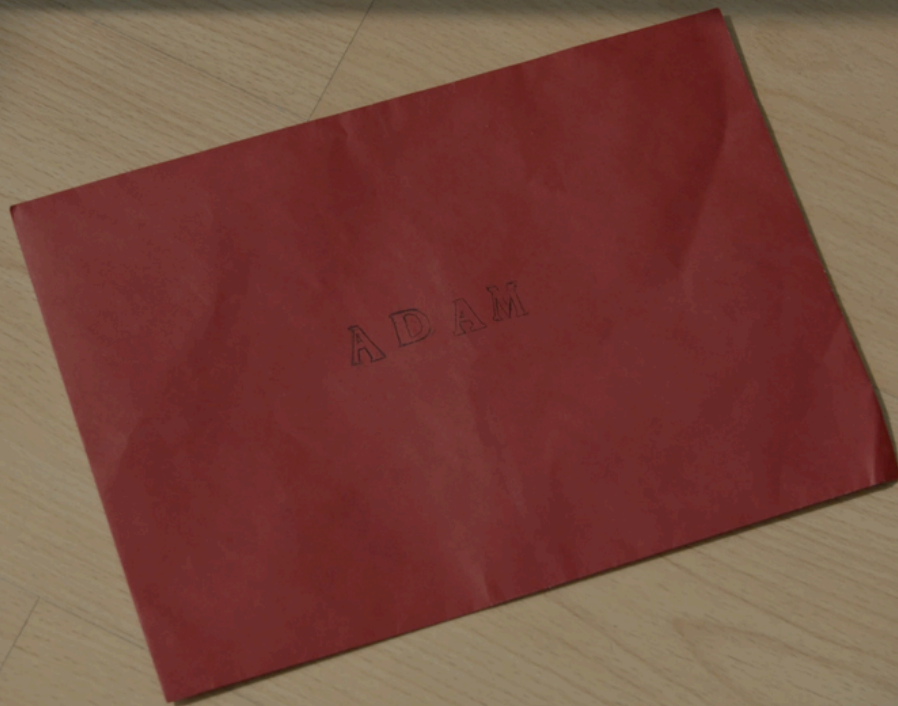




A FILM BY JAMES DALTON

RED ENVELOPE

DIRECTED BY JAMES DALTON · WRITTEN BY JAMES DALTON & EITHNE O'SULLIVAN  
STARRING ROWLAND STERLING · MARIANNA GEORGOPOULOU · MOKE BENLEY



# FILM INFO TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

<b>Title of Film:</b>	RED ENVELOPE
<b>Country of Production:</b>	UNITED KINGDOM
<b>Date of Completion:</b>	23 AUGUST 2024
<b>Ratio:</b>	16:9
<b>Sound:</b>	5.1
<b>Duration:</b>	29:41:12
<b>Language:</b>	ENGLISH
<b>Genre:</b>	DRAMA . HORROR . MYSTERY
<b>Contact Details:</b>	JAMES DALTON JAMESJJJDALTON@GMAIL.COM +447506213187

# STORY



## Logline

UPON RECEIVING AN OMINOUS ENVELOPE IN THE POST, A CONFLICTED MARRIED MAN IS FORCED TO CONFRONT WHAT HE HAS REPRESSED.

## Synopsis

ADAM, A MAN HARBOURING RESENTMENT TOWARDS HIS WIFE, MIA, IS STRUGGLING TO WRITE A PIVOTAL REPORT AS A NAUSEATING SMELL DISTRACTS HIM. WHEN MIA LEAVES HIM ALONE IN THE HOUSE, ADAM SINKS BACK INTO OLD HABITS. HE INVITES HIS MISTRESS OVER AND HAS TO DEAL WITH AN ECCENTRIC FIXER, ALL WHILE THE CONTENTS OF AN OMINOUS RED ENVELOPE AND ITS CONTENTS LOOM OVER HIM.



# DIRECTORS STATEMENT



AS A FILMMAKER, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN EXPLORING THE COMPLEXITIES OF STORIES TOLD FROM A FIRST-PERSON PERSPECTIVE. I ENJOY CRAFTING FILMS IN WHICH WE LIVE INSIDE A CHARACTER'S WORLD AND MIND. THEIR SUBJECTIVE REALITY IS JUST AS IMPORTANT, IF NOT MORE IMPORTANT, THAN THEIR OBJECTIVE REALITY.

