



Pit Stop

A YEN TAN FILM

80 minutes / HD / Color / USA / 2.35:1 / 5.1 Surround (English & Spanish)

PUBLICITY

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TAGLINE

Two men. A small town. A love that isn't quite out of reach.

SYNOPSIS

Pit Stop takes a subtle and eloquent approach in telling the parallel stories of two gay men in a small Texas town. There's Gabe: a contractor who's getting over an ill-fated affair with a married man and finds solace in the relationship he still harbors with his ex-wife, Shannon, and their daughter, Cindy; and there's Ernesto: a Hispanic lumber yard worker in the midst of splitting up with his live-in boyfriend, Luis, as he receives news from the hospital that his former love, Martin, is in a coma. At the end, when Gabe and Ernesto meet for a one-nighter—having endured all the struggles and heartbreaks and wondering if they'll ever find love again—they face the possibility that they might just be meant for each other.

FROM SUNDANCE FILM GUIDE: Recovering from an ill-fated affair with a married man, Gabe finds solace in the relationship he maintains with his ex-wife and daughter. On the other side of town, Ernesto evades life at home with his current live-in ex-boyfriend by spending much of his spare time in the hospital with an ailing past love. Impervious to the monotony of their blue-collar world, they maintain an unwavering yearning for romance. Far from the gay centers of the world, director Yen Tan explores the complex and oft-forgotten lives of gay men in small-town America. The understated, contemplative nature of Ernesto and Gabe's story is told from the perspective of an observer, allowing us—even if just for a moment—to understand what it means to be an outsider. The emotional isolation the two men have grown accustomed to is captured in a subtle, optimistic, poetic fashion while avoiding melodrama. In a refreshingly quiet film, Tan's protagonists never try to run away from their relatively hollow surroundings, but opt to fill life's deepest voids with their tenacious confidence. – TOBY BROOKS

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a gay Asian-American filmmaker, I always desire to see a broader and more complex range of LGBT characters in cinema. I'm also drawn to stories that delve into the heart of underrepresented communities. *Pit Stop* is a character-driven drama that revolves around the lives of two gay characters in a red state small town. In today's climate where there's so much discourse over gay rights and marriage equality, *Pit Stop* is my endeavor in diverting that debate into something less political but more emotionally grounded: the meaning of love, the meaning of family, and the meaning of connection. The playwright Adam Bock once said, "In being specific in my work, that's how universality happens. Everybody is lonely, everybody is afraid. As artists, as we get more specific, the universe appears." This is precisely what I seek to achieve with *Pit Stop*. – YEN TAN

Q&A WITH YEN TAN

How did the story come to you?

The idea for *Pit Stop* came about in 2002 when I was commuting between Dallas and Houston (where my editor was based) for the post-production of my first film, *Happy Birthday*. I made "pit stops" for gas and coffee in the small towns in between the cities, and I started to think about what it'd be like to live there as a gay man. My curiosity led to some research online, and I corresponded with several gays and lesbians who live in small towns. They were people who chose to be in places that may not be accepting of their lifestyles. Yet, they managed to blend in seamlessly with the rest of their community, holding jobs as conventional as everyone else's. They were mechanics, teachers, construction workers, business owners, or law enforcement officers. Nevertheless, these small towners are not as "out" as the average gay urbanite. Being gay is part of their identity, but it's not necessarily something they'd talk about openly. A few of their close confidants may know, but for the most part, DADT ("Don't Ask, Don't-Tell") is the prevailing attitude. This all brought back another distant memory I had in college. I was studying at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa and used to frequent a gay bar called The Garden. One cold winter night, I met Larry, a farmer who lived near Ames. Since his place was too far away and I had a roommate in my dorm, we ended up spending the night in his truck at a secluded residential area. He was closeted and had an ex-wife who doesn't know he's gay, and they had a kid who was about to attend elementary school. This provided a foundation for me to work off from, and I started to

write the script with Larry's story as a starting point. Little did I know I was gonna be working on the script for close to ten years, and eventually co-wrote it with David Lowery.

When did you begin production? How long did it take?

We shot the film in Texas (Austin, Bastrop, Dripping Springs, Lockhart) in the summer of 2012. Production took about a month.

Did you face any difficulties in making the film?

