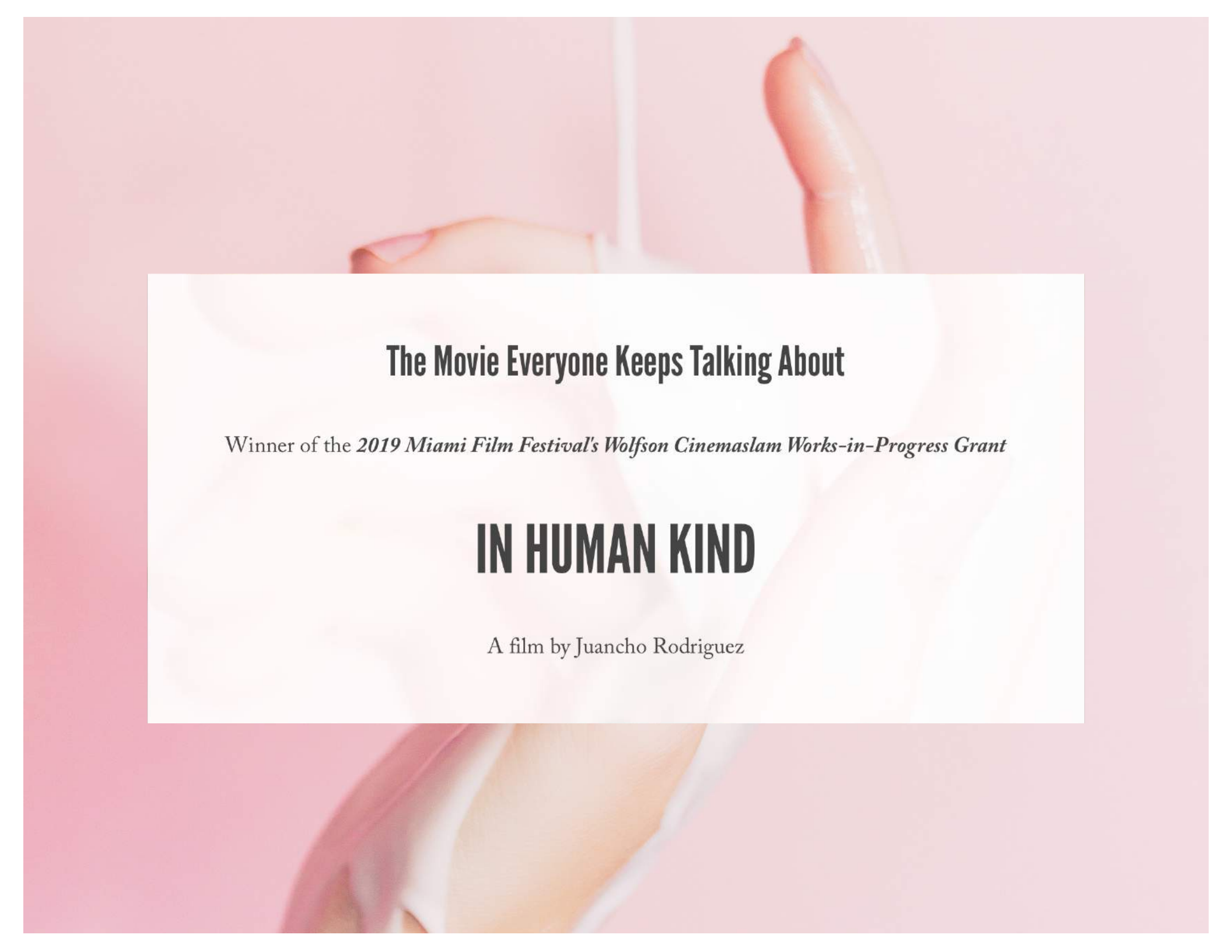




IN HUMAN KIND

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

A very real and different story about the realities of sex trafficking in Miami, FL