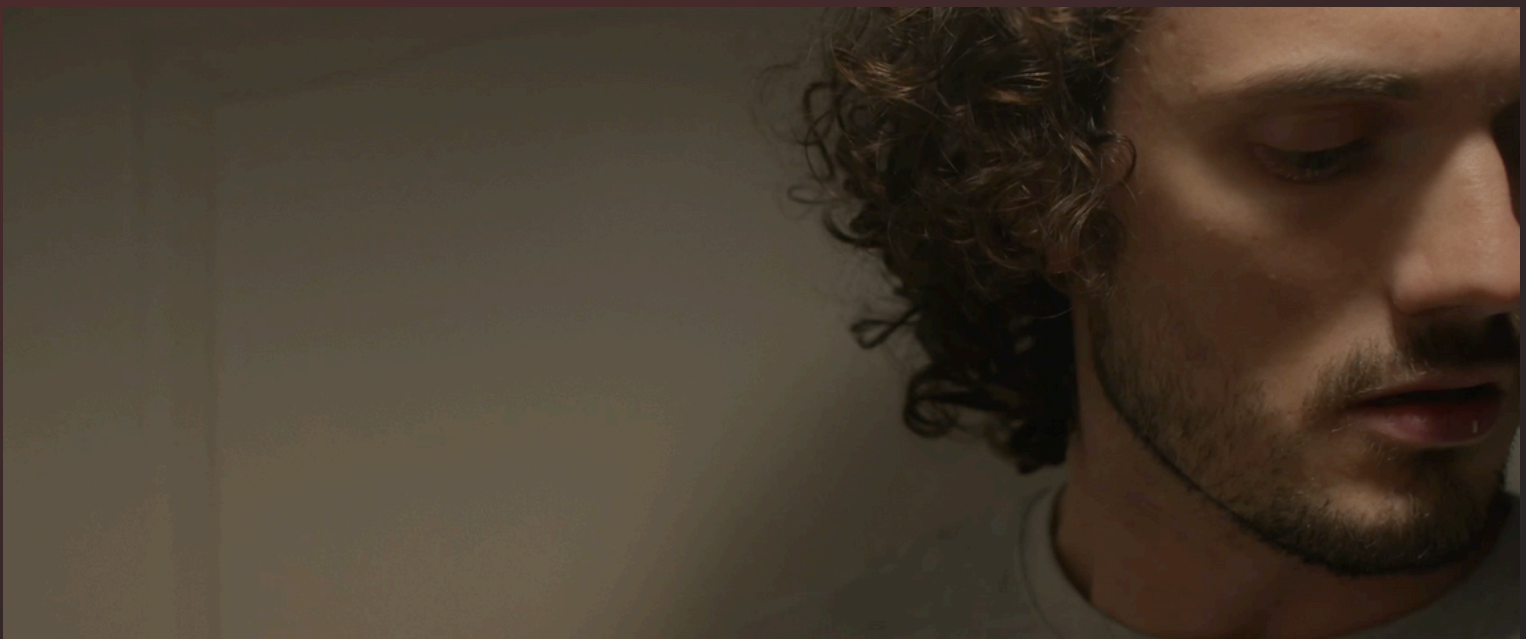
ENJOY PLAYING WITH SURREALIST METAPHORS AND ALLEGORICAL FRAMING. MY GOAL IS TO SHED NEW LIGHT ON ARCHETYPAL AND FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN STORIES, DRAWING ON SYMBOLIC CONCEPTS SUCH AS HUMAN TALISMANS, SPIRITUAL BEINGS, AND DOPPELGANGERS TO DO SO.

IN MY PRIOR WORK, ITCH, TOUCH OF YOUR SKIN, TASTE OF YOUR LIPS & PSYCHIC TUMOUR, I HAVE BEEN REFINING MY TALENT AS A WRITER AND DIRECTOR WITHIN THIS SURREALIST METHODOLOGY AND LANGUAGE. I AM CONFIDENT IN SAYING THAT RED ENVELOPE, MY NEWEST SHORT FILM, IS A PERFECT SYNTHESIS OF MY PREVIOUS SURREALIST WORK.