It took so long to get the script off the ground, and it was nearly impossible to find financing for the film. I must have shelved the project more than a dozen times. Being accepted by the Outfest Screenwriting Lab in 2009 was certainly a confidence boost, and once we received a production grant from Austin Film Society in 2011, that very quickly led to more grants (i.e. Vilcek Foundation) and funding opportunities. Casting was occasionally frustrating. There were times where I wondered if I was making the film twenty years ago, where actors would balk at the gay content and gave ridiculous reasons to back out of auditions. There was a nice counterbalance: actors who didn't care and who responded to the story and characters were incredibly passionate. Production went fairly smoothly, self-inflicted mental torture aside.

What do you want the audience to take from the film?

I wasn't interested in making anything sensational or had a "message." My intent with *Pit Stop* is to always focus on the characters' humanity and their way of life. My hope is that the integrity of this approach enables the audience to fully empathize with their emotional journeys and their plights in finding, losing, and rediscovering love.

CREDITS

Gabe – Bill Heck

Ernesto – Marcus DeAnda

Shannon – Amy Seimetz

Winston – John Merriman

Luis – Alfredo Maduro

Les – Corby Sullivan

Cindy – Bailey Bass

Linda – Heather Kafka

Chase – Richard C. Jones

Russ – Jonny Mars

Yesenia Garcia – Hilda

DIRECTED BY Yen Tan

WRITTEN BY Yen Tan, David Lowery

PRODUCED BY Kelly Williams, Jonathan Duffy, James M. Johnston, Eric Steele

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS Bala Shagrithaya, Vilcek Foundation

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS Emily Ting, Lawrence S. Dickerson, Whurley

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY HutCH

EDITED BY Don Swaynos

PRODUCTION DESIGNER Scott Colquitt

MUSIC BY Curtis Glenn Heath

SOUND DESIGNER Eric Friend

CASTING Katie Richter

CAST

Bill Heck (Gabe) is currently performing in the 2012 Pulitzer Prize winning play *Water by the Spoonful* in New York City. He was most recently seen on *Elementary*, opposite Lucy Liu, and in *Person of Interest* for CBS, in addition to a recurring role on *Pan Am* for ABC. Heck starred as “Joe Pitt” in Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America* revival in NYC, and played beside Al Pacino in *The Merchant of Venice* for The Public Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park. Prior to the Park, Bill was the lead in Horton Foote’s *Orphans’ Home Cycle* for the Signature Theatre (Theatre World Award, Clarence Derwent Award, Outer Critics Circle nom, Drama Desk nom). His Outer Critics and Drama Desk nominations garnered him notable attention as he was the solitary new-comer slotted alongside Denzel Washington, Liev Schrieber, Jude Law and Christopher Walken. Bill has additional television, film, and theatre credits. Training: BFA, University of Evansville; MFA, NYU Grad Acting.

Marcus DeAnda (Ernesto) was born in Los Angeles but raised in a small border town in Texas called Presidio. He attended the University of Texas in Austin where he studied Broadcast Journalism and Radio Television and Film. He also studied acting at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City and later attended Anthony’s Meindl’s Actor Workshop in Los Angeles. His television credits include roles in *Cougar Town*, *The Closer*, and the Syfy film, *Mandrake*. His current film credits include roles in *K-11*, directed by Jules Mann-Stewart and *Viva*, directed by Anna Biller. He will soon be in Ohio and Maine filming the lead role in *Monhegan Light*, based on a short story by Richard Russo and directed by Joe Battaglia.

Amy Seimetz (Shannon) is an actress and filmmaker whose previous credits include *Tiny Furniture*, *The Off-Hours*, and *Myth of the American Sleepover*. Her directorial debut, *Sun Don't Shine* won the Special Jury prize at SXSW and was nominated for a Gotham Award. This fall, she was cast in Christopher Guest’s HBO series *Family Tree* opposite Chris O’Dowd. Seimetz also stars in Shane Carruth’s *Upstream Color*, which is premiering at Sundance 2013 in U.S. Dramatic Competition.

John Merriman (Winston) is an award-winning filmmaker and actor. He starred in the 2012 New York Times Critic's Pick *You Hurt My Feelings* and the LA Film Festival winning feature *Gretchen*. This past year he played the lead in the indie features, *Pictures of Superheroes* and *Cinema Six*. Together with Kerri Lendo, he wrote, directed, and acted in the short films *Modern Man* and *Sleep Study*, which won the Audience Award at the 2010 Austin Film Festival.

Alfredo Maduro (Luis) was born and raised at Barranquilla, Colombia and was trained at Tisch School of Arts at NYU for Drama. He booked many commercials upon graduation, including Colgate, Budweiser, Taco Bell, AT&T, and Coors Light. He then moved to Los Angeles and was cast in *Cuba 1961: A Love Story*, *Little Love*, *Behind the Red Motel Door*, and *TwiHarder*.

