



SOPHIA

PRODUCER IRIS SAUNDERS WRITER & DIRECTOR ZHENZHEN MA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY CARLOS DE VARONA PRODUCTION DESIGNER DANIELE GABRIEL ART DIRECTOR CHANTAL GABRIEL
CASTING DRCTOR SUKI VAN LANH GAFFER & GRIP BRYAN SILLS - ALONZ JACKSON SOUND DANIEL LEE TURNER - DIEGO SALDANA - ROJAS MAKEUP ARTIST & PA EBONI BROWN
SCRIPT PROOFREADER EDDY BERMUDEZ LEE = EDITOR ZHNZHEN MA COMPOSER CHRIS RYAN SOUND DESIGNER & MIXER COSME LICCARDO - COLOR CORRECTION YASSEL QUIJANO

SOPHIA

Synopsis (short)

genre: family drama

Unexpected life experiences occur when Sophia, an 11 year old girl, is forced to face her fears and reconnect with her dad.



Synopsis (long)

After being forced to spend a day with her dad who has been divorced from her mom for a year, Sophia, a sensitive 11 year old female, grapples with the trauma of not having seen her dad in a year.

Having grown accustomed to being alone, although not enjoying it, Dad struggles to show the love he has for his daughter and his actions come through as cold and abrasive when Sophia makes an effort to break the silence.

Lingering below the surface of their behavior lies their deepest fears: the daughter fears her dad will force her to come back to live with him, while the dad fears he will lose his daughter again.

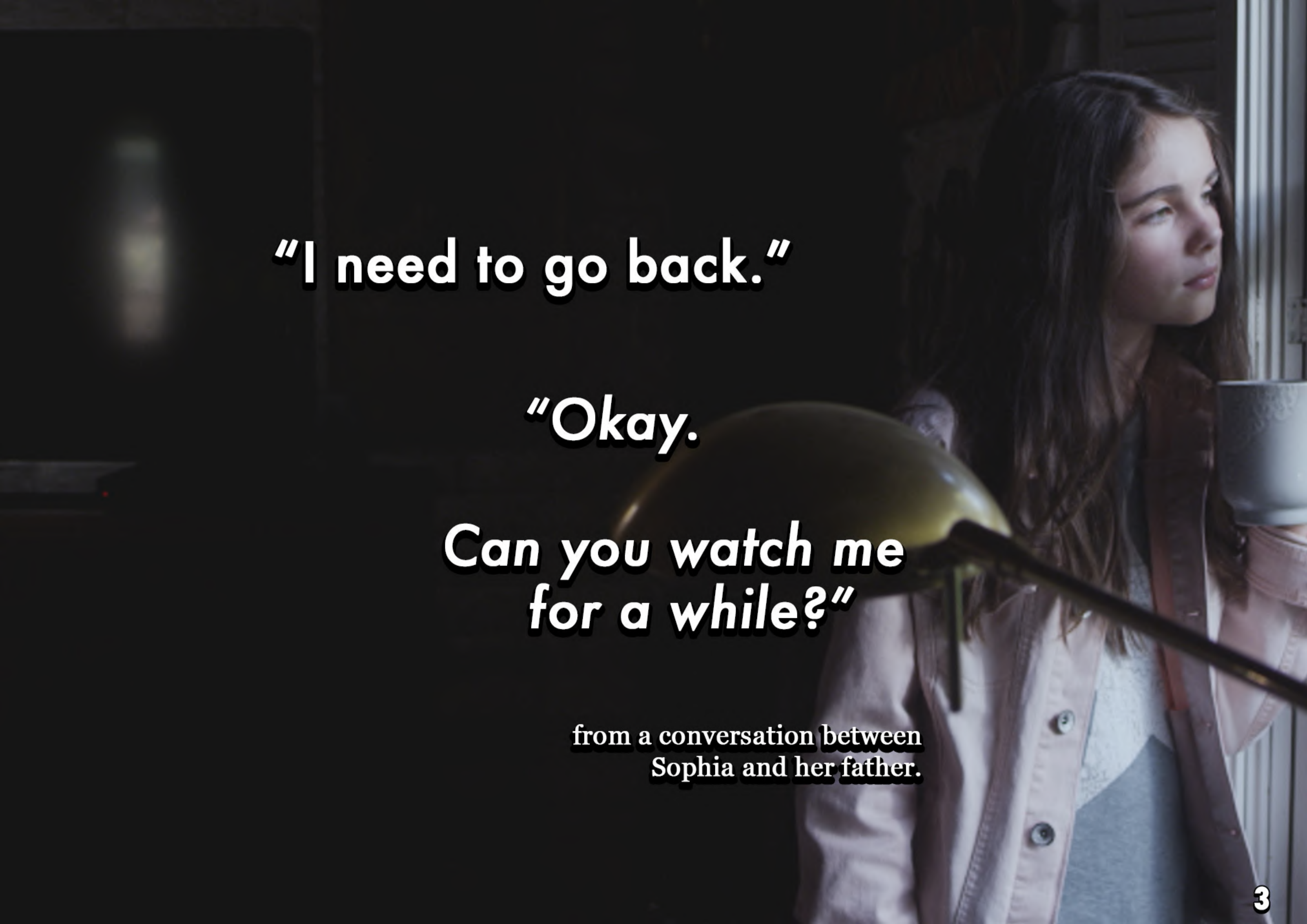
When Dad measures Sophia's height on a wooden stick, she sees all of the markings from when she was smaller. Instantly they share a nostalgic moment and the ice between them melts as the dad's love

shines through, silently but warm.