PEOPLE LIKE TO DENY IT. WHEN FACED WITH CONSEQUENCES FOR A REGRETTABLE ACT, IT IS THE EASIEST OPTION. IT REQUIRES NO ACCOUNTABILITY, IT ELICITS NO REFLECTION, AND IT CAN RESULT IN NO PUNISHMENT. EVEN IN THE FACE OF CONCRETE PROOF TO THE CONTRARY, PEOPLE STILL DENY IT; THEY STILL LIE. THIS IS THE CENTRAL THESIS OF MY FILM. HOW CAN SOMEONE COMMIT AN ABHORRENT ACT AND, EVEN WHEN FACED WITH FACTS, STILL REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR WRONGDOING?

ONE MUST SELF-VICTIMISE TO AVOID FACING ONE'S RIGHTEOUS SUFFERING, AND AS A RESULT OF THIS, THEIR VICTIMS MUST SUFFER DOUBLY IN AMBIGUITY AND EVIDENCE.

**JAMES DALTON**  
PRODUCER · WRITER · DIRECTOR





## KEY CREDITS



### James Dalton

Co-Writer . Director . Producer

JAMES DALTON IS A BRITISH FILMMAKER WHO SPECIALISED IN DIRECTING WITH EXPERIENCE IN SCRIPT WRITING AND PRODUCING. GRADUATING FILM AT SAE INSTITUTE IN 2024, HE MADE HIS DEBUT SHORT FILM 'ITCH' IN 2023 AND HIS SUBSEQUENT FILM 'TOUCH OF YOUR SKIN, TASTE OF YOUR LIPS' IN 2024, HIS FOLLOWING FILM 'PSYCHIC TUMOUR' IS NEARING THE END OF POST-PRODUCTION AND LOOKING FOR A FALL RELEASE.

HIS NEWEST FILM 'RED ENVELOPE', WHICH HE CO-WROTE AND DIRECTED, CONTINUES TO FOLLOW JAMES' DEEP INTEREST IN AVANT GARDE FILMMAKING AND ARTHOUSE CINEMA, AND ENJOYS WORKING WITHIN THE GENRE OF HORROR AND MYSTERY.



### Denver Dsouza

Director of Photography

DENVER HAS BEEN IN THE FILMMAKING SCENE SINCE 2020. HIS ROLES ARE DOP AND/OR CAMERA OPERATOR. WITH A KEEN EYE FOR DETAIL AND A DEEP APPRECIATION FOR VISUAL STORYTELLING, HE HAS DEVELOPED A STRONG FOUNDATION IN CINEMATOGRAPHY THROUGH BOTH ACADEMIC COURSEWORK AND HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE.

WITH A COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND A DRIVE TO PUSH CREATIVE BOUNDARIES, HE AIMS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORLD OF CINEMATOGRAPHY WITH INNOVATIVE AND VISUALLY STRIKING WORK.



## Mitra Bessick

1st Assistant Director . Social Media

MITRA, 24, HAS A BACKGROUND IN DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING AND DIGITAL MARKETING. HE IS PASSIONATE ABOUT NARRATIVE FILMMAKING IN DOCUMENTARIES, TO BE SPECIFIC, AND IS ALSO EXCITED TO BE THE 1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR AND SOCIAL MEDIA FOR 'RED ENVELOPE'.

MITRA'S EXPERIENCE IN COORDINATING SMALL PRODUCTIONS AND MANAGING ONLINE CONTENT HAS HELPED THEM DEVELOP ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR THIS MULTIFACETED ROLE.



## Eithne O'Sullivan

Co-Writer

EITHNE O'SULLIVAN IS A LONDON-BASED SCREENWRITER. SHE WROTE THE SAE STUDIOS AND TRUE MOON PICTURES CO-PRODUCED SHORT FILM NON-COMPOS MENTIS, WHICH IS THE FOLLOW-UP TO VEHICLE FOR MUSTARD, WHICH I WROTE AND DIRECTED.

