



Before *You*

written & directed by

Lauren Melinda

Logline

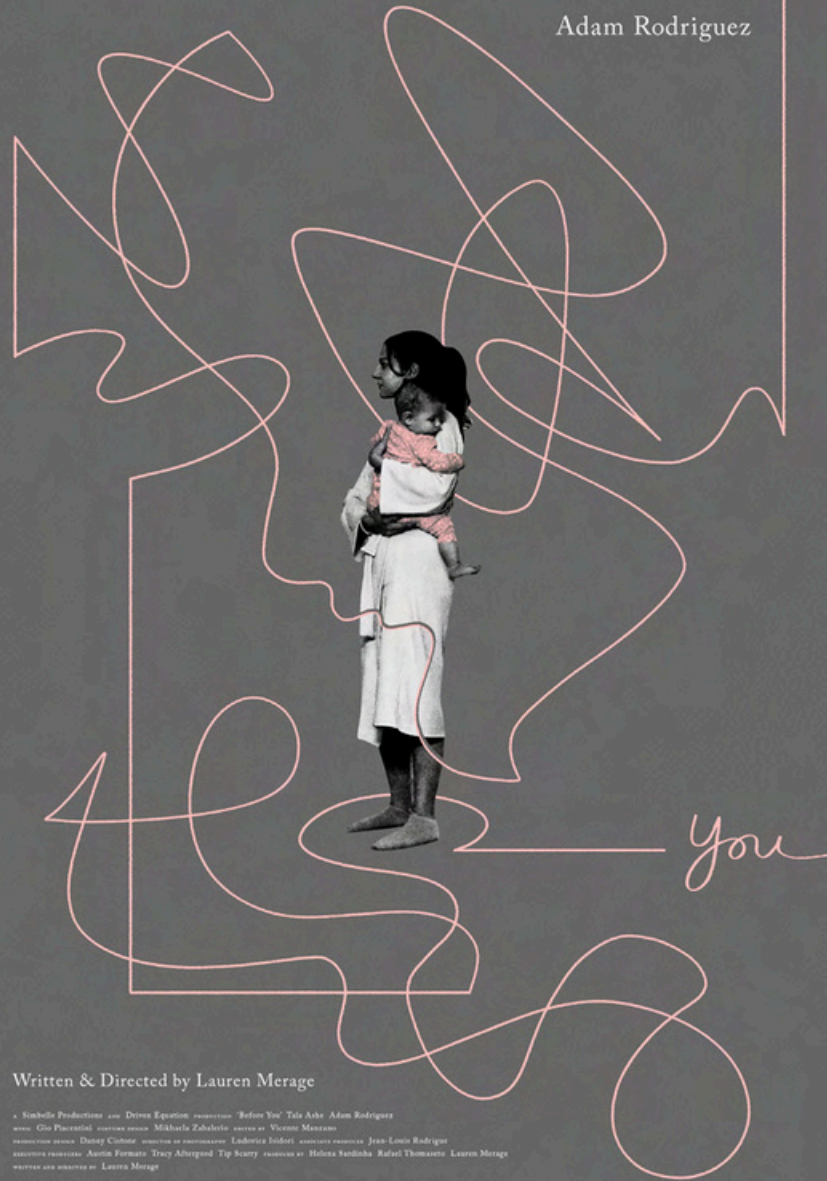
Looking back on her first pregnancy, a woman navigates the echoes of a life-changing loss.

Before You is a narrative short film based on true events that navigate the complex emotional landscape of having an abortion - a procedure currently restricted or banned in 21 of the United States.

(In Solidarity with Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc.)

