

MY DEAR FRIEND ZOE

BREAKING UP WITH A FRIEND IS HARD.  
BREAKING UP WITH A BATTLE BUDDY IS HARDER.

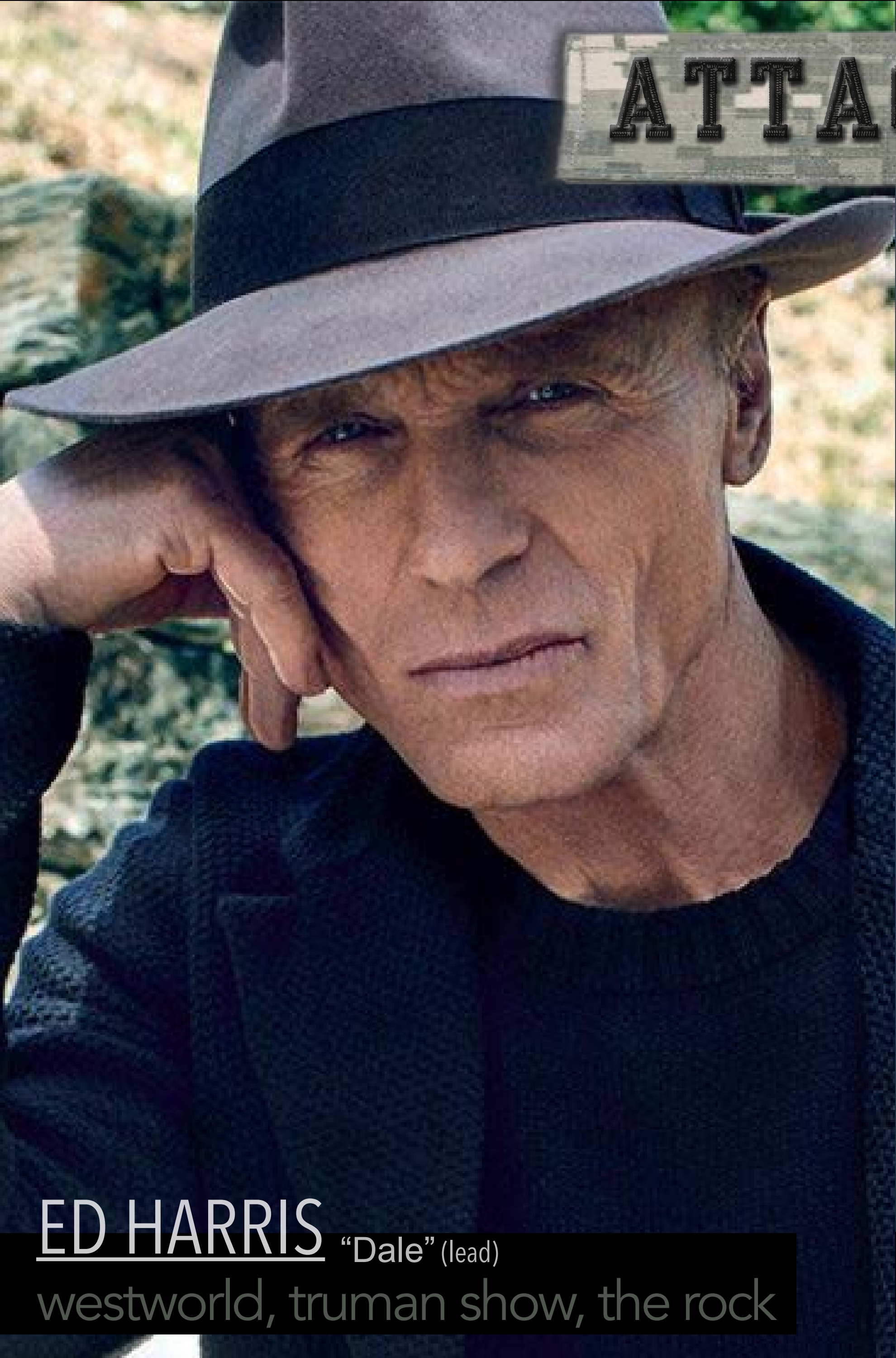


RE

ReCre8 Entertainment





A close-up portrait of Ed Harris wearing a grey fedora with a black band and a dark blue sweater. He is resting his chin on his hand and looking thoughtfully to the side.

ATTACHED

A portrait of Sonequa Martin-Green with her hair in a bun, wearing a black high-collared blouse and long gold earrings. She has her hands clasped under her chin and is looking off-camera.

CAST

A portrait of Natalie Morales with long brown hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a red top. She is sitting and resting her chin on her hand, looking directly at the camera.

ED HARRIS “Dale” (lead)

westworld, truman show, the rock

SONEQUA MARTIN-GREEN “Merit” (lead)

star trek discovery, walking dead, space jam

NATALIE MORALES “Zoe” (lead)

parks & rec, stuber, santa clarita diet





MDFZ is a  
**DARK COMEDY DRAMA**  
**FEATURE FILM**

that feels like  
**FIGHT CLUB**  
**BOOKSMART**  
**NEBRASKA**

and tells a totally  
unique story about  
**FRIENDSHIP**  
**FAMILY**  
**& VETERANS**





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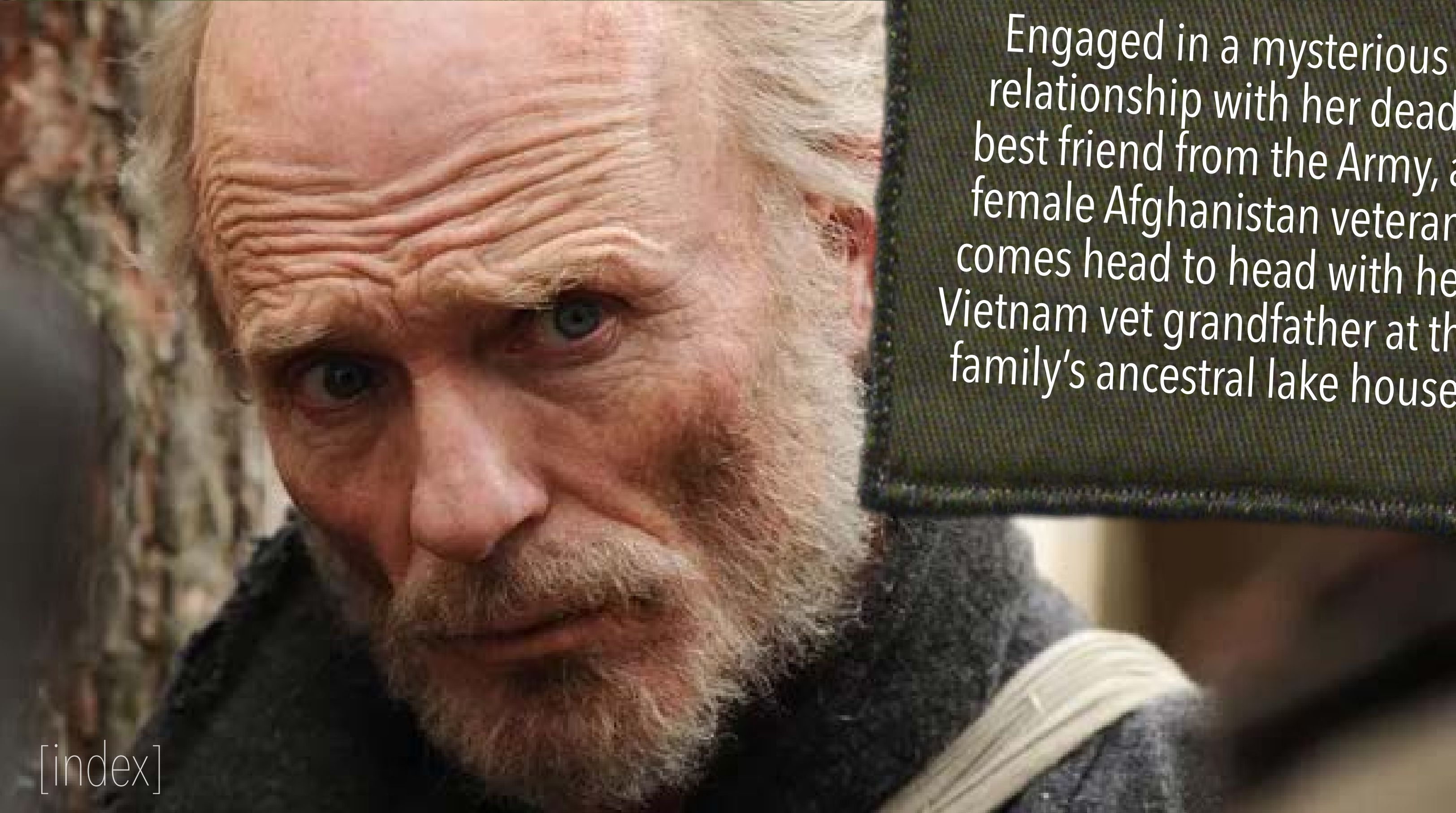
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## LOGLINE

Engaged in a mysterious relationship with her dead best friend from the Army, a female Afghanistan veteran comes head to head with her Vietnam vet grandfather at the family's ancestral lake house.







**GENRE**

**NICHE**

**Dark Comedy**

**Drama**

**Military/Veteran**

**Buddy Film**

**Middle America**

**Apolitical**

**Magical Realism**

**WHY THIS PROJECT IS  
SPECIAL  
UNIQUE  
PERSONAL**





# SYNOPSIS

I.

Merit and Zoe are more than best friends... they're battle buddies.

Ten months into deployment on a remote outpost in Afghanistan, their biggest enemy is boredom.

Merit, a rule-follower from small town Minnesota, is the ideal soldier. Zoe, a rebel from Bakersfield, is the opposite.

But in this place, they're cut from the same cloth, promise to stay BFFs back home no matter what.





## II.

Two years later, back in Minneapolis, they're still BFFs...just not in a way either could've predicted.

At some point Zoe died (we're not sure how) then mysteriously reappeared in Merit's life (only Merit can see her). The two have been co-existing ever since. Their friendship a toxic but comfortable shield against the world, codependent and secret.

So much so that Merit dropped out of college and has been hiding from her family and friends. But it's cool, Zoe still makes her laugh and Merit refuses to lose her again.





III.

But that all changes when Kris, Merit's shrewd CEO mom, calls from a business trip in China to say that Merit's grandpa Dale is in the ER. Kris needs Merit to go to Dale's remote Wisconsin lake house to look after him until Kris can get home.

But Merit...can't. Even though grandpa Dale, a Vietnam vet and retired Army Colonel, was Merit's hero growing up—the reason she joined the Army—the two haven't spoken in years. And it's Merit's fault. She even missed seeing her grandma, Dale's wife, on her death bed.

Dale's written her off as a selfish and spoiled snowflake ever since.

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#### IV.

Since his wife's death, Dale has become a reclusive misanthrope, insisting on living alone at the lake.

