

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT



UNNESTED

An empty-nested couple uses social media to attract the attention of their all-grown-up children.





LONG SYNOPSIS

Empty Nest Syndrome is defined as the feelings of sadness, numbness, fear, and/or loss of purpose parents experience after their adult children leave the family home. Some couples grow apart during this time, while others are closer than ever! UNNESTED follows empty-nested husband and wife Gerard and Johana Donoghue. Where "Gerry" is a self-titled comedian, "Jo" is an overthinker, and thus bickering ensues. When they are not bickering over the last time their kids sent them a letter, they waste their nights away watching sappy reality competition shows. However, everything changes when Gerry and Jo watch the end of an episode of "Star Gazer", a gossipy news show that feeds off the lives of celebrities. It's here that Gerard and Johana discover Instanet, the film's equivalent of Instagram. They realize Instanet is the answer to their current empty-nest woes and set out to garner likes, comments, and hopefully a call or two from their elusive children using the app. From photoshoots at art galleries to live streaming paintball matches, their posts are carefully crafted to target the interests of their kids. After a vulnerable message from a relative suggests that they have Empty Nest Syndrome, the duo's inner fears are exposed, prompting them to do their most adventurous activity yet: skydiving. Before taking the ultimate plunge, Gerry and Jo reflect on their many adventures. The couple skydive, ending the film as "social stars", inspiring other empty-nesters to embrace their age and the idea that it's never too late for a new adventure! Produced by long-time industry professional Leda Barham and shot by experienced photographer and cinematographer Deon Gedeon, UNNESTED is the crown jewel to writer and director Sabrina Federhofer's student filmography while attending Miami Dade College's School of Entertainment and Design Technology.

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MEDIUM SYNOPSIS

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

Empty Nest Syndrome is defined as the feelings of sadness and/or loss of purpose parents experience after their adult children leave the family home.

UNNESTED follows empty-nested husband and wife Gerard and Johana Donoghue, who believe reconnecting with their kids is the solution to their current marriage woes. They soon discover Instanet, the fast-paced social media app perfect for grabbing the attention of the next generation. From photoshoots to live streams, every post they make is targeted to the interests of their kids. Will "Jo" and "Gerry" capture the attention they so desperately desire or will they soon realize that they have more to offer the world than stay stuck in the past?

Produced by Leda Barham and shot by cinematographer Deon Gedeon, UNNESTED is writer and director Sabrina Federhofer's student thesis from Miami Dade College's School of Entertainment and Design Technology.



YAJHAYRA MARIA

" JOHANA DONOGHUE "

New York-born Yajhayra grew up bicultural in a multicultural city, influencing her acting at an early age. She is a South Florida branch member for 'Women in Film and Television' and has performed in many commercials for brands like The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, Pepsi, and Gatorade. She recently portrayed "Johana Donoghue" a mom discovering she is in the throes of empty nest syndrome in the film "Unnested," as well as "Donna Brightstar" a hard but lovable enforcer of dreams, in "The Dream Factory". Her fierce work ethic and commitment to a role are upstaged only by her lovable smile and winning personality.

TED DECHATELET

“ GERARD DONOGHUE ”

Ted is a professional actor, director, teacher and fight choreographer who has worked extensively in New York and in Regional Theatres around the country. Film and television credits include Wild, Grimm, The Librarians, The Wonderland Murders, Saturday Night Live, and numerous commercials. With his company Greybeard Productions, Ted has made several short films, including All Cats are Grey which won Best Romantic-Comedy at the Oregon Short Film Festival. He is an Assistant Professor at FAU and teaches acting for camera.



