

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

# AVENUES

PRESS KIT

88 MINUTES

MPAA RATING - TBD

BAD  
MAN'S  
SON

## - SYNOPSIS -

Based on a true story, *Avenues* is a deeply personal exploration of fatherhood and the isolation felt by former convicts. The film follows Saul Sanchez as he returns home to the rough Northeast Los Angeles neighborhood of Highland Park—also known as The Avenues—after serving a decade-long prison sentence. Once back, Saul seeks a reunion with his estranged young daughter even though her life has moved on, oblivious to his paternity. Guided by a sympathetic parole officer, who discovers his hidden illiteracy, Saul begins writing a letter to his daughter and begins a journey of self-discovery amid pressure from his gangland Avenidas familia. As Saul separates himself from old friends, he reluctantly mentors a troubled teenage neighbor following an all-too-familiar path. In a heart-wrenching dénouement, Saul puts everything on the line for a second chance.



“AVENUES” — Hector Atreyu Ruiz as Saul Sanchez



## Ojos! 5 Hot American Latino films to discover in 2013

NEWS

BY CHRISTINE DAVILA

JANUARY 10, 2013 9:30 AM

0 COMMENTS

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All are first features by wildly original voices who are remixing potent multi-cultural heritage and inventing their own unique brand of genre. So much talent! Makes this Chicanita so proud!

2. **AVENUES**\* — written and directed by Aaref Rodriguez and produced by his production company, Bad Man's Son. A story that deals with a cholo ex-con who returns to his barrio in Highland Park and sets to go on the straight and narrow but soon finds himself pulled by his old gang familia may sound familiar, but never has it been as emotionally excavated and depicted with such sensitivity and complexity. Hector Atreyu Ruiz is Saul Sanchez whose driving motivation is the chance to reunite with his estranged daughter. Guided by a sympathetic parole officer, played by Tracey Heggins, from the 2008 indie African-American gem *Medicine for Melancholy*, Saul tackles catch-22 circumstances towards his mission and confronts growing uneasiness from his vatos who continue to test if he's still down. At its core the film is an exploration about fatherhood and home, in particular highlighting the social phenomenon of absentee fathers because they are behind bars, an issue predominantly afflicting Latino families and communities.

Rodriguez, a USC film school grad, made the feature before graduating, having fleshed the story further out of the short film he made titled *Pardon*. His project mentor, Patricia Cardoso (*Real Women Have Curves*) encouraged him to do more with it and this is the amazing result. With earnest and raw performances, the moving and powerfully directed film marks this a sign of a true filmmaker talent discovery.

\*Was originally reviewed under the working title *Pardon*.

## - THE FILMMAKERS -

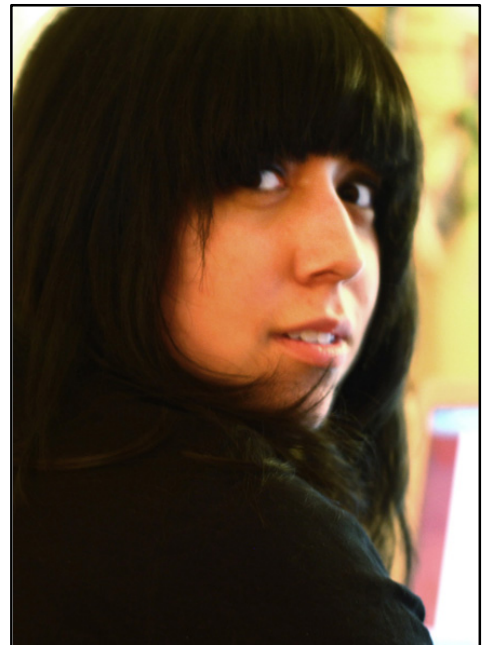


### **AAREF RODRIGUEZ** — *Writer and Director*

A Northern California, Central Valley native, *Avenues* marks Aaref Rodriguez's feature film debut as a writer and director. Rodriguez recently earned his MFA in Film Production from USC's School of Cinematic Arts under a highly selective, fully funded, Annenberg Fellowship Award. While at USC, he was awarded the National Association of Theater Owner's Award for Excellence in Directing, A Broccoli Foundation Award for excellence in Producing, and a Rodolfo Montes Scholarship for excellence in Filmmaking. Rodriguez also holds a BA in Theatre from USC and a MA in Theatre Arts from CSULA. In addition to active filmmaking, Rodriguez teaches high school Special Education and Art in South Los Angeles.

