



THE PHOENIX

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Overview

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FACEBOOK [facebook.com/thephoenixshort](https://www.facebook.com/thephoenixshort)

IMDB [imdb.com/title/tt14202352/](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14202352/)

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SPECS

GENRE	Drama
DATE OF COMPLETION	October 15, 2021
ANTICIPATED RATING	G
RUNTIME	15 minutes
ASPECT RATIO	1.85:1
SHOOTING FORMAT	Digital
AUDIO FORMAT	Stereo
FRAME RATE	23.97 fps
LANGUAGE:	English

The Story

LOGLINE

After successfully acquiring superpowers, a young girl attempts to fix her parents' marriage.

SYNOPSIS

Inside a working class home in 90's America, eight year old Charlie wants nothing more than to be a superhero. Her overworked parents are drifting apart, and their arguments just keep getting worse. Charlie's only escape is her dream of being super. Eventually, the toxicity around the house boils over, and Charlie watches as her mother throws a frying pan at her father. BAM! Charlie freezes time, her arms outstretched in a gesture of protest. She has finally unlocked her super power! Instinctively, Charlie discovers that she can not only stop time, but turn it back. Immediately, Charlie turns back time just before her parents' most recent fight and tries to avert it through her innocent, eight year old diplomacy.

What unfolds is Charlie's growth to realizing that her powers may not be the solution to solving the problems of her broken home, but rather the answer to finding her strength to rise above hardship that lies within herself.



Director's Statement

When I started writing this story, it wasn't meant to be autobiographical. Yet my subconscious mind had a story to tell, and writing this story was hugely therapeutic.

The protagonist's story mirrors my own upbringing closely. My parents constantly screamed at each other, at me, and fights would often escalate into threats or thrown objects. The only friends and role models I had were in books and movies, and I was terribly lonely. Like Charlie, I desperately wanted superpowers—I wanted to save the world! I wanted to save my parents! I never wanted anyone to feel the same way as I did.

I never got 'superpowers,' but continued to try and help my parents, always to no avail. As soon as I helped my dad clean the house and throw away the things he'd hoarded, it would revert back to disaster within weeks. No matter how many ways I helped my mom, or how many times she would apologize for her actions, she would always revert to calling me a useless bitch. It wasn't until after college, after a series of particularly bad incidents, that I finally realized that no matter what I did, I could not save them. I could not save them, because their actions were never my fault. And thus, the heart of "The Phoenix" was born.

Though I no longer wish for a physics-bending magical transformation, I do still believe I have the power to create mass positive change. My superpower is my voice. My superpower is my drive, determination, and hard work to create stories that inspire and uplift.



Interview with the Director

This is a story driven by complex female characters that is written, produced and directed by women – was that a conscious decision?

While I didn't consciously set out to write a specifically female-driven story, I wrote what I knew and observed, and all the women I know are complex and resilient. I am lucky enough to be surrounded by strong and powerful kickass women on my crew: Melody Carey (producer), Danielle Diaz (editor and creative producer), Avery Chung Melino (producer of marketing and distribution), and many more. On top of being a woman-driven project, the film is about a biracial family modelled after my own, and I appreciate the opportunity to work with a 60% BIPOC crew. Their different perspectives and upbringings brought a new layer of depth to the project.

What's the significance of the film taking place in the 1990s?

I grew up in the nineties, and I wanted this story to be as authentic as possible, especially since the story closely mirrors my own. The art department did an incredible job sourcing authentic nineties props, including a television that looks greatly similar to the set I had growing up. It was incredible working with production designer Cheyenne Milne, who made a huge effort of getting into my head and vision—it was magical watching him and his team age the property eight years, from 1998 to 2006, for the time jump.

Tell us about Charlie and her evolution over the years.

When the film opens, Charlie is brimming with life, ready to take over the world. After the story jumps forward to her teen years, the abuse has not stopped, and the house is in ruin and overrun with clutter. Though we don't show Charlie's life during the eight years interim, I like to think that she put her natural determination into other avenues and excelled in the things she could impact. That way, when she finally comes to her breaking point with her parents, there's hope that she is on her way to a better life.

What's the significance of the phoenix motif in the film?