WRITER + DIRECTOR

SABRINA FEDERHOFER



With an All-American father and a Central American mother, Sabrina's home has always been filled with love and culture, from diverse music to cuisine to even humor! Although she admires and takes inspiration from the likes of drama, suspense, and action, her heart yearns to create films that make people of all walks of life and ages feel warm and fuzzy inside. With her love of history, the arts, and learning, Sabrina enrolled in Miami Dade College's School of Entertainment and Design Technology to pursue filmmaking after years of STEM-focused learning. As a student filmmaker, Sabrina has been able to write, direct, and edit various of her own short films, earn a paid internship with NBCUniversal, and work with numerous industry professionals. An Adobe Professional in Video Design, a freelance graphic designer, and a teacher in her church's children's ministry, Sabrina has much to look forward now that she has earned her Bachelor's degree.



PRODUCER

LEDA BARHAM

Leda Barham is a Costa Rica-born freelance producer and production manager who has more than three decades of experience working with production companies on hundreds of high-end television campaigns and commercials worldwide. She is currently pursuing a B.A.S in Film, TV, and Digital Production at Miami Dade College and has produced numerous short films over the past three years. For the last year she has been working on the preproduction of a low-budget feature film shooting between 2025 and 2026. Leda excels at all aspects of production – from scripting, scheduling, budgeting, logistics, casting, crewing, and managing projects of any size. She is based in Miami and fluent in Spanish, English, and French.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

DEON GEDEON

Deon M. Gedeon is a Photographer, Cinematographer and Colorist. With nearly 5 years in the film industry, he has excelled as a filmmaker and creative team player, inspiring to bring moods, expressions, and concepts together. Skilled in operating high-quality cameras with the right angles and perspectives to achieve the director's desired look and feel.





ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

TANAHIRY MACHUCA-TORRES

Tanahiry Machuca-Torres is a freelance producer who is also skilled in directing and script supervising. Having that she's independently produced her own thesis film "En Las Sombras" with similar production requirements, she was able to play a vital role in ensuring UNNESTED had efficient shooting days by coordinating with crew, actors and extras. An MDC Film Bachelor's graduate for a few years now, "Tana" has cemented herself as South Florida's youngest yet brightest Assistant Director/Unit Production Manager.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

MANUEL FERNANDEZ

Manuel "Manny" Fernandez is a writer and director who plans on pursuing his Master's degree in Writing or Production Design. He was a tremendous leader of the art department of UNNESTED, having experience in many short films as well as theater productions. He's very detailed and cares deeply about character development. A recent bachelor's graduate, his thesis film "Bumper to Bumper" received positive reviews and gave Manny insight into the complex inner workings of pre-production, production, and post.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION BEHIND THIS FILM?

I originally wrote the script to UNNESTED in my college Screenwriting 2 course, Spring 2020. Previously, in Screenwriting 1, I wrote an animated comedy/drama so for the level 2 course, I wanted to tackle more of a slice-of-life drama. During this time, my only other sibling, my older brother, who I consider my best friend, had entered into a serious relationship with his then girlfriend, now wife. As at-home life started to gradually change for my family, I pulled from my own life to write a story about the feelings and adjustments that come when kids leave the family home. Upon further research, I realized that there was in fact a name for this transition and the emotions brought on from it: Empty Nest Syndrome. I originally presented the concept as a serious drama to my professor, Agustin Gonzalez, who immediately shot down the idea in favor of a more comedic approach. Trusting his instincts, and my own bias towards comedy, I began the writing process. Draft after draft, as plot lines changed and character motivations developed, I finally completed UNNESTED to rave reviews from my professor and colleagues. As the Production Workshop 1 course neared, I had no hesitation in choosing to pitch UNNESTED as my thesis film.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SETBACKS, IF ANY, THAT YOU FACED DURING THIS PRODUCTION?

One of the toughest aspects of this film was the amount of locations we had. The appeal of the script was always the adventurous nature of the film, brought on by the sheer amount of locations the couple travels to within the film. Writing and reading about various locations is fun but actually finding, obtaining and shooting at these locations brings an onslaught of challenges. Every location required release forms, rental agreements, payment, scouting, and company moves. During the actual production, we had to speed through shooting as fast as we could so we could move to another location in time! Overall, we shot the entire film safely and effectively despite some stressful time management moments before and on set.