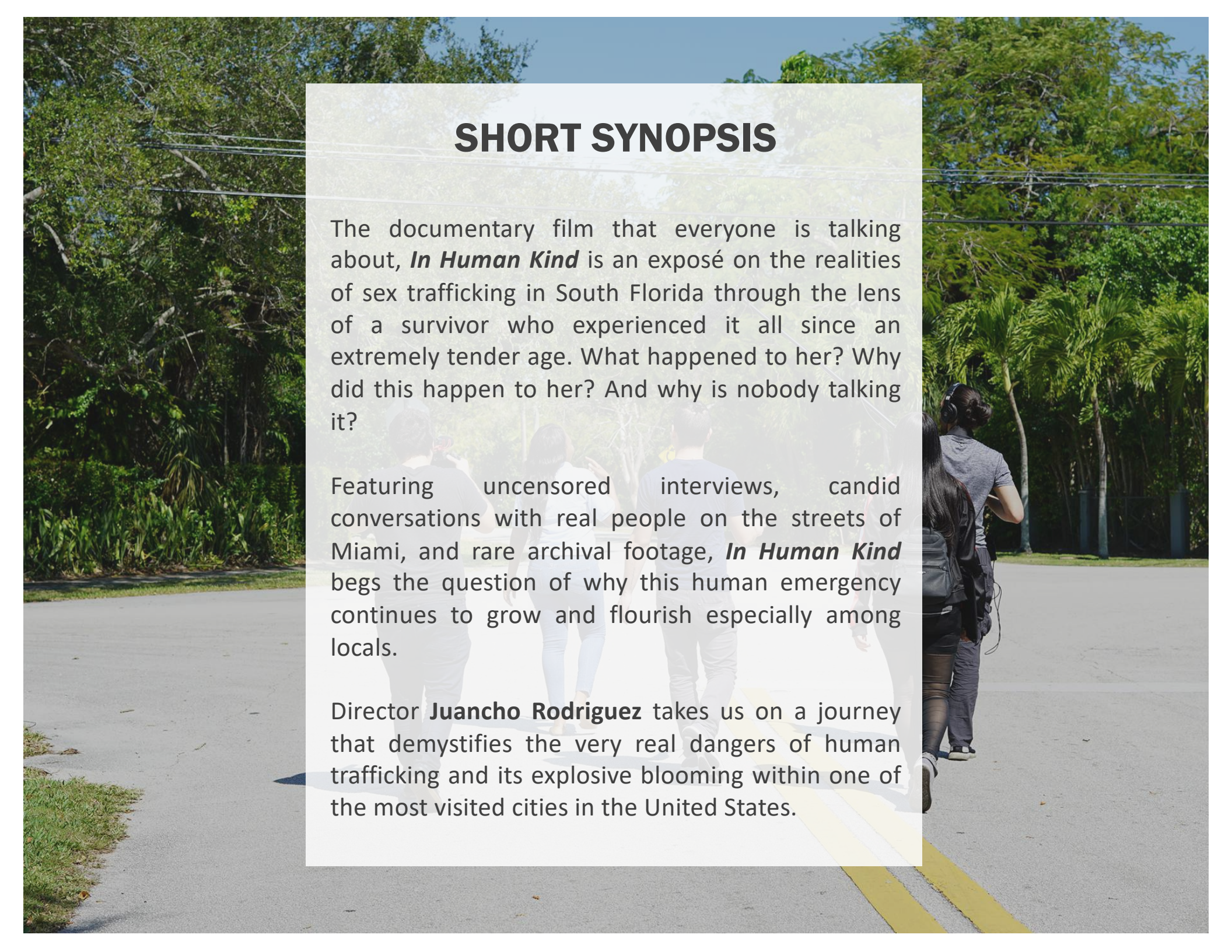
The Movie Everyone Keeps Talking About

Winner of the *2019 Miami Film Festival's Wolfson Cinemaslam Works-in-Progress Grant*

IN HUMAN KIND

A film by Juancho Rodriguez

ABOUT THE FILM

The background image shows a park scene with lush green trees and a paved path. Several people are walking away from the camera on the path. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

The documentary film that everyone is talking about, ***In Human Kind*** is an exposé on the realities of sex trafficking in South Florida through the lens of a survivor who experienced it all since an extremely tender age. What happened to her? Why did this happen to her? And why is nobody talking it?