Tension however rises when Dad takes Sophia to the park to play with sparklers. Noticing her playful attempt to mask her fear of fire, Dad tries to help Sophia overcome it by forcing her to play with him. Backfire burns through their relationship as Sophia succumbs to her fear and pushes him away further by asking to go home to her mom. Dad responds by abruptly leaving her in the park alone.

Dad, now filled with regret as he sits at home, tries to amend his behavior in his mind by instead asking Sophia to watch him play with the sparkler. In his imagination, they are still together, as the red light from the fire dances on their faces under the night sky.

Meanwhile, Sophia, after waiting for her upset Mom at a bus station near the park, decides to wander into the dark streets alone, walking away.



"I need to go back."

"Okay.

**Can you watch me
for a while?"**

**from a conversation between
Sophia and her father.**

SOPHIA

Director's Statement

by: Zhenzhen Ma

Not satisfied to only tell a story.

"SOPHIA" originated from a personal experience with my dad when I was 12 years old. For me, the most embarrassing and scariest thing for a film director/writer is to reveal him/herself in the story and then for their family members and friends to find out. Thus, it was important for me to face this fear and to not merely imitate reality but to go beyond it. Although my mom sent me to spend a day with my divorced depressed dad when I was 12, all of the other plots in the short film are figments of my imagination. However, the emotion rings true throughout, which for me is most important.

Ingmar Bergman said, "I write scripts to serve as skeletons awaiting the flesh and sinew of images." If you read my script, it's so concise that you can't imagine how rich it will be when you see the short film. This way of bringing flesh to the skeleton is what I insisted upon when directing "SOPHIA".

Embrace changes and uncertainties.

If I completely insisted on my original thought of "SOPHIA", it would look different from what it is now. Changes and uncertainties happened continuously during writing the script, location scouting, rehearsals with actors and actresses, shooting, and even editing. For instance, I was location scouting in a Jewish family wooden house where their book room reminds me of my dad's old book room. I instantly fell in love with their old wooden bookshelf, everything was perfect, right until the iron son returned right before shooting and put a king sized bed right in the middle of the book room. Everything had to be changed. We couldn't use that room. The production designer and art director then suggested to move the scene to the living room by redecorating the shelf and everything in the room. I was initially against the idea, but I just waited and allowed the living room to transform and become the perfect location for the main scene. I saw how magic came through during the changes through the whole production. I realized the power of editing so much more. After re-editing the ending scene, the emotion became strong and smooth like classical music.

The original ending is Sophia goes back to her dad's home and places all of the scattered books back onto the bookshelf with her dad. I even locked the ending scene in the story before I wrote the script, I was so sure about it. Guess what? It changed during the editing. Instead of Sophia returning, I decided to just let Sophia walk away alone into the dark street without showing where she goes. This seems a wiser choice as an ending. Uncertainty is always intriguing.



SOPHIA

Cast and Crew

Jamie Walsh
as Sophia

Oscar Periera
as Father

Fiona Green
as Mother



Zhenzhen Ma
Director and Screenwriter

After receiving numerous awards for her short films while in the US, Zhenzhen Ma moved to documentary directing and editing in Beijing for the predominant state television broadcaster, China Central Television (CCTV). Ma is currently working on “Summer Variations,” her first feature film debut about love and philosophy. Being an avid pursuer of life, history, and connecting with others, she continues to make documentaries every month about rural Chinese traditional culture.

Carlos de Varona
Director of Photography

Carlos de Varona has been active in the film industry for over 12 years, and worked in over 30 countries across the globe. He is the owner of Chroma House, a Miami video production company and is most known for his camera work on Thor, Not Easily Broken, and Valkyrie.



Iris Saunders
Producer

Iris Stryx Saunders is an award winning producer, actress and writer, known for Changing Minds (2019), Bats & Jokes (2017) and The Pirate Gypsies (2015). She has written over 30 screenplays and over 50 songs with her team, consisting of Grammy Award winners, at the Hit Factory Criteria in Miami, FL. Her work in music and film production has amassed her over 2 million views on her YouTube channel and over 100,000 followers on Instagram (see Iris Stryx). As a philanthropist, Iris is a patron of the Film Society of Lincoln Center and a direct sponsor for several kids in Uganda, providing them with school supplies and tuition. Iris is a fervent believer that nothing is impossible, but nothing great comes without sacrifice.



