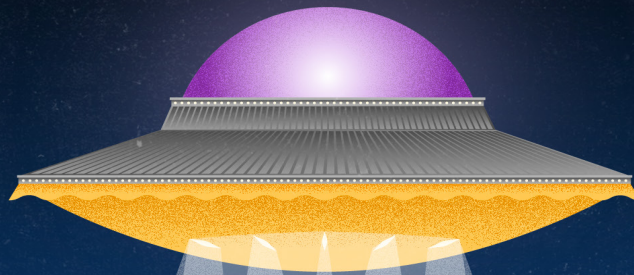


ANA CRUZ KAYNE   DANNY DEFERRARI   MALLORY PORTNOY   JORDAN CARLOS



# KNEAD

a short film by  
**Timothy Michael Cooper**

**PRESS KIT**





## LOGLINE

When an alien landing mysteriously drives people around the world to achieve their deepest dreams, an aspiring baker in an unhappy marriage wonders why she hasn't been affected at all — forcing her to take matters into her own hands.





## SYNOPSIS

It's 1963 in the suburbs. Olive is a spectacular home baker whose husband, Kenneth, takes her (and her beautiful pastries) for granted. When she brings up her dream of someday going to baking school, he casually dismisses it — just as he always does.

So when an emergency newscast shows a UFO crash-landed nearby, with slug-like aliens emerging from the wreckage, Olive hopes against hope that this could change everything. Sure enough, everything *does* change when people around her start getting possessed — wandering off disoriented and returning the next day far happier, with a new sense of their life's true purpose.

That same day, Olive's best friend Helen gets possessed in the middle of Kenneth's birthday party, then returns with the dream of being a yoga instructor in India. Olive hopes to "catch" the possession from Helen...but to no avail. Later, Olive jealously listens to news reports touting stories from people around the world who've also been lucky enough to be possessed. The final straw comes when Kenneth gets possessed too, imbuing him with a brand-new dream of becoming a Hollywood actor. Will *everyone* on earth be given the chance to feel fulfilled and joyful, while Olive's dream goes unheard?

As the aliens prepare to leave, Olive is faced with a life-altering decision: Will she continue with her unfulfilling suburban life as it is, or muster the courage to take her future into her own hands?





## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I've often wondered, "What might it take to unite humanity? To make us see that we all share one earth, that we all have the same common goals — survival, shelter, nourishment, companionship, love?"

Then the pandemic hit. Right away, we saw that even a global tragedy wouldn't get people to unite under the same ideological roof. But perhaps something even bigger could motivate us to cooperate — like a huge, truly earth-shattering event. As a writer, that naturally led me to envision the potential effect UFOs and blob-like, utterly unthreatening aliens might have on such a divided society. What would we make of them? Would we still use them to pursue our own ends? Do we really need outside events to kick us into action — or does true motivation come from within?

This was the genesis of *Knead*, a short comedy with a big sci-fi twist. The film explores just how hard it can be to pursue your most heartfelt goals when the very idea of doing something for yourself, let alone following your dreams, feels in peril.

Just weeks before shooting, I realized that changing the time period from the present day to the 1960s would be the perfect vehicle to mirror Olive's feeling of being stuck, even imprisoned, in an unfulfilled life. She fervently hopes that these invading creatures from beyond can save her from her stifling reality as a submissive housewife...and perhaps even propel her towards her sweet, doughy, colorful dream of being a pastry chef. However, as Olive comes to realize, we all have to muster the courage within ourselves to pursue our desires, especially when no one else believes in them — or in us.

*Knead* is my most ambitious movie to date. It came together with the collaboration of dozens of brilliant, dedicated cast and crew members across multiple countries. Getting it off the ground and (eventually) in the can during a pandemic and two simultaneous strikes (by both the Screen Actors Guild and the Writers Guild of America) was a true challenge...but it was absolutely worth it to tell this uplifting story of self-realization, liberation, and baking.

I invite you to join us in rooting for Olive to follow her passion. After all, her dilemma — choosing either her security or her dreams — is a heart-wrenching choice that we all must face.

