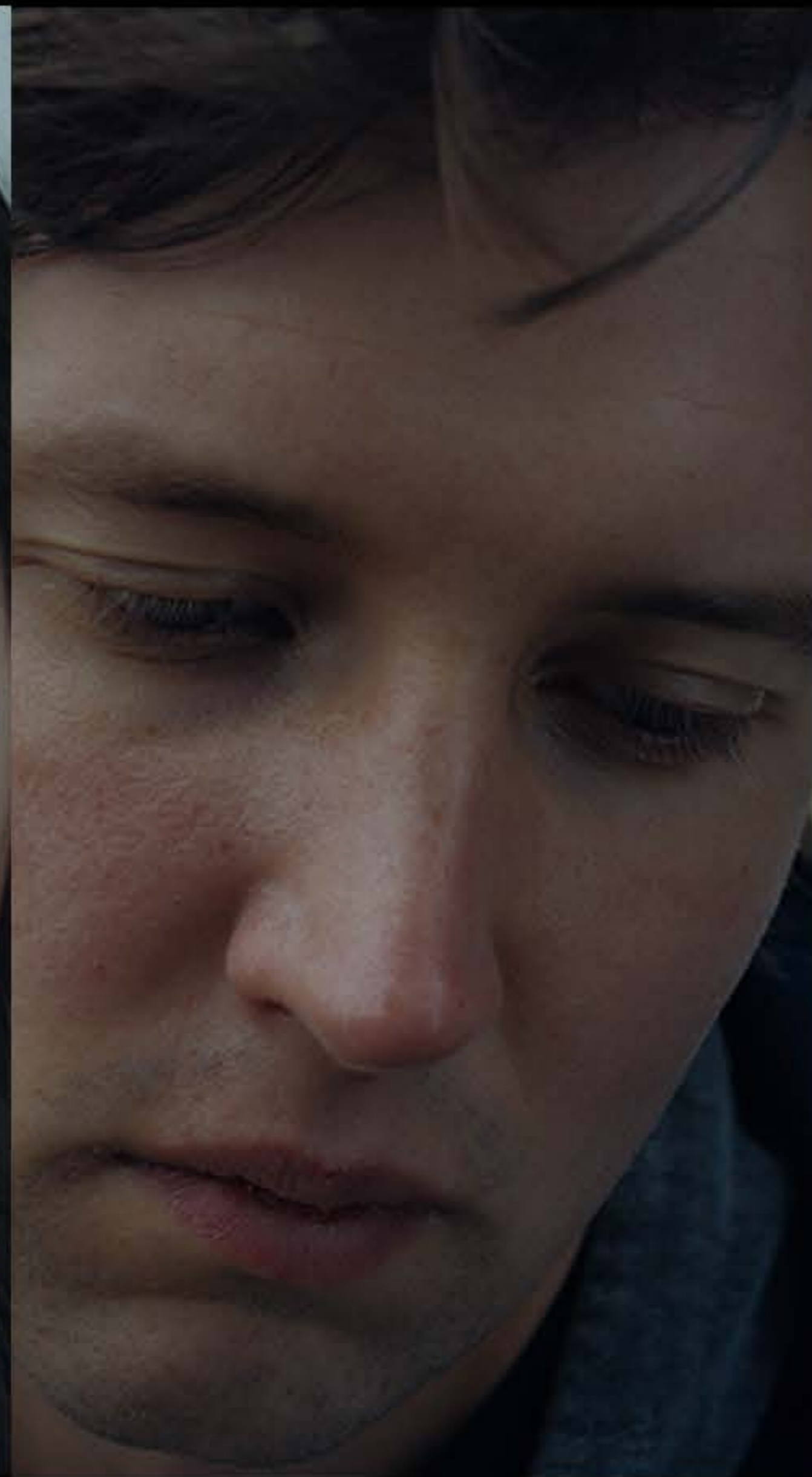
QUN CHI



ERIK BARRIENTOS



JIN PARK



SAM STRALEY



JOYCE HA

A person is sitting on a wooden floor in a dark room, looking out a window. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window on the right. The person is wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and pants. The window has a grid pattern.

CREW

Director
Linh Tran

Producer
Jake Rotger
Jewells Santos
Sam Straley

Writer
Delia Van Praag
Jewells Santos
Linh Tran

Director of Photography
David Foy

Assistant Camera
Jacob Ocker

DIT
Dan Stewart

Location Sound Mixer
Tom Le

First Assistant Director
George Ellzey Jr.

Production Designer
Megan Moore

Wardrobe & HMU
Jewells Santos

Composer
Benjamin Barantschik

Editor
Elijah Gray

Sound Designer
Jayson Niner

Colorist
Sam Howells

Gaffer
Adam Noll

VFX Artist
Elijah Gray

Titles
Zoe Pham

Graphic Design
Don Eblahan

Guitarist
Don Eblahan

COVID Compliance Officer
Delia Van Praag

Production Assistant
Dan Stewart

FILM CONTACT

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