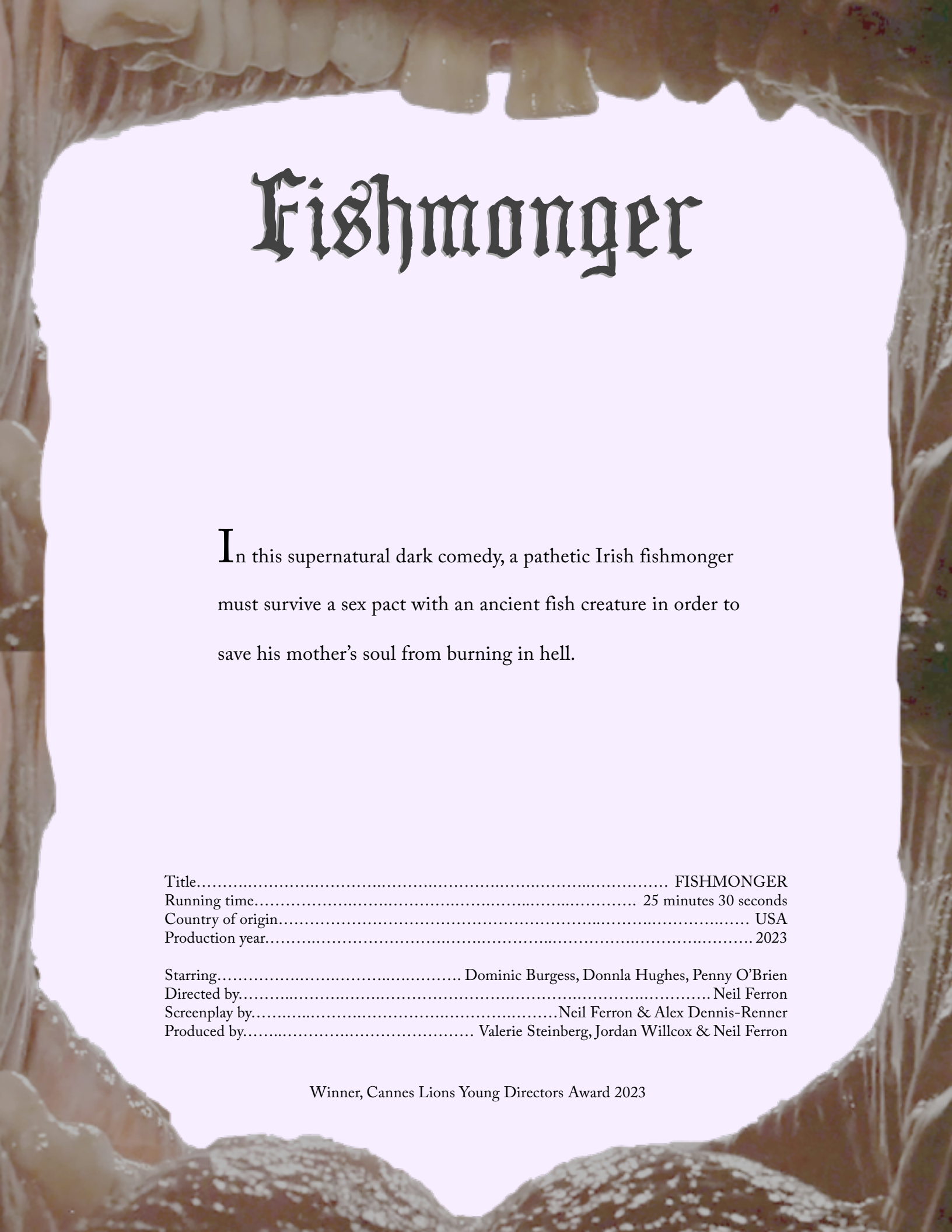


# Fishmonger

PRESS KIT





# Fishmonger

In this supernatural dark comedy, a pathetic Irish fishmonger must survive a sex pact with an ancient fish creature in order to save his mother's soul from burning in hell.

