

WHAT'S YOUR HAPPIEST MEMORY IF YOU DIE TOMORROW?

upload ME



PRESS KIT
2021

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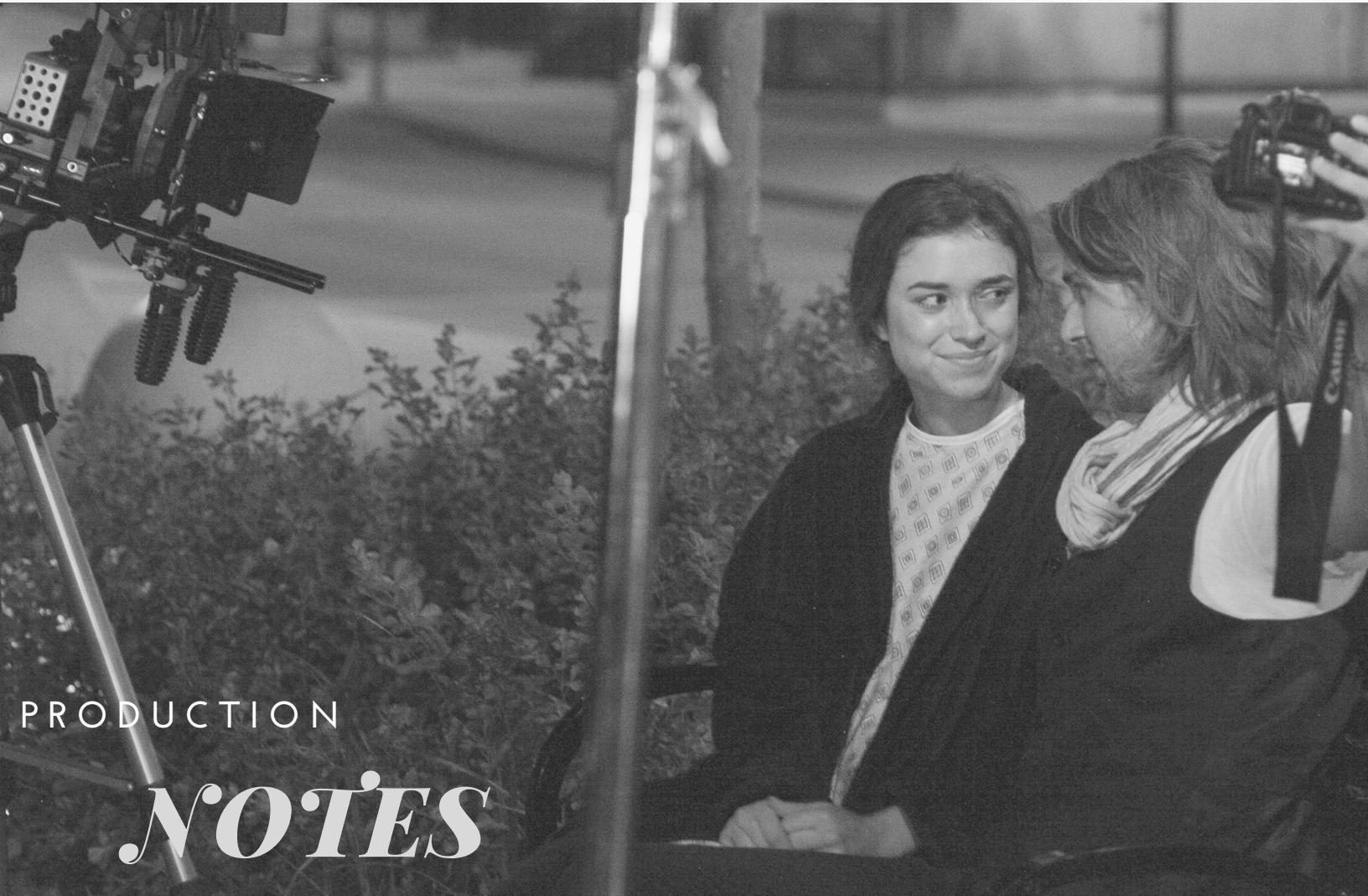
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Upload Me
A film by Sherwin "Serg" Saballa

Logline
What's your happiest memory if you die tomorrow?