Before

Tala Ashe
Adam Rodriguez



Written & Directed by Lauren Merage

© Simbelle Productions and Driven Equation. "Before You" Tala Ashe Adam Rodriguez
www.GloFuntional.com. Mikielita Zulueta. Victorio Masiano
Daisy Cuevas. Leticia Beldarrain. Jean-Louis Rodrigue
Austin Formato. Tracy Aftergood. Tip Scarry. Helena Sardinha. Rafael Thomaseto. Lauren Merage
Lauren Merage

SIMBELLE
DRIVEN
EQUATION

ORIGINAL TITLE: **Before You**

RUNTIME: **14:26**

GENRE: **Psychological Drama**

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: **Lauren Melinda**

PRODUCED BY: **Helena Sardinha, Rafael Thomaseto, and Lauren Melinda**

STARRING: **Tala Ashe & Adam Rodriguez**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: **Tracy Aftergood, Austin Formato, and Tip Scarry**

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: **Jean-Louis Rodrigue**

PRODUCTION COMPANY: **Driven Equation & Simbelle Productions**

Before You

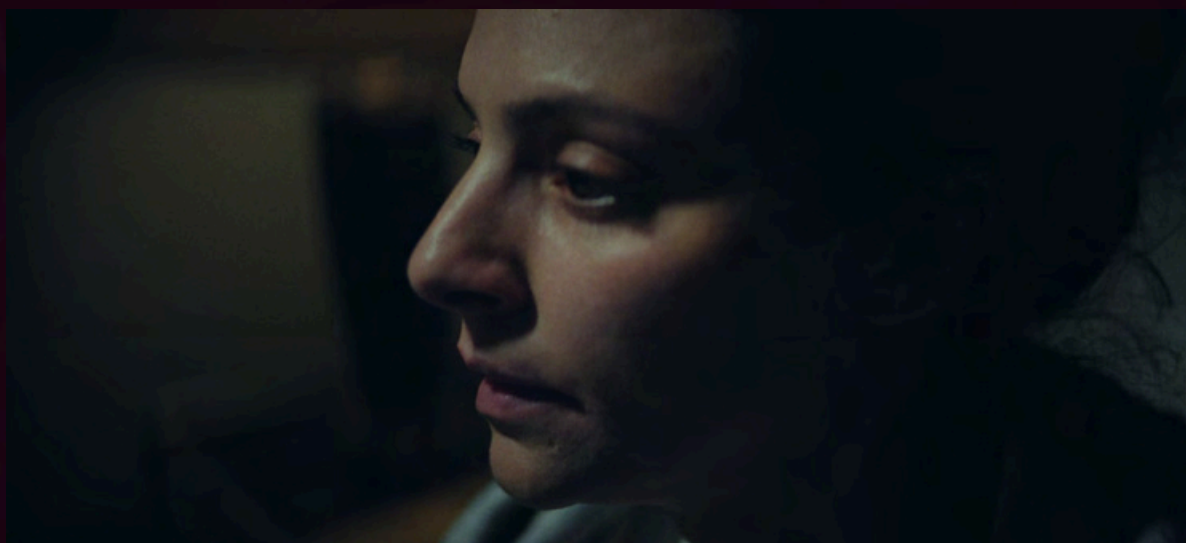
Director's Statement

"Before You" is a deeply personal journey born from my own experience with termination for medical reasons (TFMR). This film explores the complex emotional landscape of a woman looking back on a pivotal moment in her life, reconciling past choices with her present reality as a mother.

The non-linear structure of the film mirrors the way our minds process trauma and reconstruct memories. By weaving together fragments of the past with the present, we challenge viewers to confront the lasting impact of life-altering decisions. Through a blend of hyper-realistic scenes and surrealist elements, we've created a visual language that speaks to the ineffable aspects of loss, healing, and the journey to motherhood.

In an era where women's bodily autonomy is increasingly under threat, 'Before You' stands as both a work of art and an act of resistance. Drawing from my own story, the film refuses to shy away from the complex realities of TFMR, a topic often overlooked in both public discourse and cinematic representation.





Inspired by the works of Lynne Ramsay and Terrence Malick, I've crafted a narrative that is deeply personal yet universally resonant. 'Before You' is more than a film about a medical decision; it's about the weight of memory, the nature of motherhood, and the courage it takes to face an uncertain future.

This was not an easy film to make, as it required revisiting one of the most challenging periods of my life. But it's a necessary one. In a world that often reduces women to their reproductive capabilities, 'Before You' dares to show the full humanity behind these difficult choices and their lasting impact.

