



THE CIGUAPA

Written and directed by Blaine Morris

LOGLINE

A queer couple, Manny and Leo, go to a cabin for their anniversary but a mysterious woman they find in the woods threatens to break them apart.

Running Time 14 mins
Format DCP
Aspect Ratio 1:85
Shooting Format Pro Res 444
Language English
Color



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Being brown and queer in today's society often means you're invisible. There is a small amount of representation in media and usually not very pleasant. This project was born one night watching Castle Rock while texting my best friend (Alexander Flores, Producer/"Manny") lamenting the state of the industry for people like us. As a Latinx and bisexual actor and filmmaker, I love genre yet don't see any opportunities for us within that. So we decided to create our own.

In many ways, this is a classic horror cabin in the woods story. A couple on an anniversary getaway go to a cabin in the woods with hopes to mend their relationship but a monster gets to them first. But it changes the game with the story of a realistic queer Latinx relationship centered around bisexual prejudices with a culturally relevant monster that has never been seen on screen. It puts Friday the 13th and The Evil Dead through a diverse contemporary lens, focusing on characters and queer relationships you rarely see in this genre.

Using classic horror style cinematography with extreme low, high, and dutch angles with a creeping monster POV and a color system moving from warm to cold, the film easily fits into the horror canon while popping with its unique content. Horror fans will be excited to be introduced to a new monster from Dominican folklore - the long haired, backward footed, man-eating Ciguapa.

This film is a labor of love with hopes to showcase the breadth of untold stories the horror genre can sustain. Just as the main characters take things for granted and lose the ones they love, without making films with queer Latinx characters we may never know we lost them in the first place. Hopefully, this film will lead to greater representation and open doors to queer Latinx characters in horror, while being a damn good scary time.

WHAT IS THE CIGUAPA?

"There is an exact harmony in all her muscles and limbs, a wonderful beauty in her face, and an agility in her movements so full of spontaneity and grace that she leaves the one who sees her absorbed. ...Her jealousy ends with death... when it is the ciguapa that surprises such, the male lover dies."

- Francisco Guridi, 1866



Ciguapas are said to inhabit the high mountains of the Dominican Republic. They are considered to be magical beings, beautiful in appearance to some, yet horrendous to others. They are wild creatures. Often compared in many cases to mermaids: beautiful yet cruel, and far from innocent. Deceitful and ready to capture the wayward traveler, it is said that they are so beautiful that they can lure men into the forest to make love with them, only to kill them afterward.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

A young queer couple, Manny and Leo, escape for an anniversary weekend alone in the woods. When they arrive to the cabin, the cracks in their relationship start showing. After a tumultuous first night, including a haunting melody only Manny can hear, the couple finds a naked woman lost in the forest. As they decide how to help her, her peculiar presence threatens to tear this couple apart.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Manny, bisexual, and Leo, gay, arrive at a quaint log cabin for their one year anniversary vacation. As they get settled in the cabin, Leo brings up the possibility of them moving in together which Manny is wary of. While they make dinner on the front porch, a strange humming comes from the woods that only Manny hears. Later while dancing and drinking, Leo tries to become intimate with Manny but Manny pushes him away. Leo, deeply offended, stomps out. The humming returns, frightening Manny but with no clear source.

The next morning, Leo apologizes and they go on a hike. Manny presses further about the potential of them moving into together when suddenly a sobbing woman calls out. Manny runs after the sound with Leo chasing after, finding a naked woman with floor length black hair crumpled on the forest floor. Panicked, they struggle over what to do with her and decide to bring her back to the house. Manny wants to take her to the doctor but struggles with his astigmatism at night and Leo doesn't know how to drive. As they argue, the woman takes a strange interest in Manny.

Leo confronts Manny about bringing back the woman and his history with his female coworker who he has repeatedly tried to contact the whole trip. Angered, Manny finally tells Leo his true feelings about Leo's prejudices about his bisexuality. Barely speaking, they go to bed. In the middle of the night, Manny hears the strange singing again and finds the woman crawling up their bed. She has transformed into the Ciguapa, a terrifying forest siren, deafeningly WAILING. Leo falls into a trance and the woman grabs him and kisses him. Manny tries to fight her off but she's preternaturally strong. She runs into the woods with Leo. Manny gives chase but gets lost. He collapses in despair and regret. But then finds Leo's red kimono. As he tries to pull it off a branch -

The Ciguapa is there.



THE TEAM



BLAINE MORRIS - WRITER/DIRECTOR

is a queer Latina multihyphenate filmmaker. Prior to graduating from Columbia University, she acted on MTV Skins, Master of None, and many more. She has directed, written, edited, and produced short films which premiered at Slamdance, Santa Barbara International Film Festival, Outfest, won a DGA Student Jury Award and was nominated for a College Television Award. She wrote, produced and starred in the psychological thriller feature film "Dark Obsession" featuring Mena Suvari and Danielle Harris. She assisted Academy Award nominated writer/director Charles Shyer for Netflix's "The Noel Diary" and is associate producer on "The Grotto" directed by Joanna Gleason, winner of Best Narrative First Feature at Heartland International Film Festival. Blaine graduated USC as a MFA George Lucas Scholar in Film & TV Production and is a WIF mentee of "Good Trouble" showrunner Joanna Johnson, whom she shadowed on the season 4 finale.

