

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PRESENTS

# NUCLEAR

**DIRECTED BY**  
**SEBASTIAN IBARRA DEL CASTILLO**  
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**WRITTEN BY**  
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**PRODUCED BY**  
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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PRESENTS CTPR480 "NUCLEAR" SHAW JONES DIEGO WHITEHILL VANGE TAPIA JAY MCGREGOR KRISTA CONTI  
MUSIC BY DANIEL MONTES DE OCA SOUNDTRACK BY ISABELLA MORCOTE RILEY BUCHANAN SOUND BY AMENDA LEE LEILA HILF COSTUME DESIGNER BELLA LEE PRODUCTION DESIGNER KYLIE LUDVIKSEN GRACE FENNESSY  
EDITED BY CHARLOTTE MARY DESPARD KATIE GERGEN VISUAL EFFECTS BY DAVID DEISER ASSISTANT CAMERA GAOYANG GANJIIN DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY DENNIS LEE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DARRIEN SNYDER  
PRODUCED BY KAVIN KAPOOR RILEY BUCHANAN SCREENPLAY BY MICHA EFRON DIRECTED BY SEBASTIAN IBARRA DEL CASTILLO



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**LOGLINE:** In 1962 suburban California, at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, a young teenager's plan to run away from home is complicated by news of an imminent catastrophe.



## SYNOPSIS

On October 22, 1962, nuclear tensions between the USSR and the USA are higher than ever. But for teenager Dave Sims, this is the least of his concerns. After his family discovers he's gay, Dave anxiously packs his bag to escape from his homophobic, abusive military father Robert before he arrives home from work. Unbeknownst to Dave, however, Robert is simultaneously racing home from the local military base to warn his son of an imminent catastrophe. Robert's race becomes a battle against time to convince Dave to stay with family before it's too late.









## **SEBASTIAN IBARRA DEL CASTILLO , DIRECTOR**

Sebastian is a Queer writer and director originally from Mexico City drawn to stories that explore moral complexities and challenge ingrained beliefs. A recent graduate from the USC School of Cinematic Arts, Sebastian thrives in the grey areas of life; finding beauty in irony and nuance, embracing emotional vulnerability, and exploring characters confronted with moral dilemmas. His work employs diverse sub-genres like melodrama, horror and absurdist comedy to explore human behavior and challenge the status quo.



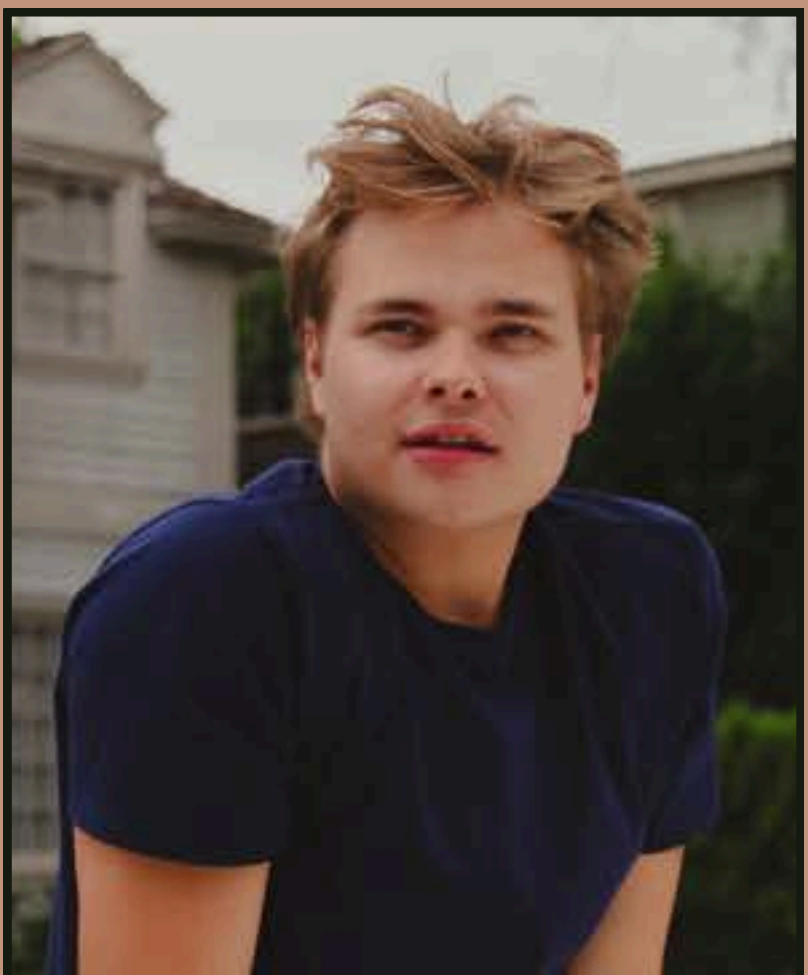
## **MICHA EFRON , WRITER**

Micha grew up in Tel Aviv, Israel. After high school and a year of bartending, he finally realized he wanted to pursue a career in screenwriting. His only regret is not being old enough to have written 'Stand By Me.' For Nuclear, he was very excited to tell a story about complex characters navigating a complex historical moment.



