



ANDY PHILLIPS

WORDS

MIA ASHLEY

Y'ALL MEDIA AND SCREEN 4 ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT ANDY PHILLIPS MIA ASHLEY LASH DOOLEY
WORDS MUSIC BY ANDREW MORGAN SMITH EDITOR NICK BLATT PRODUCTION DESIGNER CAROLINE
KENNAN DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY BRENNAN ROBIDEAUX CO-PRODUCERS BRENNAN ROBIDEAUX
THOMAS ZRABKOWSKI EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS HUNTER & CANDYCE PERRET ANDY PHILLIPS
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY ANDY PHILLIPS
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Logline

Searching for the courage to overcome his stutter and share his poetic gift, William ventures into the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans to immerse himself into the soulful spoken word scene at The Slam.

Synopsis

In the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, all are welcome at The Slam Bar & Poetry Cafe. The Slam is run by Elaine, the tough proprietor who on any given night serves as MC, bartender, and when necessary - bouncer; all in an effort to make sure everyone feels welcome in her club. William, a preppy uptown yuppie, is an unlikely regular to The Slam. He's a talented poet desperate to share his unique gift, although he tends to just sit in the back of the bar alone, quietly taking in the performances. Extreme familial pressures coupled with a severe stutter are holding William back from mustering the courage to share his poetry. But as Elaine gets to know William, she challenges him to rise above his fears and to once and for all step up to the mic.

Filmed on location in the Lower Ninth Ward, WORDS is a soulful depiction of the city's artistic and cultural hospitality. It's a story of courage, friendship, and self-discovery.

Cast & Crew

William.....Andy Phillips
Elaine.....Mia Ashley
Iggy.....Lash Dooley
David.....Matthew Martinez
Dad.....Dan Kellmer
Caller.....Shelby Sandlin

Writer/Director.....Andy Phillips
Director of Photography.....Brennan Robideaux
Script Supervisor.....Thomas Zrabkowski
Editor.....Nick Blatt
Sound Design.....Alessandro Altman
Production Design.....Caroline Kennan
Composer.....Andrew Morgan Smith
Color Technician.....Jorge Soto
Line Producer.....Chris Haney



Director's Statement

When I set out to create WORDS as a first time filmmaker, I had three goals. The first was to tell a story that had a strong commitment to authenticity of the subjects it addressed: stuttering and poetry. The second was to inspire audiences to pursue their own dreams and share their unique talents. And lastly, I knew I wanted to return to my roots in southern Louisiana. With these objectives in mind I launched into a fascinating development period in which I was fortunate enough to meet with poets, writers, teachers, researchers, speech pathologists, community organizers, founders of national stuttering organizations, poets who stutter, business leaders and even CEO's who stutter.

I took on a sense of responsibility to represent these stories with sincerity and compassion. Stories like the one internationally renowned poet Phil Kaye describes in his poem "Repetition," in which he talks about the stutter he had as a child. Others like Greer E. Mendy and her community gathering place, The Tekrema Center for Art & Culture in New Orleans, where they hold monthly poetry readings open to anybody who wants to attend.

It became increasingly evident that the characters and themes in WORDS were much more than just mere elements of my film, they were symbols of real journeys. And in the end the lines between art imitating life and vice versa became blurred. I know I wrote The Slam before I discovered The Tekrema Center. I know I wrote the character of William before I heard Phil Kaye's poem. But the unexpected links between the story I had written and the stories of the many people that I had the pleasure of meeting along the way was the life force that quite literally willed this production into existence.

In the end, I put all my heart into WORDS. I told the story with as much passion and authenticity as I could. I gratefully was able to return to my roots and film on location in Louisiana. And now, my dream is that the love and care that went into this film is felt by audiences and provokes hope and inspiration.



Delta Bound

The song that opens the film and establishes the tone is a cover of an old blues classic, Delta Bound, performed by the late Jillian Johnson. Ms. Johnson was one of the victims of the tragic movie theatre shooting in Lafayette, LA in July of 2015. Her music lives on and is honored in this film as a testament to her lasting artistic contribution. The haunting rendition of the song serves as a critical component of the Louisiana roots that help breathe a culturally authentic life into the spirit of the film.



Ms. Greer & The Tekrema Center

The key location to the production was set as a poetry cafe in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans. In researching for the film, Director Andy Phillips discovered The Tekrema Center for Art & Culture. The center is owned and operated by Greer E. Mendy. The building was purchased just two months before Hurricane Katrina devastated the area. After surviving the storm, Mendy dedicated the building to the community offering it as an artistic oasis in the much deprived neighborhood. The WORDS production team was graciously allowed complete access to the center to serve as the film's main scenic location: The Slam. The history of the building immediately hits you upon entering. Water lines from the hurricane still fade into the chipped wooden walls. The spirit of resilience, community, and power all simultaneously resonate from the structure, while alongside an undeniable sense of struggle, grief, and loss is still felt. The palpable emotions evoked from the location was the perfect setting for this story of courage, support, and artistic discovery.





We Have a Production Designer?

Perhaps one of the best things about the creation of this film was the strong collaborative effort that came together for the sake of making a great movie. The crew consisted of young passionate artists, friends of friends, and many favors being called in. One great example is Production Designer, Caroline Kennan, who was a fateful last-minute addition to the crew. During the final walk through the day before filming was to begin, it was announced that the Production Designer would be arriving shortly to meet with the director. To which Director Andy Phillips responded, "We have a Production Designer?" Kennan immediately got to work and quickly developed a plan to transform the set. The Tekrema Center was already a beautiful and aesthetically rich space, but Kennan's design was the critical element that brought the film's key location, The Slam, to life. Overnight she worked with her team to custom build the bar, curate and hang artwork, and she even secured a beverage sponsor so that the prop drinks the bar patrons were drinking would be natural and authentic to the location. This kind of above and beyond attitude was the very energy that brought WORDS to life.