— Timothy Michael Cooper

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

GENRE	Comedy/Sci-Fi
LANGUAGE	English
WRITER / DIRECTOR	Timothy Michael Cooper
PRODUCTION COMPANY	Velocity Films
PRODUCERS	Natalie Schwan, Susie Talbot
COMPLETION	2024
RUNNING TIME	11 min 25 sec



## FILMING & POST

*Knead* was filmed on location at a period-appropriate house in Midwood, Brooklyn over two days in November 2023. Cinematographer Evan Jake Cohen filmed with an ARRI ALEXA 35 with Canon K35 Prime lenses. Post-production was an international effort, including editor Emily Chao and colorist Andrew Francis in London, post audio editor Tyrelle Massey in Oregon, and a creative team spread among Spain, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Texas, and New York.



## WRITER / DIRECTOR

Timothy Michael Cooper is a writer-director based in Brooklyn. He wrote and directed *Concierge: The Series*, starring *Saturday Night Live*'s Kate McKinnon, which was nominated for the first-ever short-form Writers Guild Award.

His short comedy *Lemon*, starring Jennifer Westfeldt, Noah Bean, and Jenn Lyon, premiered at Tribeca Film Festival, played at dozens of international festivals, was purchased by United Airlines and Amazon Prime, and landed an option for TV development.

The short also led to him being named an IFP Screen Forward Labs Fellow. For his short sci-fi film *Quarter-Century Kid*, he was awarded a 2021 Soho House Script House fellowship, receiving mentorship from Sundance screenwriters and directors.

As a longtime member of the writers' room for the Writers Guild Awards, he's written jokes and sketches for Jimmy Fallon, Amber Ruffin, Kenan Thompson, Amy Schumer, Ariana DeBose, Rachel Brosnahan, Paul Reiser, Michelle Buteau, and many more.

He wrote the dramatic feature *Away From Here*, starring Nick Stahl, Alicia Witt, and Ray Wise. And he's the creator of 365 Short Stories, where he published an original high-concept short story every single day for a year.

Timothy is a proud member of the WGAE, the Brooklyn Filmmakers Collective, and the Hollywood Radio & Television Society, as well as a mentor for first-generation college students via 1stGenYale.



## PRODUCER NATALIE SCHWAN

Natalie Schwan is an award-winning director and producer, and founder of full-service production company Velocity Creatives. She is known for work that celebrates the vastness of the human condition, the journey of the overcomer, and the spirit of adventure. She has received multiple Telly Awards for directing and producing, produced Webby-nominated work, and won second place in the SheDirected Audience Awards Competition. She has received press from *Variety*, and her work has been featured at festivals including LA Shorts, SOHO, and Chelsea International, and was a semifinalist at Flicker's Rhode Island. In early 2023, she launched a new branch of her business focused on narrative shorts, episodic, and feature film content: Velocity Films. She is constantly drawn to historical narratives and adventure stories. Her slate includes a dystopian feature drama, a period Ellis Island narrative series, a heart-wrenching family drama feature, and a female-driven scripted global anthology series.



## PRODUCER SUSIE TALBOT

Following an eight-year span working with Academy Award-winning actress Rachel Weisz, Susie now focuses on sourcing, developing, and packaging projects in the scripted and unscripted fields. TV projects include WWII sports-spy drama *Courting Danger* with EPs Maven Screen Media, Endgame Entertainment, and Votiv Films; and *The Lotus Eaters*, based on Tatjana Soli's novel about a female photojournalist embedded in the Vietnam War. Susie EPed the indie series *I Need Your Love*, which premiered at Tribeca Film Festival 2024. *No Longer, Not Yet*, a coming-of-age feature written and directed by Gibson Frazier and featuring Matther Maher and Anthony Rapp, will hit the festival circuit in 2025. Her short films have played at festivals including Indy Shorts, Dances With Films, and Austin Film Festival. In early 2024, Susie co-founded Puff Piece Productions with producer Lila Claghorn to create narrative and nonfiction projects that spark conversations and shift perspectives. Armed with a keen understanding of the global marketplace, Susie and Lila strategically position projects to find their ideal home and resonate with audiences worldwide.



