

# FREEBIRD

A man and a woman are sitting on a windowsill, looking out a window. The man is on the left, wearing a green shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a red plaid shirt. They are both looking out the window at a bright, sunny outdoor scene with trees and a building. The window is framed by a dark frame, and the scene outside is brightly lit with warm, golden light.

A SHORT FILM BY  
PRETTY PENNY MEDIA



A woman with dark hair and bangs is looking out of a car window at night. The background is filled with out-of-focus city lights, creating a bokeh effect. The woman's face is partially visible, looking slightly to the side with a contemplative expression. The car's interior and window frame are visible in the foreground.

# LOGLINE

FREE BIRD follows a millennial woman living in Philadelphia as she approaches her 30s and experiences a second coming-of-age, navigating the changing expectations she has for herself.





# THE STORY

BY KRISTEN PHANEUF

Kate is a millennial woman who loves her partner, her dog, and the life they've built together. She cherishes her friends, going out to dinner with them, and the business she started with her best friend. But as time passes, she begins to feel stuck as she sees her friends and family moving forward. One by one, those around her are taking big steps—relocating, getting married, starting families—while she feels content with her own life. Caught between the desire to carve out her own journey and the pressure to meet societal expectations, Kate's story speaks to the millennial struggle of balancing a traditional life with the thrill of forging an individual path.

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Stylistically inspired by stories like *Frances Ha*, *Normal People*, *When Harry Met Sally*, *Shiva Baby*, and *Dan In Real Life*, *FREE BIRD* combines humor with deep emotion, the comfort of home with the awkwardness of family, the beauty of love with the paralysis of anxiety.



@freebird.shortfilm

# THE FILMMAKING

We filmed this movie in Philadelphia PA and Bucks County PA. We were lucky to film in a beautiful, classic Bucks County house and capture the nature of the suburbs. In Philadelphia, we captured a quintessential Fishtown neighborhood street in the fall, and filmed in an iconic style Philly townhome (they even let us on the roof!). We worked with Elixir Coffee Roasters to create an iconic cafe with a distinct Philadelphia style.







As a woman-centered story, we felt strongly about assembling a cast and crew that had a large representation of women. Our actors were cast out of Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New York, and Virginia, and we had the thrilling opportunity to film on a Panavision Arri Alexa Mini and utilize a car mount to drive around the city.







# THE CHARACTERS

This story compares two worlds- Kate's chosen family and friends in the city, and her related family in the suburbs.

Written from personal experiences and brought to life by beloved actors in the Philadelphia film & theatre scene, each character is a realistic portrayal of the people we are surrounded by.





# Kate

KRISTEN PHANEUF - LOS ANGELES

*Kate, a millennial woman approaching 30, is navigating a second coming-of-age. Passionate about her community and career, she contrasts her life with her sister's stable, traditional choices. While those around her make big decisions—marriage, spontaneous trips, new cities—Kate finds contentment in life's simple pleasures: cuddling with her dog, watching reality TV with her boyfriend Michael, and enjoying wine with friends. At her sister's baby shower in the suburbs, she compares her own fulfilling, free-spirited life with the conventional family life around her. Thriving in Philadelphia's energy, Kate also finds peace in the calm of Bucks County, and finds herself torn between the warmth of family and the comfort of her chosen life. She yearns to have it all.*







## Penny

AS HERSELF - LOS ANGELES

*The perfect pup. She brings peace to Kate's home. She is there when she wakes, there when she sleeps. A loyal, constant companion.*



## Michael

KENDRIX LAMAZ BROWN - VIRGINIA

*Michael is Kate's partner—her rock, her home, her person. Steady yet goofy, he grounds her when she gets lost in dreams and ambitions, gently pulling her back with his thoughtful perspective. Reliable and perceptive, he knows how to navigate her family with ease, seamlessly integrating himself in the way every girl hopes for. He reassures her, reminds her of who she is and the life she wants, and, above all, he's her favorite person.*



# PART 1: THE CITY



## Josie

MAGDELENA BORLANDO  
- NYC

*The Gen Z barista. She's sweet, funny, and always up for a good time— though she might not be the most dependable employee. Kate often feels envious of her freedom, and exasperated by her lack of consideration. It almost seems that she knows Kate wants to connect with her, and takes advantage of that.*



## Lucy & Isaac

DONOVAN LOCKETT - PHILADELPHIA  
MICHAEL STAHLER - PHILADELPHIA

*Lucy and Isaac are more than just friends to Kate—they're her chosen family, the people she shares her life with. They've celebrated countless milestones together, but while they continue moving forward, Kate feels like she's standing still. She and Lucy have always been in sync, making this shift in their friendship unsettling. Through it all, Isaac remains the steady presence—supportive, gentle, and always the voice of reason.*



Kate’s family is all the good and bad of those related to you. They are funny, combative, annoying, and understand in a way that other people just...can’t. Her parents have built a beautiful home filled with all the comforts of suburban life. Her sister, Carrie—pregnant and unwaveringly supportive—is the only one Kate truly lets her guard down around. Then there’s her cousin Sarah, always ready with her own firm opinions on family and career. Together, they create a dynamic that’s both warm and frustrating—a constant push and pull between love and the feeling of being misunderstood..