It's my hope that by sharing this story, we can contribute to a more compassionate and nuanced understanding of reproductive rights in America and beyond. 'Before You' is an invitation to empathy, a call for nuanced dialogue, and a testament to the resilience of women facing impossible choices.



A Scar That
Never Fully Heals

Before You

Social Impact

At the heart of "Before You" lies a deep commitment to fostering meaningful dialogue around reproductive healthcare and bodily autonomy. Our collaboration with PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION OF AMERICA strengthens our mission to create authentic, empathy-driven conversations about abortion experiences and reproductive rights.

We believe the impact of this film begins during its festival run. By collaborating with local Planned Parenthood chapters and reproductive rights advocacy groups, we're creating enriched post-screening discussions that extend beyond the film itself. These panels serve as platforms for community leaders to share resources, personal experiences, and create meaningful connections with audiences.

Our social impact campaign focuses on bringing together diverse communities through coordinated screenings and events.

Working closely with Planned Parenthood, we aim to:

- Create safe spaces for open dialogue about reproductive healthcare
- Connect communities with local healthcare resources
- Challenge existing narratives around abortion care
- Foster greater understanding and empathy
- Support Planned Parenthood's ongoing mission of accessible healthcare for all

Beyond the film, we're developing a companion photography project that documents the emotional landscape of women navigating personal healthcare decisions. Through intimate portraits and personal narratives, this visual storytelling initiative provides another avenue for expression, healing, and community building.

Through our ongoing collaboration with Planned Parenthood, we remain dedicated to fostering a community of support, understanding, and advocacy. Our goal is to amplify voices, shift perspectives, and create spaces where meaningful conversations about reproductive healthcare can thrive.





LAUREN MELINDA
Writer, Director, Producer

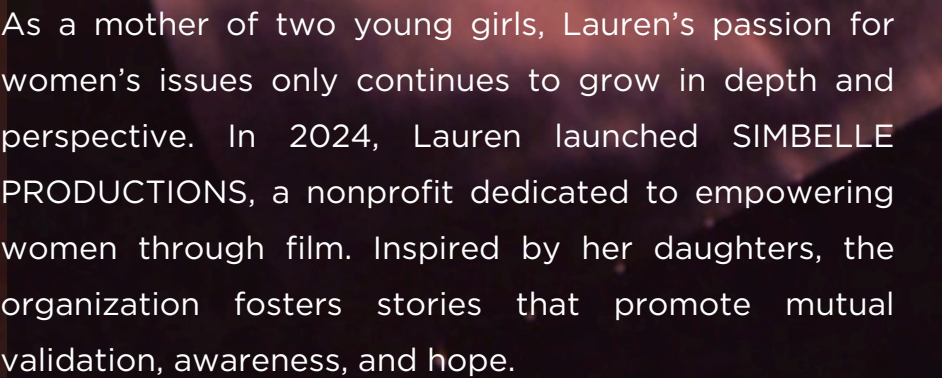
Before You

Lauren Melinda Lauren Melinda is an award-winning Persian-American filmmaker and founder of SIMBELLE PRODUCTIONS. Her work explores issues of feminine identity and perception, while critiquing the forces of culture and circumstance that shape the roles assigned to women.

As a mixed-media artist, Lauren's video installations have been commissioned by galleries, museums, and private collectors from North America to the Middle East. Her photographs have been sold to major collections around the world.

Seeking to further push the limits of art as a means to shine a light on culture, identity, and society, Lauren expanded into filmmaking and immediately fell in love with the craft and its transformative potential. She has so far written and directed three short films that have screened in 52 festivals on nearly every continent - garnering the top prize at six of them.

Beyond her art, Lauren has traveled the country and the world to advocate for women's rights and empowerment through grassroots organizations including ONE, Reform Alliance, and Planned Parenthood.



As a mother of two young girls, Lauren's passion for women's issues only continues to grow in depth and perspective. In 2024, Lauren launched SIMBELLE PRODUCTIONS, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering women through film. Inspired by her daughters, the organization fosters stories that promote mutual validation, awareness, and hope.

