



# JEROME

A film by  
**Gianfranco Fernández-Ruiz**



# JEROME

FILM CATEGORY  
NARRATIVE SHORT

GENRE  
DRAMA

PRODUCTION LOCATION  
LOS ANGELES, CA  
USA

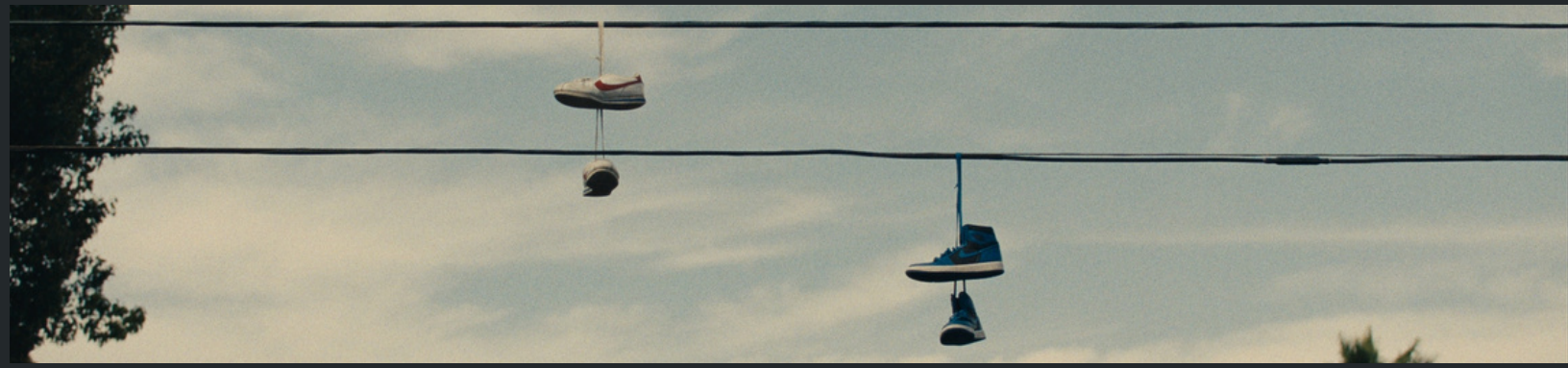
LANGUAGE  
ENGLISH

PICTURE FORMAT  
DIGITAL

ASPECT RATIO  
16:9

SHOOTING FORMAT  
4K

TOTAL RUNNING TIME  
14:29 MINS



# LOGLINE

Basketball connects Jerome to his long-absent father, though not in the ways he wishes. As he struggles to accept his shortcomings, Jerome questions what family is and who he'll become.



# SYNOPSIS

Jerome (17) struggles with feelings of inadequacy when wearing his old man's fresh Jordan 1 kicks, but he's not ready to let them go. After a failed family dinner event with friends he's forced to confront the long absence of his father, a search he's been on for longer than he wants to admit. He deals with it the only way he knows how—basketball. Will he shed the history of the past and forge himself a new future?



# DIRECTOR BIO

Gianfranco Fernández-Ruiz (hyphen is silent) is a Los Angeles-based writer/director. He believes protagonists should mark culture as integral to identity but second to story.

Originally from Boston, his work mirrors the frail and current socio-political climate with nuanced multiethnic characters that feel both distinct and common - unique and universal.

Gianfranco focuses on relationship dynamics not cultural difference. For him, story thrives when it engages universal audiences to discover, along with the characters, mutual catharsis.

Gianfranco currently studies directing at the American Film Institute Conservatory and was recently selected for the inaugural Flip the Script Short Film Fund by Creator+ with his short film JEROME.



# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a spirited, too-much-to-handle kid, my mom would threaten me with, “you want me to call your father?” Have you ever flinched at a word? I did. Whatever a father was, it frightened me - my monster under the bed.

As a teenager, the idea of an ever-present father still terrified me. A man of my own blood around all the time? What would that look like? How would it change the world I knew? How could that influence me as a man and future father?

I'd never know.