The phoenix is an immortal bird that gains new life through rebirth from the ashes of its predecessor. Just as the film's animated Blue Phoenix superhero is trapped in the cage,

Charlie is trapped in her household. The Blue Phoenix has saved so many other people and because of this choice, she puts herself in a situation that she can't save herself. Charlie realizes she is on the same path, but does not want to end up like the Blue Phoenix—alone and destroyed. So, she starts her transformation into her destiny as a powerful and resilient woman.

What was it like working with the cast?

I feel so blessed to have found such an amazing cast (shout out to my casting directors, who sifted through hundreds and hundreds of applications!). Not only did they bring top-notch performances that made me feel like a kid again, they're all incredibly easy to work with and genuinely *good* people. Liza Stephanian, who plays the mom, gave me so many flashbacks of the rage I've encountered with my own mother, and Mike Ward, who plays the dad, brought such incredible depth to a character close to my heart. Both young and teenage Charlies blew me out of the water from the start, and they looked uncannily similar— their casting was truly meant to be. Audrina Miranda, who plays young Charlie, is mature and intelligent beyond her years—she asked me questions like an adult that showed she truly thought about the meaning behind each of her lines. She has the perfect blend of childlike quirkiness paired with an impressive capacity for expressing serious emotions. Danielle Mercado, who played Teenage Charlie, brought professionalism and resilience to another level. Her scene required emotions to be brought to a peak over and over and over again. She could cry on command and did so several times throughout the day. I am endlessly impressed by her professionalism and emotional capacity.

What should audiences take away from this story?

I hope that audiences can leave this story with a sense of hopeful strength. I'd love to encourage viewers to examine past guilt and let go of things that are out of their control, or inspire people who are currently in bad situations to gather the strength to leave. I hope that people feel compassion for others, because you never know what someone is going through, what could be going on behind closed doors. I hope that people recognize the power they have within, whether or not it's qualified as 'super,' and work with that power to make the world a better place.

CAST & CREW

The Minds Behind “The Phoenix”



About the Director

Regina Pigsley is a Bay Area-born, Los Angeles-based writer and director. She holds a degree in film at UC Berkeley, where she was the first female and BIPOC president of the Berkeley chapter of Delta Kappa Alpha, the professional cinema fraternity, leading the fraternity to win five national awards. She specializes in narrative filmmaking and music videos, and has experience with a diverse array of genres, from action to musicals to science fiction.

Regina's film credits include *13 Reasons Why* (2019), *Clickbait* (2020), and *You Can't Say No* (2018), and she has worked on commercial projects for brands such as Verizon, Toyota, Salesforce, Shutterfly, and more. She ran the marketing campaign for the 2019 documentary *The Distant Barking of Dogs*, which became one of fifteen films shortlisted for the Oscars, and her short film "Face Value" (2020) was recognized with three festival awards, including Best Director at the Sweden Short Film Awards.

Regina hopes "The Phoenix" will be an inspiration to young women to find and embrace their own individual superpowers, and use them to fight their way to a better life.



About the Producers

JACK BERKENFIELD, Producer

Jack Berkenfield was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, and grew up with a passion for film and television. He studied broadcasting at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and now works as a corporate video editor and post producer for Bay Area clients including Salesforce, Intel, and Apple. As a post-production specialist and sci-fi buff, Jack is thrilled about the technical challenges presented by the superpowers on display in “The Phoenix.”



MELODY CAREY, Producer

Melody Carey is a Chicagoland-born, San Francisco-based producer and filmmaker. She has worked as a writer, director, producer, assistant director, and editor for award-winning short films and TV. Currently, she works as a Production Coordinator to produce virtual events for clients such as ESPN, Cartier, Accenture, Deloitte, and the Apollo Theater. Passionate about film as a vehicle for positive impact and change, she is excited to help bring the story of “The Phoenix” to life in order to help others find their inner strength.



AVERY CHUNG-MELINO, Producer of Marketing & Distribution

Avery Chung-Melino is a digital marketer by day and is a producer and production designer by night. Her passion for visual and written storytelling led her to filmmaking, where she enjoys working on projects that explore womanhood and cultural identity in America. She was president of GiANT Filmmakers, UC Berkeley’s longest-running film club, and is an alumna of Delta Kappa Alpha.



About the Crew

CARLOS GONZALEZ, Cinematographer

Carlos Gonzalez is a film creative with a passion for live action cinema. He developed an eye for visual meaning through early involvement in the grip & electric department, and is currently focused on pursuing cinematography and directing opportunities to add to his understanding of cinematic creation as well as to his artistic expression. Carlos brings a wide range of experience to “The Phoenix,” from commercial work to music videos to short films.