She is currently developing her first narrative feature, ECHOES, and a TV series based on her Ukrainian great-grandmother who worked as the midwife to the Shah of Iran.

Lauren received a dual Bachelor's degrees in Fine Arts and Art History from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Masters of Fine Arts from the University of California, Irvine. She is based in Los Angeles.

@laurenmelindafilm

Helena Sardinha and Rafael Thomaseto are the founders of Driven Equation, a boutique production company with headquarters in both Los Angeles and São Paulo that's committed to championing inclusivity and representation in media and delving into the heart of social issues and marginalized themes.

Their projects have earned acclaim at some of the best festivals around the world, such as the Sundance Film Festival, Aspen Shortfest, Palm Springs, Santa Barbara International Film Festival, Fantastic Fest, and SeriesFest. Their latest project, *The Ballad of Tita and the Machines*, was successfully revered by the LA Times and Forbes and screened at a number of festivals in 2023, including the Tribeca Festival and Morelia International Film Festival. Following the success of their previous short film *Huella* (Amazon Prime, Short of the Week), Rafael and Helena are currently developing its feature-length adaptation, supported by the Sundance Institute through their Producers and Screenwriting Labs, to be shot in 2024. The duo are currently in post-production on their latest feature *Satisfaction*, which boasts a stellar cast that includes Zar Amir Ebrahimi, Emma Laird and Fionn Whitehead.

