

JEROME

A film by
Gianfranco Fernández-Ruiz



JEROME

FILM CATEGORY
NARRATIVE SHORT

GENRE
DRAMA

PRODUCTION LOCATION
LOS ANGELES, CA
USA

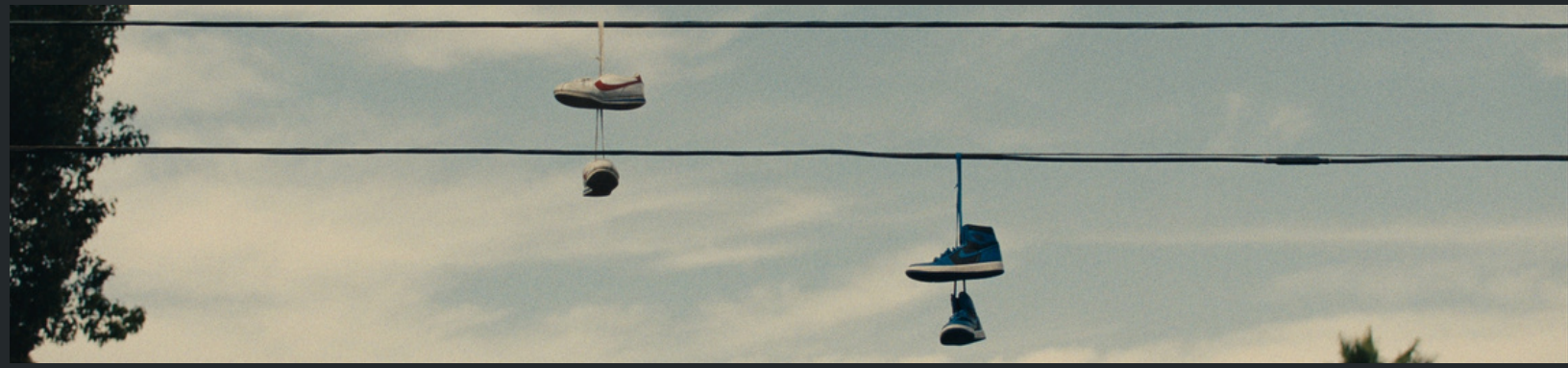
LANGUAGE
ENGLISH

PICTURE FORMAT
DIGITAL

ASPECT RATIO
16:9

SHOOTING FORMAT
4K

TOTAL RUNNING TIME
14:29 MINS



LOGLINE

Basketball connects Jerome to his long-absent father, though not in the ways he wishes. As he wrestles with his own concept of family, he must confront his father's legacy on and off the court.



SYNOPSIS

Jerome (17) struggles with feelings of inadequacy when searching for his estranged father. Even still, he honors him, wearing an old pair of Blue Jordans. After a failed family dinner event he's forced to confront the long absence of his father. As he spirals toward a ghostly legacy, he copes the only way he knows how—basketball. Will Jerome shed the history of the past and forge himself a new future?



DIRECTOR BIO

Gianfranco Fernández-Ruiz is a Los Angeles-based writer/director who was selected to participate in a class of 26 directing fellows out of a group of over 350 gifted candidates worldwide at the American Film Institute Conservatory (AFIC). His work has been recognized and selected in the inaugural Flip the Script Short Film Fund for emerging BIPOC filmmakers for his short *Jerome* (2023) and the Future Money Grant for *Anemoia* (2024). *Jerome* has since been selected as a finalist for the prestigious ABFF x HBO's Short Film Award.

Gianfranco's shorts have premiered at Oscar Qualifying festivals, domestically and abroad like PAFF, ABFF, MVAFF and many more.

Gianfranco writes about men participating in intimacy and hardened women and the love they make. While his interests lie in universal ideas, his work centers BIPOC talent in front of (and behind) the camera. He marks culture as integral to a character's identity but second always to a character's story.

Gianfranco's short film *SABORRRR!* is the most diverse BIPOC crew in the history of Utah film (feature or otherwise), a point he prides and continues to advocate for in the film industry.

He is currently working on his thesis film *When Big People Lie*.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a spirited, too-much-to-handle kid, my mom would threaten me with, "you want me to call your father?" Have you ever flinched at a word? I did. Whatever a father was, it frightened me - my personal monster under the bed.