Project Synopsis
Fate and Death will weave a story of Shine, a social media influencer who goes back to her past to face a new reality.



PRODUCTION

NOTES



BLACK AND WHITE SCENES

"I chose black and white on the main timeline because the main story is a march to an inevitability."



COLORED SCENES

"And color to memory scenes and ending scenes because of how the characters idealized their past and their future."

Crux

Upload Me is a love story, but more importantly, it is a story about love. It's an exploration of our disconnectedness despite our technological interconnectedness, it's an artistic expedition to what it means to love deeply.

Craft

To craft a state of 'becoming' is my approach to collaboration. I believe the best way to capture authenticity in cinema is the absolute surrender to vulnerability.

The script is not just an alternate reality with which the actors and crew could interact, but I let everybody gradually bring their own reality into this world.

Everybody involved had to surrender a piece of himself or herself.

A willingness to be vulnerable.

A willingness to trust without guarantee. It's a surrender to 'become.'

The aim is not perfection but sincerity. That essence became more important than a perfect camera dolly shot.

This test brought courage, truth, and wholeheartedness to the process. What is more personal than a confession, and what makes us more vulnerable than love.



Origin

The screenplay started with nothing more than an existential debate between Fate and Death (as characters) arguing about the meaning of life. Its evolution to be a feature film screenplay took about 7 years to develop. The startup culture, Social Media, my personal struggles and chaos around the world found its way to the script. It became the backdrop for the characters.

The first few drafts over the years were very raw. But as I mature, the more objective and almost clinical my approach has become. The separation of myself to the story made it so that it became itself and not mine anymore. So it went from a personal therapy into something like a jigsaw puzzle. Most of the writing was between 1am to 4am. In the morning I was taking care of my newborn son as a stay at home dad, and at night I was taking care of a dying man as a hospice aide for my part time job. The contrast of life and death really weaves itself into the story and gives it a unique depth.



Dualism

To recreate life, its contradictions, its chaos and beauty in cinema, the mosaic of dualism is used as a tool throughout the narrative of Upload Me: between fate & death, past & present, narrative & documentary, B/W scenes & colored scenes, imaginary & real. Culminating these contradictions in a single cohesive narrative in cinema was a challenge.

Despite that, it does not require special knowledge to understand the story.

To achieve an imperfect raggedness yet precise non-linear structure. The story is organized by color palette choices.

I chose black and white on the main timeline because the main story is a march to an inevitability. And color to memory scenes and ending scenes because of how the characters idealized their past and their future.

Besides my artistic endeavors, my experience in the healthcare industry exposed me to death, and witnessing it with my own eyes influenced my life and my craft. The beauty of it is not that it ended but it once began. I'm moved by its absoluteness, as it begins and it ends, just like films.

The Beautiful Chaos

Armed with a beautiful story despite our lack of resources, we moved forward. We worked with an unusual yet brave team. It was a mixed bag of artists, actors, industry outsiders, musicians, professionals and amateurs, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed friends scattered around the globe.

The talent spanned from actors from Chicago, Indiana, Iowa, to our partner in the UK, from an office supporter in Ghana, production and script consultants in Hollywood, impressionists in the Philippines and Abstract artist in Canada, musician in San Francisco and concept artist in New York. We found help through friends of friends. Some actors had to wear different hats, from location scouting, social media management, crew and assistant-directing. Even my family lent their talents and resources.

The film is a culmination of various hands of brave, good-hearted dreamers that came together to make something beautiful. Throughout the production we unconsciously developed a simple unwritten rule: learn the rules and then break them. We really did not control chaos, but we rode the waves of chaos.

It was a beautiful chaos.