OUTSIDE OF NARRATIVE FICTION, SHE CO-DIRECTED THE SHORT DOCUMENTARY STRANDS, WHICH DETAILS THE RELATIONSHIP THAT QUEER PEOPLE AND BLACK WOMEN HAVE WITH THEIR HAIR. AS A TRANS WOMAN, EITHNE IS PASSIONATE ABOUT TELLING TRANS STORIES, DRAWING ON HER OWN EXPERIENCES OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION, TRANSFORMATION, AND SOCIETAL PRESSURE. SHE IS CURRENTLY IN THE THROES OF WRITING HER FIRST FEATURE SCREENPLAY, RANGER.



## Sophie Kotyk

Head Art Department . Script Supervisor

SOPHIE IS A 20-YEAR-OLD DUTCH/CANADIAN FILMMAKER, WHO ASPIRES TO CREATE MEANINGFUL ART, WHETHER THAT BE THROUGH HER PROJECTS OR WORKING ON OTHER CREATIVE PROJECTS AS A PART OF THE ART DEPARTMENT. 'RED ENVELOPE' IS ONE OF THOSE.

HER PAST WORK EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY BEGAN IN SPAIN, WHERE SHE GREW UP, NOW SHE IS IN LONDON TO ENHANCE HER CAREER.



# CAST BIOGRAPHIES



## Moke Benley

MOKE STUDIED AT UNSEEN ACTING SCHOOL, FOLLOWING THIS HE HAS BEEN IN A FEW SHORT FILMS AND PROJECTS INCLUDING, "JEREMY" - SUPPORTING, "DO UNTO YOURSELF", A SHORT FILM BY KATT ROLLINSON, "CFO" - LAD, CORPORATE VIDEO RE. HACKING, "DETECTIVE GRACE" - SUPPORTING, MOVIE FOR THE STREAMING PLATFORMS SHOOTING IN JULY, "BILL GOLDMAN" - SUPPORTING, "THE RETIREMENT", MA GRADUATION FILM SHOOTING SEPTEMBER. HE IS HOPING TO SHOWCASE HIS CHARACTER ACTING SKILLS IN RED ENVELOPE PORTRAYING "MICKEY".



## Marianna Georgopoulou

MARIANNA IS A GREEK ACTRESS THAT HAS MOVED TO LONDON TO PURSUE THE CAREER OF ACTING. SHE IS CURRENTLY ENTERING HER 3RD YEAR STUDYING ACTING AND PERFORMANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, LONDON. SHE HAS PARTICIPATED IN 3 SHORT FILMS AS A LEAD, AS WELL AS IN NUMEROUS THEATRE PERFORMANCES. THE LAST THEATRE PERFORMANCE WAS IN BLOOD WEDDING BY FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA AS THE BRIDE.



## Rowland Stirling

ROWLAND IS A LONDON-BASED ACTOR AND WRITER FOR STAGE AND SCREEN WHO TRAINED AT THE ACADEMY OF LIVE AND RECORDED ARTS. SINCE GRADUATING IN 2018 HE HAS PERFORMED IN SEVERAL OF LONDON'S OFF WEST END THEATRES, INCLUDING THE ETCETERA AND THE SOUTHWARK PLAYHOUSE. AS PART OF THE KING'S HEAD THEATRE'S 2021 QUEER SEASON, HE CO-PRODUCED AND STARRED IN THE UK DEBUT OF MATING IN CAPTIVITY. RECENT SCREEN CREDITS INCLUDE DUE DATING AND EASTENDERS.

# CHARACTERS



AN ECCENTRIC FIXER, WHO IS OLD-SCHOOL IN HIS METHODS AND STRANGE IN HIS WAYS.

**MICKEY**  
*Moke Benley*



**MIA**  
*Marianna Georgopoulou*

AN UNASSERTIVE MARRIED WOMAN WHO IS SEEMINGLY CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO WORLDS.



A CONFLICTED MARRIED MAN WHOSE REPRESSED THOUGHTS BEGIN TO MANIFEST AROUND HIM.