@drivenequation

Before You



HELENA SARDINHA + RAFAEL THOMASETO

Producers

a film by **Lauren Melinda**



Before You

TRACY AFTERGOD

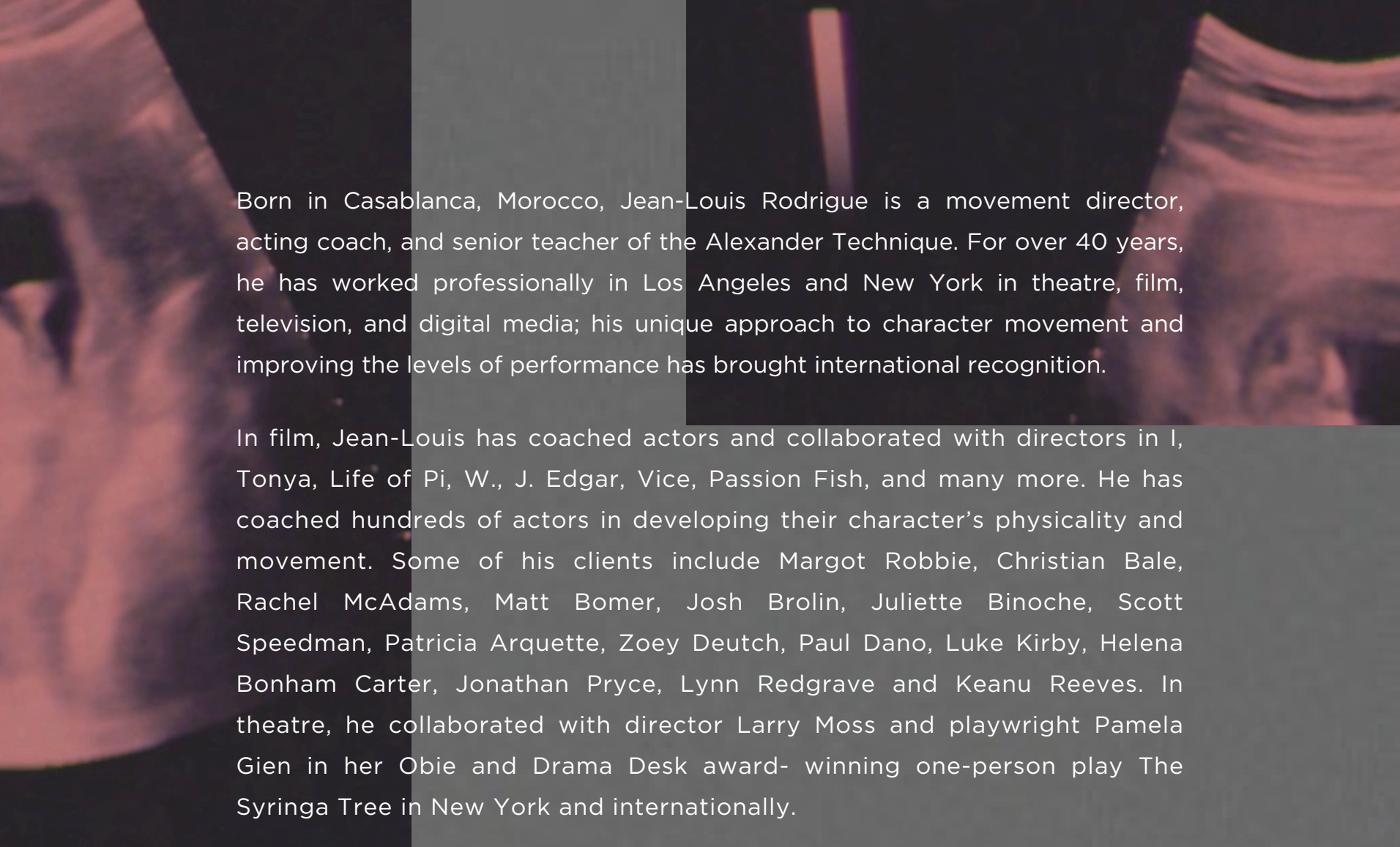
Executive Producer

Tracy Aftergood is a documentary producer whose driving force is to amplify women's voices on screen with female led teams at the helm. Prior to her most recent film, Diane von Furstenberg: Woman in Charge for Hulu, Aftergood produced the sports documentary, Helen | Believe, which followed gold medalist and mental health advocate Helen Maroulis. The film premiered at The Santa Barbara International Film Festival and had a nationwide theatrical release in 2023. In 2020 Aftergood produced the YouTube Originals documentary This is Paris, which featured the global icon and now activist Paris Hilton. The film premiered at the 2021 Tribeca Film Festival and has been watched by 80 million people to date. In 2018, Aftergood collaborated with writer/director Amy Berg as a producer on the HBO Emmy nominated series, The Case Against Adnan Syed. Aftergood's first documentary, which also marked her pivot into non-fiction, was The First Monday in May. Directed by Andrew Rossi, the film chronicled the production of the famed Met Gala and its corresponding fashion exhibition, China: Through the Looking Glass. It went on to open the Tribeca Film Festival in 2016 and was theatrically released by Magnolia.

Before becoming an independent producer, Aftergood held senior executive roles at production companies such as MakeMake Entertainment, MediaWeaver Entertainment and The Gotham Group.

In addition to her work as a producer, Aftergood served as a board member for The Young Storytellers Foundation for 15 years and currently mentors film and media majors at Emory University. Aftergood received her BA from Emory University and MFA from The Peter Stark Producing Program at USC.

