

# ABIGAIL

INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY



MAX HECHTMAN FILMS PRESENTS "ABIGAIL" RICHIE ALLAN ELVIRA TORTORA LAUREN HART AND LEILANI MARIE VASQUEZ  
MUSIC BY ANDRÉS SOTO EDITOR MAX HECHTMAN DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY JOE DANIELE JOE DEFELICE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MERYL HECHTMAN ORIGINAL STORY BY JASON K. ALLEN  
SCREENPLAY BY JASON K. ALLEN MAX HECHTMAN MERYL HECHTMAN PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY MAX HECHTMAN AND CHRISTONIKOS TSALIKIS

ABIGAILSHORTFILM.COM







**MAX HECHTMAN FILMS presents**

# ABIGAIL

**Screener Link:** by request

**Trailer:** <https://vimeo.com/maxhechtman/abigailtrailer>

**Poster and Film Stills**

**Behind the Scenes Stills**

**Website:** [www.abigailshortfilm.com](http://www.abigailshortfilm.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/AbigailTheShortFilm](http://www.facebook.com/AbigailTheShortFilm)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/abigailtheshortfilm](http://www.instagram.com/abigailtheshortfilm)

**IMDB:** <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8698066>

**For Festivals/Screenings and other General Inquires:**

[info@abigailshortfilm.com](mailto:info@abigailshortfilm.com)

**For PR Inquires:**

Meryl Hechtman  
(516) 946-7729  
[hechtman@optonline.net](mailto:hechtman@optonline.net)

**Genre:** Live-action Short, Narrative Drama

**Shot on:** SONY FSS Camera and Lenses

**Filmed entirely on location in:** Middle Village, NY and Merrick, NY

**Tech Specs:** 23 min. / 2019 / USA / Color / DCP and 4K ProRes / 1.85:1 / 2.0 Stereo and 5.1 Surround / 23.98fps / English



## Synopsis:

A lonely and elderly widower struggles to come to terms with the loss of his wife and the circumstances surrounding her death. When he visits her grave, he encounters a little girl who shows him the path to healing and fills him with hope.

Inspired by a true story, *Abigail* addresses the topics of grief, loss and the complicated topic of end-of-life decisions, and the unique challenges it poses on relationships and family dynamics.





## **Official Selection Highlights**

Long Island International Film Expo (2020)

Golden Door International Film Festival (2020)

Point Lookout Film Festival (2021)

Hang on to Your Shorts Film Festival (2021)

Portland Film Festival (2021)

## **Awards and Nominations**

### Stage 32 5th Annual Short Film Contest

Quarterfinalist - WON

### Long Island International Film Expo (2020)

Audience Award - WON

Best Short Film - NOMINATED

Best Long Island Short Film - NOMINATED

Best Director (Max Hechtman and Christonikos Tsalikis) - NOMINATED

### Point Lookout Film Festival (2021)

Best Film - WON

Best Local Film - NOMINATED

Best Director (Max Hechtman and Christonikos Tsalikis) - NOMINATED

Best Actor (Richie Allan) - NOMINATED

Best Produced Script (Jason K. Allen, Max Hechtman and Meryl Hechtman) - NOMINATED

Best Cinematography (Joe Daniele and Joe DeFelice) - NOMINATED





## **Director's Statement:**

We believe this film is important because it facilitates the complicated and difficult subjects of illness, grief and loss - topics that are more relevant today in the recent past, given the millions of families worldwide who have been effected so tragically by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the endearing relationship of Elmer and his beloved Abigail, we are prompted to ask ourselves important and uncomfortable questions about expressing our wishes regarding medical treatment and end of life, while we're in a position to do so. Through Elmer's grieving process, we also discover how the path to acceptance and moving forward, often comes from the memories, traditions and secrets of those who we have lost.

It is our hope that this film opens the door for conversations for anyone facing this adversity in their life.

– Max Hechtman and Christonikos Tsalikis





## MAX HECHTMAN

(Co-Director/Co-Producer/Co-Writer/Editor)

MAX HECHTMAN, a graduate of the Film and Media Program at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), NYC, is a Long Island and New York-based filmmaker. His narrative and documentary work has received recognition at various film festivals nationally. His goal is to use the art of film to bring attention to issues that challenge his and other generations, through subject matter and stories that are relatable and impact our lives.