So much of who I believed I was felt like a great mystery wrapped up in this man. I didn't know where he was, or what family I had. The history, the legacy, the facts: my father came to America undocumented, participated in illegal activities, imprisoned for ten years then deported. And for years I thought, what of that belongs to me? I sat with my hands behind my back waiting for that question to be answered, waiting for the moment I'd be taken in. But that whole time, my mother worked 80 hour weeks; took me to school; put me into programs; and checked in throughout the day. Frankly, for a single mother I didn't know where she found the time, but as I grow older I realize she didn't find the time. She made the time.

The school to prison pipeline is a darkness that threatens communities of color everywhere. But families and communities that stick together shed light on that darkness. Those programs gave me community, and my mother, in so many ways, played the role of a father too.

My mother. A strong, independent, bull-willed woman taxed with teaching her son to articulate his grief, and more importantly, to stay a child, to keep his imagination, even if she didn't know exactly how. She wasn't always the softest. She didn't always understand why I wanted to know a man that was never there. But she showed up, and taught me that showing up is the single most important thing a person can do in life.

Later I'd learn I'd be a father. I was 24. I learned that being a father was as simple as showing up. Unfortunately, I don't see the single mother represented on screen. This film is for all the single mothers like my mother who mentored me into my fatherhood with little to nothing.



# KEY CAST



Elias Ferguson  
as  
Jerome Walker Jr.



Aries Sanders  
as  
Jade Walker



## CAST

Jacob Gaines ..... Mati Rivera  
Oscar Torre ..... Tavo Rivera  
Tristan Cunningham ..... Clara Rivera  
Sydney Mikayla ..... Tati Rivera  
Alejandro Patiño ..... Abuelo

# BTS





jerome 10

# KEY CREW

Duran Jones is a 2007 graduate of Hampton University with a BA in Broadcast Journalism. A keen sense of storytelling and a unique perspective led Duran to the American Film Institute Conservatory (AFIC), there he honed his craft and set his goal to tell stories for people of color that offer the truth in unique genres seldom seen on the screen for multiethnic communities.

While studying at the AFIC he graduated from the 2020 PGA Power of Diversity workshop, where his pilot "Daywalker" received interest from Mary Parent, Gary Lucchesi, and Prentice Penny.

Duran was also selected as a 2021 Sundance Feature Film Producers Lab Fellow with the script "The Incredible Heist of Hallelujah Jones" written by Victor Gabriel. The proof of concept for that feature won the Grand Prix for Best Short and Best Producer Award for Jones at the HollyShorts Film Festival, qualifying for the Oscars.



Executive Producer  
**Duran Jones**



Executive Producer  
**Selena Leoni**

Growing up in both Italy's quiet countryside and the outsized cities of China gave transnational producer Selena Leoni unique viewpoints of the world. Her love for art and technology led her to City University of Hong Kong, where she earned her BAS in New Media in 2015. Selena later attended UCLA's Producers Program and earned an MFA.

Selena is a Producer fellow in Film Independent's Project Involve 2021 and a member of BAFTA Newcomers. Many of her projects played and won awards in Academy Award-qualifying festivals like Austin Film Festival, HollyShorts, and SBIFF. Her most recent credits include Wayfarer Studios' feature film SMILE OR HUG which premiered at Bentonville Film Festival, and Bryant Griffin's feature debut YOUNG KINGS which won the ARRI Franz Wieser Grant. Selena's interests lie in developing globalized character-driven stories that give underrepresented groups a platform and a voice.

Ben O’Keefe is a Forbes 30 Under 30 award-winning filmmaker, social change activist and multi-hyphenate leader on the frontlines of the progressive movement, navigating the intersections of entertainment, politics, and social impact.

In 2021, Ben launched The FLIP THE SCRIPT Short Film Fund, in partnership with The Kennedy/Marshall Company, NAACP Hollywood Bureau, and advisors such as legendary producer Frank Marshall, 6x NBA All-Star and co-founder of Mortal Media, Blake Griffin; Emmy-nominated actor MJ Rodriguez ; Producer & Director Lulu Wang, actor & activist Kendrick Sampson (HBO’s Insecure); and Showrunner Elle Johnson.