@happilyeveraftergood



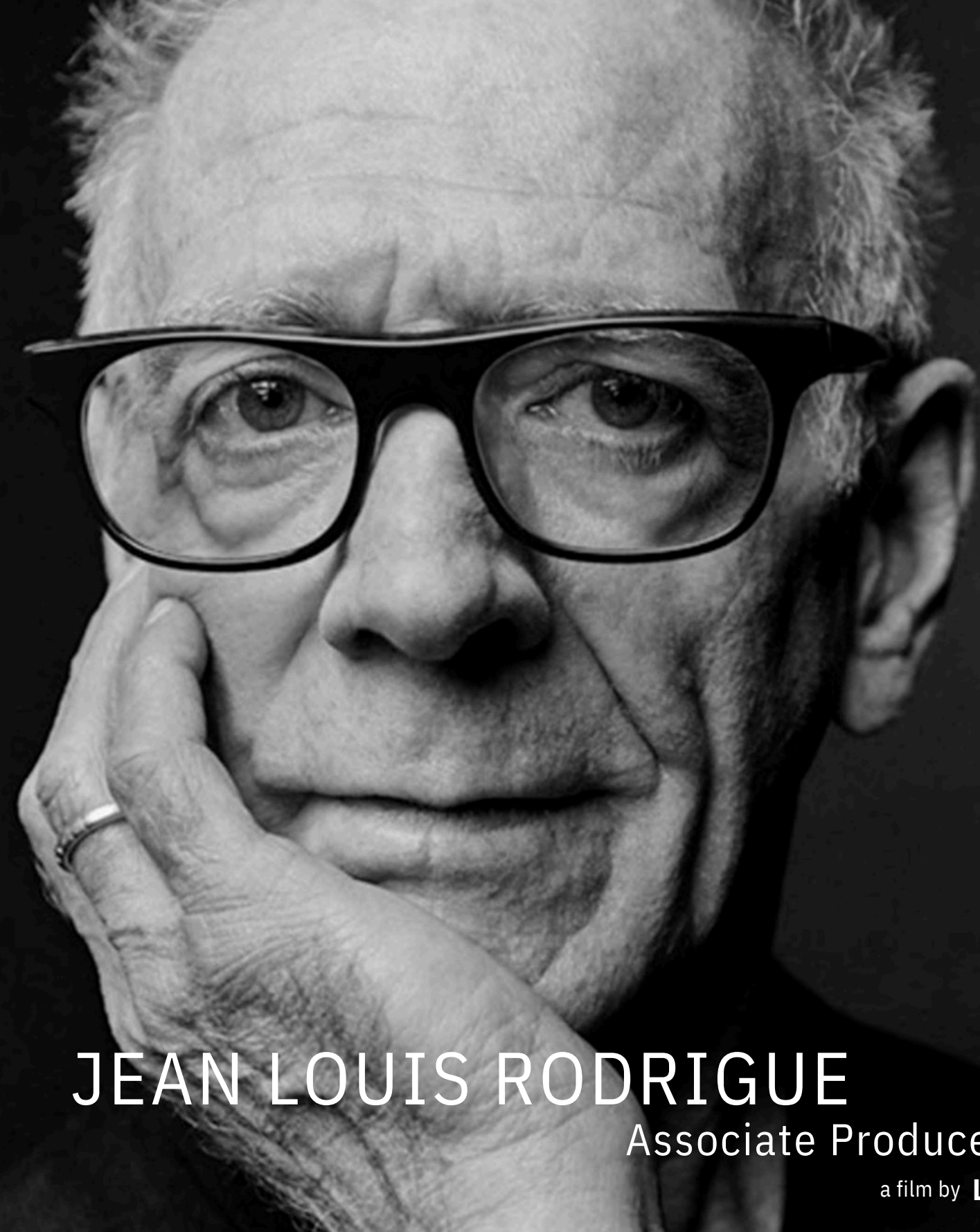
Born in Casablanca, Morocco, Jean-Louis Rodrigue is a movement director, acting coach, and senior teacher of the Alexander Technique. For over 40 years, he has worked professionally in Los Angeles and New York in theatre, film, television, and digital media; his unique approach to character movement and improving the levels of performance has brought international recognition.

In film, Jean-Louis has coached actors and collaborated with directors in *I, Tonya*, *Life of Pi*, *W.*, *J. Edgar*, *Vice*, *Passion Fish*, and many more. He has coached hundreds of actors in developing their character's physicality and movement. Some of his clients include Margot Robbie, Christian Bale, Rachel McAdams, Matt Bomer, Josh Brolin, Juliette Binoche, Scott Speedman, Patricia Arquette, Zoey Deutch, Paul Dano, Luke Kirby, Helena Bonham Carter, Jonathan Pryce, Lynn Redgrave and Keanu Reeves. In theatre, he collaborated with director Larry Moss and playwright Pamela Gien in her Obie and Drama Desk award-winning one-person play *The Syringa Tree* in New York and internationally.