Featuring uncensored interviews, candid conversations with real people on the streets of Miami, and rare archival footage, ***In Human Kind*** begs the question of why this human emergency continues to grow and flourish especially among locals.

Director **Juancho Rodriguez** takes us on a journey that demystifies the very real dangers of human trafficking and its explosive blooming within one of the most visited cities in the United States.

MEDIUM SYNOPSIS

A multi-billion-dollar industry dedicated to treating human beings as mere objects forced to perform unimaginable acts against their will continues to boom in South Florida.

A sex trafficking survivor turned advocate who's now fighting to leave an imprint on young girls, young boys and others at risk shares her most intimate revelations as a crying help for others to avoid the danger of forced human labor.

In Human Kind follows the journey of a young woman who landed into human trafficking from a very young age and experienced the harsh realities behind the gorgeous façade of tourism, parties and money while growing up in the Magic City.

The film uses never-before-seen interviews, real conversations with people on the streets, and heart-wrenching archival footage to explore the damage that the abuse of power and sex inflict on society.

On a scorching-hot Miami afternoon, and with just a small crew composed of the **producer Gabriela Caminero**, the **cinematographer Ivan Meza**, and a **sound mixer Luis Caminero**, **Colombian-American director Juancho Rodriguez** took it to the very streets where ordinary people get confronted with their own idea of sex trafficking, while shedding away their fear of a wandering camera.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Miami, Florida. Paradise on earth. Hot weather, hot music, hot people. Thousands of tourists visit this exotic location in the hopes of experiencing the vacation of a lifetime.

What many people don't know, or perhaps refuse to acknowledge, is that this idyllic location is one of the cities with the highest index of sex trafficking in the United States; children, young girls, and even young men inhabit Miami with a very different story to tell, and one that most of the time never sees the light of day. These individuals are forced laborers. They're used against their will. They're creatures who have become a means to an end: the pleasure of others.

In Human Kind uncovers some of the ugliest truths in this multi-billion-dollar trade through a first-hand testimony from a survivor who reveals what happened to her during some of her darkest moments.

Developed over the course of a year, the inception of the film involved deep research with the authorities, endless phone calls with foundations, and even a rigorous vetting process with the federal government. Featuring uncensored interviews from a survivor who lived it all, the **State Attorney for Miami-Dade County**, and real people in the streets of Miami, **In Human Kind** is the first foray into documentary filmmaking by **Colombian-American director Juancho Rodriguez**, who helmed a team of passionate filmmakers into discovering the real meaning behind the trafficking of humans in the Magic City.

BIOGRAPHIES

Juancho Rodriguez | **DIRECTOR**

Colombian-American filmmaker Juancho Rodriguez has been enamored with the entertainment industry since a very young age, filming home movies and editing passion projects before entering film school. Between 2013 and 2017 he worked in marketing and collaborated with some of the biggest brands in the United States.

In early 2018 he collaborated with recording artist Manca directing the music video for her debut single "*Pelee*." And a few months later, he dedicated his time to a cause that eventually became *In Human Kind*, pushing him to debut as a documentarian.

Rodriguez developed the project for almost a year talking with several institutions in South Florida, and finally meeting with his film subject, Shanika Ampah; this conversation led to a rapport that soon became the very story foundation for the film. Within a few short weeks, Rodriguez asked producer Gabriela Caminero to join the project and take on the producing helm.