His most recent documentary, *Stories of Strength and Hope: Preventing Youth Suicide* (2018), which won Best Documentary at the 2019 Long Island International Film Expo (LIIFE), was inspired by a Middle School assembly given by suicide prevention advocate, John Halligan, and his seeing *Dear Evan Hansen* on Broadway, which heightened his awareness of the entertainment industry's portrayal of mental health and youth suicide. The documentary covers the subject matter from the perspectives of the family, clinician, someone with a lived experience and the media, and features interviews with Halligan, whose son, Ryan, committed suicide at age 13; nationally-recognized child and adolescent psychiatrist Harold Koplewicz, President of the Child Mind Institute and Meryl Cassidy, Executive Director of the Suffolk County Response Crisis Center.

*FIT Hives: Sustainability- The Secret to Survival* (2016), which won the Eco Sustainable Award from Fashion Film Festival Chicago, was made as part of an Innovation Fund grant from the Clinton Global Initiative. The documentary, which also screened at the Chelsea Film Festival and NewFilmmakers NY, was produced to educate the FIT community about the importance of bees to the environment, the use of bee-derived resources in the majors taught at the college and the installation of beehives on the roof. Hechtman's first narrative film, *I Am Here* (2016) addresses the issue of his generation's obsession with texting and technology and its effect on their lives and relationships. It was an official selection at festivals including Big Apple Film Festival, New York City International Film Festival and the Long Island International Film Expo (LIIFE).

*Abigail* (2019), his senior thesis film, which was an ambitious undertaking, touches on the controversial and complicated topic of end-of-life decision-making, as well as grief and loss.

In addition to filmmaking, he has been working as a professional video editor for the past five years. He hopes to continue his work in production and post-production and pursue film projects, including short and feature-length narratives and documentaries that get people to think, question and open conversations about subjects that are difficult, but can lead to change and positive outcomes. An avid enthusiast of musical theatre, he also hopes to adapt Broadway musicals for film.



## CHRISTONIKOS TSALIKIS

(Co-Director/Co-Producer/Post Production Supervisor)

CHRISTONIKOS TSALIKIS is a co-founder of Reel Life Cinematography, one of Long Island's premiere video production companies. Chris' 20+ years of experience in production and post-production has established him as a master of storytelling through his expertise in directing, cinematography and editing.

His experience encompasses producing films and videos for commercial and event clients. With an extensive knowledge of cameras and editing software platforms, Chris's work reflects exceptional skill in elevating the production value of the projects with which he has been involved, as well as his ability to successfully blend traditional and current techniques and trends.

He is also a gifted and natural teacher of his craft, which he has used to mentor a number of emerging filmmakers, including his co-director on *Abigail*, Max Hechtman.





## **RICHIE ALLAN**

(Elmer)

Richie Allan has been the voice and face of hundreds of radio and television commercials, as well as guest and starring roles in TV and Film. Recent appearances include Part 6 of the Showtime mini-series *Escape at Dannemora*, directed by Ben Stiller, and in the pilot episode of Amazon Prime Video's Golden Globe award-winning *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*.

On film, Richie has been seen in *Alto*, *Meet Dave*, *Pink Cadillac*, *Murder In The First*, *The Dennis Byrd Story*, and *A League Of Their Own*. Other TV appearances include: *Law and Order: SVU*, *E.R.*, *China Beach*, *JAG*, *Seinfeld*, *Married with Children*, *Growing Pains* and many others. He had recurring and featured roles in *Santa Barbara*, *All My Children*, *General Hospital*, *As the World Turns*, and *Guiding Light*.

His theatre career includes the west coast premier of *Home Games* (White Fire Theater), and David Mamet's world premier of *The Disappearance of the Jews*, as well as regional and off-Broadway musical theatre roles in *Guys and Dolls*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Damn Yankees*, and *Chicago*.



## **ELVIRA TORTORA**

(Abigail)

Elvira Tortora is a Brooklyn, NY native and graduate of Baruch College. In her senior year she toured England and Scotland with the musical *Once Upon a Mattress*.

She also appeared in operas and theater productions and television commercials. One of those commercials led to a career in the fashion industry that lasted thirty-five years. Since then, she has done work in print ads, television, theater, student films and independent short films.



## **LAUREN HART**

(Woman at Cemetery)

Originally from Washington D.C., Lauren Hart is a New York City-based actress who almost went to law school but decided she would rather play a lawyer than be one. With degrees in Communications and Politics from New York University, Lauren trained as a professional actress at the prestigious William Esper Studio. She is a working actress in film and television, theater, commercials, and she is a professional voiceover actress.