Jean-Louis has worked on and off-Broadway, and at major performing arts institutions such as Berlin International Film Festival, Cirque du Soleil, Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute, Getty Villa, Geffen Playhouse, Royal National Theatre, Piccolo Teatro di Milano, Verbier Festival, Royal Shakespeare Company. He has taught at the UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television and the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music for the past 34 years. Jean-Louis lives in Los Angeles with his husband, Kristof.

@alexandertechworks

Before You



JEAN LOUIS RODRIGUE

Associate Producer

a film by **Lauren Melinda**

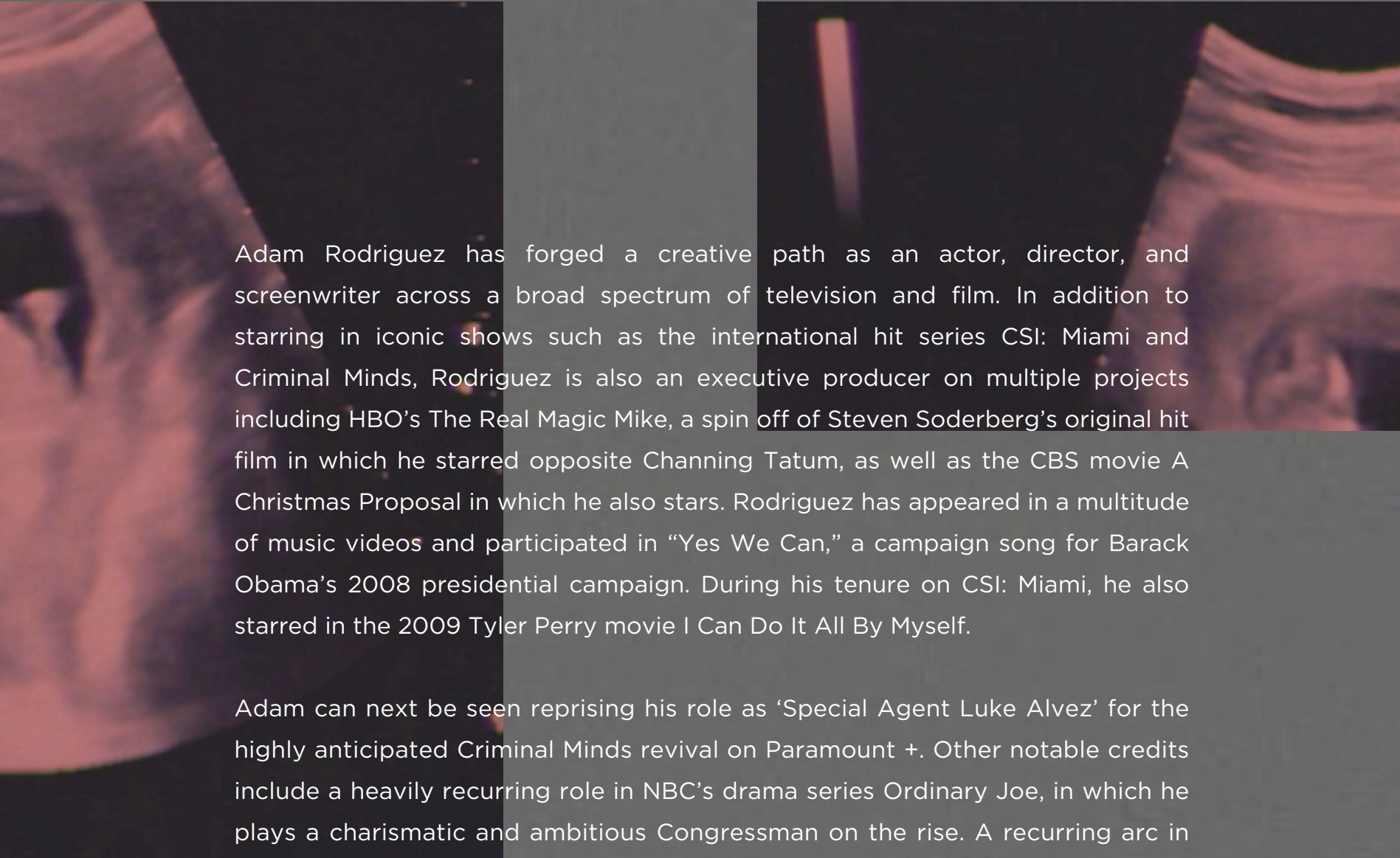


TALA ASHE
Actor

Before You

Tala Ashe was born in Iran and raised in Columbus, Ohio. She received a BFA in Acting from Boston University, with additional training from LAMDA and UCB. Tala was nominated for an Outstanding Actress Drama Desk and received a Special Obie Citation for her performance in ENGLISH, Sanaz Toossi's Pulitzer Prize winning drama at the Atlantic Theater Company. She will reprise her role for the Broadway transfer in 2025. For five years, Tala was a series regular on DC'S LEGENDS OF TOMORROW playing "Zari Tomaz," the 1st Muslim-American superhero on Television. Additional theater credits include: The Vagrant Trilogy, Troilus and Cressida, Urge for Going (The Public), Deep Blue Sound (Clubbed Thumb), Breaking the Story (Second Stage), Lunch Bunch (Play Co), The Profane (Playwrights Horizons), The Who and the What (LCT3). Regional: Head over Heels, The Happiest Song Plays Last, Troilus and Cressida (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), Welcome to Arroyo's (The Old Globe). Tala also had major arcs on SMASH and AMERICAN ODYSSEY on NBC. Other selected guest star roles include 30 ROCK, LAW & ORDER: CI, and LAW & ORDER. Currently recurring on HBOMax's THE GIRLS ON THE BUS.

@talaashe