### **KRISTIN COX RODRIGUEZ** — *Producer*

Born and raised in North Texas, *Avenues* marks Kristin Cox Rodriguez's feature film producing debut. Previously she produced *Cadence*, a short film, about an urban youth living out his gridiron fantasies. She received her BA in Public Relations from USC's Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism—where she earned a seat at the distinguished Annenberg Honors Seminar—under a highly selective Trojan Scholarship. Also while at USC, she minored in Cinema Television at the School of Cinematic Arts. In addition to her active writing and producing, she works as a Brand Insight Consultant performing custom market research studies for such clients as LG Electronics, Campbell's Soup, and Goodyear Tires.



**TOM P. INGRAM** — *Executive Producer*

Tom P. Ingram is best known as the organizer of the yearly Viva Las Vegas Rockabilly Weekend, the world's biggest and most prestigious Rockabilly music event. Tom is also an actor, accomplished martial artist, and successful real estate investor in Long Beach, California. Tom is currently producing a narrative feature film set at Viva Las Vegas titled *Rockabilly*.

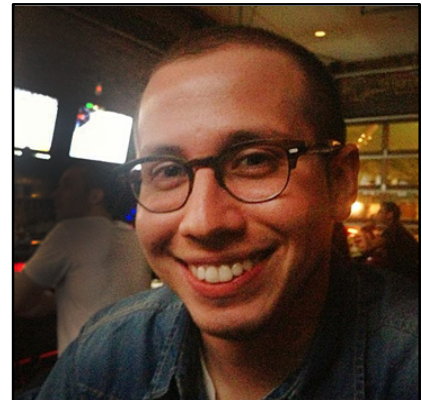


**TOMM LOONEY** — *Executive Producer*

In addition to being a restaurateur and art gallery owner, television and radio anchor Tomm Looney is best known as “the voice” of *The Best Damn Sports Show Period* and as the current co-host of the *J.T. the Brick with Tomm Looney* show on Fox Sports Radio.

**MATTHEW ALAN COX** — *Music Supervisor*

A graduate of USC's prestigious Music Industry program, *Avenues* is Matthew's feature film debut as a music supervisor. In *Avenues*, he strove to create a unique musical theme that redefined the typical urban sound. Matthew has worked with filmmakers to place music in multiple short films and documentaries. In addition to active music consultation, Matthew works for a major music publisher.



**TONY LLORENS** — *Composer*

A bluesman from Chicago, Tony has played piano with numerous music legends, including Desi Arnaz and Albert King. Tony currently infuses his musical genius in film scores, including the Moog synthesizer sounds that drive the haunting, unique sound of *Avenues*. In addition to composing and performing, Tony teaches high school music and choir.

## - THE CAST -

### **HECTOR ATREYU RUIZ** — *Saul Sanchez*

Hector came of age on the turbulent streets of South Los Angeles where poverty, gang violence, and drugs colored his life and resulted in incarceration as a youth. Despite grappling with this reality, he enrolled in a community college and then transferred to USC, where he graduated cum laude with a degree in theatre. Hector has since worked extensively in film and television for the last decade and is best known for playing Trigger in Michael Olmos' *Splinter* and opposite Kevin Bacon in James Wan's *Death Sentence*. *Avenues* marks Hector's first foray into leading man roles.

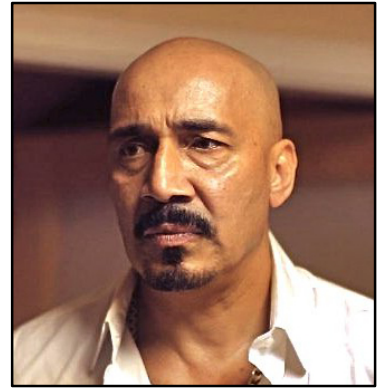


### **TRACEY HEGGINS** — *Angela Wright*

Beautiful and talented, Tracey burst onto the scene with a breakthrough performance in Barry Jenkins' 2008 indie *Medicine for Melancholy*. Tracey recently played the vampire, Senna in Bill Condon's *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2*. In *Avenues*, Tracey plays a parole officer who begins a taboo personal relationship with an ex-con she's helping to transition back to the real world.

**LOUIE “SKI” CARR** — *Victor Noriega*

Originally from Inglewood, California, Ski jump-started his career as a dancer and became one of the most iconic performers on *Soul Train*, going on to be a back-up dancer for the R&B group *New Edition*. Ski added acting to his repertoire and has had roles in George Tillman, Jr.’s 2010 film *Faster* with Dwayne Johnson, and Andrew Davis’ 2003 film *Holes*.



