

FIRST ANNUAL

PLAYHOUSE WEST FILM FESTIVAL *Dallas*

2026

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 · FILM SCREENINGS BEGIN 9:15 AM

CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE DAY · AWARDS 8:00 PM

EAST DALLAS CHRISTIAN CHURCH

629 N Peak St. · Dallas, Texas 75246

FESTIVAL INFORMATION



OFFICIAL FESTIVAL PROGRAM

THE FIRST ANNUAL DALLAS FESTIVAL

WELCOME TO PLAYHOUSE WEST

The Playhouse West Film Festival arrives in Dallas as a celebration of artists who make the work themselves - writing, directing, producing and performing in films shaped by craft, courage and collaboration.

Established in Los Angeles in 1997, the festival has become known for its filmmaker-friendly spirit and in-depth conversations after each screening block. This first Dallas edition brings that tradition to a new community and introduces audiences to emerging film artists from Playhouse West locations across the country.

Thank you to every filmmaker, performer, crew member, volunteer and audience member who made this day possible. Enjoy the films, stay for the conversations, and celebrate the people behind the work.

THE FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

FILM SCREENINGS BEGIN
9:15 AM
CONTINUE THROUGHOUT
THE DAY
AWARDS 8:00 PM

VENUE

East Dallas Christian
Church
629 N Peak St.
Dallas, TX 75246

PRESENTED BY

Playhouse West Dallas
Arts Foundation

SCREENINGS & EVENTS

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Schedule subject to change · 26 films across five screening blocks with filmmaker Q&A sessions

9:15 - 10:15 AM	FIRST BLOCK Let's Go! · Don't Pass Me By · LOUsely Based · Results · Nehemiah · Parallel Circuit · Smalltown Outsiders
10:15 - 10:50 AM	Q&A
10:50 AM - 12:00 PM	SECOND BLOCK Whenever You're Ready · For Your Ears Only · Lullaby · Ellie Makes a Friend
12:00 - 12:35 PM	Q&A
12:35 - 1:35 PM	LUNCH BREAK
1:35 - 2:55 PM	THIRD BLOCK The Pep Talk · Not Safe for Work · From Now · Bounty · Rise of the Gingerbread Man-Conversations · I Promise · Inevitable Deception · My Animus Valentine
2:55 - 3:30 PM	Q&A
3:30 - 4:50 PM	FOURTH BLOCK Unremarkable · Corruption · The Freeze · A Quart of Salt · Pillow · Promises
4:50 - 5:25 PM	Q&A
5:25 - 6:25 PM	DINNER BREAK
6:25 - 7:25 PM	FIFTH BLOCK Whale of a Tale · Between Peaks
7:25 - 8:00 PM	Q&A
8:00 PM	AWARDS CEREMONY

A MEMBER-DRIVEN CELEBRATION OF FILMMAKING

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

The Playhouse West Film Festival celebrates artists who make the work themselves - writers, directors, producers and performers building independent films through craft, collaboration and community.

Established in Los Angeles in 1997, the festival is known for its filmmaker-friendly spirit and for conversations that continue after the screen goes dark. The 2026 event brings that tradition to Dallas for the first time, with 26 films presented across five screening blocks.

Festival selections are member-driven: each film includes a Playhouse West student or alumnus in a leading creative or performing role. In the film listings, **bold names identify current Playhouse West students and alumni.**

DALLAS · 2026

26 FILMS

Five screening blocks

THE EXPERIENCE

Independent films
Filmmaker Q&As;
Grand Jury Awards

PRESENTED BY

Playhouse West Dallas
Arts Foundation

1997

FESTIVAL ESTABLISHED
IN LOS ANGELES

26

FILMS SCREENING
IN 2026

1st

ANNUAL DALLAS
FESTIVAL

A NONPROFIT PRESENTATION

The festival is sponsored by the Playhouse West Dallas Arts Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiration, education and the development of motion-picture and theatre artists.

