

# PIEDRA DURA **PRESS KIT**

## PRESS CONTACT:

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Short Film Written and Directed by **Rommel Villa**

**GENRE**

Drama

**TAGLINE**

Trust doesn't always lead to good outcomes

20min | 2023 | SPANISH | BOLIVIA | COLOR

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## LOGLINE

An altar boy is disciplined after being caught watching gay porn at church.

## SYNOPSIS

Wanka, an altar boy in rural Bolivia, is caught watching gay porn at church by Father Pedro. After receiving a severe reprimand, Wanka confides in Father Pedro about his fears over being humiliated and potentially punished as a closeted gay boy in a conservative town in Bolivia. Worried over Wanka's well-being, Father Pedro decides to bring him to his house to help Wanka overcome his fears.

Once they arrive Father Pedro's house, he convinces Wanka to dance with him to help him distress. After the dance, Father Pedro joins Wanka in the couch and pours him a few glasses of whiskey to help him loosen up some more. A more relaxed Wanka opens up to Father Pedro and thanks him for his guidance. Father Pedro puts the drinks aside and gives Wanka advice regarding having sex with other people. However, while giving advice, he reveals he's very open minded and caresses Wanka's body, from his face down to his groin area, undresses him, kisses him, and promises him he'll teach him more things because he loves him.

A disturbed Wanka leaves the Father's house and walks through the streets of the town confused, scared, and humiliated.

# Director's Statement

I was raised in a Catholic household where it was important to respect the Church's teachings as well as practice the Bible's commandments. I enjoyed the sense of community that the institution had to offer. Once I did my confirmation, I became a Catechist. I wanted to work with children and teenagers, helping them develop their spirituality and going on mission trips to remote towns to help those in need. My work and commitment led to my becoming a coordinator which allowed me to meet the Monseigneur, the highest religious authority in town.

The Monseigneur became like a father figure to me. He gave me love, advice and support in good and bad moments. I trusted him so much that I opened up to him in regards to my curiosity towards the LGBTQ+ community and the hypothetical idea of being gay - I was struggling with the fact that I am -. He didn't judge or mistreat me, he just listened to me, hugged me, told me God loves us all, and to help me get through my nerves, he pour me a few glasses of whiskey. I will admit that things got a little blurry after a few glasses, but what I do remember is having an "awakening/sobering" moment when I looked down at my hand and the Monseigneur's hands were pressing my hand against his testicles while he was giving me loving advice in between kisses... Words cannot describe how confused, angry, scared, alert, speechless, and dumbfounded I felt leaving his home.

Piedra Dura is the story of an innocent boy who is caught in a vulnerable moment and is taken advantage of by the only person he trusts. Wanka is the young, naive, hopeful character we all have been at some point in our lives, wanting nothing but to be loved and accepted. The story depicts an example of the reality many young people face in conservative/underdeveloped countries, many of which are humiliated, rejected, harassed, and even murdered due to their sexual orientation.