**RENE ARREOLA** — *Nacho Estrada*

*Avenues* is based on the true story of Rene’s experiences in Northeast Los Angeles. Rene starred in the short film, *Pardon*, directed by Aaref Rodriguez, which inspired *Avenues*. Rene began acting a few years ago and has had roles in multiple film and television projects. Rene is carving out a niche as a character actor with his gritty performances and chiseled exterior.

**ISRAEL MONTANO** — *Leo Quinto*

In his acting debut, Israel portrays with stunning clarity a conflicted teenager transitioning from juvenile to adult in a rough, gangland neighborhood. Director Aaref Rodriguez discovered Israel when he took Rodriguez’s High School Video Production class in South Los Angeles. Though new to acting, Israel is the certified “scene-stealer” of *Avenues*.



**ERIKA FLORES** — *Esperanza Quinto*

Originally from Cancun, Mexico, Erika began acting in telenovelas. Erika is one of the hardest working indie Latina actresses with roles in more than a dozen projects in the past few years. Most recently, Erika starred in Adam Watson’s 2012 film *Los Traficantes*. In *Avenues*, Erika – with heartbreaking beauty – plays a single mom losing control of her teen son.

# - THE MAKING OF “AVENUES” -

## The Short Film and Project Inspiration

*Avenues* is adapted from Aaref Rodriguez’s touching, 6 minute USC short film, *Pardon*.

**Q:** What changed from the short to the feature length version?

**Rodriguez:** The feature length version builds upon the elements of the short – fatherhood, isolation, and the courage to do what’s right for those you love. In the longer timeframe, it was an interesting challenge because we really got to build out Saul’s environment, his back-story, from the gang family to the love story. Also, the short starred Rene Arreola as the protagonist, but in *Avenues* he plays the antagonist that’s pressuring Saul—so he got to portray both sides of that coin. That was tough for him to do especially since this story is based on the real life experiences of him and his family in Northeast Los Angeles.

**Q:** What elements of Rene’s life inspired *Avenues*?

**Rodriguez:** When Rene came in to audition for the short film he was clearly the most authentic actor to read for the leading role. He was my last audition of the day so we just sat down and started talking. He had such a rich background that involved the turmoil of his brother being estranged from his daughter after serving time in prison, battling illiteracy, and living in the midst of a harsh gang culture. I was so inspired that I incorporated his real life story into the short and immediately began shooting with him as the lead. The feature film, *Avenues*, further explores elements of his life and that’s what gives it its heart.



**SCREEN GRAB OF “PARDON”** — *Rene Arreola* starred in the USC short film from which “*Avenues*” is based.



## The USC Thesis Connection

*Avenues* was written, filmed, and edited while the Director was a full-time student at USC's School of Cinematic Arts' MFA Film Production Program.

**Q:** How did your graduate work at USC come into play with *Avenues*?

**Rodriguez:** *Avenues* was filmed on weekends over the course of a Summer as my unofficial thesis project. I really wanted to come out of school with a feature—one that could really serve as my calling card and speak about who I am as a filmmaker. While I was in the MFA program, I had really thoughtful and caring mentors that shepherded not only my shorts but also this film—one in particular was Patricia Cardoso (director of *Real Women have Curves*).

## Filmmaking with a Micro Crew

*Avenues* was filmed with a crew of 5 people, including the Director and Producer.

**Q:** What are the pros and cons for filming with such a small crew?

**Rodriguez:** Well you don't have to feed a lot of people, which is great. Joking aside, we all had to wear a lot of hats. It was a big learning experience for all of us, and we were exhausted when we got home after each day of shooting. It did allow us to move very quickly and get in and out of locations fast, because most of the time having lots of people means that there are crewmembers sitting around and ultimately there's less energy. Plus the crew was really tight knit and believed in the project, everyone who worked on this was completely into what we were doing. We all really poured our blood, sweat, and tears into the film.

## Student and Teacher On Set

*Avenues* featured a former high school student, Israel Montano, of Director Aaref Rodriguez's Video Production class.

**Q:** What stood out to you about Israel that made you think he'd be right for this role?

**Rodriguez:** Actually, as I was writing the role, he was the person I had in my mind as the inspiration for the character of Leo. His mannerisms and the cadence of his speech helped me write the character. When it came time to cast, we auditioned other people, and none of them had that same innocent quality that he had. So I had Israel meet the star of the film to get a feel and we offered him the part. Israel and I rehearsed a lot before shooting to really get the character down. While shooting Israel continually challenged our more seasoned actors and that just really made things special. In the end, his performance is nothing short of fantastic.