Like Merit, he's a veteran who's closed off to the world, content to live out his days in radical independence.

But Kris has other plans: find a retirement home for him, quietly sell the lake house, guilt Merit into helping.





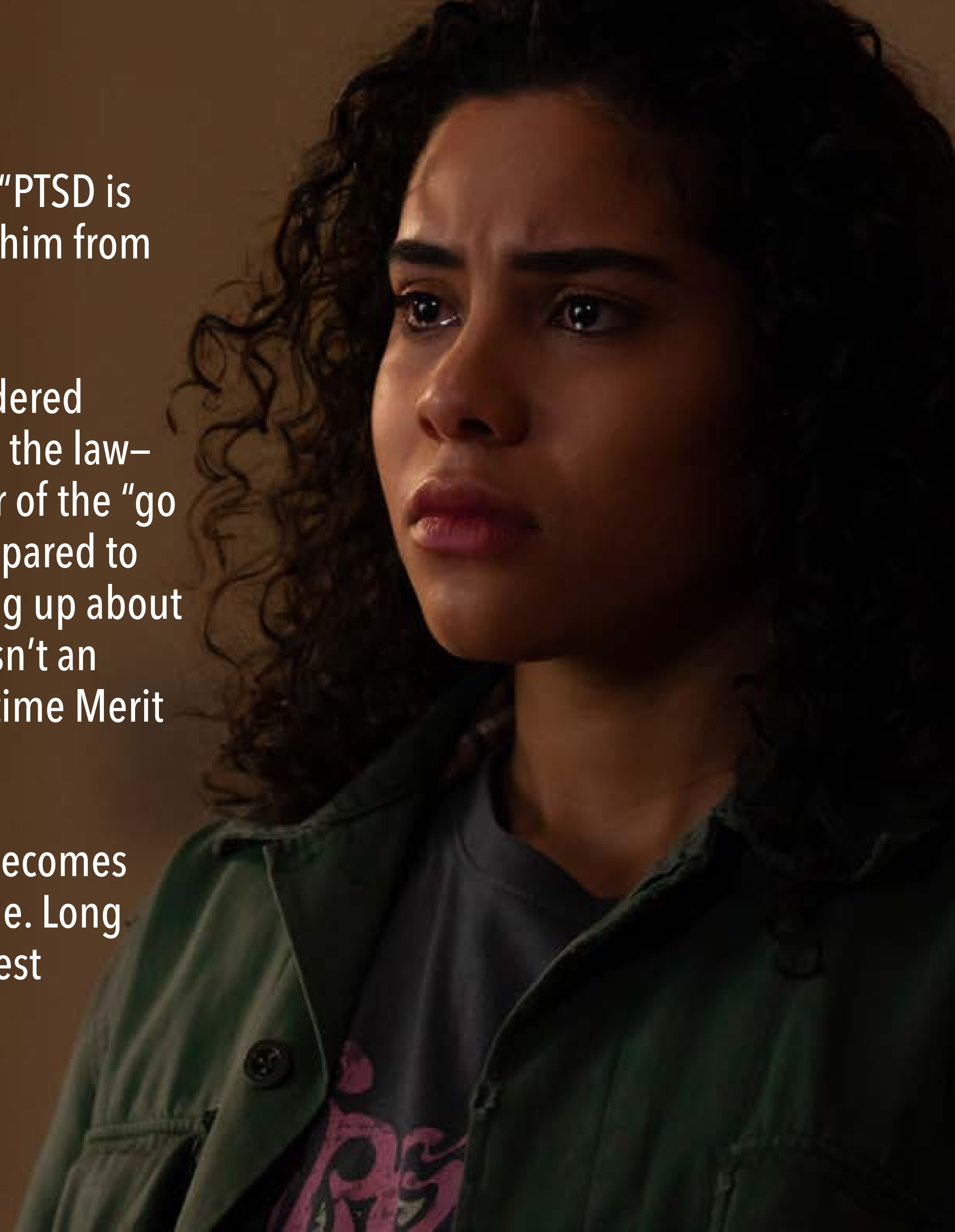
V.

Merit refuses, unwilling to face her "PTSD is bullshit" grandpa or aid in evicting him from the lake house.

She's also in the middle of court-ordered therapy—Zoe got her in trouble with the law—and Dr. Cole, the Vietnam vet leader of the "go to therapy or go to jail" group is prepared to fail Merit if she doesn't start opening up about her trauma. But talking about Zoe isn't an option, Zoe makes sure of that any time Merit tries.

Suddenly going to the lake house becomes Merit's only option to buy some time. Long enough to finally confront her biggest problem of all...Zoe.

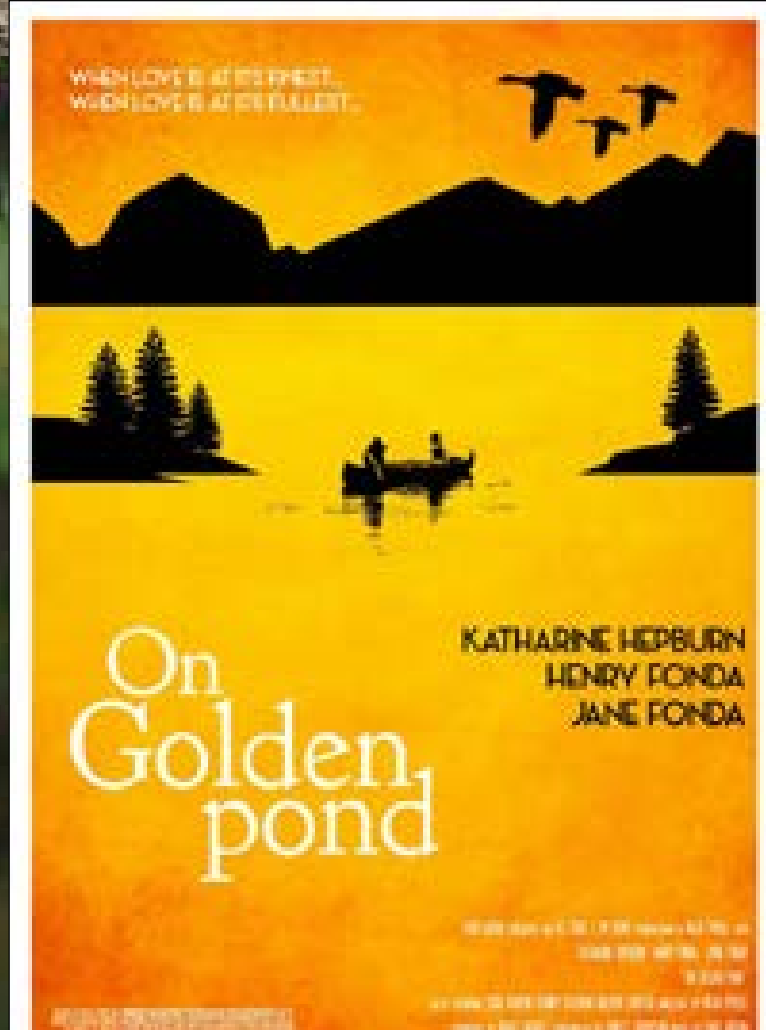
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# COMPS

Quaint, pastoral Midwestern setting.



Family you love (sometimes hate).



Embracing your inner turmoil.



Complicated female relationships.



Epic friends, real and imagined.



Humorous intergenerational conflict.





A woman in a yellow jacket sits on a wooden stump in a rural landscape. In the background, there is a white barn with a corrugated metal roof, a tall metal windmill, and a line of bare trees under a clear blue sky.

**WHY THIS**  
**WHY NOW**

**MDFZ isn't a war film.  
Or a pity party about PTSD.**

We (filmmakers, veterans) have seen enough of both and are ready to tell a different story. Something unique... authentic...unexpected.

This film is about things everyone can relate to: **complicated friendships, divided family**, and the messed up ways in which we can process our grief. All told through the lens of dark humor, wit and pathos.

MDFZ isn't another heavy-handed melodrama about *coming home* but instead, a clever, heartfelt, buddy dramedy about **complex relationships between women**, a rift between

an Afghanistan vet and her Vietnam vet grandpa, and the difficulties of letting go of the past.

**With three substantive lead roles** at its core, MDFZ is commercial, apolitical, and rife with social impact. Another factor is its timeliness. **Content about mental health is more mainstream and culturally relevant than ever before.**

Based on writer-director Kyle Hausmann-Stokes' **real life experiences during and after the military**, the script is brimming with authenticity and point-of-view. And thanks to his vast connections within the military and veteran community (100 million nationwide), there is a loyal, built-in audience that can be accessed and activated to ensure the film's successful release.



A group of people are seated in a circle in a room, possibly a meeting or a therapy session. A woman in a denim jacket and hoodie stands in the center, holding a small object. The room has framed pictures on the wall and a wooden floor. The word "CHARACTERS" is overlaid in large white letters across the center of the image.