DANIELLE DIAZ, Editor & Creative Producer

Danielle Diaz is a Los Angeles-based filmmaker and editor. A former on-set editor for tech companies such as Salesforce and Intel, she now works for Open Road as a film trailer assistant editor. Danielle worked on the first XR stage to be used for commercial work. She holds a degree in psychology from UC Berkeley, which informs her emotion-driven editing, and was the showrunner of Berkeley’s cinema fraternity for two years. Danielle has a wide breadth of work under her belt, having edited everything from dramas, horror films, action films, to documentaries and music videos.



CHEYENNE MILNE, Production Designer

Cheyenne Milne is a San Francisco native and Bay Area based filmmaker. Cheyenne has over two decades of experience as a Decorator, Prop Master, and On Set Dresser across multiple industry platforms. Cheyenne’s passion is embracing the visual creative challenge of cinematic storytelling through design and decor. Some of Cheyenne’s most recent projects include *The Matrix Resurrections* (2021), *The Sky is Everywhere* (2021), and *Nash Bridges* (2021).



The Cast



AUDRINA MIRANDA
Charlie



MICHAEL J. WARD
Jeff/Dad



LIZA STEPHANIAN
Meg/Mom



DANIELLE MERCADO
Teenage Charlie

VOICE ARTISTS

ANNA SHARPE
The Blue Phoenix, V.O.

JANET PETERSON
The Villain, V.O.

Credits

Director
REGINA PIGSLEY

Producers
JACK BERKENFIELD
MELODY CAREY

Cinematographer
CARLOS GONZALEZ

Editor & Creative Producer
DANIELLE DIAZ

Producer of Marketing and
Distribution
AVERY CHUNG-MELINO

Production Designer
CHEYENNE MILNE

Composer
JAN WILLEM DE WITH

Casting Directors
JOSH KO
KARINA RODEGEB

Gaffer
CURTIS YAP

Key Grip
**MARCUS CHAMPION-
RAINES**

Grip
SAMUEL GOLDHABER

First Assistant Camera
TOMMY
SCHNECKENBERGER

Camera Operator
FREDDIE WHITMAN

Art Director
AVERY CHUNG-MELINO

Set Decorator
JENNIFER TERRELL

Hair and Makeup
TEJAE HARDY

Costume Designer
BRIANA LISETTE

Costumer and Makeup
Assistant
DOMINIQUE RENTERIA

Set Buyers
OLIVIA KANZ
EMILY OKUN

Wardrobe Assistant
SHAWNTEL TILOS

Assistant Director
MELODY CAREY
SABRINA MOTA

Sound Designer & Boom
Operator
DEVON LUI

Sound Mixer
HUGH MACALISTER

On Set Photographer
DOMINIC BOWKER

Script Supervisor
VASAN ARUL
MELISSA MARQUEZ

Covid Compliance Officer
ADITYA BARADWAJ

Character Designer
VINOD KRISHNAN

Compositing Artist
ZORAN PETROVIC

Animator
RISTO TOPALOSKI

Animation Storyboard
Revisionist
JOSHUA ROBERTS

Colorist / Visual Effects
Artist
SAM SLADE

Assistant Editor / Post-
Production Supervisor
JACK BERKENFIELD

Visual Effects Supervisor
DANIELLE DIAZ

Digital Imaging Technician
JACK BERKENFIELD

Storyboard Artist
DANIELLE DIAZ

Production Assistant
JON GARMAN

Caterer
DANTE SIMONCHINI

Special Thanks

WE WANT TO THANK

Imelda Brann
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Julie Ku
Sarah Winther Lagersted
John Micheletos
David Milne
Laurie Noll
Ernie Simoncini
The FX Factory
Golden Gate Props
From The Heart Productions
The Town of Arnold, California

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Devin Dehaven
Cheyenne Milne
Mathis Agnew
Catherine Richey
Anonymous Phoenix

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

Matthew Z. Allen
Annelise Bauer
Grant Erdoes
Chloe Feng
Therese 'Tag' Goulet
Suzanne Hudson
Tripp Hudson
Emmy Berning Weisner



PHOTOS

Production Stills & Behind the Scenes



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