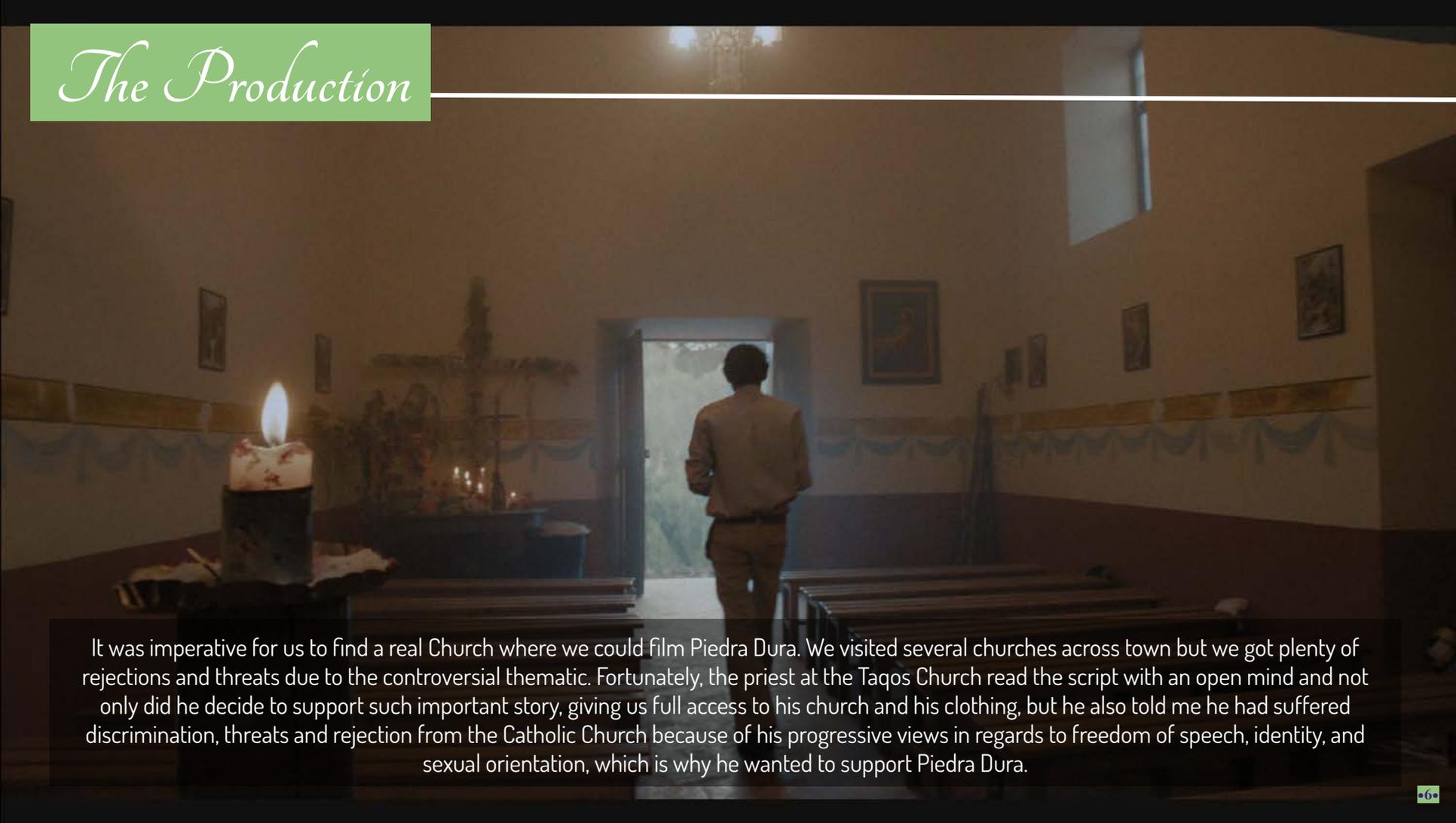
*Rommel Ovella*

# *The Production*

**Piedra Dura** was filmed in December 2021/January 2022 in Sucre, Bolivia. It was a three-day production with three main locations: The Church and streets of Taqos, a small community on the outskirts of Sucre, and the Santa Catalina ranch, a beautiful colonial hacienda where we filmed the Father's House scenes.

It was imperative for us to find a real Church where we could film *Piedra Dura*. We visited several churches but due to the controversial thematic, we got plenty of rejections and threats. Fortunately, the priest at the Taqos Church read the script with an open mind and decided to support such important story, giving us full access to his church.

# *The Production*

A photograph of a man in a light-colored shirt and trousers standing in the center of a church, looking out an open doorway. The church interior is dimly lit, with a large lit candle in the foreground on the left. The walls are decorated with framed pictures and a blue and white garland. A large cross is visible in the background near the doorway.

It was imperative for us to find a real Church where we could film Piedra Dura. We visited several churches across town but we got plenty of rejections and threats due to the controversial thematic. Fortunately, the priest at the Taqos Church read the script with an open mind and not only did he decide to support such important story, giving us full access to his church and his clothing, but he also told me he had suffered discrimination, threats and rejection from the Catholic Church because of his progressive views in regards to freedom of speech, identity, and sexual orientation, which is why he wanted to support Piedra Dura.

# The Production

Santa Catalina, where we filmed the Priest House scenes, is a beautiful hacienda where music videos and films are constantly being filmed. It is mostly used as wedding reception venue due to its beautiful colonial architecture, and the many spacious rooms that can be adjusted to the client's needs.