Ben served as a producer on the Amazon Studios film All In: The Fight for Democracy featuring Stacey Abrams, which was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award. O’Keefe was also head writer and guest host of the Webby and Shorty award winning MTV program DECODED and recently served as a Senior Advisor to Senator Elizabeth Warren’s presidential campaign.



Producer  
**Ben O'Keefe**



Producer  
**Santi Naidoo**

Santi Naidoo is a South African producer who is currently a Producing Fellow at the American Film Institute Conservatory and is an Acquisitions Intern at Submarine Entertainment. She holds a triple major Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Cape Town in Film and Television Studies, Psychology, and Organizational Psychology, and graduated cum laude with a post-graduate degree in Film and Television. Santi has several years of experience in film and stage production, and is passionate about creating spaces for underrepresented and marginalized filmmakers in the industry.

Born and raised in the Netherlands, and a transplant to Beijing at 18. Joewi learned Mandarin Chinese and was the first foreigner to graduate in cinematography from the Beijing Film Academy. Joewi is currently enrolled in the Cinematography MFA program at the American Film Institute Conservatory.

Joewi has lensed 5 feature films. Most notably NEZHA, which had its premiere at the Busan Film Festival and ASH, which was selected for Camerimage. The Hollywood Reporter praised Joewi in their Ash review; "Dutch lenser Joewi Verhoeven's stellar images — bathed in yellow and blue in the past, and red and green in the present, make Ash one of the most beautiful films to come out of China this year, in any genre." He has also earned success with short film HEADING SOUTH which won Best Cinematography at 2020 Little Wing Film Festival and Gold Screen at Cannes Lions Young Director Award 2020.



Cinematographer  
**Joewi Verhoeven**



Production Designers  
**Armaan Pujani & Yajine Qin**

Armaan Pujani & Yajie Qin are natives of Mumbai, India and Yichang City, China respectively, both currently study Production Design at the American Film Institute Conservatory. Armaan & Yajie's ever-growing portfolio includes projects ranging from high concept commercials to intimate narrative settings in feature and short films. They each have a broadening portfolio experimenting with genre and purpose.

# CREW

Writer / Director / Producer  
Producers

Executive Producers

Co-Producer  
Line Producers

Unit Production Manager  
1st Assistant Director

2nd Assistant Directors

Script Supervisor  
Production Coordinator

Production Assistant

Production Designer

Art Director

Sound

Editor  
Assistant Editor

Sound Designer

Composer

Colorist

Title & Credits

ADR Recorder

Hair And Make-Up

Gianfranco Fernández-Ruiz  
Santi Naidoo  
Ben O'Keefe  
Adam Westcott  
Nick Phillips  
Mckenna Marshall  
Duran Jones  
Selena Leoni

Daniel J. Egbert  
Zach Johnson  
Juliette Poirier  
Adrien Hoppenot  
Ariel Mahler  
Piotr Matyja  
Jack Highberger  
Christina Rascon  
Austin Williams  
Zach Johnson  
Amy Kouxiao Zhang  
Austin Chen  
Gabiella Feingold  
Sophia Marriott

Armaan Pujani  
Yajie Qin  
Jaala Jones

Eli Adkison

Kun Chen  
Joe Murphy  
Eduardo VC  
Alexandra Kalinowski  
Cameron Marygold  
Oliwia Palmerczuk  
Jeff Lee

Kaia Neely

Director of Photography  
1st Assistant Camera  
2nd Assistant Camera

Steadicam Operator

Gaffer  
Key Grip  
Best Boy Electric  
G&E

DIT  
BTS

Studio Teacher

Costume Designer  
Costume Assistant

Joewi Verhoeven  
Pascale Williams  
Simon Cai  
Dalizeth Maradiaga  
Rafael Van Oostrum

Damon Mavroudis  
Christian Chico  
Hannah Platzer  
Enoc Mendez  
Peter Glaros  
Amir Medina  
Matty Rothenberg  
Bryan Tran  
Charlie Blumberg

Hannah Platzer  
Mario Vega  
Zach Johnson

Angel Harper

Mikaela Zabalerio  
Nicole Pistolnik  
Mon Castro Busto



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## CONTACT

A FILM BY  
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SCREENER AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