You may have seen her in several national commercials airing for Match.com or in a variety of episodes for The Travel Channel's *Mysteries at the Museum* and *Monumental Mysteries*.

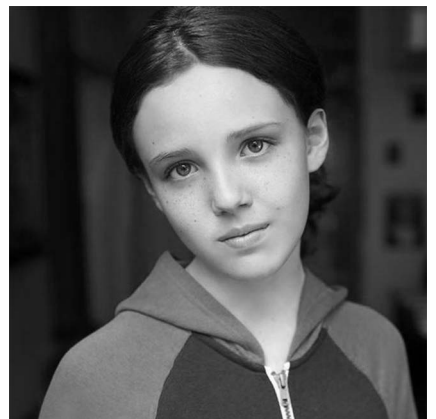


## **LEILANI MARIE VASQUEZ**

(The Girl)

A New York-based actress and singer, Leilani Marie Vasquez was born on August 12, 2008 in Long Island, NY. Leilani's career began in musical theater where she appeared in many community projects, as Chava in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Gertrude in *Seussical*, and Young Cosette in *Les Misérables*, among others. Leilani was a member of The Long Island Children's Choir for several years and has been taking private voice lessons with Hazel Leon, lead singer of Nishul, since 2018.

Her working with co-directors Max Hechtman and Christonikos Tsalikis on *Abigail*, which marks her film debut, fueled her ambition to become an actor further. Since filming it, Leilani has worked with director Jacqueline Dow, a finalist for the 2018 HBO Acting Fellowship, and in Jake Rasmussen's short *Climate Change is Real*, which won 1st Place in the 2019 Eco-Fest Comedy Video Competition sponsored by the Center for Environmental Filmmaking. Leilani has appeared in many short films since then and continues to study acting at The Creative House, where her teachers include Daniel Cosgrove and Alan Gordon. Leilani's Talent Manager is Jenevieve Brewer and her Rep in Los Angeles is Amy Lord at Eris Talent Agency.





## JASON K. ALLEN

(Co-Writer/Original Story)

Jason's writing credits include the feature film *Lucky Fritz* and award-winning short films *American Sock*, *You Destroy Me*, and *That Smell*. *American Sock* won Best Short at eight film festivals, while *That Smell* screened at 82 festivals in 15 countries, including the SAG-AFTRA Short Film Showcase at New York's Robin Williams Center.

Jason has won Best Screenplay honors at the Nashville Film Festival, San Diego Film Awards, and Mountain of Laughs Comedy Fest among others, and is a seven-time finalist of the Nashville Film Festival Screenwriting Competition. Most recently, his films won Best in Show at the Push Film Festival, Best Screenplay at Video Hackers-Italy, Audience Choice Award at the Flagler Film Festival, Best International Short at the Mestre Film Fest in Venice, and Best Comedy at LaFF-VIN, an annual event hosted by the Red Skelton Museum of American Comedy.

Allen has worked on several assignments, including writing an untitled animated feature for Singapore's Egg Story Creative Productions. As a journalist, he has won three Associated Press Managing Editors Awards for feature writing. His writing and photography have appeared in numerous books, magazines and newspapers.



## JOE DANIELE

(Co-Director of Photography)

Joe "JD" Daniele has been a 'shooter' since the days of film as a medium, not just a memory. Trained as a film and TV guy, he has won many awards, such as multiple; NY Emmy, ADDY, NORI, BOLI, Telly, Axiem, Cable A.C.E. and others. As a perpetual student, JD is always looking to learn something new, as a teacher and mentor, always sharing his knowledge, and as an artist, always looks to try something new, different, challenging and satisfying to his creative soul.

When asked to handle the creative and technical aspects of cinematography (digital or traditional) JD carefully reviews how a DP can enhance the script with visuals without distracting from the story. JD's motto is: "I create solutions not problems."

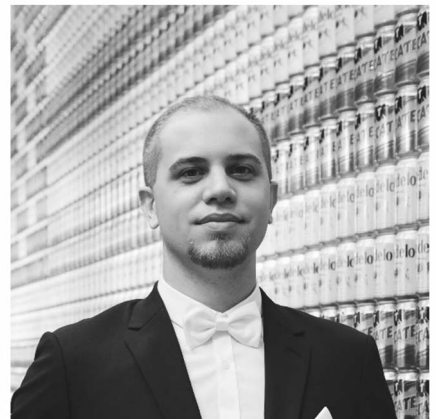
"As the cinematographer for *Abigail*, I believe we gave every ounce of time, devotion, creativity and sweat equity we had, and I believe the story and the film show how all involved were a part of a great production."