As a teenager, the idea of an omnipresent father terrified me. A man of my stature, bossing me around, and my blood. I'll just call your bluff. No way. What would that even look like? Family pictures? Game nights? The idea alone changed the world I knew all around. How could that influence me as a man and future father?

I'd never know.

So much of who I believed I was felt like a great mystery wrapped up in this man. I didn't know where he was, or what family I had. The history, the legacy, the facts: my father came to America undocumented, participated in illegal activities, imprisoned for ten years then deported. And for years I thought, what of that belongs to me?

I laid, face-down, on black Boston asphalt right outside Forest Hills, hands behind my back waiting for that question to be answered, waiting for the moment I'd be taken in and given the mugshot to prove that I was my father's son.

It didn't occur to me that day or the next, or anytime after that. An ellipses of thought that trailed without end, one after the other - like footprints. Mine and his.

All the while, my mother kept food on the table; she worked 80 hour weeks; took me to school; put me into programs; she even checked in throughout the day. Frankly, for a single mother I didn't know where/how she found the time, and as I grow older I realize she didn't ever find the time. She made it.

The school to prison pipeline is a darkness that threatens communities of color everywhere. But families and communities that stick together shed light on that darkness. Those programs gave me community, and my mother, in so many shapes and forms, I'd learn about the role of a father too.

My mother. A strong, independent, bull-willed woman taxed with teaching her son to articulate his griefs, and more importantly, to stay a child, to keep his imagination, even if she didn't know exactly how. She wasn't always the softest. She didn't always understand why I wanted to know a man that was never there. But she showed up, and taught me that showing up is the single most important thing a person can do in life.

Later I'd learn I'd be a father. I was 24. I learned that being a father was as simple as showing up. Something I learned through my mother. Unfortunately, I don't see the single mother represented on screen except to depict the scavenger. This film is for all the single mothers, like mine, who mentored me into my fatherhood with little to nothing but feminine intuition.



KEY CAST



Elias Ferguson
as
Jerome Walker Jr.



Aries Sanders
as
Jade Walker



CAST

Jacob Gaines Mati Rivera
Oscar Torre Tavo Rivera
Tristan Cunningham Clara Rivera
Sydney Mikayla Tati Rivera
Alejandro Patiño Abuelo

Legacy.

BTS



Sonhood.



jerome 12

Ball.

KEY CREW

Duran Jones is a 2007 graduate of Hampton University with a BA in Broadcast Journalism. A keen sense of storytelling and a unique perspective led Duran to the American Film Institute Conservatory (AFIC), there he honed his craft and set his goal to tell stories for people of color that offer the truth in unique genres seldom seen on the screen for multiethnic communities.

While studying at the AFIC he graduated from the 2020 PGA Power of Diversity workshop, where his pilot "Daywalker" received interest from Mary Parent, Gary Lucchesi, and Prentice Penny.

Duran was also selected as a 2021 Sundance Feature Film Producers Lab Fellow with the script "The Incredible Heist of Hallelujah Jones" written by Victor Gabriel. The proof of concept for that feature won the Grand Prix for Best Short and Best Producer Award for Jones at the HollyShorts Film Festival, qualifying for the Oscars.



Executive Producer
Duran Jones



Executive Producer
Selena Leoni

Growing up in both Italy's quiet countryside and the outsized cities of China gave transnational producer Selena Leoni unique viewpoints of the world. Her love for art and technology led her to City University of Hong Kong, where she earned her BAS in New Media in 2015. Selena later attended UCLA's Producers Program and earned an MFA.

Selena is a Producer fellow in Film Independent's Project Involve 2021 and a member of BAFTA Newcomers. Many of her projects played and won awards in Academy Award-qualifying festivals like Austin Film Festival, HollyShorts, and SBIFF. Her most recent credits include Wayfarer Studios' feature film SMILE OR HUG which premiered at Bentonville Film Festival, and Bryant Griffin's feature debut YOUNG KINGS which won the ARRI Franz Wieser Grant. Selena's interests lie in developing globalized character-driven stories that give underrepresented groups a platform and a voice.

Ben O'Keefe is a Forbes 30 Under 30 award-winning filmmaker, social change activist and multi-hyphenate leader on the frontlines of the progressive movement, navigating the intersections of entertainment, politics, and social impact.