**ADAM**  
*Rowland Stirling*

## What inspired you to create this short film, and how did the idea come to you?

THIS IMAGE JUST CAME TO ME OF THIS RED ENVELOPE GOING THROUGH A LETTERBOX AND SOMEONE PICKING IT UP. IT KEPT REPEATING IN MY HEAD OVER AND OVER AGAIN; IT HAD THIS OMINOUS FEELING TO IT, THE ENVELOPE. I THEN READ 'THE TRIAL' BY FRANZ KAFKA AGAIN, AND WITHIN A SIMILAR TIME FRAME, I REWATCHED 'LOST HIGHWAY' BY DAVID LYNCH. THOSE HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND WHY THIS IMAGERY WAS SPEAKING TO ME AND WHAT IT WAS SAYING TO ME. I'D BEEN HOLDING ONTO THIS IDEA FOR A LONG TIME BEFORE I EVEN WROTE A WORD, JUST PONDERING IT AND DEVELOPING THIS WORLD AND IMAGERY IN MY HEAD, USING THOSE INFLUENCES AS A POINT OF REFERENCE. EVENTUALLY, IT ALL CLICKED, AND I HAD A FIRST DRAFT THAT SAID CLOSE TO WHAT I WANTED TO SAY, AND THEN IT ALL WENT FROM THERE.



## Can you share some insights into the main themes or messages you wanted to convey through this film?

I LOVE MYSTERIES AND THE PROCESS OF GATHERING EVIDENCE THAT LEADS US CLOSER TO THE TRUTH, OR AT LEAST TO A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF IT. I BELIEVE WE ARE ALL NATURALLY DRAWN TO MYSTERIES. THROUGH OUR INVESTIGATION OF THEM, WE NOT ONLY UNCOVER DETAILS ABOUT THE MYSTERY ITSELF BUT ALSO LEARN MORE ABOUT OURSELVES AS WE REFLECT ON WHAT WE DISCOVER.

THE ACT OF LOOKING FOR THE TRUTH IS ALWAYS HARDER WHEN THERE ARE LIES AND DECEIT INVOLVED IN THE MIX AND THAT BLURS THE LINES BETWEEN REALITY, SOMETIMES INVESTIGATIONS CLOSE WHICH HAVE GOT IT ALL WRONG DUE TO LIES AND STUFF BEING FALSIFIED, MEANING THEY ARE PLENTY OF LITTLE WORLDS AND EVENTS WHICH ARE FICTITIOUS YET WE BELIEVE. WHAT IS TRUE AND WHAT IS FALSE, WHEN THE LINES ARE BLURRED? I THINK I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO EXPLORE THAT LINE BETWEEN REALITY AND UNREALITY, REALISM AND SURREALISM, AND HOW IT IS ALL A MYSTERY.

## What were some of the biggest challenges you faced during the production of this short film?

AS ANYONE WHO READS THIS WHO IS A STUDENT FILMMAKER WILL KNOW, THE TWO CHALLENGES ARE TIME AND MONEY, IN FACT, ANY FILMMAKER OR CREATIVE EVEN! THESE ARE ALWAYS THE TWO CHALLENGES THAT WILL GET IN THE WAY OF CREATIVITY. HAVING A SMALL, MOSTLY SELF-FUNDED BUDGET AND A SMALL TIME FRAME TO SHOOT (WE HAD 3 12-HOUR DAYS TO SHOOT THIS 18-PAGE SCRIPT) WAS THE SPAWN OF ALL ISSUES. YOU WANT TO HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD TO GET DREAMY AND EXPERIMENT ON SET AND LIVE IN THAT WORLD, WITH THOSE CHARACTERS AND TRULY COLLABORATE BUT WITH SUCH A TIGHT SCHEDULE IT MAKES IT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO DO THAT. LUCKILY I HAD SOME OF THE FINEST CAST AND CREW ONE COULD ASK FOR WHICH MASSIVELY HELPED WITH THIS ISSUE, BUT IT STILL PLAGUED US THE ENTIRE TIME. CONSTANTLY FIGHTING THE CLOCK CAN TAKE A TOLL ON ALL ASPECTS, ESPECIALLY CREATIVITY.

MONEY, DO I NEED TO SAY MORE? YOU'LL NEVER HAVE ENOUGH OF IT, ALWAYS SOMETHING THAT NEEDS IT OR CAN DO WITH IT. THIS WAS THE LARGEST BUDGET I'D EVER HAD TO WORK WITH ALTHOUGH OVER HALF OF IT WENT TOWARDS THE LOCATION, SO IT DID NOT FEEL LIKE IT. LUCKILY WE HAD SOME GOOD PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE ART DEPARTMENT. THOSE WOMEN SAVED MY LIFE WITH HOW SKILLED THEY WERE IN SOURCING EVERYTHING AND DOING EVERYTHING TO SUCH A TIGHT STANDARD ON PENNIES!