## JOE DeFELICE

(Co-Director of Photography)

With more than 10 years' experience of freelance video production in New York, Joe DeFelice has a well-rounded skill set in the field including Camera Operation, Production Assistance, Lighting Design, Video Editing and Adobe Premiere Pro. He has had the opportunity to work on a variety of media - such as social videos, music videos, commercials, live events, and talk shows - with a range of clients - including Bud Light, Cablevision and CBS.



## ALBERTO INNELLA

(Assistant Director of Photography)

Originally from Italy, Alberto grew up in Europe, moving between London, Berlin, Rome and Milan. He moved to NYC in 2015. He's a bicostal award-winning Director and Cinematographer. With 10 years in film and commercial production, his cinematographer credits include documentaries, commercials, narrative films, music video and web campaigns.

Over the past years, Alberto has directed several web campaigns for Rolling Stone in partnership with Harley Davidson, Modelo, Levi's, Destination Canada, for Elle, Cosmopolitan, Esquire, Harper's Bazaar and Vice Media. Alberto has collaborated closely with some of the most talented, award-winning cinematographers and directors in Italy. His extensive experience as a 1st AC allowed him to learn many skills that he holds today as a director of photography.

Alberto's style can be best characterized by simplicity and lightness, in awe of the human connections and beauty in everyday life.



## ANDRÉS SOTO

(Composer)

A Costa Rican composer and orchestrator based in Los Angeles, Andrés has written music for 5 feature films, over 25 shorts, 5 documentaries, and one video game, in addition to several concert works that have been performed by orchestras around the world.

Recent feature film credits include *iHe Matado a mi Marido!*, *Buscando a Marcos Ramirez* and *Nowhere*. As an arranger and orchestrator he has collaborated with two-time Latin Grammy winner Edin Solis, songwriter Max Vernon in two musicals, violinist Jane Hunt in music that has been featured at the US OPEN opening ceremonies at Arthur Ashe Stadium in NY and in Australia's Channel Seven broadcasts of the Australian Masters, among others.

He has also worked in the score preparation department of *Ocean's Eight*, the Coen brothers' *Hail, Caesar!*, *Barbershop 3*, and as assistant score technician to composer Marcelo Zarvos in the Showtime drama *The Affair*.





## **Full Credits**

Starring: **RICHIE ALLAN** as Elmer  
**ELVIRA TORTORA** as Abigail  
**LAUREN HART** as Woman at Cemetery  
**LEILANI MARIE VASQUEZ** as The Girl

Produced and Directed by: **MAX HECHTMAN** and **CHRISTONIKOS TSALIKIS**  
Screenplay by: **JASON K. ALLEN**, **MAX HECHTMAN** and **MERYL HECHTMAN**  
Original Story by: **JASON K. ALLEN**  
Executive Producer: **MERYL HECHTMAN**  
Directors of Photography: **JOE DANIELE** and **JOE DeFELICE**  
Editor: **MAX HECHTMAN**

Music by: **ANDRÉS SOTO**  
Lighting: **JOE DANIELE**, **CHRISTONIKOS TSALIKIS**  
Script Supervisor/Continuity: **NATHAN SIEGELAUB**  
Script Editor: **MISCELLEANA TSALIKIS**  
Storyboard Artist: **DAVID JAFFE**  
Camera Operators: **JOE DANIELE**, **JOE DeFELICE**, **MAX HECHTMAN**  
Assistant Director of Photography: **ALBERTO INNELLA**  
First Assistant Camera: **JOE DANIELE**  
Makeup and Hair: **MONIQUE NORWICK**, **RENÉE SAFIR**, **MARIA VLANTIS**  
Post Production Supervisor: **CHRISTONIKOS TSALIKIS**  
Re-recording Mixer: **ELIOTT TAYLOR**  
Sound Post Producer: **ASHLEY FOY**  
Sound Effects Editor: **CHRIS LIANG**  
Production Assistants: **EMMANUEL PANTELIDIS**, **JAMES TROICI**  
Screenplay Facilitation: **INKTIP**  
Casting Support Provided by: **BREAKDOWN SERVICES**  
Insurance Provided by: **FILM EMPORIUM**  
Audio Finishing by: **TECHNICOLOR-POSTWORKS NY**

Production Company: **MAX HECHTMAN FILMS**