## - PRODUCTION STILLS -



The crew working a spider-dolly during a tense on-screen confrontation.



Shooting at La Fuente Restaurant in Highland Park, Los Angeles.



Cruising in our low-rider on North Figueroa in Highland Park, Los Angeles.



Actors rehearsing lines in between scenes.



Matthew Alan Cox bruises up Israel Montano before an emotional scene.



On set in downtown Long Beach—which doubled for Highland Park in some scenes.

# - TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS -

## RUNNING TIME

88 Minutes

## LANGUAGE

English

## ASPECT RATIO

2.39:1 Widescreen

## SOUND

5.1 Surround

LtRt Stereo

## EXHIBITION FORMATS

HDCAM-SR

HDCAM

Blu-Ray Disc

DVD

Quicktime



**"AVENUES"** — Tracey Heggins and Hector Atreyu Ruiz

# AVENUES

## - CREDITS -

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**WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY**

Aaref Rodriguez

**PRODUCED BY**

Kristin Cox Rodriguez

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Tom P. Ingram

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Tomm Looney

**CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS**

Todd Engle

Ernesto Rivera

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

Hector Atreyu Ruiz

**MUSIC SUPERVISOR**

Matthew Alan Cox

**COMPOSER**

Tony Llorens

## CAST

SAUL SANCHEZ	Hector Atreyu Ruiz
ANGELA WRIGHT	Tracey Heggins
VICTOR NORIEGA	Louie "Ski" Carr
NACHO ESTRADA	Rene Arreola
LEO QUINTO	Israel Montano
ESPERANZA QUINTO	Erika Flores
VANESSA RIOS	Maile Martinez
HENRY VAUGHN	Tom P. Ingram
MARGARITA MARTINEZ	Lizette Coronado
JAMES McCOY	Todd Engle
YESENIA RIOS	Jenny Mendoza
KENO RICHARDS	Brad Hills
RESTAURANT OWNER	Ruben Zapien
GOYO	Jacob Sanchez
MEMO	Emiliano Torres
CHUCHO	Jordan Jones
JOSUE	Jack Guzman
FLACO	Cesar Garcia
WOMAN AT BBQ	Andrea Martinez
GIRL AT BBQ	Sarah Arreola
BOY AT BBQ	Brian Navous
PRISON GUARD	Ernesto Rivera
GUY ON TRAIN	Erik Melendez
BUTCHER	Daniel Carpio

## CREW

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	Aaref Rodriguez
LOCATION SOUND	Matthew Alan Cox
PRODUCTION DESIGNER	Kristin Cox Rodriguez
GAFFER	Erik Melendez
MAKEUP	Matthew Alan Cox
COSTUMES	Kristin Cox Rodriguez

## **PRODUCTION SUPPORT**

CASTING DIRECTOR	Erika Flores
CASTING FACILITIES	Cazt Studios Film Independent
LEGAL SERVICES	George M. Rush
SAG-AFTRA REPRESENTATIVE	Hector Del Cid
PRODUCTION INSURANCE BY	Truman Van Dyke Company
PRODUCTION INSURANCE AGENT	Kent Hamilton
PAYROLL SERVICES BY	PES Payroll
BANKING SERVICES BY	USC Credit Union
EQUIPMENT RENTALS	Wooden Nickel Lighting & Grip
PRODUCTION SOUND RENTALS	Coffey Sound
PROP WEAPONS	Larry L. Sherman
PICTURE VEHICLES	Anthony Rosas
CHILD WELFARE SERVICES	Stella Pacific Management
STUDIO TEACHER	Phil Eisenhower

## **POST-PRODUCTION**

POST-PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR	Kristin Cox Rodriguez
EDITOR	Aaref Rodriguez
COLOR CORRECTION	Bad Man's Son, Inc.
MUSIC SUPERVISION BY	Nothin' Creative
MUSIC SUPERVISOR	Matthew Alan Cox
MUSIC COORDINATOR	Elvia Cox
COMPOSER	Tony Llorens
MUSIC RECORDING STUDIOS	TL Garage
RECORDING ENGINEER	David H. Chapple
DRUMS	Matt Hergert
BASS GUITAR	Nathalie Chapple
ELECTRIC GUITAR	David H. Chapple