# CHARACTERS





ZOE

### ANTI HERO

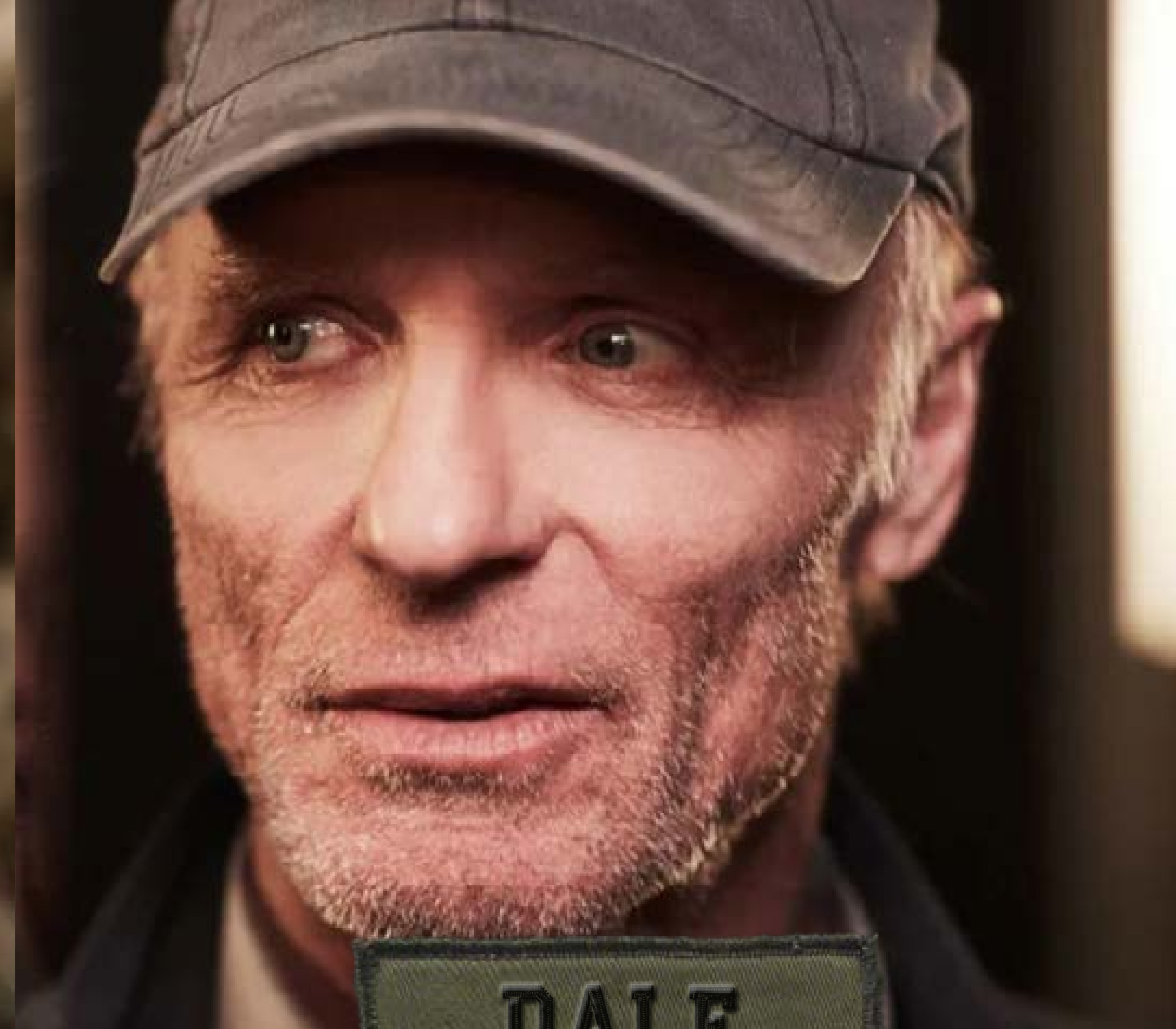
Soldier. US Army mechanic. Merit's BFF. Mischief. Witty. Calls em like she sees em. Died. Not that bummed about it. Full of life. Also jokes about death. *Wants* to keep Merit for herself and stuck. *Needs* to learn why she's still here.



MERIT

### HERO

Afghanistan Vet. Former US Army mechanic. Obsessive runner. Lives a spartan life. Haunted by dead best friend. Mixed feelings about that. Great with her hands. Terrible with her emotions. *Wants* to rekindle her relationship with Grandpa. *Needs* to let go of Zoe.



DALE

### ANTAGONIST

Vietnam Vet. Former US Army Colonel. Merit's grandpa. Bird lover. Widower. Recluse. At war with his family. Needs no one's help. Refuses to leave the lake house. *Wants* to remain isolated at the lake house. *Needs* to forgive Merit, let people in again.





### **INSTIGATOR**

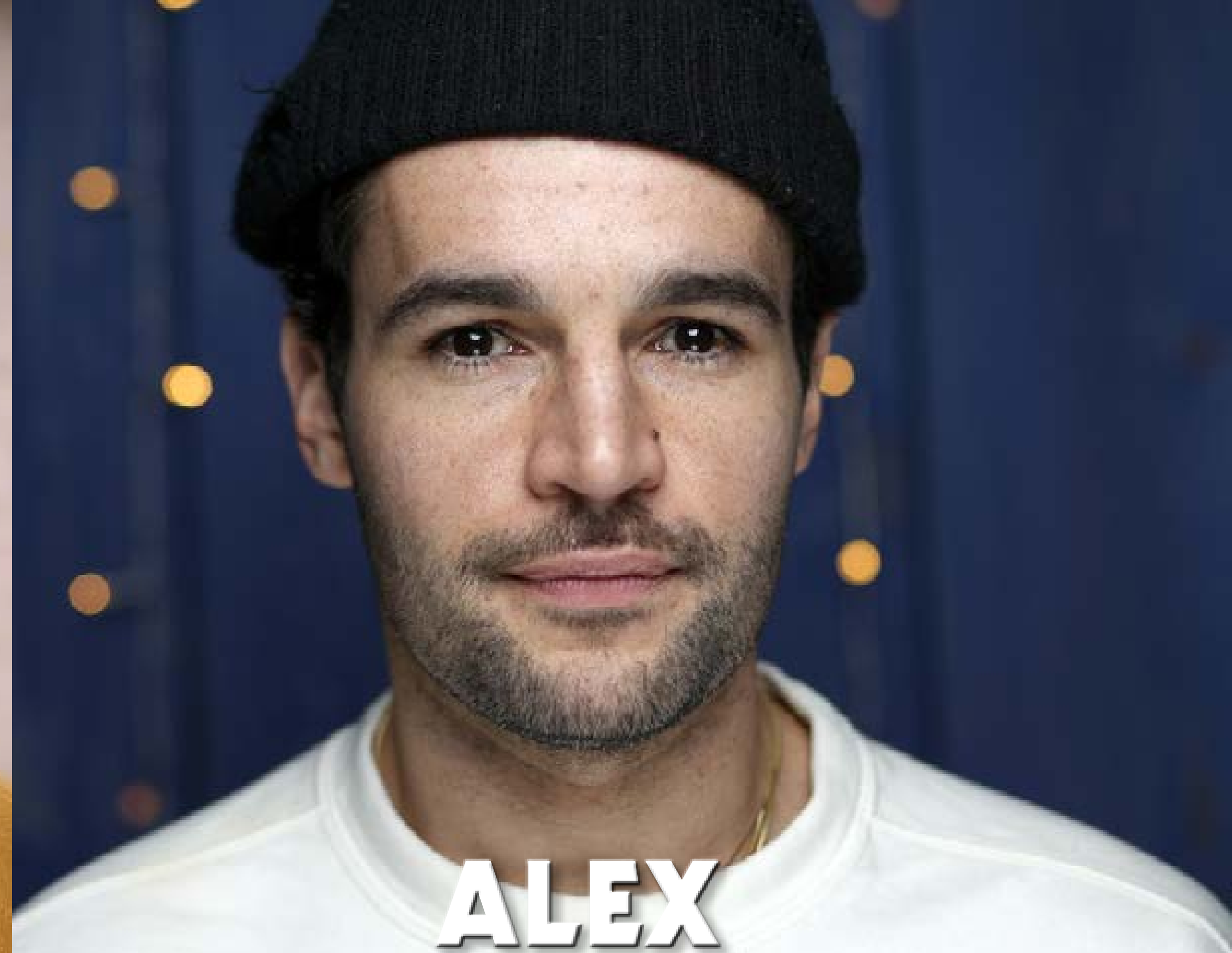
Merit's mom. Dale's daughter.

Shrewd, international businesswoman.

Thoughtfully meddlesome in family affairs.

*Wants:* Lake house sold. Grandpa in a home.

*Needs:* Merit and Grandpa to reconnect.



### **LOVE INTEREST**

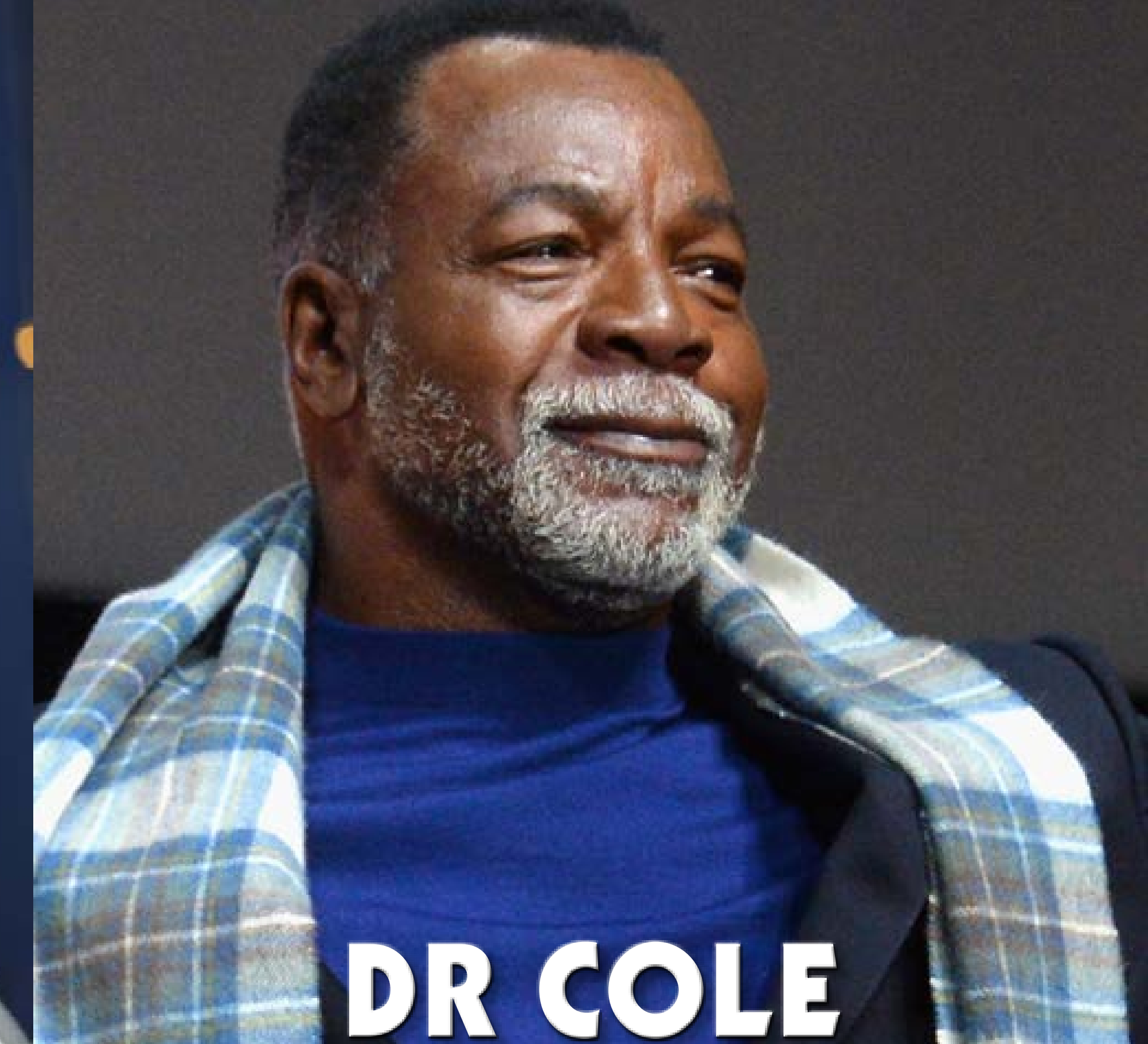
Local love interest. Nursing home manager.

Confidently quirky. Unintentionally charming.

Intrigued by Merit. Unafraid to call her out.

Accidentally comes between Merit and Grandpa.

*Wants* to understand Merit and explore the awkward but undeniable chemistry between them.



### **CATALYST**

Group Counselor. Combat veteran.

Knows a thing or two about PTSD.