Title..... FISHMONGER  
Running time..... 25 minutes 30 seconds  
Country of origin..... USA  
Production year..... 2023

Starring..... Dominic Burgess, Donnla Hughes, Penny O'Brien  
Directed by..... Neil Ferron  
Screenplay by..... Neil Ferron & Alex Dennis-Renner  
Produced by..... Valerie Steinberg, Jordan Willcox & Neil Ferron

Winner, Cannes Lions Young Directors Award 2023



# FISHMONGER

/ the film

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/ the film

## *Logline*

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In this supernatural dark comedy, a pathetic Irish fishmonger must survive a sex pact with an ancient fish creature in order to save his mother's soul from burning in hell.

## *Short Synopsis*

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**CHRISTIE O'MALLAGHAN** is a lonely and pathetic fishmonger, hated by everyone on the island of Connamarragagh for being a disgrace of a man — can't fish, can't swim, can't even drink.

When Christie's mother is struck down with a **deadly case of St. Moira's Bloat** (contracted by eating cheese curdled from her own breast milk), Christie learns that if he is unmarried at the time of her death, her soul will burn in hell.

Christie sets off on wild ride of **suicide attempts, exploding hell-blisters, tentacle sex, and a musical promenade**. Either Christie will rise above a life of disgrace and failure —or— his mother will burn for eternity.

# FISHMONGER

/ the film

## Narrative Approach

**FISHMONGER is a wild and bizarre comedy.**

Peter Brooks' Lear dosed with bad mescaline.

Ingmar Bergman waltzing with Pee-Wee Herman.

Also, **FISHMONGER is a love story.** A son trying to shield his mother from pain. A young man finding a romance with a stranger. An island of angry people trying—hoping—to find connection.

Ultimately, we're hoping to tell a story that will inspire audiences **to laugh, to cry, to gag** (a little), and then—at the end of it all—to **feel a bit of unexpected vulnerability.** (Tune in to find out if we succeed.)





# FISHMONGER

/ the film

## PRACTICAL MAGIC!

We *could* say that we wanted to avoid CGI because our film takes place in 19th-century Ireland. But, really, **we just LOVE old school movie magic.**

FISHMONGER is brought to life by **miniatures, creature makeup, in-camera special effects, poor-man's process, and practical stunts.** Maybe we're luddites, but we find that creating a tangible world imbues everything on set with electricity. It asks everyone to play make-believe at the highest level. **AND it means we get to bring on a whole village of weirdo artists & storytellers** to build and breathe life into our world.



# FISHMONGER

/ the film



## Director's Note

Despite all the hell-blisters and tentacle sex, **FISHMONGER is a very personal film.** I spent the majority of my life deeply wanting to be somebody else. I hated my body, I hated my belly, my hair, my chipmunk cheeks, my inability to talk to girls or play sports. As an altar boy, I would literally kneel in front of a crucifix and beg god, “Please make me like Chip Reno” (Chip was the coolest boy in my sixth grade class).

**Everything that Christie feels in this story—self-loathing, inadequacy, fear—is something that I struggle with.** To this extent, FISHMONGER is wild and weird comedy born out of lumpy vulnerability.

Also, **this film is an elegy.** In 2017, my Uncle Tom took his life. Tom was a 6’5” ER nurse with a ZZ Top beard and a laugh that sounded like a choking hyena. **An unforgettable weirdo.** Tom’s death ripped a hole in my family, and it ripped open something in me. I have struggled with anxiety and suicidal ideations all my adult life, and when Tom killed himself, it felt like I had permission to do the same. So FISHMONGER is my attempt to celebrate and mourn Tom—to hope that, in his final moments, he imagined **something wild, ridiculous, and beautiful** in his final moments. And it’s also my attempt to start a conversation with myself and others about suicide, to speak the unspeakable act in hopes of keeping it at bay.



# FISHMONGER

/ creative team



# FISHMONGER

/ creative team (1 of 4)

## *DIRECTOR/CO-WRITER*

**Neil Ferron** is an LA-based writer/director from Seattle. His first feature screenplay, *FISHMONGER*, a supernatural dark comedy about tentacle sex and vulnerability, won the Grand Prize of the Slamdance Screenplay Competition (2021). His AFI thesis, a short film version of *FISHMONGER*, received a Cannes Lions Young Directors Award (2023) before its world premiere at Fantastic Fest and its European premiere at Sitges International Fantastic Film Festival of Catalonia.