Rook Daly is an actress and writer, known for Alondra Underground (2020) and Babylon (2022) (as Beauty with Margot Robbie, Brad Pitt, Samara Weaving, Tobey Maguire). She graduated with a journalism degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Patricia Holly is an actress and composer, known for Christmas Break-In (2018), Sucks to Suck (2018) and Planet California (2018). She has been in many plays and musicals around the Des Moines area, which she portrayed Sister Mary Robert in Sister Act: The Musical, at the Des Moines Playhouse.



Lisa McConnel is an actress known for her first role as Janet in an Indie feature film Mercy's Girl. Since then she's been busy working on short films, webisodes and stage. Lisa currently plays Oprah in the stage parody play Orange is the New Comeback.



Ray Graham is an actor and producer, known for Programmed Series: Aznek (2019), Frances Stein (2015) and Volumes of Blood (2015). Also a retired clinical social worker who began acting after he retired. He appeared in several stage plays in the last two years, and recently ended a run as the Father in Purdue University's production of Eurydice. He's also appeared in several independent films, including The Colors of Emily, Dr. Frances Stein, and What Happened in Danville.



Regina Pollard is an actor and singer born and raised in Chicagoland. She finds joy in performing and creating. She graduated with a speech and hearing science degree, but is continually drawn to performing arts; it's a bug she caught as a child that doesn't seem to be going away.



Christina Lindsay is an actress, known for The Pale Man (2017), Upload Me (2022) and Visiting Friends. She has been studying both theater and film and continues to train. She has spent most of her career in sales and has appeared in several training and presentation videos for her corporation.



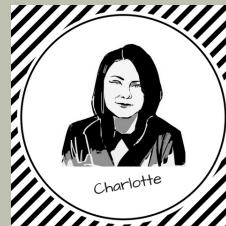
Max Helm classically trained, Max has played roles as diverse as Lysander in A Midsummer Night Dream to John Lennon in the independent short film, Driving John Lennon. Max recently graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a double major of English and French. While pursuing his degrees, Max worked on his modeling and has appeared on numerous international book covers.



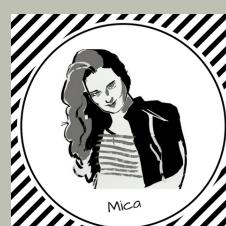
Peter Mastne began his acting career in Chicago, where he studied acting and Improv at the Vagabond theater and Second City. He moved to Los Angeles in 2017 where he made several guest star and co-star appearances in various true crime shows and landed his first recurring role on Investigation Discovery's hit show Homicide Hunter in May 2019, playing Detective Skip Arms. In 2017 Peter Mastne wrote, directed and starred in Imago, a Feature film about human trafficking.



Constantine Giannaras has always been an avid lover of film and theater. Since he was young he had a lingering dream in the back of his mind to act or write and finally earned his debut in the role of Ross. In his free time he plays guitar and sings at open mics, He does stand-up and he loves to go backpacking for long stretches of time, going wherever the wind takes him.



Jessica Dean Rose is an actress and assistant director that typically works on feature films. Her career in the entertainment industry started in music, eventually blending with film & television at JBTV Music Television in Chicago. She worked in both film and television as a Production Assistant before becoming an AD. In 2020, she published her guidebook for Set PAs, "How To Survive On Set." She is originally from Chicago, Illinois, but resides in Tennessee.



Isabelle Lev is an actress, known for Upload Me (2022), Imago and Jack (2016) she grew up doing Community Theater and joined her High School Theater program before going on to college.

BIO



Sherwin 'Serg' Saballa is the producer, writer, director of Upload Me. Upload Me is his Debut Feature film. He received training with Hollywood cinematographer Shane Hurlbut A.S.C., (Need For Speed, Act of Valor, Terminator Salvation, Fathers and Daughters) and at the Hollywood Film institute.



Suresh Choudhary is an award-winning producer, director and Comedian who has been in the industry spanning over 11 years who worked on productions both abroad and in the United States.

He produced and directed several shorts which garnered him awards in India including 2nd Prize for Short Filmmaking at WIT College, Solapur and 2nd Prize at SCOE College, Vadgaon (Pune). He also completed an intensive course at a non profit media arts organization Chicago Filmmakers in 2014.