Corby Sullivan (Les) recently wrapped the sci-fi thriller *Rise* at Warner Bros. He has appeared on *CSI* and MTV's *Awkward*. Corby has a passion for theatre and has performed at regional houses across the country, including *The Laramie Project*, *110 in the Shade*, and *Game Over* in which *Variety* called Sullivan "a talent to watch!" Jury panelists John Singleton, Malcolm McDowell, Randi Hiller, Ted Rae, John Burnham, and Libby Goldstein also nominated Corby for Best Actor at the Edgemar Short Film Festival for his work in *Afternoons with Lester*.

Bailey Bass (Cindy) was born on September 4, 2004 in San Antonio, Texas. In 2008, Bailey and her identical twin, Charlotte, were signed with their first talent agency in Austin, Texas. Bailey booked her first regional commercial shortly thereafter. In 2010, Bailey and Charlotte booked the role of Cammie Blair, in Nicole Kassell's *A Little Bit of Heaven*, with Kate Hudson and Gael García Bernal.

Heather Kafka (Linda) began what would become a career in acting, in 1978 at the age of 6. Since then she played "Chloe" on MTV's *Austin Stories*, Leatherface's sister "Henrietta" in the Michael Bay-produced remake of the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and starred as "Diana" in Bryan Poyser's *Lovers of Hate*, which was in US Dramatic Competition at Sundance 2010 and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award.

Most recently, she can be seen in Spencer Parson's *Saturday Morning Massacre*, the Zellner Brothers' *Kid Thing* (Sundance 2012), David Lowery's *Ain't Them Bodies Saints*, Yen Tan's *Pit Stop*, and Kat Candler's *Black Metal*, all three of which will be in Sundance 2013. She is currently in production on Cameron Bruce Nelson's *Some Beasts*, in pre-production on Dylan Pasture's *Prove It All Night*, and just wrapped on Terrence Malick's *Untitled Project V* and David Gordon Green's *Joe*, starring Nicolas Cage.

CREW

Yen Tan (Co-Writer/Director) is a Malaysian-born and Austin-based writer, director and graphic designer. His award-winning feature, *Ciao*, was released theatrically after a successful festival run. The Los Angeles Times called the film "a revelation; a minimalist work of maximum effect." He was profiled on the cover of The Austin Chronicle for his key art, where he has designed numerous posters for films that screened at Sundance, SXSW, Cannes and Toronto. *Pit Stop*, a script that was workshopped at Outfest Screenwriting Lab and was awarded grants by Austin Film Society, Vilcek Foundation and crowdsourced at United States Artists, is his third feature.

David Lowery (Co-Writer) is an award-winning filmmaker from Texas. He was accepted to the Sundance Screenwriters Lab for *Ain't Them Bodies Saints* (starring Rooney Mara, Casey Affleck, Ben Foster), which is premiering in competition at Sundance 2013. His debut feature, *St. Nick*, premiered at the 2009 SXSW Film Festival and went on to play dozens of other film festivals around the world. That film was released theatrically in the spring of 2011 to rave reviews from the New York Times and Wall Street Journal. His follow-up directorial effort, the short film *Pioneer*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2011 and won the Grand Jury Prize at SXSW the following March. It has played nearly 30 film festivals around the world to date. Lowery is an alumni of the Talent Campus at the Berlin Film Festival and IFP Narrative Labs. In 2010, the Independent Film Channel declared him an 'Independent Icon.' Filmmaker Magazine named him one of the 25 New Faces Of Independent Film in 2011.

Kelly Williams (Producer) is a producer and film programmer. He is the Director of Programming for the Lone Star International Film Festival and the former Film Program Director at the Austin Film Festival, where he was awarded the International Film Festival Summit Excellence Award in 2007. He has produced numerous award-winning short films, including Kat Candler's *Hellion* (Sundance 2012). Recently, he produced the feature films *Holiday Road*, *Cinema Six* and *Pictures of Superheroes*. He is currently producing Candler's latest short film *Black Metal* and the feature film *Pit Stop*, directed by Yen Tan, both of which will be world premiering at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival. He is a 2012 Sundance Creative Producing Fellow.