When we first found the room where we filmed the Living Room scenes, it had no furniture, decorations, nor curtains. It was a plain empty room with old cracked walls and ceilings. José Pozo, Production Designer, saw the potential in the room and with the help of his team, built this beautiful living room that speaks history, religion, privacy, and mystery, all of which were the original vision for this location.

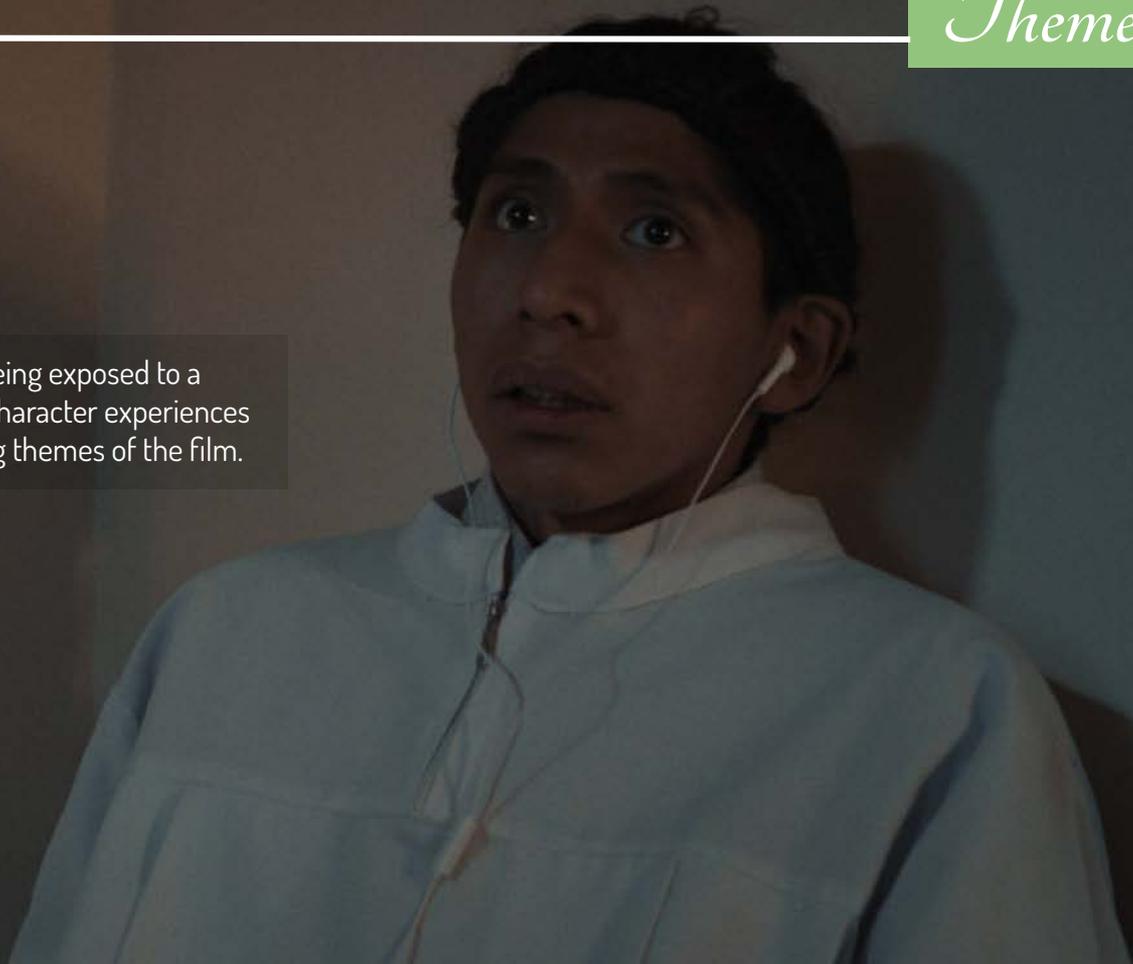


## *The Production*

The music Wanka and Father Pedro danced to is an authentic traditional Bolivian genre called “cueca”. It is a dance originated in the south. Cuecas are known for their melodic and joyful tunes while the lyrics have flirtatious connotations that couple would dance to holding white handkerchiefs, waving them around while keeping eye contact with their partner, mimicking the dance many birds perform to the females as a way to show their attraction towards them.