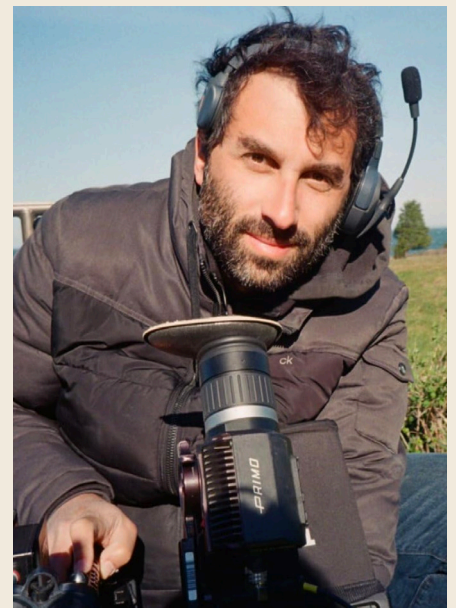
## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER SIMON TAUFIQUE

Simon Sohel TaufiQue is a British-Indian, award-winning composer, Emmy-nominated film producer, and educator based in NYC. He's collaborated with filmmakers like Reinaldo Marcus Green, Cary Fukunaga, Anja Marquardt, Kevin Smith, Rashad Frett, and Mary Harron. Notable work include *She's Lost Control*, winner at the 2014 Berlinale and three Spirit Awards nominations; the Emmy-nominated *The Interpreters*; *Imperium*, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Toni Collette; the groundbreaking mental health HBO documentary *Weight Of Gold*; and *Land Of Gold*, Tribeca's Untold Stories' \$1 million winner (HBO Max). Simon also produced/scored *Ricky*, a Sundance 2023 nominee and Sundance Feature Lab project shooting in 2024. His films, distributed by giants like Lionsgate, Universal, and HBO, have garnered accolades at Sundance, Berlinale, and Venice, among others, with nominations for the Independent Spirit Awards and the Academy Awards shortlist. He has been featured in profiles on NBC News, Medium, and numerous podcasts and publications. Simon is represented by APA/IAG and WhiteBear PR, and is a proud member of the PGA East.



## DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY EVAN JAKE COHEN

Evan Jake Cohen is a NYC-based cinematographer. He's traveled the U.S. and the world making films, commercials, documentaries, and promos for major networks and brands such as NBCUniversal; Mercedes-Benz; Heineken; and Nike. Recent highlights include the feature film *Phyllis, Silenced* by writer-director Roland Ellis; a Mercedes-Benz commercial featuring Alicia Keys, directed by Cheryl Dunn; the short films *The Privates* from writer-director Dylan Allen, a Vimeo Staff Pick Premiere and Short of the Week's Best of the Month; *Fill Your Heart With French Fries* by writer-director Tamar Glezerman, a Vimeo Staff Pick and Short of the Week's Comedy of the Year; *Every Other Weekend* by writer-director Josh Rothstein, winner of Best Short Drama Award at Venice Short Film, Lakeshorts, Westfield, and Williamsburg Independent Film Festival; and *Hey Girl* by director Haley Geffen, winner of a Humanitarian Award at Best Shorts Competition.





# KEY PRODUCTION CREDITS

## CREW

written and directed by	TIMOTHY MICHAEL COOPER
produced by	NATALIE SCHWAN & SUSIE TALBOT
line producer	DYLAN FLASOWSKI
co-producer	ALICIA FISCHER
executive producer	SIMON TAUFIQUE
director of photography	EVAN JAKE COHEN
production design	BECKY LEE MORGAN
casting	KATE GELLER, CSA & ROSS SHENKER
original score	SIMON TAUFIQUE
editor	EMILY CHAO BFE
vfx	DAN MELIUS
costume design	SARAH COGAN
hair	JUSTINE SIERAKOWSKI
makeup	ANNIE JOHNSON

## CAST

Olive	ANA CRUZ KAYNE
Kenneth	DANNY DEFERRARI
Helen	MALLORY PORTNOY
Dave	JORDAN CARLOS





## WEB

[kneadfilm.com](http://kneadfilm.com)

## CONTACT

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