GUITARRON Aaref Rodriguez  
VIOLIN Kristin Cox Rodriguez  
CELLO Matthew Alan Cox  
KEYBOARDS & SYNTHESIZERS Tony Llorens

**Post Production Sound Services**  
**SOUND ONE**  
**Manhattan, New York, NY**

SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR Bob Hein  
RE-RECORDING MIXER Krissopher Chevannes  
BACKGROUND EDITOR Michael Kurihara  
FX EDITOR Eric Hirsch  
FOLEY EDITOR Michael Kurihara

**GENEROUS SUPPORT BY:**

Chelsea Rose Properties, L.L.C.  
La Estrella Restaurants  
La Fuente Restaurant  
Neighborhood Market of Highland Park  
Maurice the Artiste of the Northeast  
El Camino College EOPS Family  
Framework Entertainment  
Sound One  
Appletini Talent Agency  
Manual Arts High School  
Greyhound Lines, Inc.  
Folsom State Prison

**SPECIAL THANKS**

Johnny, Summer, and the Plascencia Family  
Manisha Dhanak  
James Wilson  
Yesenia De Avila

Joseph Valdez  
Melva Oliver  
Kiana Ruiz  
Marilyn Recinos  
Larry & Vicky Sherman  
Wayne Wallace  
David C. Lam  
Allan Mindel  
Rito & Elvira Ruiz  
Marc. A. Ruiz  
Cynthia “Changita” and the Dominguez Family  
Dal and the Toruno Family  
Sid & Patricia Levin  
Greg Maciel  
Douglas S. Matthews  
Jorge Ramirez-Martinez  
Brittney Beane  
Alistair Tober  
Hedy Rodriguez  
Maria Timpani  
Eddie Padilla  
Zack De La Rocha  
Stephen Parsey  
Oliver Riley-Smith  
Dan Shulman-Means  
Ana “Osita” Escamilla  
Zmary & Nahir Popal  
Randall & Elvia Cox  
Hugh McChord  
Katy Groskin  
Timothy Marx  
Patricia Cardoso  
Robert Kositchek  
Allan Holzman  
Christine Davila  
R.J. Daniel Hanna  
John Watson  
Gary Goldsmith  
Walter A. Gardiner (1878-1907)



## MUSIC

### “HEAVY AIR”

Written by Nate Grace, Jesse Jenkins, and Austin Youngblood

Performed by Pure X

Courtesy of Acephale Records

By Arrangement with Terrorbird Media

### “SURFACE”

Written by Nate Grace, Jesse Jenkins, and Austin Youngblood

Performed by Pure X

Courtesy of Acephale Records

By Arrangement with Terrorbird Media

### “CIELO”

Written by Fantasia Nortena

Performed by Fantasia Nortena

Courtesy of Fantasia Nortena

### “WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES SOMETIMES”

Written by Billy Frazier

Performed by King Davis House Rockers

Featuring Richard Thomas

Courtesy of Verve Records

Under License from Universal Music Enterprises

### “ISLAND, IS”

Written by Jonathan E. Mueller, Christopher M. Rosenau,  
James F. Schoenecker, Daniel T. Spack, Justin Vernon, and Thomas J. Wincek, Jr.

Performed by Volcano Choir

Courtesy of Jagjaguwar

By Arrangement with Bank Robber Music

### “BACK WHERE I BEGAN”

Written by Nate Grace, Jesse Jenkins, and Austin Youngblood

Performed by Pure X

Courtesy of Acephale Records

By Arrangement with Terrorbird Media

**SHOT ENTIRELY ON LOCATION IN:**

Los Angeles, California  
Long Beach, California  
Sacramento, California  
Folsom, California  
Madera, California

**PHOTOGRAPHED WITH CANON CAMERAS AND LENSES**

**EDITED ON AVID**

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**A  
Bad Man's Son, Inc.  
Production**

Downright Ruthless and Relentless ®

# - CONTACT INFORMATION -

For more information please contact us at the information below:

## **PRODUCTION COMPANY**

Bad Man's Son, Inc.  
Aaref Rodriguez & Kristin Cox Rodriguez  
Contact@BadMansSon.com

## **PUBLICITY**

Reyes Entertainment  
Yesenia De Avila  
Yesenia@ReyesEntertainment.com

## **LEGAL COUNSEL**

George M. Rush  
George@gmrush.com



*"AVENUES" — Erika Flores and Hector Atreyu Ruiz*