Neil's work has been described as "wonderfully surreal" (Sub Pop), "**shocking, horrific, and funny**" (Rolling Stone), and a "Ph.D testing of what 'works' on the human consciousness" (Seattle Weekly).

Neil is a recent graduate of the AFI Conservatory. He holds a Masters in Theatre & Performance from Trinity College Dublin thanks to a George J. Mitchell Scholarship.



**NEIL FERRON**

# FISHMONGER

/ creative team (2 of 4)



**JACK MCDONALD**  
*Cinematographer*

**Jack McDonald** is a Director of Photography with an MFA in Cinematography from AFI Conservatory, and a BFA in Film & TV from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. **FISHMONGER**, his AFI thesis film, had its world premiere at Fantastic Fest ahead of its European premiere at Sitges. His additional DP credits include **COFFEE SHOP NAMES**, streaming on HBO Max, which played at Tribeca and won Best Comedy at Palm Springs ShortFest. He shot three episodes of the Hulu series **BITE SIZE HALLOWEEN**, including **SNATCHED**, **THE NEW NANNY**, and **GO TO BED, RAYMOND**. Additional DP credits include **PICNIC AND A LITTLE MUTINY**, **RATED R**, **SKETCH**, **BUG BITE**, and **LATE SUMMER DREAM OF FLYING**, which premiered at the prestigious cinematography festival **CAMERIMAGE**. Earlier in his career, Jack worked as Gaffer and Key Grip on dozens of feature films, including the Safdie Brothers' **GOOD TIME** and Chloé Zhao's **THE RIDER**.



**AUGUSTINE SO**  
*Editor*

**Augustine So** is an LA-based film editor from Hong Kong. He had years of experience producing and editing commercials and branded content and is currently pursuing a career in narrative film editing. In 2018, he produced and edited **Ups and Down** for **Bulletproof**, a music video featured on **MTV Philippines**. He also produced and edited **The Windsor Paradox**, a dark comedy short film nominated for The Best Editing Award in the **Austin Comedy Short Film Festival** in Fall 2018. In 2018, he is accepted to the editing program of the **American Film Institute Conservatory**, the No. 1 film school in the US. In 2023, Augustine was accepted into the **British Academy of Film and Television Arts - US Newcomers** program. Currently, he is working as an Assistant Editor on an Amazon Prime mini-series directed by **Lulu Wang**. Augustine is a member of the **Motion Picture Editors Guild**.

# FISHMONGER

/ creative team (3 of 4)



**VALERIE STEINBERG**

*Producer*

Named one of Variety's "10 Producers to Watch" in 2023, **Valerie Steinberg** is a producer based in LA, whose credits include EP of Riley Keough's directorial debut "War Pony" (Cannes '22, Caméra D'Or winner) and EP of A24's "The Inspection" (TIFF '22, Golden Globe nominee). Valerie has a slate of feature films in development, including Samantha Aldana's "Little Lying Wild," the winner of the 2023 Sitges Women in FAN teaser competition. Additional credits include lead producer of "Karmalink", a Cambodian sci-fi feature that opened Venice Critics' Week '21, and Executive Producer of 21 genre shorts for Disney's "Bite Size Halloween" series on Hulu. Her award-winning short film credits also include "Hair Wolf" (Sundance Jury award winner), "The Breakthrough" (SXSW), "Fry Day" (SXSW/Tribeca), and "Blocks" (Sundance/SXSW). Valerie graduated from Yale University with degrees in Philosophy and Chinese.



**JORDAN WILLCOX**

*Producer*

**Jordan Willcox** received his Juris Doctorate from UC Hastings and his Masters of Fine Arts from the American Film Institute for producing. He recently produced the upcoming comedy "Stealing Pulp Fiction." As an emerging independent producer, Jordan looks forward to developing new and exciting stories.