The cueca music in Piedra Dura was composed and performed by Alvaro Balvin, the composer of the film.

Piedra Dura is a story about the loss of innocence after being exposed to a traumatic event. This is a LGBTQ+ story where the main character experiences guilt, shame, and fear, all of which become the underlying themes of the film.



# Look and Visual Progression



The story starts early in the morning and ends at night to symbolize the shift from innocence to trauma. We filmed the first exterior scenes in a sunny, beautiful day. Fun fact, we had to film the same scene twice in different days since in the first try, the sky was overcast and somber.



In contrast to the bright, welcoming day exteriors, we filmed dark, somber night scenes where the red color in Wanka's jacket stood out in the dark, symbolizing the indelible mark in him after his time spent with Father Pedro.

# Look and Visual Progression



The contrast of natural, almost heavenly white light and the use of candles, helped establish the spiritual and ethereal presence of religion in the church scenes. Candles and their warm light helped set intimacy and peace .



The use of natural light ceases once we get to the Father's house. There, overhead artificial light and candles set the mood for the serious scenes. Red is heavily introduced to enhance the serious tone of what's about to happen. Wider shots turn into claustrophobic close-ups the more the story progresses, giving a subjective view of how Wanka feels.

# Cast and Character List



**Ladislao Cardozo**  
Wanka



**Bernardo Arancibia**  
Father Pedro



## Rommel Villa – Writer/Director

Rommel Villa is an Emmy and Student–Academy–Award–winning filmmaker born and raised in Bolivia. He grew up writing and directing award-winning plays based on social issues within the Latinx and Queer communities. Rommel has a degree in Systems Engineering and an MFA in Film/TV Production.

Winner of Directing stipends from Lionsgate–Televisa, USC School of Cinematic Arts, and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Rommel’s work ranges from magical–realistic LGBTQ+ stories like his film “Teddy Mate”, to movies based on real–life events like “Sweet Potatoes”, a historical film about the Mexican scientist who synthesized the birth control pill, which granted Rommel a Student Academy Award.

[IMDB – RV](#)



## Simon Avila – Producer

Simon studied Communication Psychologist and next has emphasized his career in audiovisual arts. In 2018 he obtained a scholarship at Congo Films School in Colombia. There he directs 3 short films. The first of them, Temporal (8') has participated in several international festivals and markets including the Short Film Corner of the Cannes Film Festival (2019). In addition, he won the “Bolivian Eye” award for best short film at the 15th Bolivian International Human Rights Film Festival. A MAR CINE co-founder, works and collaborates in film projects focused on childhood, memory, nature and identity of Latino contexts.

[IMDB – SA](#)



## Oscar Alfaro – Director of Photography

He studied cinema in Argentina. Oscar has 20 years of experience as a film photographer. His specialty is historical documentaries involving fictionalized events. He has worked for different government ministries and institutions such as the local newspaper and the Casa de la Libertad in Sucre, Bolivia, the most important museum in the country, creating documentary and fictional audiovisual content. He currently works as an independent Photographer and Audiovisual Producer for the Government of Sucre.



## Jose Bozo – Production Designer

He is a member of the first generation of Bolivian filmmakers. Throughout 50 years of his prolific career he has worked on the most important feature films of the national filmography. He has also taught art history and related subjects at the University of San Andrés in La Paz, Bolivia. His work is characterized by an attachment to the national reality applied to narrative atmospheres typical of each story through the use of Andean textures, colors and shapes.

[IMDB – JB](#)



## Angela Arancibia – Associate Producer

Angela is a Bolivian filmmaker focused on writing and film production. She studies the last courses of Social Communication and Psychology at the undergraduate level in Sucre, Bolivia. Her first short film: “Ella” (6’) has won awards at different national film festivals. This experience has helped strengthen her knowledge and production skills. Her new bet is the Piedra Dura project (20’). She is currently writing “Mirando el atardecer” a new short film with which she will continue building her career and forging her own narrative.



