

University of Southern California
presents



a **sunburnt summer**
這個夏天 陽光很猛

20 minutes
Chinese / English
HD 16:9 Color

Sandrine Pascale Cassidy
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LOGLINE

A single mother has to deal with the situation, in which her son was raped by the son of her boss.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Mia comes back from a trip to Chicago, organized by the school she teaches at, just to learn that her son, Teddy, has been raped, and the person who raped him is the son of Lynn, a good friend of her, as well as the headmaster of the school.

Teddy recalls that he was drunk when it happened, the night when they were celebrating Teddy's birthday. There isn't anyone who witnessed the rape, nor could testify that he was unconscious.

Mia wants justice, even though it means she has to put her job and her friendship with Lynn at risk, despite of Lynn's intimidation. But the situation gets more and more difficult for her to cope with.

SYNOPSIS

Teddy wakes up from a hangover. He doesn't feel good; not only because of the headache caused by alcohol, but he also feels weird somewhere in his body. He tries to remember what happened last night, when his mom Mia comes back home.

Mia puts down her luggage and is about to check in on Teddy. She walks pass the dining area and notices the mess on and around the table. It was Teddy's birthday yesterday, and it seemed like he and some friend had some great time. Mia enters Teddy's room and finds out that he's still in bed. As Mia is trying to get Teddy to get up, she notices some bruise on Teddy's wrist. Worried, she asks Teddy what happened.

Teddy recalls that Sean and Lily were here yesterday to celebrate his birthday. They had some food and some alcohol. Teddy got drunk and couldn't stop puking. Teddy recalls that Lily left early and Sean helped putting him in bed. Teddy recalls that, when he was not fully conscious, Sean molested him.

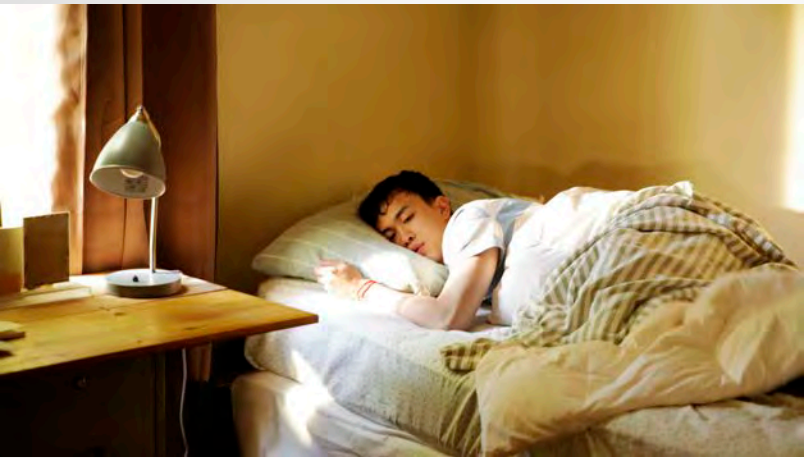
Mia brought Teddy to the hospital, and decided to report this case to the police.

Teddy goes to ask Lily if she could testify for him that he was drunk and unconscious, so that the police can make it a rape case. But Lily denies by saying that she was not there and didn't see anything happen.

Mia goes to the school where she works and meets with Lynn, the school's headmaster and also Sean's mom. Lynn tells Mia that she has already been to the police station with Sean. Lynn asks Mia, after all these years of friendship, and her helping Mia getting a job and the green card, how can she pay her back with such a horrible accuse. Lynn also says that even though the sexual behavior happened, no one could prove that Teddy was unconscious, and therefore did not give Sean consent. Mia becomes furious and questions Lynn for her integrity, whereas Lynn questions her back and says that she has already talked with her lawyers and is ready to bring this to the court. Also, Lynn tells Mia that she doesn't have to come to work anymore as she might have to spend more time preparing the lawsuit.

Mia and Teddy are now helpless. Upset, Teddy decides to give up. Feeling unable to do anything, Mia breaks down.

A few months later, Mia and Teddy moves away from the city, to somewhere they hope that they can start a new and better life.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This is a story about helplessness.