Adam Rodriguez has forged a creative path as an actor, director, and screenwriter across a broad spectrum of television and film. In addition to starring in iconic shows such as the international hit series CSI: Miami and Criminal Minds, Rodriguez is also an executive producer on multiple projects including HBO's The Real Magic Mike, a spin off of Steven Soderberg's original hit film in which he starred opposite Channing Tatum, as well as the CBS movie A Christmas Proposal in which he also stars. Rodriguez has appeared in a multitude of music videos and participated in "Yes We Can," a campaign song for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. During his tenure on CSI: Miami, he also starred in the 2009 Tyler Perry movie I Can Do It All By Myself.

Adam can next be seen reprising his role as 'Special Agent Luke Alvez' for the highly anticipated Criminal Minds revival on Paramount +. Other notable credits include a heavily recurring role in NBC's drama series Ordinary Joe, in which he plays a charismatic and ambitious Congressman on the rise. A recurring arc in Showtime's critically acclaimed historical dark fantasy television series Penny Dreadful: City of Angels as 'Raul Vega,' a righteous union leader and advocate for his people. He portrayed Hilda's love interest 'Bobby' in the fourth season of Ugly Betty and recurred as Jane's professor in Jane the Virgin. Other recent TV spots include Gloria Calderon Kellett's groundbreaking Cuban-American family sitcom One Day At A Time, and FOX's hit drama Empire, among others.

@adamrodriguez

Before You



ADAM RODRIGUEZ

Actor

a film by **Lauren Melinda**

Film Stills



Behind the Scenes



Before You

credits

A Simbelle Productions AND Driven Equation PRODUCTION 'Before You' Tala Ashe Adam Rodriguez

MUSIC Gio Piacentini COSTUME DESIGN Mikhaela Zabalerio EDITED BY Vicente Manzano

PRODUCTION DESIGN Danny Cistone DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Ludovica Isidori ASSOCIATE PRODUCER Jean-Louis Rodrigue

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS Austin Formato Tracy Aftergood Tip Scarry PRODUCED BY Helena Sardinha Rafael Thomaseto Lauren Melinda

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY Lauren Melinda

SIMBELLE
PRODUCTIONS

DRIVEN
EQUATION

 **Planned
Parenthood**
Care. No matter what.



Contact Us

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PRODUCER: rafael@drivenequation.com