In Human Kind is his foray into documentary filmmaking, and in his own words "a different kind of story about sex trafficking in Miami, FL."





Gabriela Caminero | **PRODUCER**

A jack of all trades, Caminero has been working sets throughout her entire filmmaking career: from first assistant director to script supervisor, she understands the complexity of projects like no-one else.

She sat on the Producer chair for ***In Human Kind*** after discussing the possibility of the project with Rodriguez and how to make just an idea into a finished documentary that could speak to the complexity of sex trafficking.

Dominican-born Caminero has been in charge of every inch of the production and all logistical processes.

Ivan Meza | CINEMATOGRAPHER

A true artist and photography aficionado, Ivan Meza is a Director of Photography who has a keen eye for aesthetics and a perfect sense of composition.

Along with Director Juancho Rodriguez, he crafted the distinct look for *In Human Kind* inspired by cinema verité European films, and a particular music video from Thirty Seconds to Mars that touched them both.

Meza has a long-standing project reel ranging from music videos and short films to now documentaries.

In Human Kind is his second collaboration with Rodriguez, after also serving as Director of Photography for Manca's "*Peleo*."



A Q&A WITH THE FILMMAKERS

Why the interest in sex trafficking now? What led you to pursue the subject?

The topic of sex trafficking has been a somewhat mysterious human issue that everybody seems to be aware of, but nobody really knows about. All we know about is what the media shows us: people being imprisoned, Eastern European women being smuggled into the United States, children abducted by serial killers; yet nobody is talking about the root of that "traffic." Yes, it is true that human beings do get abducted and sold in the most horrible ways every day across the globe, and it is a terrible reality; nevertheless, a large-scale problem cannot be looked into, let alone solved, until we, as part of a community, really open our eyes to what makes others believe they can use a person for their own personal gain. Are we just really blind? or do we not believe something like this can happen to our family? to ourselves?

In Human Kind has quite a different look compared to what you see on most documentaries. What was the reasoning behind this?

I'm going to be honest: everything is about sex. No matter how you slice it, sex and pleasure drive our humanity sometimes even more so than power. We're sexual beings, and it's this same drive what has allowed a multi-billion dollar illicit business to flourish behind a facade of excess and beauty. We wanted to do something as different as possible with *In Human Kind* when dealing with the realities of sex trafficking; we're not only making a clear allusion to the party curtain that is Miami, but also to the very nature of sexual desire – human beings are being used as a means for the pleasure of others BECAUSE that same pleasure is innate yet ethereal; and when something is that powerful, it will continue to thrive, no matter the consequences.

We're clearly presenting a factual work of non-fiction with our film, but we still wanted to explore the realms of sexual desire and how its very nature makes it possible for so many individuals to live in precarious conditions under abusive power.

Were you aware of what was happening in Miami in relation to its boom in Human Trafficking?

We all assumed Miami could be a target for Human Trafficking because of its status as a party city, especially with the amount of tourists that visit every year. With that said, it is still shocking to us how much Miami has evolved into a hot pit for this crime – we're still within the top 5 cities across the U.S., and we're in Florida, which is constantly fighting 2nd place in terms of the reported number of victims. The crazies thing of all is that the biggest victims are local people – women, men and children who live here and who have, one way or another, fallen into a trap of sexual coercion or social degradation. The very people of Miami are becoming objects whose humanity is being reduced to nothing. That's not the Miami that's being advertised, and that's not the city where we should want our future to be, unless something changes.

What governmental agencies were involved with *In Human Kind*?

During the very early stages of the project, and especially while working with such an abundance of research material, the Health System and the School of Medicine at University of Miami were perhaps the biggest pillar stones to get this off the ground due to their incredible support in terms of information and access; not only were they receptive to hear what *In Human Kind* was about, but they also gave us the power of word of mouth for survivors to be aware and have a platform to join us. They truly helped us with growing the seed.