We're living in a world full of conflicts. Everyday, everywhere, people stand against all kinds of things for all kinds of reasons. Those exciting and satisfying success stories we see and hear are just a tiny portion of them, while in most cases, what we are against are too gigantic, too powerful and too firm for us to turn over. This story starts with an incident of sexual assault, but it definitely is not limited to it. What does this single incident reveal, of the cultural and social norms, ideologies, and unspeakable relations, that cultivate and even indulge incidents like this to happen, are quintessential to understand such problems.

I started writing the script in the summer of 2017. Back then, it was titled "Surrounded", a story about a rape victim, surrounded by lies, betrayals, and collective violence, who has to fight all alone against all of them, but was unable to change the reality. A year has passed, the script has been revised almost 20 drafts, and more and more cases like this have been exposed to the public around the world, from Hollywood in the US, to universities in China. When we see more and more people who had chosen to remain silent stood up, I think it is more important to know what kept them silent. Thus, we would know what are the actual things that we need to take down.

Just like the title indicates, the "sun" and the "heat" that it generates are the key elements and metaphors in this short film. If we could understand how does the "sun" generate "heat", how does the "heat" affect every single person, and how do people get "sunburnt" in every level of the lives of ours and others, I hope we could no longer be afraid of the "sun," and know how not to get "burnt."

THE FILMMAKERS



Writer / Director - Zicheng Li

Zicheng is from Beijing. He graduated from the School of Cinematic Arts of the University of Southern California with an MFA degree in Film Production. Before that, he attended the University of Minnesota Twin Cities to study psychology and sociology, during which time he started making music, writing poems, and making short films. He believes in the poetic and emotional quality of cinema. He published his first poetry anthology *Fleeting Years* in 2014, and his short film *The Sound That Remains* has been awarded Best Student Film and screened in London by London Independent Film Awards in 2017.



Producer - Di (Cindy) Wu

Cindy (Di) Wu is from Shanghai, China, currently earning her MFA in Film & TV Production at USC School of Cinematic Arts. She has worked with various student film productions with a concentration in producing. Cindy recently finished an internship with Kathy Morgan International (KMI) at AFM and Cannes as a sales assistant. She has previously been involved in a variety of creative backgrounds such as television production, project management, journalism, and music therapy. Prior to USC, she graduated from New York University with a major in Applied Psychology and a minor in Art History.



Associate Producer - Xiaoyuan (Ivy) Xiao

Ivy graduated from the University of Southern California in 2018, majoring in Film and TV production. In 2009, Xiao came to United States as a foreign exchange student at Elkhart Memorial High School. Later she double majored in Studio art and Film & TV production at Indiana University Bloomington and received her BA degrees. Xiaoyuan has worked with various student film productions with a concentration on producing. Some films she produced had been selected for several film festivals including, but not limited to, the 68th Berlin International Film Festival 2018, NBC Universal 2017, and Newport Beach Film Festival 2016.



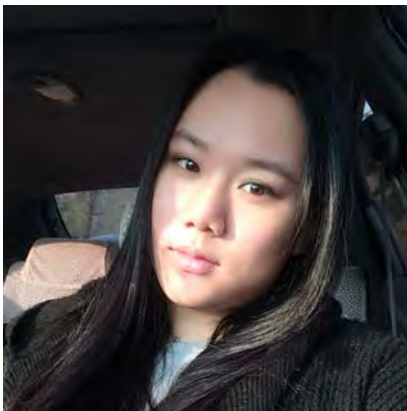
Director of Photography / Composer - Huazhang Dai

Huazhang is from Shenzhen, China. He earned his BA in Cinema at SFSU, and his first master degree at USC Thornton School of Music in Screen Scoring. With strong interests and talents in photography, he continued his study at USC School of Cinematic Arts as an MFA student in Film Production, and worked as a cinematographer on a variety of short films, including *Love & Loss*, a short documentary that won the silver award of documentaries of the 2018 Student Academy Awards.



Production Designer - Yuelin (Jolene) Zhao

Jolene was born and raised in Beijing, China. With a strong passion in storytelling, she decided to go on an adventure in filmmaking without hesitation since she made her first short video in high school. She then majored in Visual Art Media and minored in Communication at University of California San Diego. She is now a LA based director and production designer, and also an MFA candidate in Film Production at the University of Southern California. Jolene believes that film is a medium where her imagination can come alive. She loves a wide range of stories - from building worlds of dystopias and fantasy to observing people and ordinary things.



