

GREENWICH

E N T E R T A I N M E N T

Presents



Runtime: 91 min

In Theaters and on Amazon and Apple TV July 1.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PR CONTACTS

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LOGLINE

Students at a revered prep school face uncertain futures after an explosive New York Times exposé questions the school's legitimacy.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

T.M. Landry, an unconventional prep school in Louisiana, receives national attention for sending its graduates to elite universities. When an explosive New York Times exposé rocks the school, students face uncertain futures and must decide for themselves what they are willing to do to be accepted.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Four high school seniors in rural Louisiana attend T.M. Landry, an unconventional K-12 school housed in a sparse warehouse made famous for sending its graduates to elite universities like Harvard, Yale, and Stanford. The students aim to meet the intense expectations of Mike Landry, the imposing founder of the school who charts a relentless course towards their college dreams. When the *New York Times* publishes an expose on Landry's controversial methods, the school buckles under the scrutiny. Each senior is left to contend with uncomfortable truths about their school and the college admissions system, and decide for themselves what they are willing to do to be accepted.

Accepted offers a unique and intriguing look at the world of Ivy League college admissions and the true cost of getting that first foothold into elite American society. In his first documentary feature, director Dan Chen grounds a broader look at the inequities in the American education system with unbelievable access to T.M. Landry and the deeply personal stories of four dynamic students looking to overcome countless obstacles to achieve their dreams.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

By Dan Chen

When I heard about T.M. Landry in early 2018, what struck me was how the school flouted expectations. The students were mostly Black, the school was a warehouse in rural Louisiana, and the seniors had just been accepted into Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and other prestigious universities. The joy in those viral acceptance videos was visceral, real, and communal.

I'm Chinese American. I don't share the experience of being Black in America. But I know what it feels like to be underestimated by society, to resist the stereotypes put upon you, and to work for an acceptance that's elusive. If the students and teachers at T.M. Landry had discovered a way to thrive despite the inequity in America's education system, that would be a story worth sharing. My producers and I embarked on our first trip to the school in March 2018, and after we met the students of the upcoming Class of 2019, we decided to help tell the story of their senior year, as they strived for their own college acceptances.

The year did not go how anyone expected. Instead of coming upon an antidote for inequity, we were confronted with challenging questions. In an unjust society, what is the cost of success? For under resourced communities, what opportunities are available for self-determination? For a young person coming of age, how do you discover and accept yourself?

I wanted to capture the feeling of being a student attending the school, opting to film mostly handheld, as if the camera belonged to one of the students in the Class of 2019. Over the course of the year we followed almost ten students and interviewed dozens of members of the community. I'm thankful for their participation, especially when the situation at the school became fraught and complicated. Everything we learned informed the ethos of the film as it took shape in the editing room, where we focused the story through the perspective of four students, and discovered that all of the nuance and complexity we aimed to express could be found in their lived experiences.

I hope this film helps viewers question the comfortable lies we tell ourselves about our society. And I hope that audiences will find inspiration in a new generation of students that see the world with startling clarity.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Dan Chen - Director, Producer, Cinematographer

Dan is a Chinese American filmmaker in Los Angeles. He grew up in Manhattan, Kansas and graduated from the USC School of Cinematic Arts, focusing on directing and cinematography. His work has been featured at numerous festivals including Tribeca Festival and Slamdance Film Festival, as well as online at Vimeo Staff Picks, Short of the Week, The Verge, and NBC Asian America. He is interested in stories about outsiders, fallibility, and coming of age.

Jason Y. Lee - Producer, Additional Photography

Jason Y. Lee is the founder of Jubilee Media, a media startup that provokes a new culture of empathy. Known for viral series "Middle Ground," "Spectrum," and "Odd Man Out," Jubilee has developed an audience of 7M+ subscribers and garnered 2B+ views. Prior to founding Jubilee, Jason was a consultant at Bain & Company and worked on the 2007 Obama Campaign. Jason is a proud Korean-American raised in Overland Park, Kansas and graduated with honors from the University of Pennsylvania - The Wharton School. Jason directed and produced his first documentary "Save My Seoul" about sex-trafficking in Korea which premiered at LAAPFF in 2018.

Jesse Einstein - Producer, Additional Photography

Jesse Einstein is a filmmaker and actor based in Los Angeles. Jesse has produced, directed, written, and acted in projects with partners such as Concordia Studio, Boardwalk Pictures, Jubilee Media, Audible, Radical Productions, Sky TV, ABC, Comedy Central, Hulu, and FX. Jesse has produced two feature documentaries: The Disunited States of America, a verité character study of regular people against the backdrop of the 2016 Election, and Accepted, which The Hollywood Reporter called "...brilliant documentary... a considered and affecting coming-of-age story... Essential viewing."

As an actor, Jesse has appeared in movies directed by Ari Aster and Maggie Kiley and had roles on TV shows like Pam & Tommy, Mixed-ish, The League, Kroll Show, and Lopez. He recently directed, produced, and co-wrote Operation Firewall, a 9-episode podcast for Audible Originals about a Secret Service agent and a hacker-turned-informant who led a groundbreaking cybercrime investigation in the early 2000s.