BRYAN SILLS
ALONZO JACKSON
Gaffer and Grip
COSME LICCARDO
Sound Editing
CHRIS RYAN
Music Composer
YASSEL QUIJANO
Color Correction

DANIEL LEE TURNER
DIEGO SALDANA-ROJAS
Sound
EDDY BERMUDEZ LEE
Script Proofreader
BARBARA ATTWELL
Transportation and Slate
SUKI VAN LANH
Casting Director

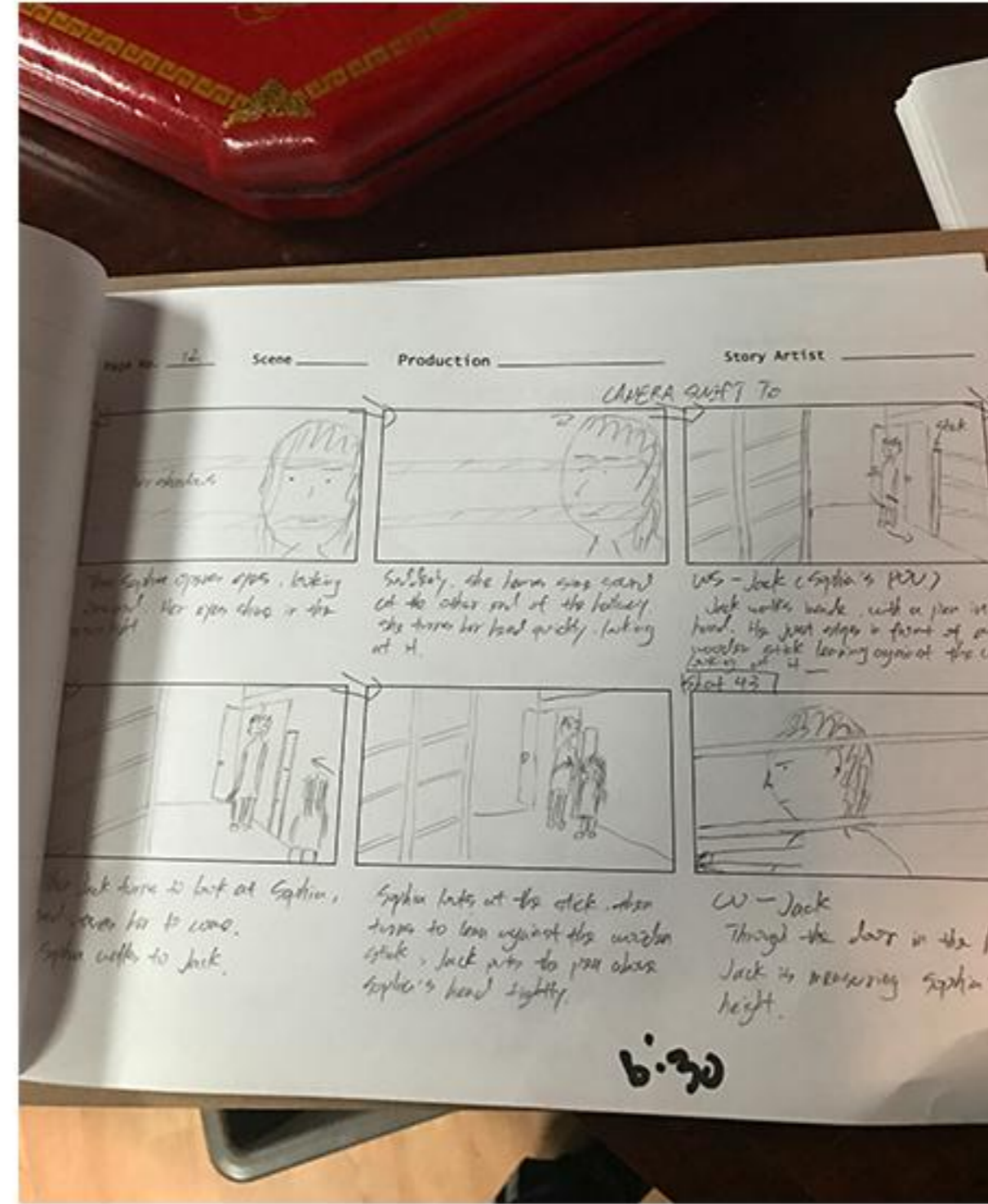
EBONI BROWN
Makeup and PA
DANIELE GABRIEL
Production Designer
CHANTAL GABRIEL
Art Director

Stills

SOPHIA



FROM THE MOVIE



FROM THE SET



SOPHIA

Technical Specifications

TOTAL RUN TIME

18 mins

ASPECT RATIO

2.39:1
4096x1716

SHOT ON

RED EPIC 4K

PRODUCTION

USA

EXHIBITION FORMAT

4K DCI Scope
Linear PCM

LANGUAGE

English

Contact

DIRECTOR

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PRODUCER

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WATERBEAR
— F I L M S —

GONELLA  PRODUCTIONS

designed by V. Bilenjki / bilenjki.com