BUT PROBABLY WHAT I WILL BE SAYING EVERY TIME TO THIS QUESTION IS TIME AND MONEY, THEY BOTH GIVE YOU SPACE AND ARE A BLANKET, WHICH WE DID NOT HAVE.



## **How did you approach the casting process, and what were you looking for in your actors?**

I NEVER TRADITIONALLY AUDITION FOR ROLES. I DON'T SEE MUCH VALUE IN PUTTING SOMEONE ON THE SPOT IN A SOMEWHAT FORMAL SETTING; I JUST DON'T SEE THE VALUE. I DON'T THINK ANYONE CAN TRULY PERFORM WELL UNDER THAT SORT OF PRESSURE, OR VERY FEW CAN. USUALLY, I SEE A HEADSHOT AND GET THIS SORT OF SPARK AND INTUITIVE FEELING, AND THEY JUST BECOME THE CHARACTER, THEY ARE JUST THE CHARACTER, IT'S CORRECT. THEN I WILL LOOK INTO THEIR SHOWREEL TO GET AN IDEA OF WHO THEY ARE AND IF THEY EMBODY. THEN I'LL USUALLY GET A SELF-TAPE SENT IN OF THEM JUST RUNNING SOME LINES, BUT BY THE TIME I GET TO THAT PHASE, I AM USUALLY SO ATTACHED TO THEM AS THAT CHARACTER ALREADY.

BUT I WOULD SAY WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT, FOR ME WHEN CASTING; IS CAN I GET ALONG WITH THEM, NOT JUST GET ALONG WITH THEM ARE THE SORT OF PERSON WHOM I HAVE SOME SORT OF CONNECTION WITH. I THINK THE DIRECTOR AND ACTOR RELATIONSHIP IS VERY BEAUTIFUL AND DELICATE, IT MUST BE A VERY POSITIVE CONNECTION WHICH ALLOWS THE DIALOGUE THE DIRECTOR AND ACTOR MUST HAVE WHERE THEY ARE COMMUNICATING AND TALKING ON A SIMILAR WAVELENGTH AND TRULY LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER'S UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE CHARACTER. I HAD A GREAT CAST, OF GREAT PEOPLE WHO WERE JUST WONDERFUL HUMAN BEINGS AND WONDERFUL TO JUST EXIST AROUND; HAVING TO WORK ASIDE!



## **What do you hope audiences will take away from watching this short film?**

I HOPE THE AUDIENCE WILL TAKE AWAY QUESTIONS THAT THEY WANT ANSWERED AND THOSE QUESTIONS LEAD TO MORE QUESTIONS. I DON'T WANT TO SAY REALLY WHAT I THINK OF IT ALL. I THINK THE PIECE SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. BUT I HOPE IT LEAVES AN IMPACT ON SOMEONE AND MAKES THEM INTERESTED IN UNDERSTANDING WHY IT DID.

# FULL CREDITS

<b>James Dalton</b>	DIRECTOR PRODUCER CO-WRITER EDITOR CASTING LOCATION SOUND DESIGN
<b>Eithne O'Sullivan</b>	CO-WRITER GAFFER
<b>Sophie Kotyk</b>	ART DIRECTOR SCRIPT SUPERVISOR
<b>Mitra Bessick</b>	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SOCIAL MEDIA
<b>Denver Dsouza</b>	DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
<b>Jennifer Bacalhau</b>	ASSISTANT CAMERA
<b>Aditya Sanjeev</b>	ASSISTANT CAMERA
<b>Jayda Calloo</b>	ART ASSISTANT
<b>Cian Hutnell</b>	ASSISTANT EDITOR DIGITAL IMAGING TECHNICIAN
<b>Joel Venn</b>	COLOURIST
<b>Matthew Poole</b>	ON SET SOUND
<b>Arturo Mena Leon</b>	SOUND MIXER SOUND DESIGN
<b>Ciello Padilla</b>	MUSIC