## **KAVIN KAPOOR , PRODUCER**

Kavin Kapoor is an award-winning director and producer from Singapore. With a background in engineering, he has a unique approach to directing that often incorporates technology as a central character. His projects force us to think forward-- to imagine futures or realities that are grounded in our current fiction. As an expat, his work often reflects his family values and challenges the concept of "a home." Kavin believes in virtual production, and he collaborates frequently with teams to produce content for various mediums; he has worked as a mo-cap supervisor for PlayStation, a VR artist for the USC Bridge Institute, and an AR developer at Meta, beyond directing several short films.



## **RILEY BUCHANAN , PRODUCER**

Riley Buchanan's background is as varied as it is, well, overwhelming. When he wasn't catching lizards in the backyard, Riley grew up immersing himself into nearly every art form his hometown of Tampa, FL had to offer. By the time he was accepted into USC's film program, he had earned Superior ratings as an actor at Florida State Thespian Festivals, become the lead singer and guitarist in alt-rock band Visit Neptune, won "Best Director" and "Best Film" at GIFF, and achieved Valedictorian from his high school. These diversified pursuits that aim to answer Riley's question of self bleed through the fabric of his work as a writer, director and producer, where he continues to explore the perception of self through high-calorie characters and delicate stories that we don't merely observe, but relate to.



# OUR JOURNEY



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Before coming out as gay to my family, I felt like my world was going to end. When I finally did, my dad nearly choked and my mom sank in her chair: They thought their world was ending too. None of us really knew how to see each other within this new normal. For them, it was hard to accept this foreign side of me; for me, it was hard to accept how hard it was for them to accept it. Making amends tested our family; it brought out our worst idiosyncrasies... maybe our best too. This experience drew me to tell the story of Robert, Barbara and Dave Sims: a family like mine whose world is ending... only for them, the world is also literally ending.



## IDEA TO PRODUCTION

Our team came together with a pitch: through a rigorous selection process at USC, we had to compete for our film to be chosen as one of only four thesis films produced in our cohort. Once green-lit, we felt triumphant, but our work was only beginning.







## OCTOBER 1962

I was drawn to the Cuban Missile Crisis not only because the world was at the brink of ending, but also because it was one of the key moments in its decade where the undercurrent violence of the post-war American dream surfaced to invade its citizens' mundane lives. Since our story follows a household resistant to change yet catalyzed by impending doom, the Crisis made the perfect backdrop to find the domestic struggle within a decade of rapid political change and a population coming to terms with their secretly violent ways.



## OUR QUESTION

Our characters are forced to ask themselves what is most important to them in their last moments together and if they're willing to change, compromise or both in order to stay together. Simply, I wanted to ask... when our time is limited, who do we chose to spend it with and what are we willing to give up for it?



## BUILDING THE WORLD

Creating our family's house was a question of both invoking the times and reflecting our distinct characters. It was a monumental part of the process, since after all, their home is what the Sims are ultimately fighting to protect. So you can imagine it was an arduous search before we found our perfect house at Canoga Hills —which, I might add, inspired the title for our original 60s pop ballad. With an inclination for the colorful and inspiration from movies such as Haynes' "Far From Heaven" and its own muse Sirk's "All That Heaven Allows" we designed our home and characters through the palette of picture perfect suburbia. Barbara's look was particularly crucial to paint the specificity of our family: it's a mix of inspiration between Donna Reed, Mexican diva Katy Jurado, and my own grandmother, whose watch Barbara actually wears in the film. We look back at this world through an uneasy camera half-inspired by thrillers and half by Cassavetes, and through a soundscape designed around a slipping time motif, which together are meant to infuse a sense of tension true to the times and true to the Sims. We added elements of thrill and humor while maintaining an intimate family drama at the forefront of the film's vision.





# CAST

## **SHAW JONES as ROBERT**

Shaw Jones can be seen on Amazon with leading roles in the features "Proximity," which he garnered praise from Rolling Stone's Peter Travers and "Blue," which he has been honored with two Best Actor Awards. Television work includes "Your Honor," "Star Trek: Picard," "The Upshaws," "NCIS," "Criminal Minds," "Snowfall," "Grace and Frankie," "The Affair," "911," "The Cool Kids," "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia," "For All Mankind" and a recurring player on "Jimmy Kimmel Live." Shaw has also brought his talents to the stage starring as Lee Harvey Oswald in Stephen Sondheim's Assassins, No Place To Be Somebody at the WACO Theater and Birdland Blue at the Paul Robeson Theater. He is currently starring Off Broadway in WOUNDED at the Soho Playhouse.



## **DIEGO WHITEHILL as DAVE**

Hello my name is Diego Whitehill and I am an actor from Oakland, California. I am currently studying theater and film at USC. I'm so grateful for this opportunity to help bring such a unique story to life. A heartfelt thank you to the phenomenal crew behind this film for making the process such a blast!