Wise and compassionate.

Believer in tough love and second chances.

*Wants* Merit to open up to the group.



A cinematic photograph of two young women in a dimly lit room. The woman on the left is in the foreground, wearing a dark hoodie and a denim jacket, looking off-camera with a serious expression. The woman on the right is in the background, wearing a green jacket, looking towards the camera. The lighting is warm and low-key, creating a moody atmosphere. The word "ROLES" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the center of the image.

# ROLES



**MERIT**

IS STRONG, STUBBORN AND ISOLATED

MERIT is a former US Army mechanic, Afghanistan vet, and obsessive runner. She lives a spartan life, cut off from the world, with only Zoe—her wise-cracking (dead) best friend from the Army—to keep her company. But she's made her peace with that, losing Zoe is not something she's willing to let happen again.

When we see Merit and Zoe as battle buddies in Afghanistan, it's clear they have an epic friendship; maybe even more. But now, years later, Zoe's ghostly presence (how she died is a secret we don't learn until later) has become a problem for Merit. Thanks to Zoe, Merit dropped out of school, lost her job, got in trouble with the law and now, has to complete court-ordered group therapy at the VA or face serious consequences. Which is made all the more complicated when Merit is summoned to the last place on Earth she wants to be, her family's lake house. To look after her ailing Vietnam vet grandpa Dale. He use to be her hero, the reason she joined the Army. But now there is a rift between them that seems impossible to repair.

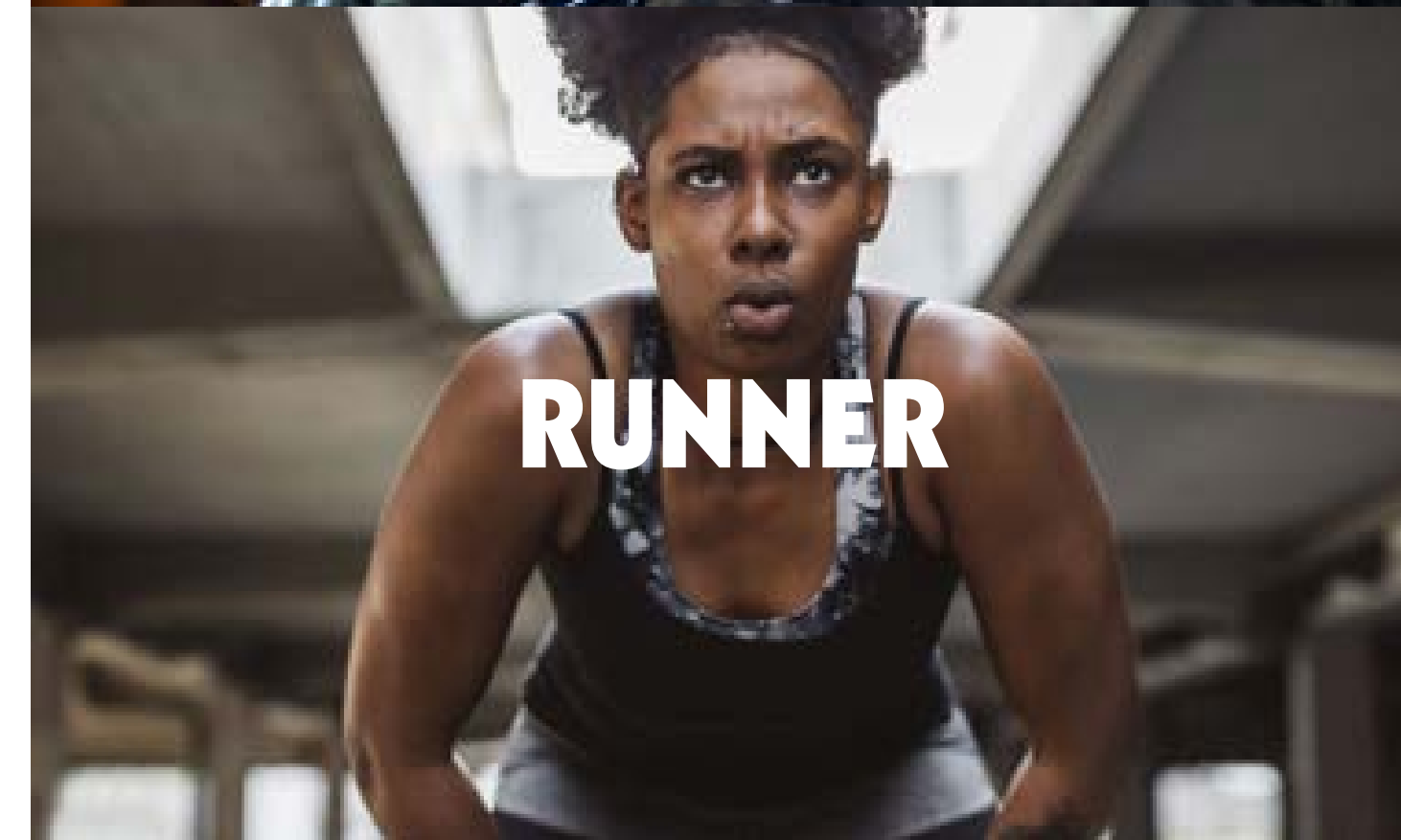
Merit is physically capable, fiercely independent and intellectually impressive; but emotionally shattered. Deep down she yearns to rekindle her relationship with Grandpa, but needs to let go of Zoe first.



**SOLDIER / VETERAN**



**MECHANIC**



**RUNNER**



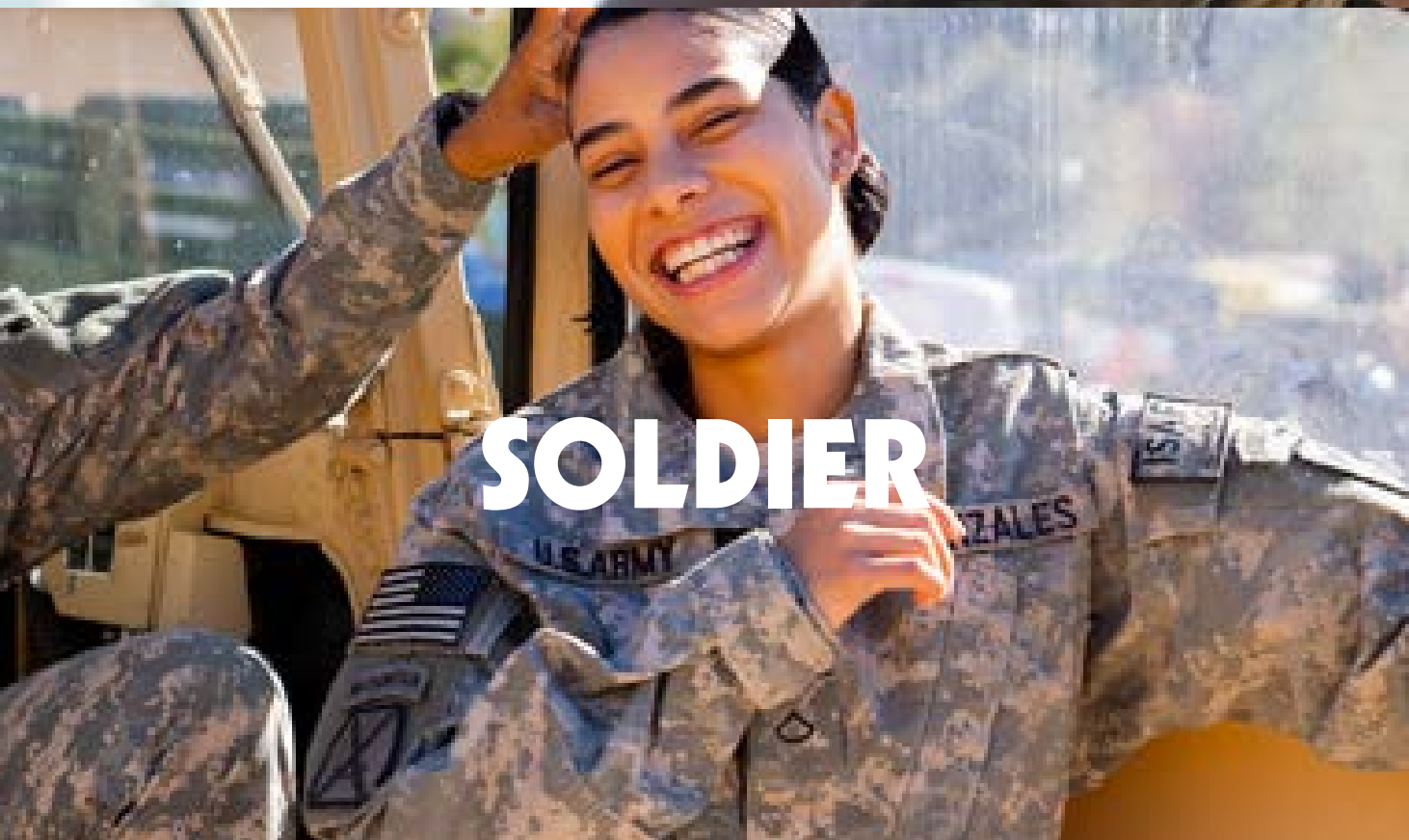
**SURVIVOR**





## IS WITTY, MISCHIEVOUS AND VOLATILE

ZOE is a former US Army mechanic, Afghanistan vet, natural rebel and perpetual life of the party. She's incredibly dynamic, street smart and mischievous. An emotional ninja. Especially with Merit, her BFF since basic training. For half of the film, we see Zoe alive and well, stuck on a boring outpost in Afghanistan coming up with endless ways to entertain Merit. For the other half of the film, back home, Zoe is some sort of ghost/manifestation of Merit's survivor's guilt. Merit can see her, no one else can. How this came to be has to do with what happened after their deployment. Merit found a purpose (college) and Zoe...did not.



**SOLDIER**



**JESTER**



**REBEL**



**DANGEROUS**

Like too many veterans (144,000 since 2001), Zoe didn't get help she needed and resorted to taking her own life. But this isn't a somber film about suicide, that's the opposite of what the filmmaker (based on his true story) and his community of veterans want. They've learned the hard way that to survive after trauma, you need to TALK about it. And that's exactly what Zoe represents and does. In the way that all soldiers know best, via crude humor, wit and levity.

Zoe selfishly wants to keep Merit for herself, and stuck. But ultimately needs to learn why, even after death, she's still here.





**DALE**

IS WISE, JADED AND DISTRUSTFUL

A retired Army Colonel and Vietnam veteran, Dale was once the loving patriarch of Merit's family. That all changed when his wife died. He's been holed up in the family's lake house ever since, refusing to talk with anyone. Especially once his daughter Kris, concerned about his recent fall and memory loss, enlists Merit (her daughter) to covertly sell the lake house and move Dale into a nursing home.