Executive Producer - Sherwin 'Serg' Saballa

Director/Writer/Producer - Sherwin 'Serg' Saballa

Associate Producer - Suresh Choudhary

Consulting Producers

Maria-Elena P. Pineda
Michael D. Sellers

Line Producer - Sherwin 'Serg' Saballa

Production Managers
Grace Bagaybagayan
Reginald Bagaybagayan
Tracey Halliday

Production Companies
Divie Studios
Ghostship International
Raw Provisions
Div. 22

Assistant Directors
Suresh Choudhary
Peter Mastne
Joana Franz Balanon

Casting Assistant Director
Joana Franz Balanon

Director Of Photography
Justin King / Sherwin 'Serg' Saballa

Additional Cinematography by
William Chueh
Isaac Ramona
Reavens 'Pei' Lee

Aerial Cinematography
Michael Today

Production Designer
Reavens 'Pei' Lee

Post Production team
Sherwin 'Serg' Saballa
Mia Hino

Art Department
Paola Martinez
Hana ACBD
De Monique
Randolph Cayaban
Landell Galiza

Makeup
Tiara Ruiz
Sarah Ahmad
Zoephia
Kristina Nadal
Sherryl Joy Saballa

Music
Sherwin 'Serg' Saballa
Sarah Jane Saballa
Randolph Cayaban
Theo Cayaban
Patricia Holly
Premium Beats



Fun Facts:

Upload Me was promised funding through a private equity of 1.5 million but just a few days before location scout, the investor (withheld identity) jumped ship over various financial disagreements leaving the Producer Sherwin Saballa financing it himself on a more shoestring budget.

Nobody showed up on the first day of the casting call.

The Director had a hard time choosing between Amy Trefry and Rook Daly for the role of Shine. The director was considering Amy because she had personal experience with cancer and was a creative force yet Rook also made a remarkable audition and has this "nostalgia in her voice that is hard to replicate." However Amy was casted in another feature before the Director made a decision leaving Rook as the only choice for Shine. "It was like the universe knew that Shine was meant for Rook," recalls the Director. "I didn't cast Shine, the universe did."

The original actress casted for Crescence had to leave the country because of immigration issues. Recasting a new Crescence within a short period was pure luck. Regina Pollard turned out to be the better and perfect fit.

The original actor casted for Beast was absent for the first 2 shooting dates, re-casting someone with the right look and skillset who can play guitar would've caused too much delay, so the director did not have any choice but to take the role himself.

During production Sherwin 'Serg' Saballa the director who also plays Beast had his front tooth broken, he had to wear a temporary false tooth, which fell off occasionally during the shoot.

Halfway through the production Cinematographer William Chueh left the production over various creative disputes with the Director. Justin King and Isaac Ramos filled that role after he left.



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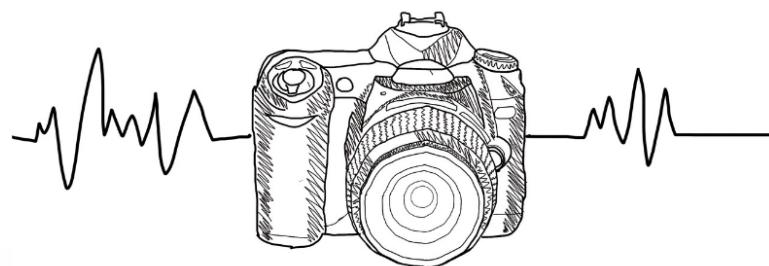
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Divie Studio and Raw Provisions with Div. 22 and Ghostship International

Rook Daly Max Helm Peter Mastne Regina Pollard Lisa McConnel Jessica Dean Rose Patricia Holly Ray Graham Christina Lindsay Constantine Giannaras Isabelle Lev Ernesto Borges
Executive Producer Sherwin 'Serg' Saballa Associate Producer Suresh Choudhary