Editor - Mozhu Yan

Mozhu comes from China, where she majored in Chinese Literature for her undergraduate education at Sichuan University. After attending an exchange program at Columbia University, she became determined to become a filmmaker in order to tell the stories that exist on paper and in her mind. Currently, she is a student at the University of Southern California, Film & Television Production MFA Program.



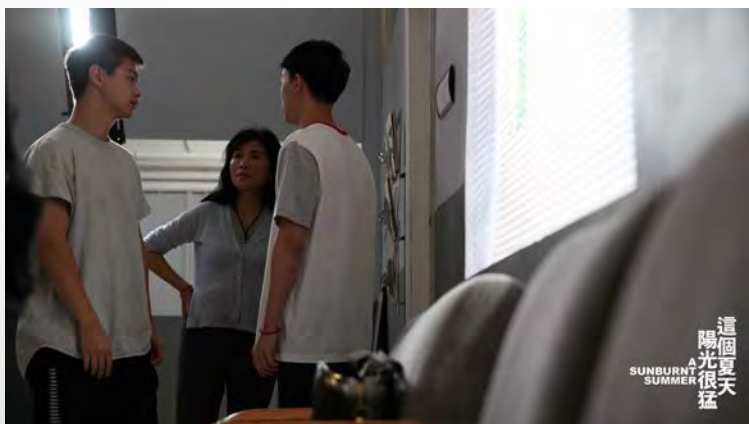
Sound Recordist - Bin (John) Zhao

John is an LA-based sound mixer and audio engineer. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from the Recording Art Program at the LA Film School. His work main focuses on production sound recording and post production sound.



Sound Designer & Mixer - Jingjue Zhou

Jingjue Zhou goes by "Jo" in America. It's her last name in Chinese but first name in English. She graduated from USC's School of Cinematic Arts in 2017 and is now a freelance sound designer for various post-production studios. She believes story momentum justifies opportunity for good sound.



CREDITS

starring / GRACE CHANG, NIC TOM

also starring / JENNIFER WANG, KATHY KHANH NGUYEN, MICHAEL CHO

written & directed / ZICHENG LI

producer / CINDY WU

associated producer / IVY XIAO

director of photography / HUAZHANG DAI

production designer / JOLENE ZHAO

editor / MOZHU YAN

sound recordist / JOHN ZHAO

music / HUAZHANG DAI

sound designer & mixer / JINGJUE ZHOU

1st assistant director / RAE CHEN

script supervisor / MOZHU YAN

casting director / KARA SULLIVAN

casting special thanks / JIZHONG ZHANG, JUN ZHANG, TODD LIEN, STARFACTORY ACTING &
MUSIC ACADEMY

production assistant / JOHN BATINOVICH

still photography / BEIDI WANG

crowdfunding video / MANDY TAO

1st assistant camera / TIANYI LU, HUANXI LI

2nd assistant camera / YUAN WANG

gaffers / BECKY BAIHUI CHEN, WENTING DENG, YINING BEI, HARK XU

grips / COLIN REN, JOHN BATINOVICH, RICK RAMIREZ, YINING BEI, JERRY WANG, GABRIEL LEE

dit / SHARON CAI

art director / ZHICHUN HUANG

set dresser / VANON LI

art assistants / YUQIAN CAO, ZIYI JIN, MING ANNE GENG, JIAJIN CHEN

makeup artist / MARIKO MILLER

wardrobe / BEIDI WANG

post-production supervisor / SHARON CAI

foley editor / JOHN ZHAO

color grading / HUAZHANG DAI

faculty advisor / MARK HARRIS

special thanks / BRENDA GOODMAN, CLASSIC CODE CAFÉ, LOIS TRYK, NANCY FORNER,
NICEOLE LEVY, PABLO FRASCONI;

CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS, CITY OF BURBANK, FILM L.A.;

NVISONATE STUDIOS, SAMY'S CAMERA, WOODEN NICKEL LIGHTING INC.

captured on CANON

edited on the AVID system

Student Produced at the University of Southern California

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