Merit and her Grandpa Dale used to have a special relationship; spending summers together at the lake house fishing, loon watching and practicing Army survival techniques. Grandpa was Merit's hero, he's the reason she joined the Army. But when Merit returned from Afghanistan, she went MIA from the entire family. Never came to see Dale, didn't even come to her Grandma's funeral. Dale doesn't believe in PTSD, wrote Merit off as another "snowflake" generation of selfish, weak veterans that don't appreciate all his generation did for them. So when Merit turns up to the lake house out of the blue, Grandpa's pride and hurt keeps her at a distance. But after a few painful days of coexistence, his veteran's heart recognizes the pain she's in. Also something...else. A mysterious presence (Zoe) that seems to be keeping Merit stuck in the past and unable to move on.







IS SURE SHE KNOWS BEST, FOR EVERYONE

KRIS is a cutthroat international businesswoman when on the road and an eccentric Midwestern mom when at home.

Even though she's caught between two incredibly stubborn veterans—her Vietnam vet father Dale and her Afghanistan vet daughter Merit—Kris doesn't suffer fools. She's a do-er and a fixer; no time for other people's pride. Kris is away on business for the first half of the film, but her incessant calls to Merit prove she's more effective from across the globe than most people are in person. But when Merit jeopardizes Kris's plan—to sell the lake house and put her ailing dad Dale in a home—Kris appears at the lake house when Merit and Dale least expect it.

Despite her antics, Kris is a caring daughter and a loving mother. What she cares about most is helping the two veterans in her life, both overstuffed with pride and pain, to bury the hatchet and revive their special relationship.







IS MAKING SURE IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN

DR. COLE is a no-nonsense, blue collar group counselor at the VA.

As a combat veteran, he knows a thing or two about PTSD. He's wise and compassionate with vets who do the work, tough on those who don't (Merit). Dr. Cole represents the scores of Vietnam veterans who are the backbone of unsung heroes that have been teaching the generation of veterans beneath them about PTSD and talk therapy. Dr Cole has one rule in his veteran rap session groups... everyone talks. When his newest 'court-ordered therapy recruit' Merit refuses to share with the group, he kicks her out.

But when he senses something else going on with Merit, he decides to present her a path to healing that worked for him many years ago.





A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue denim jacket with a patch on the chest, is high-fiving a large crowd of military personnel. The crowd consists of men and women in camouflage uniforms, many of whom are also high-fiving each other. The scene is set outdoors, possibly on a ship's deck, with a white railing visible in the background. The overall tone is celebratory and energetic.

# BUILT IN AUDIENCE



# MY DEAD FRIEND ZOE has 4 unique and primed built-in audiences.

## 1. Military & Veterans

Military/Veteran-related films are a profitable, time-tested genre.

- + there are 20.2 million military & veterans in America.
- + 80.3 million people have a veteran in their family.
- + The total military/veteran community is 100 million strong.
- + This group has a \$400 billion annual spending power.

## 2. Impact Partners

Three of the nation's most prominent and effective nonprofits (The Mission Continues, Bob Woodruff Foundation, Everytown for Gun Safety) unprecedentedly decided to become official impact partners with Kyle's short film MERITxZOE due to the unique and authentic way it discussed veterans, mental health, suicide and gun violence. These influential nonprofits have all agreed to remain impact partners for MY DEAD FRIEND ZOE and spread the word throughout their networks to see the film.

- + [Bob Woodruff Foundation](#) (87K Twitter, 70K Facebook, 6K IG)
- + [Everytown for Gun Safety](#) (267K Twitter, 1.4M Facebook, 1M IG)
- + [The Mission Continues](#) (20K Twitter, 47K Facebook, 6K IG)



## 3. Legion M

Since 2016, Legion M has grown to over 150,000 active members. Each a film lover that supports, watches and shares about every Legion M project released. That number continues to grow everyday and with every new Legion film to hit the market. Over 40,000 members are active investors in various Legion M projects, voting for the things they want to see made and fueling a film's word-of-mouth campaign.

## 4. VME Network

In 2012 MDFZ writer/director Kyle Hausmann-Stokes co-founded Veterans in Media & Entertainment. The members-only group, comprised of active military and veterans, has grown to over 5,000 members with chapters in LA, NY, Atlanta and DC. This high active, highly engaged group cares about/talks about/shares about any film or tv show that centers on a military or veteran story. For this reason, not to mention Kyle being a founder/leader of the organization means that VME and its members will be an authentic, enthusiastic megaphone for supporting and sharing about MDFZ.





# PRODUCTION COMPANY





**LEGION M** is the world's first fan-owned entertainment company.

With experience in development, financing, and physical production, Legion M is built on a completely one-of-a-kind and energized community of passionate entertainment fans. Since Legion M's explosion onto the Hollywood scene in 2016, they have rallied their community and leveraged their investors to enable authentic, grassroots support for creative projects they believe in and to help them achieve the success they deserve.

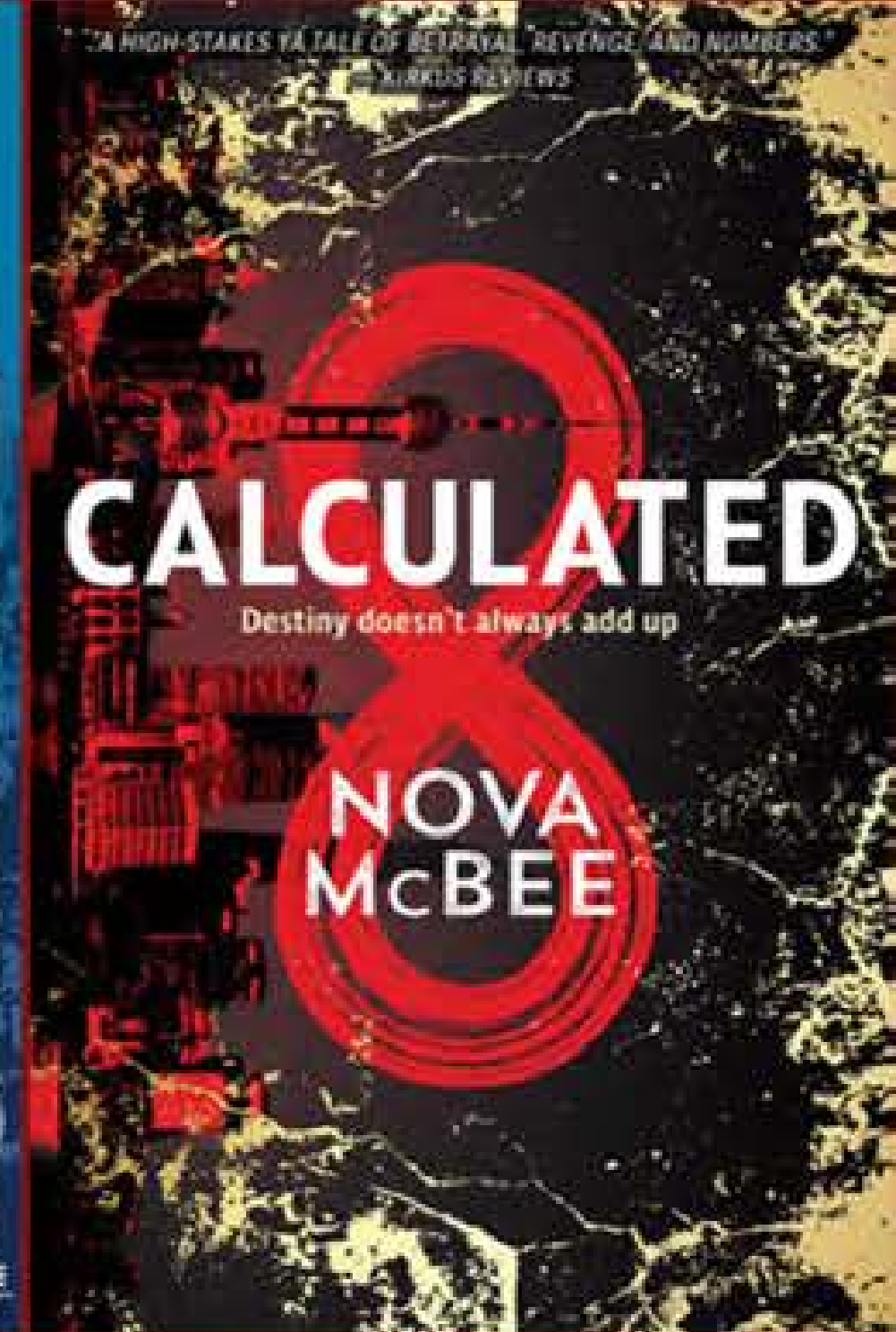
Informed and guided by a growing community of fans providing valuable input, Legion M is highly selective in the projects they choose. Legion M takes great care to only get involved with projects they know will resonate with their community and where they are certain they can make a difference for the stakeholders. When Legion M backs a project, they bring their "pride of ownership" energy to catalyze an organic, grassroots buzz that most projects would kill for and money can't buy! With new members and investor joining its movement each day, Legion M's impact continues to grow.

In September of 2022, Legion M proudly announced ***MY DEAD FRIEND ZOE.***




# LEGION M PROJECTS

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Legion M launched in 2016 with one of the most successful crowdfunding rounds in JOBS Act history. Today, they have over 150,000 members, a proven team, and a slate of projects featuring names like Kit Harington, Simon Pegg, Minnie Driver, Sean Astin, David Tennant, Stan Lee, Kevin Smith, Anne Hathaway, Nicolas Cage and Jason Sudeikis.



A film crew is working on a set outdoors. In the center, a camera operator is operating a large professional camera mounted on a rig. To the left, a man in a grey jacket and glasses is looking towards the camera. In the middle, a man in a purple shirt and black cap is holding a script. To the right, a man in a black jacket and glasses is gesturing with his hand. In the background, a man in military camouflage is standing. The scene is set in a desert-like environment with a yellow vehicle on the left and a blue sky with some clouds in the background.

# FILMMAKER TEAM



WRITER  
DIRECTOR

**I.**

Kyle is an award-winning director and writer based in Los Angeles.

He served 5 years in the US Army as a paratrooper, convoy commander, and was awarded the Bronze Star while in Iraq.

Kyle is a graduate of USC's School of Cinematic Arts and co-founder of the nonprofit organization [Veterans in Media & Entertainment](#). Over the past decade he has worked extensively in the PTSD and veteran issues space.



**II.**

Kyle is the writer/director of the award-winning film [MERITxZOE](#), the inspiration for MDFZ.

Kyle has [directed films](#) all over the world for brands such as Google, IBM, U.S. Air Force, UPS, Rocket Mortgage, Dept of Veterans Affairs, et al.

In 2018 he wrote/directed the viral [Veterans for Gun Reform piece](#) for #MarchForOurLives (35M+ views). Kyle was born and raised in Wisconsin and resides in Los Angeles.







## A PERSONAL STORY

"In many ways, I'm grateful for my relationship with PTSD.