## Eric Han – Sound Designer

A SoCal native, Eric Han was born in L.A. and spent most of his childhood in Riverside. After making several short films during high school, Eric decided to pursue a degree towards filmmaking and studied Visual Arts at the University of California, San Diego. Initially interested in directing and writing, Eric was exposed to the world of sound after taking a class on sound design. After applying and getting accepted to USC’s MFA film program, Eric developed further interest in production and post-production sound and currently freelances doing production and post sound while also pursuing his screenwriting passion.

[IMDB – EH](#)



## Sebastian Enamorado – Editor

Sebastian Enamorado is an LA-based editor with over 10 years of experience. He considers himself highly competent, confident and very passionate with what he does. He is excellent at collaboration and following direction, while also taking creative initiative. Sebastian has dealt with cross-functional teams and producers/directors with a problem-solver mindset. He’s also a nerd for systems and workflows. Organization is crucial as an editor not only for the sake of efficiency, but also for anyone else who may come to one of his future projects.

[Website](#)



## Alvaro Balvin – Composer

Alvaro Balvin Benavides is a Peruvian composer based in Los Angeles. He graduated from Berklee College of Music and from the University of Southern California Screen Scoring Master’s in Music.

He is mostly known for his work on ‘Chef’s Table BBQ’ and ‘Street Food Latinamerica’, both productions from Netflix. He is also known for his score for the award winning short film ‘La Ruta’, where he got a nomination for Best Score at the L’H Internationale Film Festival in Barcelona, Spain. And recently he scored the Gold Student Academy Award Winner (Student Oscar’s) documentary ‘Unfinished Lives’ (2020).

[IMDB – AB](#)

## Piedra Dura

Ladislao Cardozo Flores  
Bernardo Arancibia Flores

**Written and Directed by** Rommel Villa Barriga

**Produced by** Simón Avila Benavides

**Executive Producers** Simón Avila Benavides  
Rommel Villa Barriga

**Director of Photography** Óscar Alfaro Vega

**Production Designer** José Bozo Jivaja

**Edited by** Sebastian Enamorado

**Music by** Alvaro Balvin Benavides

**Production Sound** David Casillas Aguirre  
Limberty López Peñarrieta

**Sound Design** Eric Han

## CAST

*Wanka* Ladislao Cardozo Flores  
*Father Pedro* Bernardo Arancibia Flores  
*Wife* Lizeth Zárate  
*Husband* Eduardo Barrero Villaca  
*Country Family* Guillermina Benavides  
Antonio Avila  
Clemente Avila  
*Additional ADR* Jose Enamorado