He currently lives in LA with his wife and two cats and is interested in exploring stories at the intersection of assimilation and individuality.

Mark Monroe – Producer

Mark Monroe is an award-winning documentary writer, director and producer, and co-founder of Diamond Docs. A two-time WGA award winner and BAFTA nominee, his film credits include writing the Academy Award winners, THE COVE and ICARUS, as well as the Grammy winning THE BEATLES: EIGHT DAYS A WEEK. Recent collaborations include THE BEE GEES: HOW CAN YOU MEND A BROKEN HEART with Frank Marshall, PAVAROTTI with Ron Howard, BEFORE THE FLOOD with Leonardo

DiCaprio, THE DISSIDENT with Bryan Fogel, and TALES FROM THE TOUR BUS, an animated music series with Mike Judge. A journalism graduate from the University of Oklahoma, Mark began his career as a news writer for CNN. He has had at least one film premiere at the Sundance Film Festival each of the past 12 years. Other theatrical credits include: Hell On Earth: The fall of Syria and the rise of ISIS (Tribeca 2017, National Geographic); Under the Gun (Sundance 2016, Epix); Hooligan Sparrow (Sundance 2016); Racing Extinction (Sundance 2015, Discovery); Fed Up (Sundance 2014); Sonic Highways (HBO 2014); Drunk, Stoned, Brilliant, Dead: The Story of the National Lampoon (Sundance 2014, Showtime); Mission Blue (Berlin 2014, Netflix); The Summit (Winner, Best Editing Sundance 2013); Who is Dayani Cristal? (Winner, Best Cinematography, Sundance 2013); Sound City(Sundance 2013); The Tillman Story; Chasing Ice (Winner, Best Cinematography Sundance 2012); Stolen Seas; Last Play at Shea; Once in a Lifetime: The Extraordinary Story of the New York Cosmos(W.G.A. nomination "Best Documentary Script", 2007); Amazing Journey: The Story of The Who; and Morning Light (Disney Pictures).

Davis Guggenheim - Executive Producers

Davis Guggenheim is a critically acclaimed, Academy Award-winning director and producer. His work includes WAITING FOR SUPERMAN, IT MIGHT GET LOUD, and HE NAMED ME MALALA. His film, AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH, featuring former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, won the Oscar for Best Documentary in 2007. Davis directed multiple films for President Obama, including convention films in 2008, 2012 and 2016. Davis previously worked in television as a director and producer of the Emmy Award-winning HBO series DEADWOOD. His television directing credits also include episodes of THE SHIELD, ALIAS, 24, NYPDBLUE, and ER.

In 2017, Davis founded Concordia Studio based in Venice, CA. He currently serves as Founder and Chief Creative Officer of Nonfiction.

Jonathan Silberberg - Executive Producers

Jonathan Silberberg is a creative producer, showrunner, and executive producer with over twenty years of experience producing nonfiction films and series. He has worked on feature films and series for companies including RadicalMedia, HBO, Netflix, Showtime, Imagine Entertainment, Participant Media, Sundance Channel, A&E, and Discovery. His credits include Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky's Oscar and Emmy nominated feature film PARADISE LOST 3: PURGATORY for HBO, National Geographic's hybrid series MARS, in collaboration with Ron Howard and Brian Grazer's Imagine Entertainment and RadicalMedia, Nat Geo's BREAKTHROUGH, and Sundance Channel's ICONOCLASTS. He began his career at the storied documentary company Maysles Films and worked for many years with RadicalMedia.

Jonathan currently serves as Executive Vice President of Nonfiction at Concordia Studio.

Nicole Stott - Executive Producers

Prior to joining Concordia Studio, Nicole was Head of Documentary at multiple BAFTA, Emmy and triple Academy Award winning Passion Pictures, one of the most prolific independent producers of theatrical feature documentaries in the international marketplace, with a reputation for critical and commercial success. Working alongside M.D. and veteran producer John Battsek for over thirteen years, Nicole creatively helmed the company's slate and produced some of the most acclaimed nonfiction titles of recent years. Credits include: Academy Award and BAFTA winner SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN, Prime Time Emmy winning MANHUNT, Academy Award nominated RESTREPO, BAFTA Outstanding Debut Winner THE IMPOSTER, Netflix Original three-part series FIVE CAME BACK, HBO's critically acclaimed THE FINAL YEAR, and Peabody Award winning LISTEN TO ME MARLON. More recently Nicole served as Executive Producer on Netflix three-part series INSIDE BILL'S BRAIN; an anthology of five documentary films for the NYTimes OpDocs, titled FROM HERE TO HOME (including Laura Nix's 2020 Academy nominated WALK RUN CHA CHA). Nicole also Executive Produced four new feature documentary films premiered in US Competition at Sundance 2020: TIME (directed by Sundance 2020 US Documentary Best Director Garrett Bradley); Ramona Diaz's A THOUSAND CUTS; BLOODY NOSE DIRTY POCKETS directed by Bill Ross & Turner Ross, and Sundance 2020 Grand Jury Prize winning BOYS STATE (Amanda McBaine/Jesse Moss).