WHO HAS BEEN AN INFLUENCE ON YOUR DIRECTING STYLE?

Growing up, I was always drawn to the works of Disney, Pixar and Steven Spielberg, as they gave audiences a sense of scale, wonder and heart through iconic visuals. As I studied film in college, I took note of directors like Tiaka Waititi and Greta Gerwing. Their films feel like extensions of themselves and know exactly how to tell a compelling story in a way that does not feel pretentious. Additionally, I admire the work of Jim Henson and Christopher Nolan. Despite the major differences between these filmmakers, they both have inspired my approach to filmmaking as both a career and something I love doing.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING ON THIS PROJECT?

I wrote the script about three years ago and have been slowly developing it over the years. Real pre-production and production commenced February 2023. Post-Production is ongoing in hopes of completion this December 2023.

WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF PRODUCTION?

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HOW DID YOU KNOW THESE ACTORS WERE RIGHT FOR THE ROLE?

My own life and my parents inspired the main characters' personalities and behaviors. I absolutely needed to have the main actors resemble my parents. I often don't see media depict a couple that resemble my parents (All-American white man with a tan Central American woman with curly hair). Ted and Yajharia not only looked the part but had outstanding natural chemistry together. They understood the characters, their feelings in relation to each other and the situation they were in, and provided the humor and heart I was looking for. It was God-sent.

WHAT WAS THE BEST THING ABOUT PRODUCTION?

Absolutely the crew. From our producer to our PAs, every member of our "nest" was outstanding in their talent, professionalism, and overall fun! We were a well oiled machine thanks to key members like Assistant Directors Tanahiry M and Kevin Martinez who ensured we remained on time and got every shot planned. Director of Photography Deon Gedeon used his extensive knowledge of camera and lighting to plan out every shot with me. He would spot the slightest mistake or needed adjustment on frame and knew the exact remedy for the visual problem occurring. I could list the multitude of ways each member did a fantastic job but that would require a whole book series. Knowledge and creativity are essential to filmmaking but this film would have been nothing without the overall joy that was radiating on set. From disco dance battles to home cooked catering provided by my own parents, UNNESTED was created in a space of fun and love.

HOW DID THE CREW COME TOGETHER?

The film's Producer, Leda Barham, used her professional knowledge and instincts to gather the right crew members for the roles needed. Her network of connections allowed for many working relationships and friendships to form on this film's set. She has a keen eye for talent and skill as well as finding people who love filmmaking and want to create friendships on set. I already knew Deon, as his family has been friends with my family for so long and we have worked together in the past, so working together as director and director of photography again was a no-brainer. Besides him and other familiar faces like Tana, almost the entire crew were fresh faces to me, brought on by Leda. Although they were essential strangers, I became friends with the crew quickly and consider them as a true gift in my life.

IF YOU HAD TO DO IT OVER AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

I would definitely start pre-production prior to the semester starting. Regardless of if my film's pitch was greenlit or not, having that extra time when things are calm between semesters would have reduced much of my and my team's stress. We were able to shoot everything with much success but if I had to do it all over again, I would have been more prepared going into the semester.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE PRODUCTION TEAM?

Thanks to this film, many of us made new connections and working relationships. Many crew members are currently working on their own thesis projects. Many of the UNNESTED team, including myself, will be part of the crews for these upcoming thesis films. Aside from these major projects on the horizon, a few of the crew members graduated last semester and are working together in education at the same school. We plan to work together to help their students learn about filmmaking and acting. Furthermore, as we all find new opportunities and walk through open doors, we always remember each other and bring each other through those open doors.

STILLS + BEHIND THE SCENES

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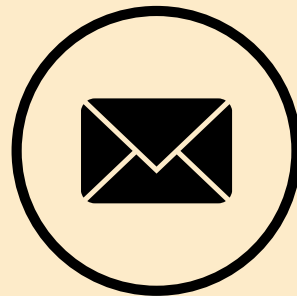
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