# PART 2: THE SUBURBS



Dad

*BRIAN MCCANN – PHILADELPHIA*



Mom

*AMANDA SCHOONOVER– PHILADELPHIA*



Carrie

*KELSEY HEBERT– PHILADELPHIA*



Sarah

*HANNA GAFFNEY– PHILADELPHIA*









# THE FEEL

This story explores the contrast between what we have and what we long for.

Kate's worlds are colored different with warm tones in the city and blue tones in the suburbs.

When capturing scenes with her friends and at home, we used stable, mounted shots to reflect the comfort and ease she feels in these familiar spaces.

At her parents' house, we used steadicam and handheld shots to capture the chaos and warm, homemade feel of her family.

This film is intimate, quirky, and natural in style.







A man and a woman are sitting on a windowsill, looking out a window. The woman is in the foreground, wearing a red plaid shirt, looking up and to the right. The man is behind her, looking down. The window shows a bright outdoor scene with trees and a building. The word "INSPIRATION" is overlaid in white serif font.

INSPIRATION



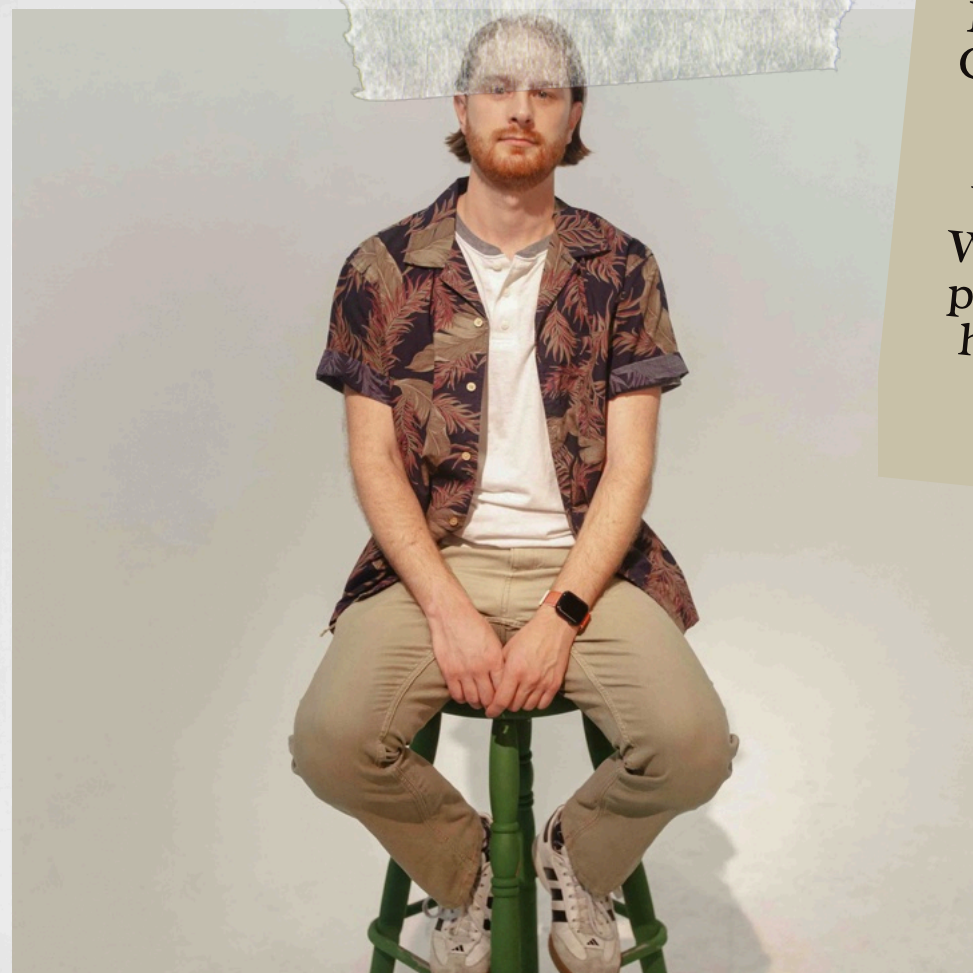




# THE TEAM







zach phaneuf  
director / producer

Zach Phaneuf is a writer, director, and scenic specialist from Northern Virginia. His work as a painter can be seen on the current seasons of The Food That Built America and The Mega-Brands that Built America on The History Channel. He has worked on over 100 theater productions at many theaters around the country including Quintessence Theatre in Philadelphia, Antaeus and IAMA Theaters in Los Angeles, and with StarKid Productions on Nerdy Prudes Must Die and Cinderella's Castle. Directing credits include the plays The Odd Couple, Little Shop of Horrors, Lemon Shaker Pie, and Us and You, as well as the Pretty Penny short film We'll Find A Way. He is also one-half of the podcast Thank The Academy where he and his wife Kristen talk about every Academy Awards' Best Picture winning film.

Kristen Phaneuf is an actor, writer, and producer from Philadelphia. She starred in the independent feature film KINGS from Jambalaya Productions, then appeared in the AMC series Dispatches From Elsewhere. After three years in the Philadelphia theatre scene working with companies like The Arden, Philadelphia Artists Collective, The Philadelphia Theatre Company, she moved to Los Angeles. Since then she has appeared on the Disney Channel (ZOMBIES Z-CAP), joined SAG-AFTRA and studies at The Last Acting Studio and at Groundlings. She is a founding member of Pretty Penny Media and was recently nominated for Best Actress and the short film We'll Find A Way. She cowrote the full length play US & YOU which premiered at the Hollywood Fringe, and she continues to help write, produce, and act in the Los Angeles and Philadelphia markets.



kristen phaneuf  
writer / producer