Jonathan Duffy (Producer) is an entrepreneur, producer and a fundraiser based in San Francisco. After graduating from the University of Texas at Austin Radio Television & Film program, Jonathan worked as the Director of Development for the Austin Film Festival. He later co-founded an award-winning organic food delivery business and is currently a limited partner in two other successful restaurants in the Austin area. Jonathan is a passionate advocate for access to higher education and is currently working as the Director of Development for the University of Illinois managing the Pacific Northwest region of the United States.

James M. Johnston (Producer) is a filmmaker from Fort Worth, TX. He was a 2011 Creative Producing Fellow at the Sundance Institute. His work as a producer includes the award winning films *St. Nick* (2009), *Pioneer* (2011) which won the Grand Jury Prize at six film festivals including SXSW. He also co-produced Yen Tan's award-winning film *Ciao* (2008) which was distributed theatrically by Regent Entertainment. In addition to *Pit Stop*, Johnston also produced *Ain't Them Bodies Saints* by writer/director David Lowery, starring Rooney Mara, Casey Affleck, and Ben Foster, which is premiering in competition at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival. Johnston also co-owns two successful vegan restaurants with his wife Amy McNutt called Spiral Diner & Bakery and they are in the process of opening Fort Worth's first art house cinema called The Citizen Theater.

Eric Steele (Producer) is a filmmaker and producer from Dallas, TX. Producing credits include Clay Liford's *WUSS* (2011), which premiered at SXSW and won the

Audience award at AFI, and *The Verdigris*, a documentary feature about Will Rogers (in production 2013). Writing and directing credits include *Bob Birdnow's Remarkable Tale of Human Survival and the Transcendence of Self* (in post-production 2013), *Cork's Cattlebaron* (2012) which premiered opening night at Maryland Film Festival, and *Topeka* (2009) which premiered at USA Film Festival. In 2010, Steele and three other filmmakers formed Aviation Cinemas, Inc. and now own and operate the Historic Texas Theatre in Oak Cliff, TX.

Hutch (Director of Photography) has photographed many print campaigns and TV commercials. He has shot James M. Johnston's *Knife* (SXSW, Sarasota, Rooftop), starring Charlie Baker (*Breaking Bad*), and *The Romance of Loneliness*, starring Lynn Cohen, Kentucker Audley, and Amy Lavere. He is currently filming Cameron Bruce Nelson's *Some Beasts*, produced by Ben LeClair (*Upstream Color*, *Gentlemen Broncos*).

Don Swaynos (Editor) is a multiple award-winning filmmaker living in Austin, TX. In his ten years as a professional editor, Don has worked on a wide variety of projects including narrative films, documentaries, reality shows, music videos, and branded entertainment. He recently edited Bryan Poyser's *The Bounceback* and Spencer Parsons' *Saturday Morning Massacre*. As a writer/director, he has just completed his narrative feature debut, the critically-acclaimed *Pictures of Superheroes*, and the award-winning experimental short *Six Hundred and Forty-One Slates*.

Scott Colquitt (Production Designer) Whether it's dressing sets or drafting budgets, Scott's passion is making films and supporting local filmmakers. After an initial stint at the Austin Film Society working for Artist Services Director, Bryan Poyser, Scott went to work for award-winning producer Sarah Green (*Frida*, *The New World*, *Take Shelter*) on Terrence Malick's long awaited *Tree of Life*. As a freelance filmmaker, Colquitt's other production credits include features by acclaimed directors Andrew Bujalski (*Beeswax*, *Computer Chess*), Bryan Poyser (*Lovers of Hate*), as well as projects by Kat Candler, Chris Eska, David Riker and Spencer Parsons.

Curtis Glenn Heath (Music) is a musician in Fort Worth, TX, and has scored a slew of SXSW films, including David Lowery's *A Catalog of Anticipations*, Clay Liford's *Earthling*, James M. Johnston's *Knife*, and Jonny Mars' *America's Parking Lot*. He is also a singer and songwriter for the acclaimed band, The Theater Fire.

Eric Friend (Sound Designer) has worked as a sound designer, engineer, and composer for the past 20 years on feature films, shorts, documentaries and television. He began his career as Mike Judge's in-house audio recordist and editor for *Beavis and Butt-Head* and *King of the Hill*. Eric currently runs Friendo Sound in Austin TX, an audio post mixing facility that specializes in sound for independent film, television, and the web.

Katie Richter (Casting) is an Austin-based casting director. She has cast Kat Candler's *Hellion* (Sundance 2012) and *Black Metal* (Sundance 2013), and was a casting assistant on Terrence Malick's upcoming untitled film and *Abel's Field*, starring Kevin Sorbo.