## **VANGE TAPIA as BARBARA**

Vange Tapia is an Actress, Producer, VO talent and Host who initiated her career acting in TV commercials during her mid-teens. Thanks to a 40 seconds monologue for national TV with the role of a valley girl, she was booked as female lead in roles for TV shows including working with Academy Award Winner Dir. Alfonso Cuarón for the television series "Hora Marcada" under the lens of Emmanuel "Chivo" Lubezki. Vange is the founder of "Actors Slash", a collective group of international and local talent in Hollywood where members not only perform but create opportunities as actors / directors / producers / writers / DP's / sound etc.. in collaboration with other fellow filmmakers. She has starred in tons of TV commercials, series, films and plays. She is happily married and lives in the City of Los Angeles, CA, doing what she likes the most.









# FULL CREDITS

## Production Team

Director Sebastian Ibarra del Castillo  
Producer Kevin Kapoor  
Producer Riley Buchanan  
First Assistant Director Darrien Snyder  
Second Assistant Director Sona Earnest  
Associate Producer Ana Flavia Veiga  
Associate Producer Jacob Victorica  
Associate Producer Rebekah Chun  
Production Coordinator Madeline Abiera  
Unit Production Manager Zakariya Syed  
Stunt Coordinator Mikayla Ashe  
BTS Photographer Natalie Serratos

## Script

Writer Micha Efron  
Script Supervisor Shouri Gomatham  
Research Head Sofia Mancing  
Script Consultant Izzy Ster  
Script Consultant Levi Elias  
Casting Director Eva Furlani  
Casting PA Tristan Obedos

## Camera

Director of Photography Dennis Lee  
Gaffer Tomaz Favrin  
First Assistant Camera Gaoyang Ganjin  
First Assistant Camera Marguerite Bysshe  
Second Assistant Camera Maceo Perez  
Second Assistant Camera Sofia Mancing  
Key Grip David Deiser  
Best Girl Grip Chloe Rankin  
Best Girl Electric Becca  
Best Boy Electric Khalif  
Grip/Swing Matt Jarzyna  
Grip/Swing Derek Delson  
Production Assistant Axil Beebe  
Production Assistant Bryton Snyder

## Post Production

Editor Charlotte Mary Despard  
Editor Katie Gergen  
Assistant Editor Khanh Doan  
Assistant Editor Xiomara Neri Hidalgo  
Post Supervisor Riley Buchanan  
DIT Kevin Kapoor  
Colorist Avery Niles

## Sound

Sound Designer Amenda Lee  
Sound Designer Leila Hilf  
Sound Assistant Rebekah Chun  
Sound Assistant Ethan Guetta

## Production Design

Production Designer Kylie Ludviksen  
Production Designer Grace Fennessy  
Art Director Amaris Pueyes  
Food Specialist Maeve Humphrey  
Costume Designer Isabella Lee  
Set Dresser Nikia Fenix  
HMU/ On-Set Costumes Genevieve Hercules  
Assistant HMU Rebekah Chun  
Assistant HMU Valeria Betancur  
Comic Book Designer Chad Buley

## Cast

Robert Shaw Jones  
Dave Diego Whitehill  
Barbara Vange Tapia  
Tyler Jay McGregor  
Connie Krista Conti  
Radford Extra Riley Buchanan  
Radford Extra Sofia Mancing  
Radford Extra Bryton Snyder  
Radford Extra Mimi Gramatky

## VFX

VFX Supervisor Kevin Kapoor  
VFX Head David Deiser

## Music

Composer Daniel Montes de Oca  
Songwriter Isabella Morcote  
Songwriter Riley Buchanan  
Mastering Engineer Austin Brown

## Special Thanks

Brenda, Gilman, Nataly, Khristyne, Steve, Jerry  
Lola Thomas  
Tristan Obedos  
Luis Alberto Ibarra  
Veronica del Castillo  
Andrea Ibarra  
Todd and Babsie Buchanan  
Yvonne Caro Caro  
Sofia Bajwa  
Andrew Gerstenblatt  
Isaiah Lenoue  
Anton Vayedjian

## Student Assistants

Tola Omilana (Producing)  
Connor Hu (Camera)  
Diana Mir-Mohammad-Sadeghi (Editing)  
Hannah Schoettmer (Sound)  
Alice Wibisono (Sound)  
Justin Winick (Production Design)

## Faculty Advisors

Scott Kroopf (Producing)  
Helaine Head (Directing)  
Tristan Whitman (Cinematography)  
Jason Rosenfield, ACE (Editing)  
Rommel Villa Barriga (Editing)  
Suhail F. Kafity, MPSE (Sound)  
Mimi Gramatky, IPDC (Production Design)

Director of Physical Production  
Hashem Selph

Physical Production Administrator  
Suh-Hee (Becca) Han

Festivals & Distribution/Licensing  
Sandrine Faucher Cassidy

Edited on Avid  
Captured on Sony



# TECHNICAL SPECS

Genre: Drama

Runtime: 10 min 56 sec

Shooting Format: Digital

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Color: Color

Audio Format: 5.1

Original Language: English







**THANK YOU**