Nicole currently serves as Executive Vice President of Nonfiction at Concordia Studio.

Joshua Altman - Co-Producer, Editor

Joshua Altman is an award-winning documentary film editor for over a decade, who has crafted a multitude of critically acclaimed films, and several Sundance award winners, including two Grand Jury Prize winners, and the Academy Award-and Emmy-nominated documentary MINDING THE GAP. His other credits include his directorial debut ALL THESE SONS, as well as THE TILLMAN STORY, THE FINAL YEAR, WE LIVE IN PUBLIC, and the Netflix series PANDEMIC, on which Joshua served as co-creator and executive producer. He is currently producing a feature documentary for 30West.

Arielle Zakowski – Editor

Arielle Zakowski is a film, TV, and commercial editor who avoids the harsh LA weather by spending her days holed up in edit bays. She was named a Rising Star in advertising by Shots Creative and has cut commercials for such clients as Apple, Nike, Subaru, and Gucci. Her most recent TV work includes episodes of Netflix's Chef's Table, Making A Murderer, and Trial by Media. She is thrilled that her first two feature documentaries - Dan Chen's Accepted and David Gelb's Wolfgang - are both premiering at Tribeca 2021. Arielle is currently deep in the throes of editing Sony's upcoming screen-life film Searching 2.

Jean Rheem – Editor

Jean Rheem is a filmmaker from South Korea and North Carolina. She is a Karen Schmeer Film Editing Fellow, and her documentary work has been supported by the Ford Foundation, Sundance Institute, and IFP. She is passionate about uplifting voices that are underrepresented in the mainstream media.

Daphne Qin Wu – Cinematographer

DAPHNE QIN WU is an award-winning Chinese American cinematographer based in Los Angeles, and a 2011 graduate of USC's School of Cinematic Arts. She has fourteen narrative features under her belt, as well as a full repertoire of shorts, commercials, music videos and fashion films shot in the U.S. and abroad.

She is currently a mentee in the ASC Vision Mentorship program under Erik Messerschmidt, and her recent features include GRASSHOPPERS (2021) dir. Brad Bischoff and SOUND OF VIOLENCE (2021) dir. Alex Noyer (SXSW 2021).

Angelique Molina - Associate Producer, Additional Photography

Angelique Molina is a Los Angeles-based director and producer. Her feature film directorial debut, I'm Fine (Thanks for Asking) premiered at SXSW 2021 and won the audience award at the 2021 Florida Film Festival. Her short documentary, There Goes The Neighborhood, premiered at Los Angeles Film Festival and was awarded Best Documentary Short at USC's First Look Film Festival. She served as the cinematographer for Amelia's Closet, a short film that won the HBO Best Short Award at the American Black Film Festival and was a finalist at the 43rd Student Academy Awards.

Nathan Matthew David - Original Music

Filipino-American composer Nathan Matthew David has composed for some of the most exciting projects of the last couple years. Currently, he is the composer for Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson's hit show 'Young Rock' on NBC. His synthesis work can be heard on Christopher Nolan's 'Tenet' and he composed additional music for the most recent season of 'The Mandalorian'. In 2020, he won both an ASCAP and Peabody award for his work on the critically acclaimed 'Surviving R. Kelly' docu-series and is Emmy-nominated for the HBO documentary 'Under The Grapefruit Tree'.

Angela Asistio - Music Supervisor

Angela Asistio is a music supervisor and music consultant working in film, television, commercials, and anything and everything music. She is a member of the Guild of Music Supervisors and The Recording Academy. Her work can be found at www.angelaasistio.com.

ABOUT THE SUBJECTS

Alicia Simon

An earnest and ambitious young student who has both *Twilight* and *The Communist Manifesto* on her bookshelf. She struggled with feelings of alienation when she attended prestigious, mostly white private schools. At T.M. Landry, Alicia finds social acceptance, but she is beset by anxiety and self-doubt as Mike Landry pushes Alicia and her classmates to treat college admissions as a do-or-die proposition.



Adia Sabatier

A vivacious and deeply empathetic student with an artistic side. After a family tragedy derails her academic future, Adia rediscovers her passion and drive when she attends T.M. Landry, connecting with a new group of friends and following the tough love teachings of Mike Landry.



Isaac Smith

A soft-spoken optimist. Growing up, Isaac never imagined leaving small town Lafayette or doing anything outside of working in the oil fields, as his father and grandfather did before him. But after his older brother Raymond attends T.M. Landry and gets accepted into New York University, Isaac feels inspired to transfer to T.M. Landry in search of bigger dreams.

**Cathy Bui**

A mature young woman with a strong sense of justice. Cathy is the daughter of Vietnamese immigrants and helps her widowed mom take care of her two disabled sisters. Cathy attends T.M. Landry for the chance to attend an elite university and lift her family out of poverty. Although Cathy can be shy around strangers, among friends she is blunt, candid, and willing to speak uncomfortable truths.

**James Dennis**

A confident and prodigious student, James is one of the graduates from the Class of 2018 and was one of the students who went viral in T.M. Landry's acceptance videos. He was accepted into and currently attends Yale University.

CREDITS

Directed by
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