ALEXANDER FLORES - "MANNY"/PRODUCER

is a Puerto Rican Actor born and raised in the Bronx, New York. Alexander started acting at a young age, studying theater for most of his life. He has performed at The Public Theater with The LAByrinth Theater Company and The Cherry Lane Theater to critical acclaim. Alexander moved his focus from theater to film/tv later in his career and is best known for his work in 'The Maze Runner' franchise for 20th Century Fox. Some of his other credits include The Good Wife, Orange Is The New Black, and The Good Cop, just to name a few.

The Ciguapa is Alexander's debut venture into producing. Besides working as an actor on the short, he also developed the story alongside his best friend Blaine Morris (Writer/Dir.).





VERONICA BOUZA - CINEMATOGRAPHER

Veronica Bouza is a Director of Photography based and native to Los Angeles, California. With Veronica's background working as an IATSE 476 electrician in Chicago to an IATSE 600 camera assistant, Veronica aims to create visual experiences that are collaborative and inspire the storyteller in all of us. Veronica's narrative work has been official selections at Tribeca, The American Society of Cinematographers, Hollyshorts, LA International Film Festival to name a few. She was awarded Best Cinematography at the Atlanta Woman's Film Festival in 2020 for her short film "Leave Us Here", she lensed season Season 2 of Rising Voices "Amina" which screened at Tribeca 2022, and her short "Pens and Pencils" screened at the 2022 American Black Film Festival before getting picked up by HBO. Veronica is a graduate of DePaul University and recently finished up her MFA at American Film Institute. In her time at AFI, Veronica was selected into the ASC mentorship program 2020, accepted as a student member of the SOC, and awarded the Susan Watanabe Memorial Scholarship for a female filmmaker who strives to be a connector. Veronica is represented at WPA.

FOUSTENE FORTENBACH - EDITOR

Foustene Fortenbach ("FAW-stene") is a Spring '22 MFA student at USC who is originally from the SF/Bay Area. After working in commercials, she went back to school to finesse her directing and editing skills. Foustene loves to collaborate and work on projects that advocate for social change. In 2019, Foustene won festival awards for her short film, Cajas, the goal of which was to get people who question the trans community to take a closer step towards acceptance. The project screened throughout the U.S., as well as in Canada and Mexico. In 2020, Foustene edited At What Cost?, a short documentary that spotlights the suicide epidemic on USC's campus. Some of the festivals where it screened include LA Shorts International Film Festival, Newport Beach Film Festival, Documentary film festival.



ADDISON ROLLERI – PRODUCTION DESIGNER

is a queer award-winning Production Designer who works in moving image and has a passion for creating diverse and inclusive dream worlds. Addison has created in many different forms, from designing a dystopian pharmacy to working on a to-scale pirate ship. In the past 5 years, she has worked with esteemed production designers, including assisting with the set dressing in three rooms for Carly Rae Jepsen's Now That I've Found You. She has a degree in Cinema Production from Ithaca College and has taken the prestigious graduate-level USC film course Fiction Production III or 546, with a focus in Production Design. Her accolades include the Rod Sterling Award, Best in Production Design from The Studio for the short film Indentured, and recipient of the James B. Pendleton Award for Completion of Cinematic Works for the film Religious Commitments. She is the current assistant to the CEO of R&D Placement (who started as a Director's Rep working with David Fincher & Michael Bay), a company that places both the biggest directors in entertainment and up-and-coming talent at industry leading production companies.



GENEVIEVE CONSTANCE JONES – COSTUME DESIGNER

Art Director & Wardrobe Witch. Genevieve brings her amazing talent to the team, unifying wardrobe and aesthetics with charm and a detailed focus. From Oakland, NY, to LA, Genevieve has worked on an array of creative projects including: feature films, commercials (Mercedes-Benz, Nike), shorts (VICE) as well as music videos.





JORGIE GOICO - "LEO"

Jorgie Goico is a born and raised Puerto Rican actor currently based in Los Angeles. They relocated to LA after being accepted into acting conservatory The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in which they trained in performing for camera and theater. Since finishing the program they have further continued their training with coaches such as Rain Valdez and the Groundlings improve program. As a performer Jorgie challenges themselves by marrying their background in slapstick comedy and grounded drama. With determination, drive and passion they continue to push their boundaries as a performer on stage and in front of the camera.

CLAUDIA SERVEN - "THE CIGUAPA"

Claudia Serven is a bilingual Hispanic actress and dancer based in Los Angeles, known for being the protagonist of Vela, DeMonica, Plástico and Loteria. Since she was young she has studied acting and dancing. Currently working on an independent comedy pilot and an independent drama feature.





CREW

Written and Directed By

Blaine Morris

Story By Alexander Flores

Blaine Morris

Produced By Celai Ahmadzai

Alexander Flores

Blaine Morris

Executive Produced by

Jennifer Abdi

Director of Photography

Veronica Bouza

Edited By

Foustene Fortenbach

Costume Designer

Genevieve Jones

Production Designer

Addison Rolleri

Music by

Tristan Clarke

First Assistant Director

Capucine Salvi-Offer

Post Production Producer

Joshua Powell

First Assistant Camera

John Hanle

Second Assistant Camera

Emma Donahue

Gaffer

Kishan Patel

Key Grip

Andy Reynoso

Grip

Laura Stone

Production Sound Mixer

Miguel Paredes

Set PA

Daniel Antunez

Key Makeup**Artist/Special Effects****Supervisor**

Angie Shell

Sound Editor

Cat Johnson

Patrick Kuo

Colorist

Jesús Borrego

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