**That's the conflict and humor at the heart of this story.**

We first met—me and survivor's guilt—in 2008, shortly after I returned from Iraq. One day I was an airborne infantry sergeant charged with leading soldiers and protecting convoys in Iraq. The next, I was getting out of the Army and starting college...with zero friends. Well, except my PTSD. We were buddies. One of those relationships that's hot-n-heavy in the beginning, co-dependent in the middle and hard as hell to break up with in the end. **That journey is the spine of this film.**

I always knew it was a toxic relationship. But it also felt like the only thing connecting me to my battle buddies. Especially the dead ones.

Then, thanks to some surprisingly light-hearted advice from a few Vietnam vets, I made a kind of peace with the stuff that was haunting me. The biggest lesson for me, and the lesson Merit needs to learn in this film...

**The way to honor the people you lost prematurely isn't through guilt, regret or living in the past...  
...but by living your best life. *Moving on is not forgetting.***

That's not an empty platitude or toxic positivity. By all means, feel the lows. But make room for the highs as well. If the one you lost was looking in on you from the afterlife, would they want to seek you sulking? Or laughing?

At the core of this film is: **Humor + Heart. Drama + Levity. Nuance + Relatability.** "

-K



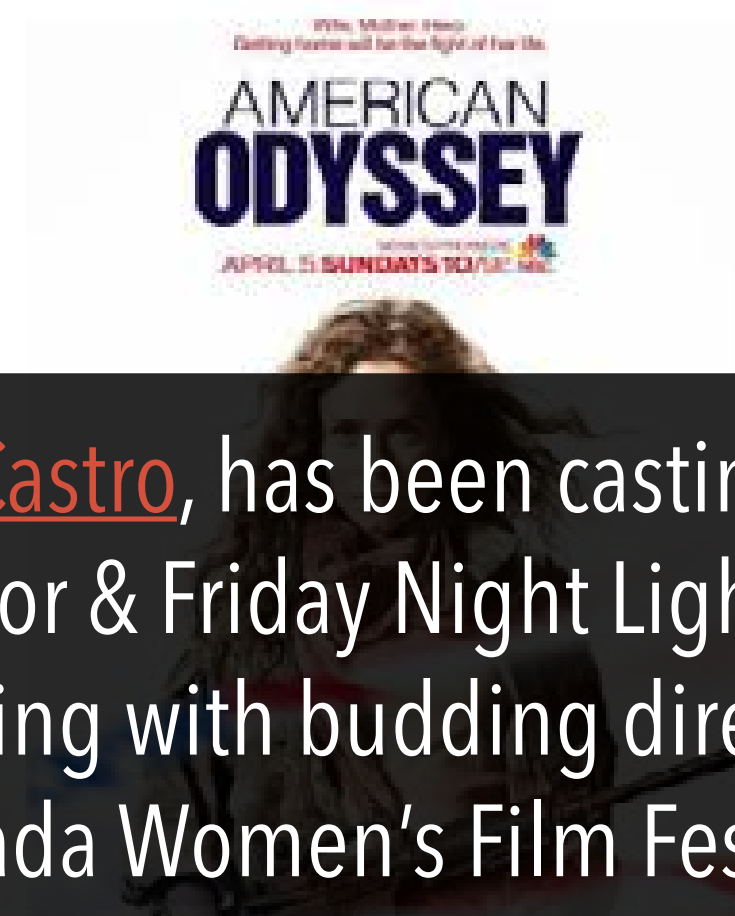
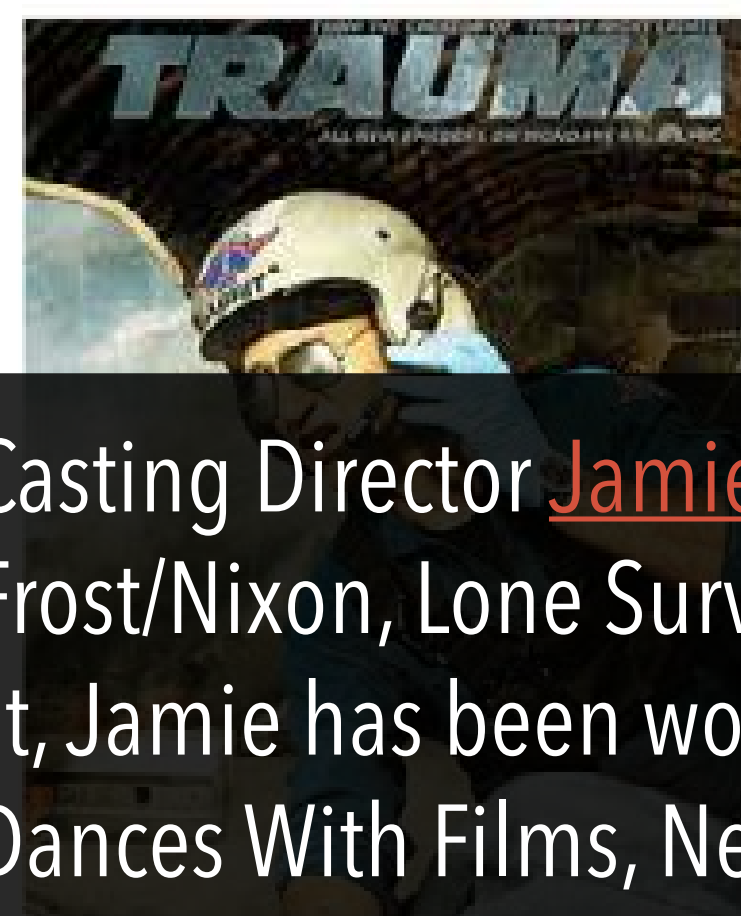
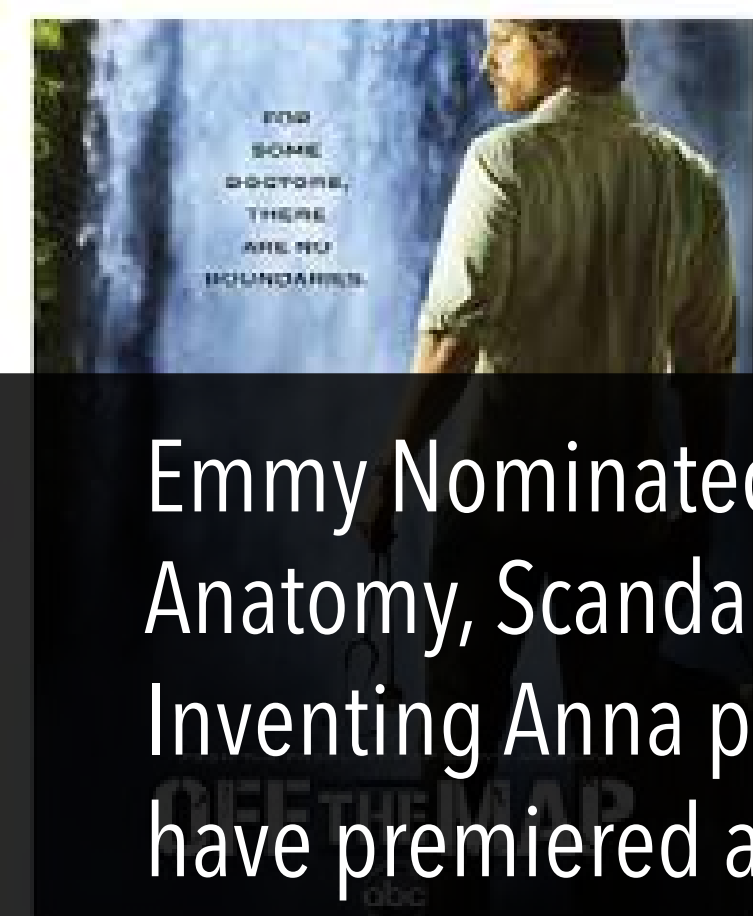
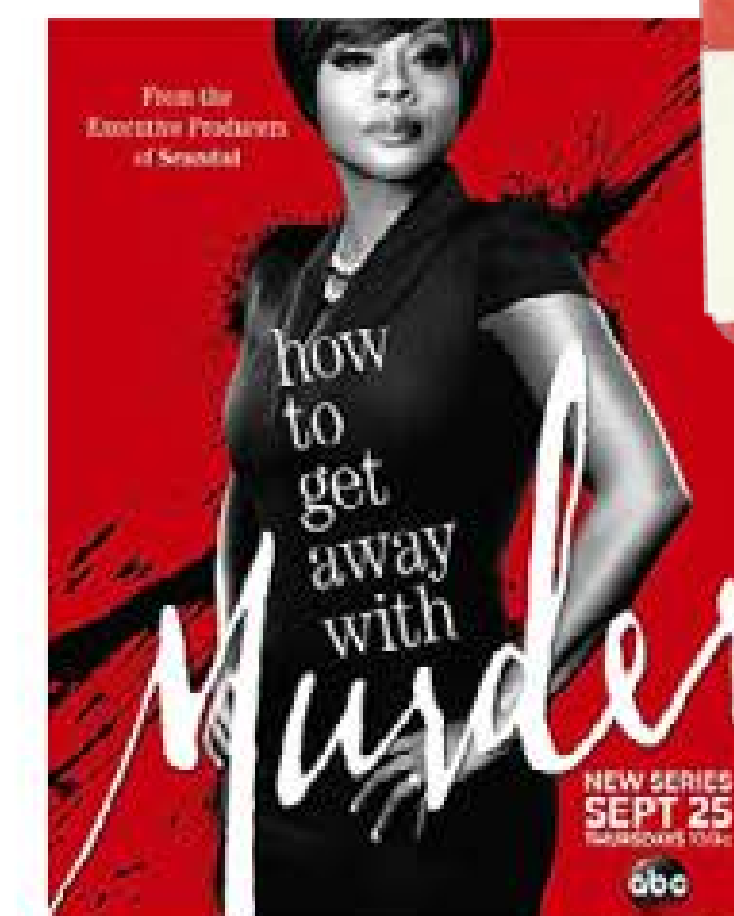
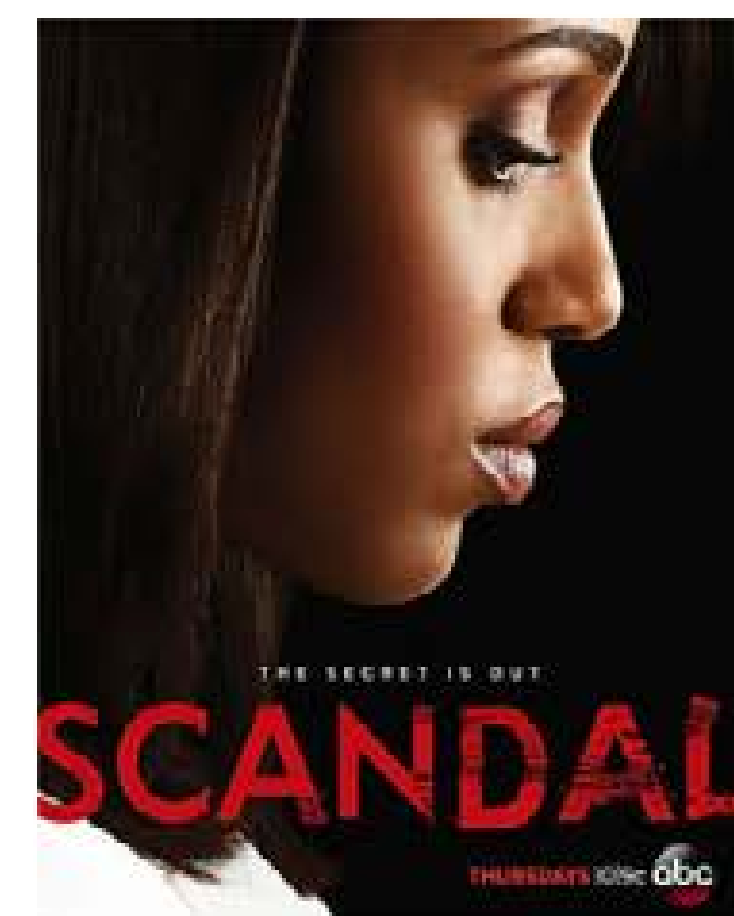
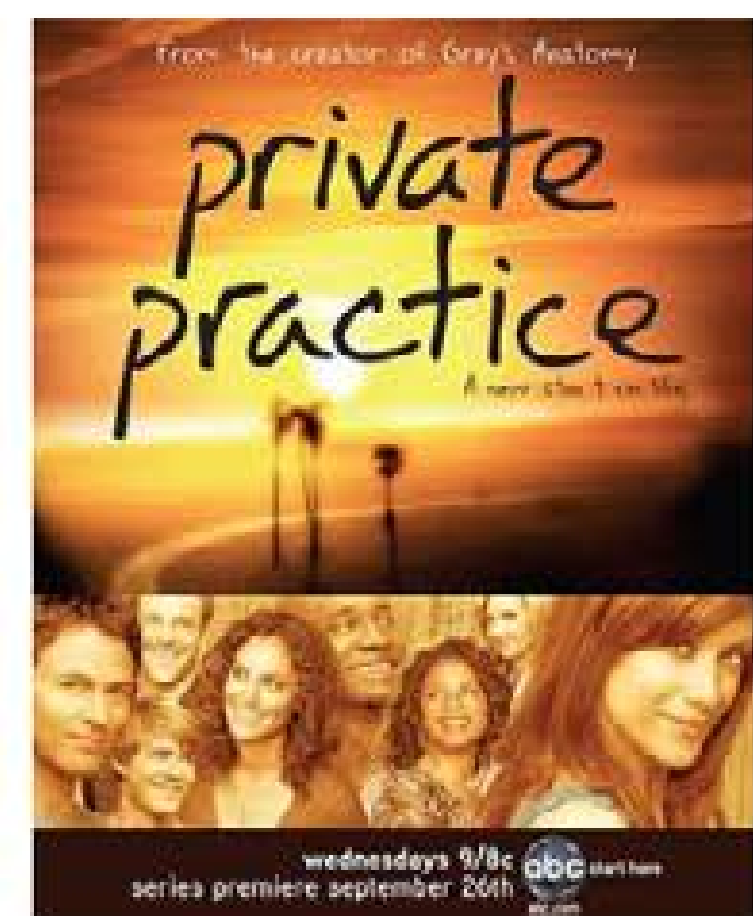
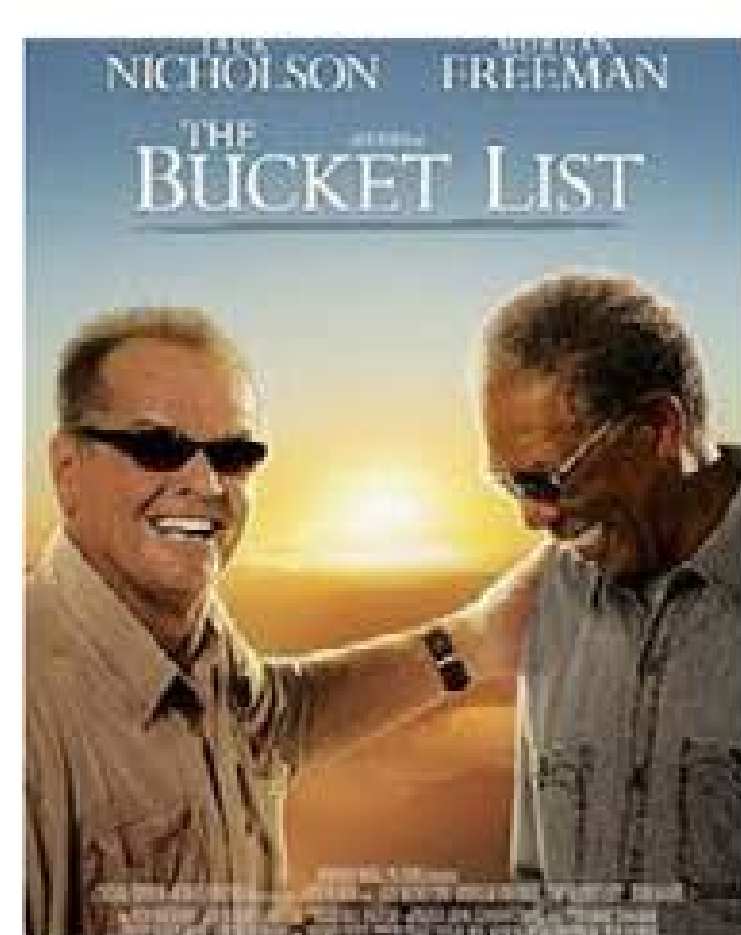