Jeff Goins is an actor, director, writer, and producer from a very small town outside of Chicago. After earning a larger scholarship for theater than football, he ended up with an MFA in Acting and making his way to Los Angeles. His acting work can be seen in the movie Imperium alongside Daniel Radcliffe and as a series regular for the military veteran streaming service VET-TV. Jeff has also had a hand in writing and producing several short films. Most recently, he directed the horror short, The Grievance. When he is not involved in film, he enjoys acting in plays around LA, building sets alongside Zach Phaneuf, and taking his motorcycle out for a spin.



jeff goins  
producer / actor



beth goins  
producer / script supervisor

Beth Goins is a proofreader, editor, and script supervisor from the Chicago suburbs. She provides valuable feedback during the final stages of writing, including novel and play manuscripts, thesis papers, and dissertations, and she does not hesitate to resolve story inconsistencies and prevent continuity issues. Beth has supported her talented husband, Jeff, in many film and theatre endeavors. She is not professionally involved in the film industry, but she has seen over 240 of them. She regularly quotes obscure lines from movies and tv, cheesy '90s rom-coms are her favorite genre, and she prefers to stay home with her two cats Rory and Jessie.





leonard p walsh II  
cinematographer

Leonard Walsh is an award winning cinematographer with over 15 years of experience in the film industry. In 2022 he was chosen by the International Cinematographers Guild as an honoree for the Emerging Cinematographer Awards for his work on the short film, KINGSNAKE. His experience ranges from feature films, documentaries, commercials and music videos. In 2019 he shot his first feature film titled Bruiser. Recently, Leonard was the second unit director of photography on the feature film Black Spines, set to release in 2024. Much of Leonard's work has been accepted into many film festivals in the US and internationally.

Spencer Drees is a producer, director, and overall creative hailing from Cincinnati, Ohio. He has contributed to projects for major studios including Disney, Paramount, 20th Century Studios, Hulu, and Netflix. Currently, Spencer works at Universal Pictures under the Universal Monsters franchise, where he is part of a small, talented team alongside Vice President Holly Goline and the legendary concept and creature designer, Crash McCreery. Outside of his full-time role at Universal, Spencer loves to actively collaborate with fellow creatives, showcasing his talents in producing, directing, photography, and editing. With his independent endeavors, Spencer has produced four award-winning shorts with overall budgets between \$25k-\$35k and in 2024, he produced his first internationally shot short film, There's Something I Have to Tell You.



spencer drees  
producer





jonathan miller  
1st AC



lexi stranix  
2nd AD



tania romero  
1st AD



tineo dominguez  
grip & electric



kayla phaneuf  
sound mixer



alfreda "fre" howard  
make up artist



jose miguel soto  
gaffer





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