# FISHMONGER

/ creative team (4 of 4)



**XIYU LIN**  
*Production Designer*

**Xiyu Lin** is an LA-based production designer originally from China. Xiyu graduated with Honors from the China Academy of Arts with a B.A. in Exhibition Design. Before she pursued her MFA at AFI, she worked as a scene designer and freelance artist. She designed scenery for several museums in China. Her artwork has been shown in the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai and the Zhejiang Art Museum. After a study tour from Japan, she moved to LA and received her first MFA in Stage Design. Xiyu's first design job happened while she studied at AFI; a short film titled BLOCKS, which premiered at Sundance 2020. Ever since Xiyu realized Production Design was the perfect career to mold all her creative interests under one roof. Since then, Xiyu approaches every film as an artist. She designs for Narrative, live event & Commercials from the idea to its final execution.



**JOHN GRANEY**  
*Composer*

**John Graney** is a music+film maker from LA. At 10 years old, he was singing in the Los Angeles Children's Choir, competing as a fiddle and mandolinist, and signed to Paradigm as a working child actor. After graduating Berklee college of music in 2003, he spent the next 15 years touring and recording as a multi-instrumentalist and singer with bands like Arctic Monkeys, The Wallflowers, Lenka, Bryan Greenberg, Honyhoney, and The Californian. After tiring of the road, he began composing music for commercials and TV placements such as True Blood, Xtreme Colorado, Bud Light, Levi's, McDonalds, and more. If you've heard an Auto Zone commercial in the last ten years then you've heard him sing. In 2018, he enrolled in The American Film institute and exited two years later with a Master Degree in film and an army of friends hungry to make awesome movies. He's been composing for media ever since and loves making big noises full of even bigger emotions.



**ALEX DENNIS-RENNER**  
*Co-Writer*

**Alexandra Dennis-Renner** was born and raised just outside of Omaha, Nebraska before eventually relocating to New York City. An alumna of Sarah Lawrence College and University College London, Alex majored in political science and creative writing, later joining the independent media streaming platform, SnagFilms, as a content acquisitions and development associate. After years of making short films, sketches, and music videos "just for fun," she found herself at the AFI Conservatory as a Fellow in the Screenwriting program, where she's now in her second year with the hopes of continuing to write feature films, television episodics, and grow a body of work that her parents don't totally understand but will tell their friends about regardless.





# FISHMONGER

/ principle cast



# FISHMONGER

/ principle cast



**DOMINIC BURGESS**

*Christie O'Mallaghan*

**Dominic Burgess** was born in Stoke-on-Trent, England (*Just like the Captain of the R.M.S. TITANIC, fact fans*). Notable acting roles include playing Victor Buono in the multi-Emmy nominated series, 'FEUD', for which he received critical acclaim (*"played with uncanny precision by Dominic Burgess – 'THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER'"*), Jerry Summers in 'DR DEATH', The RamGod Ember in Syfy's 'THE MAGICIANS', accident prone Henry in 'THE GOOD PLACE', Psycho Pete in 'IT'S ALWAYS SUNNY IN PHILADELPHIA', supervillain Kilgore in 'THE FLASH' the sinister Mr. Vup in 'STAR TREK: PICARD' and as John Wayne Gacy in 'MONSTER: THE JEFFREY DAHMER STORY'.

Dominic can next be seen in the Apple+ series 'PALM ROYALE' and Zach Snyder's 'REBEL MOON', and some other things he's NDA'd up to the neck in.



**DONNLA HUGHES**

*Sinead the Fish Monster*

**Donnla Hughes** is originally from Ireland and trained at LAMDA in London. She has worked extensively in professional theatre both in the UK and the US. Some highlights include *Ironbound* (Gamm Theatre, Rhode Island), *Describe the Night* (Gamm Theatre), *Constellations* (Geffen Playhouse Theatre, LA), *The Maids* (A Noise Within, LA), *Romeo and Juliet* (A Noise Within, LA), *Outside Mullingar* (Geffen Playhouse Theatre, LA), *The Silver Tassie* (National Theatre, UK), *The Little Mermaid* (Bristol Old Vic Theatre, UK), *The Well of the Saints* (Druid Theatre Company, Ireland), *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare's Globe, UK), *Toxic Bankers* (Leicester Square Theatre, UK). She's an established voice over artist and was a long-standing member of the BBC Radio Drama rep. Film and television credits include Jenny in *Godard and Others* (New Troy), Becky in *Get Down Stay Down* (pilot)(Room Enough), and Nurse in *Art Is*.