In 2021, Ben launched The FLIP THE SCRIPT Short Film Fund, in partnership with The Kennedy/Marshall Company, NAACP Hollywood Bureau, and advisors such as legendary producer Frank Marshall, 6x NBA All-Star and co-founder of Mortal Media, Blake Griffin; Emmy-nominated actor MJ Rodriguez ; Producer & Director Lulu Wang, actor & activist Kendrick Sampson (HBO's Insecure); and Showrunner Elle Johnson.

Ben served as a producer on the Amazon Studios film All In: The Fight for Democracy featuring Stacey Abrams, which was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award. O'Keefe was also head writer and guest host of the Webby and Shorty award winning MTV program DECODED and recently served as a Senior Advisor to Senator Elizabeth Warren's presidential campaign.



Producer
Ben O'Keefe



Producer
Santi Naidoo

Santi Naidoo is a South African producer who is currently a Producing Fellow at the American Film Institute Conservatory and is an Acquisitions Intern at Submarine Entertainment. She holds a triple major Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Cape Town in Film and Television Studies, Psychology, and Organizational Psychology, and graduated cum laude with a post-graduate degree in Film and Television. Santi has several years of experience in film and stage production, and is passionate about creating spaces for underrepresented and marginalized filmmakers in the industry.

Born and raised in the Netherlands, and a transplant to Beijing at 18. Joewi learned Mandarin Chinese and was the first foreigner to graduate in cinematography from the Beijing Film Academy. Joewi is currently enrolled in the Cinematography MFA program at the American Film Institute Conservatory.

Joewi has lensed 5 feature films. Most notably NEZHA, which had its premiere at the Busan Film Festival and ASH, which was selected for Camerimage. The Hollywood Reporter praised Joewi in their Ash review; "Dutch lenser Joewi Verhoeven's stellar images — bathed in yellow and blue in the past, and red and green in the present, make Ash one of the most beautiful films to come out of China this year, in any genre." He has also earned success with short film HEADING SOUTH which won Best Cinematography at 2020 Little Wing Film Festival and Gold Screen at Cannes Lions Young Director Award 2020.



Cinematographer
Joewi Verhoeven



Production Designers
Armaan Pujani & Yajine Qin

Armaan Pujani & Yajie Qin are natives of Mumbai, India and Yichang City, China respectively, both currently study Production Design at the American Film Institute Conservatory. Armaan & Yajie's ever-growing portfolio includes projects ranging from high concept commercials to intimate narrative settings in feature and short films. They each have a broadening portfolio experimenting with genre and purpose.

CREW

Writer / Director / Producer
Producers

Executive Producers

Co-Producer
Line Producers

Unit Production Manager
1st Assistant Director

2nd Assistant Directors

Script Supervisor
Production Coordinator

Production Assistant

Production Designer

Art Director

Sound

Editor
Assistant Editor

Sound Designer

Composer

Colorist

Title & Credits

ADR Recorder

Hair And Make-Up

Gianfranco Fernández-Ruiz
Santi Naidoo
Ben O'Keefe
Adam Westcott
Nick Phillips
Mckenna Marshall
Duran Jones
Selena Leoni

Daniel J. Egbert
Zach Johnson
Juliette Poirier
Adrien Hoppenot
Ariel Mahler
Piotr Matyja
Jack Highberger
Christina Rascon
Austin Williams
Zach Johnson
Amy Kouxiao Zhang
Austin Chen
Gabiella Feingold
Sophia Marriott

Armaan Pujani
Yajie Qin
Jaala Jones

Eli Adkison

Kun Chen
Joe Murphy
Eduardo VC
Alexandra Kalinowski
Cameron Marygold
Oliwia Palmerczuk
Jeff Lee

Kaia Neely

Director of Photography
1st Assistant Camera
2nd Assistant Camera

Steadicam Operator

Gaffer
Key Grip
Best Boy Electric
G&E

DIT
BTS

Studio Teacher

Costume Designer
Costume Assistant

Joewi Verhoeven
Pascale Williams
Simon Cai
Dalizeth Maradiaga
Rafael Van Oostrum

Damon Mavroudis
Christian Chico
Hannah Platzer
Enoc Mendez
Peter Glaros
Amir Medina
Matty Rothenberg
Bryan Tran
Charlie Blumberg

Hannah Platzer
Mario Vega
Zach Johnson

Angel Harper

Mikaela Zabalerio
Nicole Pistolnik
Mon Castro Busto



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SCREENER AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