**First Assistant Director** Milton Guzmán Girona

**Associate Producers** Ángela Arancibia Zenteno  
Andrea Collazos  
Mauricio Avila

**Script Supervisor** Ángela Arancibia Zenteno

**Set Doctor** Mauricio Avila

**Location Managers** Marco Wayne  
Felix Mendoza

**Art Director** Cesar Mamani

**Art Assistants** Adriana Torres Durán  
Oscar Gonzales  
Miguel Talavera

**Hair And Makeup** Adriana Torres Durán

**Wardrobe** Felix Mendoza

**Catering** Guillermina Benavidez

**1st Camera Assistant** Edgar Guzmán Daza

**2nd Camera Assistant** Eduardo Barrero Villaca  
Wara Belen Taborga Mendez

**Gaffer** Wara Belen Taborga Mendez

**Grips** Edgar Guzmán Daza  
Eduardo Barrero Villaca

**Casting Director** Angela Arancibia Zenteno

**Re-Recording Mixer** Ryan Vaughan

**Musicians** Juan Carlos Ortiz  
Alvaro Balvin Benavidez

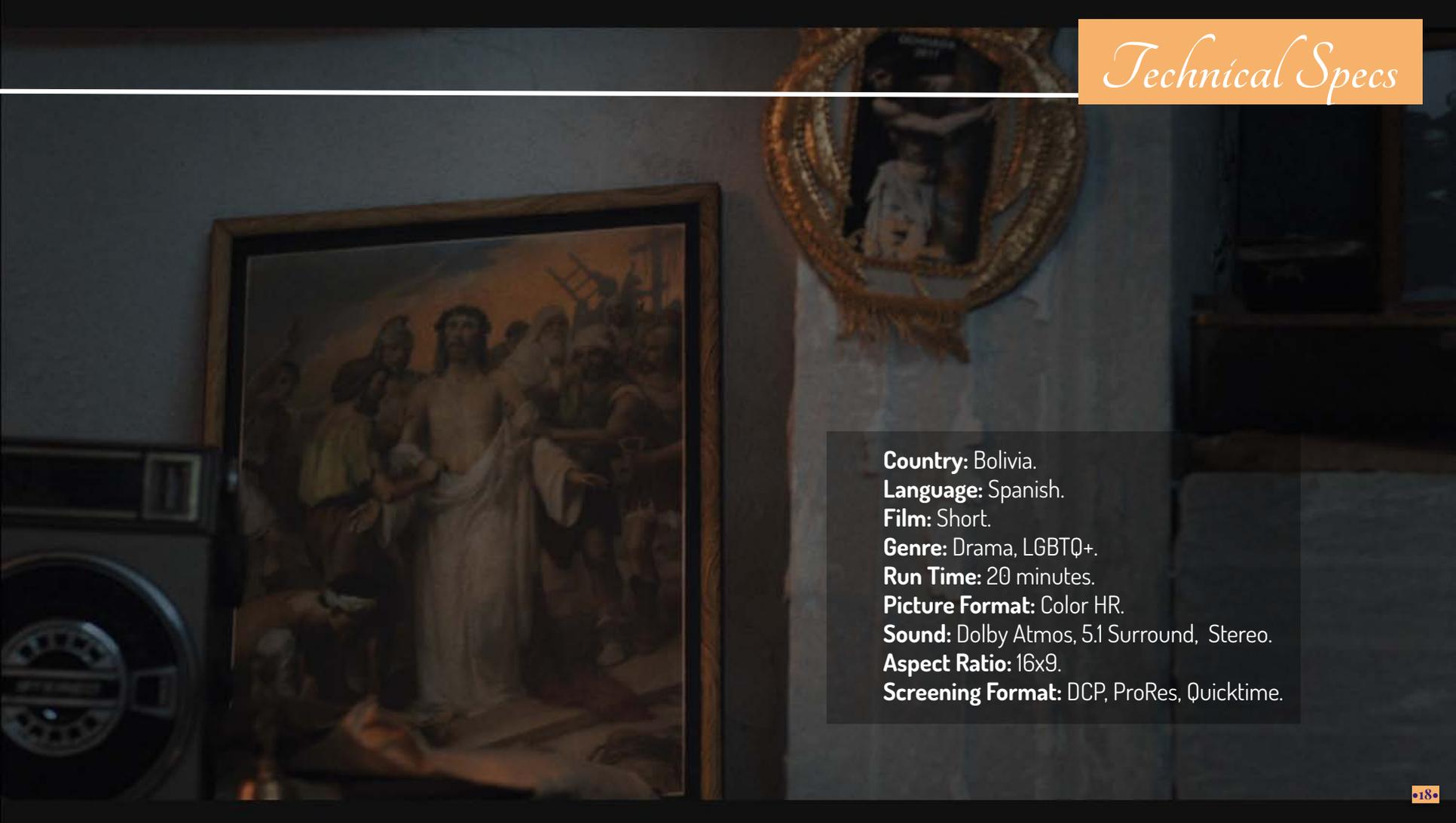
**Color Correction** Fio Karpenko

**Drivers** Antonio Avila  
Jalder Avila  
Edgar Ticona

**SPECIAL THANKS**

Familia Villa Barriga  
Familia Benavides Vela  
Iglesia Taqos  
Santa Catalina  
Posta de Salud Azari  
Foto Dorian  
Pueblo Chico  
Pizza Premier  
Lauren Villa Barriga  
Antonio Avila  
Guillermina Benavides  
Mauricio Avila  
Wilma Duran  
Nilo Barrón  
Felix Mendoza  
Marco Wayne  
Patricia García  
Oscar Durán  
Arturo Pavón y Flia.  
Daniela Mayora  
Salvador Metal

# Technical Specs



**Country:** Bolivia.

**Language:** Spanish.

**Film:** Short.

**Genre:** Drama, LGBTQ+.

**Run Time:** 20 minutes.

**Picture Format:** Color HR.

**Sound:** Dolby Atmos, 5.1 Surround, Stereo.

**Aspect Ratio:** 16x9.

**Screening Format:** DCP, ProRes, Quicktime.

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