CO-  
WRITER



[A. J. Bermudez](#) is a former boxer and EMT turned award-winning writer. Her projects include *iCON* (Grand Prize Winner, PAGE Award, 2021), *NIGHTINGALE* (Grand Prize Winner, Intern'l Screenwriters Association Award, 2020), *THE FACE OF THE EARTH* (Grand Prize Winner of the Diverse Voices Award, 2018), and *HUNT* (HBMG Foundation Selection, 2017). Her work has been featured at the Yale Center for British Art, the Int'l Festival of Arts & Ideas, the LGBT Toronto Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, and in a number of literary publications, including *Chicago Quarterly Review*, *McSweeney's*, *The Masters Review*, *Columbia Journal*, *The Chicago Review*, *Gertrude Press*, *Hobart*, and many others. Her first book, *Stories No One Hopes Are About Them*, won the Iowa Short Fiction Award and will be published in November 2022 by University of Iowa Press. A.J. wrote the feature film *Blood, Sweat and Lies* (premiered 2018).





CASTING DIRECTOR



Emmy Nominated Casting Director [Jamie Castro](#), has been casting for film and television for over 15 years. Credits include Grey's Anatomy, Scandal, Frost/Nixon, Lone Survivor & Friday Night Lights to name a few. Most recently recognized for her work on the *Inventing Anna* pilot, Jamie has been working with budding directors and filmmakers on indie features and short films. Her projects have premiered at Dances With Films, Nevada Women's Film Festival, OutFest and more.






PRODUCER

Richard Silverman has been involved in transacting over \$1B in deal finance and asset management deals and has been actively involved in the careers of entertainment icons such as George Michael, Martin Lawrence, Luther VanDross, Dr. Dre, and Snoop Dog. A WGA writer, Richard wrote and produced the original feature film ["We Are Your Friends" starring Zac Efron and Emily Ratajkowski](#). Through his company ReCre8, Richard has numerous film and tv projects in development, was a Senior Advisor to National Lampoon during its relaunch, and serves on the advisory board of LegionM.

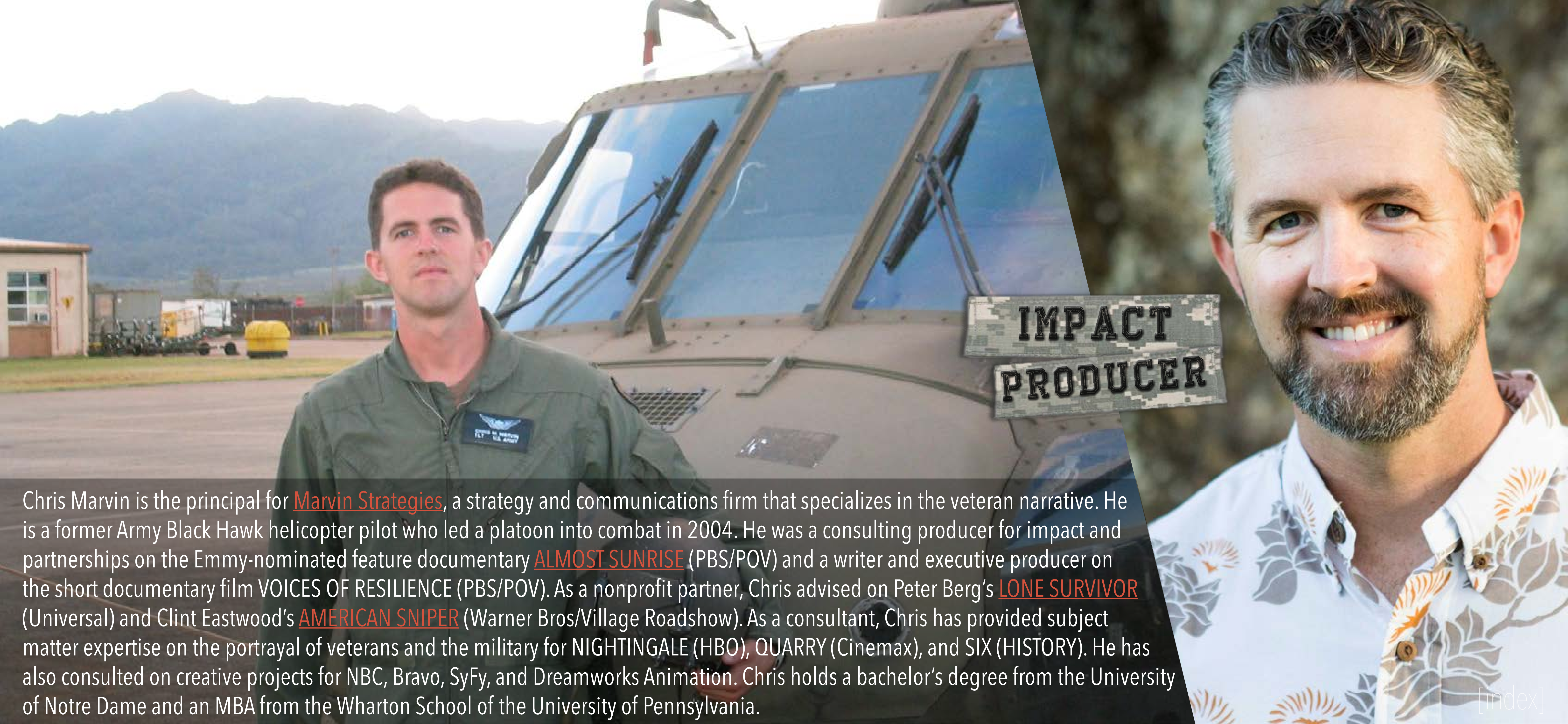




CO-  
PRODUCER

Liz Manashil is the former Manager of [Sundance Institute's Creative Distribution Initiative](#) and is the producer/director/writer of [SPEED OF LIFE](#) on Showtime starring Ann Dowd (THE HANDMAID'S TALE) and BREAD AND BUTTER starring Bobby Moynihan (SNL). She produced and directed for the Hulu/PBS show JUST SEEN IT as well as shorts and music videos including Beth Thornley's "You're So Pony." Liz is the co-host of the hit podcast "Making Movies Is Hard!!!" She received an MFA from the USC School of Cinematic Arts and has come to specialize in fostering and creating feminist content with a whimsical twist.