When our team went deep into production, the office of the State Attorney at Miami-Dade was also a great spokesperson for the film, and even their State Attorney Katherine Fernandez-Rundle herself is featured as an interviewee. Their network alone was worth the fantastic support that gave our project the credibility that it needed.

We did reach out to federal government agencies for access and even interviews, but they declined due to the budgetary constraints of *In Human Kind* at the time – it was a shame though, since one of the biggest fish we were going after for a quite some time was the Department of Homeland Security.

Did you ever feel the need to censor yourself at any point?

Censoring is the one idea that our team has always tried to stay away from. From a filmmaking perspective you want to be as provocative as possible and push the envelope as much as it can be pushed; we didn't want to restrict ourselves at any level – we're creating a film about sex trafficking, how can you sugar coat such a subject?

Because of this, we went all out with the look of the film, the type of footage that we show, the marketing materials, even the poster, which has been such a huge staple because of how titillating it is... and that's what we wanted. It's not about being scandalous, it's about standing out with an issue that needs someone to take a stand for it.

Perhaps the only time when we did try to be more careful was when interviewing our subject, especially since we're telling a very personal story – but even then, we asked the hard questions in order to make a movie that could eventually make a difference for others.

What were some of the insane challenges, as you've previously referred to them, that the production went through?

You mean besides making a documentary about sex trafficking? I feel that every step of the way while trying to bring this to fruition was a brand new challenge. From finding our subject to keeping that relationship going strong, on top of the legal logistics that need to be taken care of, everything has been a constant battle from beginning until now, especially due to the fact that we're dealing with such a sensitive issue during times when everything needs to be so politically correct.

Interviewing real people on the streets of Miami was also a huge undertaking – I just want you to imagine standing with a small camera crew on very busy streets following people around to get them to talk to you about sex trafficking. Yes, you can probably imagine how that was like; and although fun, the process of putting all these logistics together has been a constant uphill battle... a rewarding one, of course.

Your film subject is African-American, born and raised in Miami. Did her ethnicity affect the process at all?

Should it? Race is an important part of a person's identity, but what we've learned is that this can happen to anyone: female, male, child... any ethnicity, any background, any neighborhood. You just need to look closer.

This is your official debut as a Documentarian. How would you describe this "popping the cherry" moment?

Documentaries are not easy to make, that's the very first thing I learned once the project took a life of its own; and that's perhaps the biggest misconception that audiences and even young filmmakers have. The belief that documentary films consist of jumping on a van and recording what's in front of you just for the sake of documenting is simply untrue. The amount of research, clearances, phone calls, emails, and plain handling of individuals are just some of the hoops that you must jump through.

With that said, once you get past the logistics and the legalities, the actual process of making the documentary is enlightening and even life-changing. You get to talk to people and discover them through the power of their words... that's the beauty of interviewing: prying open another human being so they can share their innermost conflicts with you. When you marry social responsibility with the art of making movies, you end up falling in love with creating films that can speak to our human experiences, and hopefully inspire others to go the journey with you.

Can you describe *In Human Kind* in a short sentence, and from your own perspective?

A very different story about the realities of sex trafficking in Miami, Fl. It's provocative, it's evocative, it's unapologetic, and it's out there. Definitely not to miss.

What are some of the key things the audience needs to know about this film before they watch it?

As cliché as it sounds, what I keep telling everybody before they watch is to go in without expectations: just make sure you understand that all your previous knowledge about sex trafficking, and perhaps even sex in general, might change afterwards. We're not trying to create a shocking image for people to walk away fearful with, but a story that can open your eyes to the dangers of excess, of abusing power, and of the decadence that we have as a community, especially when we refuse to make a difference when we all have the possibility to contribute something, even if small.

Ultimately, the biggest thing to know before watching is: get ready, this film will take you places.



A LOOK BEHIND THE FILM







Official Poster

For additional information,
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or **director Juancho Rodriguez**
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