**Penny O'Brien** is an Irish actress and musician based in Los Angeles, CA. Penny made her start in theater and after several years of training in New York she broke out, working on the role of Molly O'Shea in the video game Red Dead Redemption 2. Penny is also a spirited singer songwriter and is currently working on her debut album *Happy Belated* under the artist name Ogreta



**PENNY O'BRIEN**

*Penny O'Brien*



# FISHMONGER

/ media, feature script, specs

# FISHMONGER

/ trailer & poster

## *Trailer*

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For a high quality version of this trailer, please visit:  
<https://vimeo.com/822391142>

## *Poster*

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For a high quality version of this poster, please visit:  
[FISHMONGER Poster](#)

# FISHMONGER

/ publicity stills (1 of 2)

## *Publicity Stills 1*

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For high quality versions of these stills, please visit:  
[FISHMONGER Publicity Stills](#)



# FISHMONGER

/ publicity stills (2 of 2)

## *Publicity Stills 2*

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For high quality versions of these stills, please visit:  
[FISHMONGER Publicity Stills](#)



# FISHMONGER

/ feature script

## *Feature Script*

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Neil has written **a feature screenplay of FISHMONGER**, which was the 2021 [Grand Prize Winner of the Slamdance Screenplay Contest](#).

Our goal is to channel the momentum from our short film into getting a feature off the ground and into production. (That's the BIG DREAM!)

Any interested parties, please contact David Kopple [dkopple@ent360.com](mailto:dkopple@ent360.com) or Brian Levy [blevy@ent360.com](mailto:blevy@ent360.com) at Entertainment 360.

# FISHMONGER

/ technical specs

## *Specs*

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Title..... FISHMONGER  
Running time..... 25 minutes 30 seconds  
Country of origin..... USA  
Country of production..... USA  
Production year..... 2023  
Category..... Narrative Short  
Genre..... Supernatural Dark Comedy  
Language of dialogue..... English  
Closed captions..... SRT & SCC (link [here](#))  
Film color..... Black & White  
Aspect ratio..... 1.85:1  
Frame rate..... 23.98  
Shooting format..... ARRI Alexa 3.2k  
Master format..... ProRes444XQ  
Audio format..... Dolby 5.1 / 24bits/48kHz  
Production company..... AFI Conservatory

## *Technical Contact*

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Augustine So  
+1 626 264 7509  
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# FISHMONGER

/ contact

## *Contact & Links*

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PR Requests:

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Neil's Management:

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**Brian Levy**

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Instagram:

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Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/fishmongerfilm](http://www.facebook.com/fishmongerfilm)

Producers:

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[valerie.steinberg@gmail.com](mailto:valerie.steinberg@gmail.com)

**Jordan Willcox**

[jordanwillcox27@gmail.com](mailto:jordanwillcox27@gmail.com)

# FISHMONGER

/ credits

## *Key Production Credits*

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**Directed by:** Neil Ferron

**Story by:** Neil Ferron

**Screenplay by:** Neil Ferron & Alex Dennis-Renner

**Produced by:** Valerie Steinberg, Jordan Willcox & Neil Ferron

**Cinematography by:** Jack McDonald

**Production Design by:** Xiyu Lin

**Edited by:** Augustine So

**Original Score by:** John Graney

**Principal Cast:** Dominic Burgess, Donnla Hughes, Penny O'Brien

**Supporting Cast:** Mari Weiss, Mark Bramhall, Ron Bottitta, Will Dixon

**Stunt Coordinator:** Van Ayasit

**1st AD:** Chakameh Marandi

**Co-Producers:** Thomas Bond, Doug Barden

**Casting:** Victoria Hoffman

**Camera Operator:** Jonas Fischer

**1st AC:** Nick Langely

**Gaffers:** Shane Ainsworth, Jon Mahoney

**Costume:** Nan Zhou

**HMU:** Ali Bayless

**Creature Effects:** Symbolic Arts

**Special Effects:** Runs with Scissors FX

**Sound Design:** Nathan Ruyle & This is Sound Design

**VFX:** Clean Plate FX

**Color:** Tanner Buschman & MTI Film



/ thank you!