**IMPACT  
PRODUCER**

Chris Marvin is the principal for [Marvin Strategies](#), a strategy and communications firm that specializes in the veteran narrative. He is a former Army Black Hawk helicopter pilot who led a platoon into combat in 2004. He was a consulting producer for impact and partnerships on the Emmy-nominated feature documentary [ALMOST SUNRISE](#) (PBS/POV) and a writer and executive producer on the short documentary film VOICES OF RESILIENCE (PBS/POV). As a nonprofit partner, Chris advised on Peter Berg's [LONE SURVIVOR](#) (Universal) and Clint Eastwood's [AMERICAN SNIPER](#) (Warner Bros/Village Roadshow). As a consultant, Chris has provided subject matter expertise on the portrayal of veterans and the military for NIGHTINGALE (HBO), QUARRY (Cinemax), and SIX (HISTORY). He has also consulted on creative projects for NBC, Bravo, SyFy, and Dreamworks Animation. Chris holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame and an MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.



# SCRIPT COLLABORATORS



*Co-Story By*

**CHERISH CHEN**  
Writer

Cherish is the author of the Image Comics miniseries Radiant Red. Previously she worked on the marketing of MAD MAX: FURY ROAD and GODZILLA, then in production at Freddy Wong's where she co-created the ROCKETJUMP FILM SCHOOL.



*ARMY VETERAN*

**REBECCA MURGA**  
Writer / Director

A Chicago-born, Latina WGA writer, Rebecca's clients include ABC, CBS and AT&T. She directs the AFI Directing Workshop for Women, was an Army Captain (Iraq, Afghanistan) and awarded a Bronze Star for her work with Spec Ops Command.



*ARMY VETERAN*

**AARON CAREW**  
Writer (Mgmt 360)

Aaron has been a staff writer on Fox's LETHAL WEAPON, USA's DIRTY JOHN, Sony's L.A.'S FINEST and Starz's POWER: FORCE. Aaron served 7 years in the US Army including two tours to Iraq where he was awarded the ARCOM for acts of valor.



*NAVY VETERAN*

**JACKIE PEREZ**  
Writer / Director

Jackie, a Latina Navy brat from Texas, studied engineering at MIT and served as a Surface Warfare Officer in the US Navy. She worked at CAA, at Justin Lin's Perfect Storm Entertainment, then earned an MFA in TV and Screenwriting.



*ARMY VETERAN*

**LYANDRE PIERRE**  
Writer / Director

Lyandre Pierre is a writer-director from Nashville, member of WGA East and a US Army veteran. He is the creator of the award-winning series THE 6TH DEGREE and currently in post production on his follow up series THIRD WHEEL MATERIAL.



*ARMY VETERAN*

**BRANDON MILLETT /  
LAURA LAW**

Brandon is CEO of GI Film Group, dedicated to supporting military/veteran-themed films. Laura is an entrepreneur and served 18 years as an officer in the US Army. Together they Co-Founded the GI Film Festival, a nationally renown festival dedicated to the stories of American veterans.



## WATCH THE SHORT

+ **TRAILER** (50 sec)

+ **FILM** (14 min)

BREAKING UP WITH A FRIEND IS HARD.  
BREAKING UP WITH A BATTLE BUDDY IS HARDER.

MERIT X ZOE

The poster features a woman in a military uniform in the foreground, looking off to the side. Behind her is a large, semi-transparent profile of a man's face. The background is a collage of images, including soldiers in a field and a woman in a military uniform. The title 'MERIT X ZOE' is written in large, colorful, stylized letters. A play button icon is overlaid on the poster.

© MeritxZoe.film

BLUE THREE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS A FILM BY KYLE HAUSMANN-STOKES "MERIT X ZOE" HASKIRI VELAZQUEZ, MORGAN DIXON, TUCKER SMALLWOOD  
CASTING BY JAMIE CASTRO ORIGINAL MUSIC BY GRAPHITE MAN COSTUME DESIGNER ANDREW PEDRO EDITED BY DIANA FISHMAN PRODUCTION DESIGNER BRUCE SHIBLEY  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SEAN CONATY PRODUCED BY KYLE HAUSMANN-STOKES, LIZ MANASHIL, BENJAMIN DUNN EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BARRY SONNERS, CHRIS MARVIN  
CO-PRODUCER DARIL FANIN, LYANDRE PIERRE, BRANDON MILLETT STORY BY KYLE HAUSMANN-STOKES AND JAY BLAIR WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY KYLE HAUSMANN-STOKES



# TIMELINE

A blue Adirondack chair sits on a wooden dock, facing a calm lake. The background features a dense forest of evergreen trees under a cloudy sky. The water reflects the trees and the sky. A small bag is hanging from the back of the chair.



# 2023

Target filming:  
**June 12 - July 14, 2023**

Target festivals:  
**Toronto, Venice**

Target release:  
**Nov 10th, 2023 - Veterans Day**

As part of a national military-veterans appreciation and mental health awareness campaign with impact partners:  
- Bob Woodruff Foundation  
- The Mission Continues  
- Everytown for Gun Safety

**Casting**  
JAN - APR

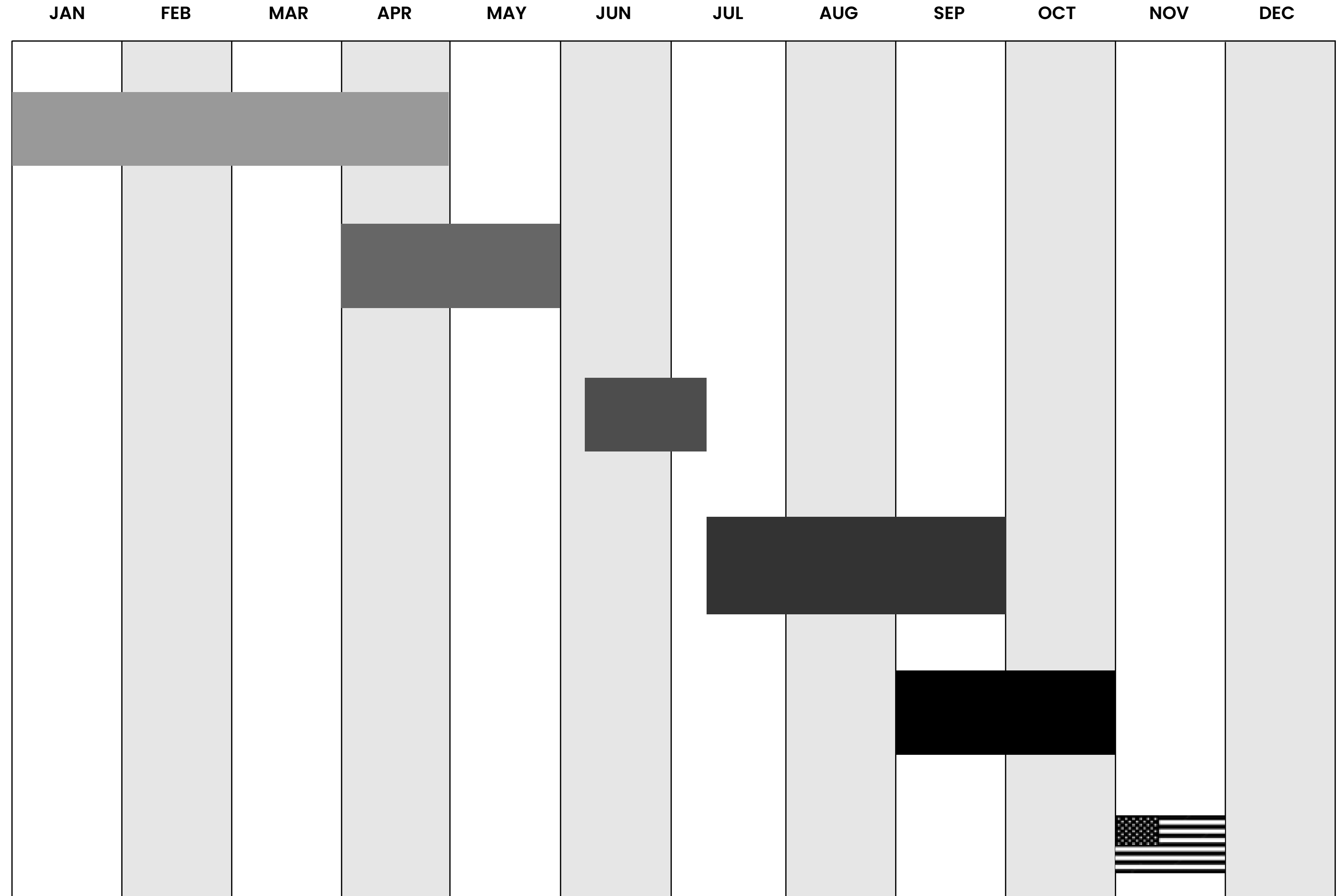
**Pre Production**  
APR - MAY

**Production**  
JUNE 12 - JULY 14  
Portland, OR: 16 days  
Los Angeles, CA: 5 days

**Post Production**  
JULY - SEPT  
Editorial, Music, Color, Mix,  
Screenings

**Festivals**  
SEP - OCT  
Toronto, Venice, et al.

**Release**  
10 NOV Veterans Day  
Premiere > VOD > Streamer





## SUMMARY

MY DEAD FRIEND ZOE is:

- apolitical
- culturally relevant (*veterans, mental health*)
- socially impactful (*suicide, gun safety*)
- based on real people
- told via an authentic veteran voice
- inspired by filmmakers' lived experience
- the feature-length version of the award-winning short film [MERITxZOE](#)
- supported by 3 of the nation's most prominent nonprofits:



America is more hungry for films about the military and veterans than ever before ([Forbes](#)).

The team of people that come together to bring MDFZ to life will, similar to military members, be a part of something bigger than themselves. And something more valuable to veterans and their families than a *thank you for your service*; the opportunity to see their story told in a way that's never been done before.



MY DEAD  
FRIEND ZONE





*Dedicated to*