OFFICIAL SELECTION · SCREENING ORDER

THE FILMS

Bold names identify current Playhouse West students and alumni



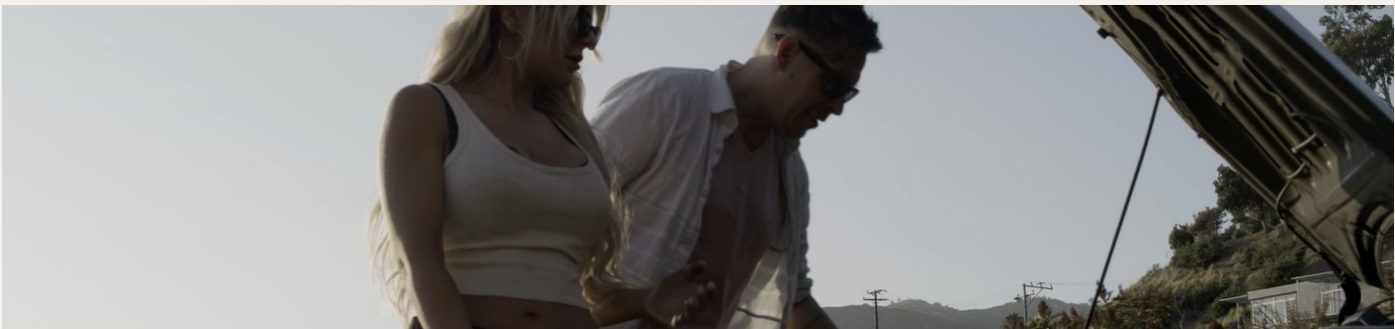
01 · FIRST BLOCK

LET'S GO!

5:07 · COMEDY

DIRECTOR Christian Valentin
PRODUCER Kasie Sandifer
SCREENPLAY Kasie Sandifer
CAST Kasie Sandifer; Janice Luo; Erica Love

Three roommates find out getting ready for a party isn't always as simple as it seems.



02 · FIRST BLOCK

DON'T PASS ME BY

2:44 · COMEDY

DIRECTOR Craig Chapman
PRODUCERS ShaunPaul Costello; Christian Liatos; Joe Hough; Robert Boyd; Ron Calhoun; Athena Vas
SCREENPLAY ShaunPaul Costello; Athena Vas
CAST ShaunPaul Costello; Athena Vas

When a man stops to help a damsel in distress, things do not go as planned.

OFFICIAL SELECTION · SCREENING ORDER

THE FILMS

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03 · FIRST BLOCK

LOUSELY BASED

14:08 · DRAMA

DIRECTOR Eric A. Eisenstein
PRODUCERS Eric A. Eisenstein; **Joeseeph Paul Mascaro**; Ryan J. Irving; Julianne Lea
SCREENPLAY Eric A. Eisenstein; **Joeseeph Paul Mascaro**; Louis Renaldo
CAST **Louis Renaldo**; Gerard DeBenedetto; Michelle Marlowe; Hunter Earls; **Joeseeph Paul Mascaro**; Jordan Hurley; Mariana Leone

A young man balances family expectations, personal struggles, and the drive to forge his own path.



04 · FIRST BLOCK

RESULTS

4:41 · DRAMA

DIRECTOR Michelle Reale-Opalesky
PRODUCERS Michelle Reale-Opalesky; Sarah Morrison-Cleary; Jack Savant
SCREENPLAY Michelle Reale-Opalesky
CAST Michelle Reale-Opalesky; Sarah Morrison-Cleary; Kate Holt

Strangers connect and offer support in a waiting room.

OFFICIAL SELECTION · SCREENING ORDER

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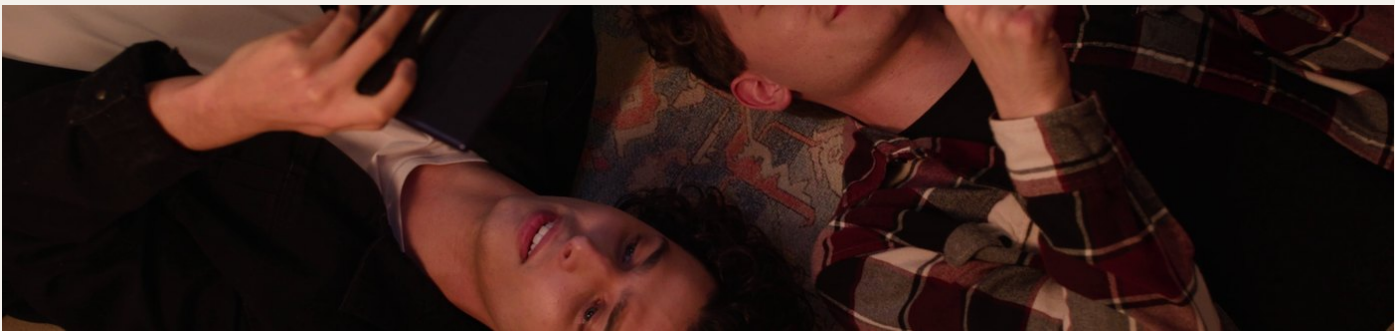
05 · FIRST BLOCK

NEHEMIAH

18:33 · DRAMA

DIRECTORS Britton Adams; Kayla McCallum
PRODUCERS Britton Adams; Kayla McCallum
SCREENPLAY Britton Adams; Kayla McCallum
CAST Kaci Nichole; **Britton Adams**; Caleb Hudson

After the loss of their young son, a grieving married couple must decide whether their unfinished life together is worth rebuilding, one painful piece at a time.



06 · FIRST BLOCK

PARALLEL CIRCUIT

8:06 · DRAMA

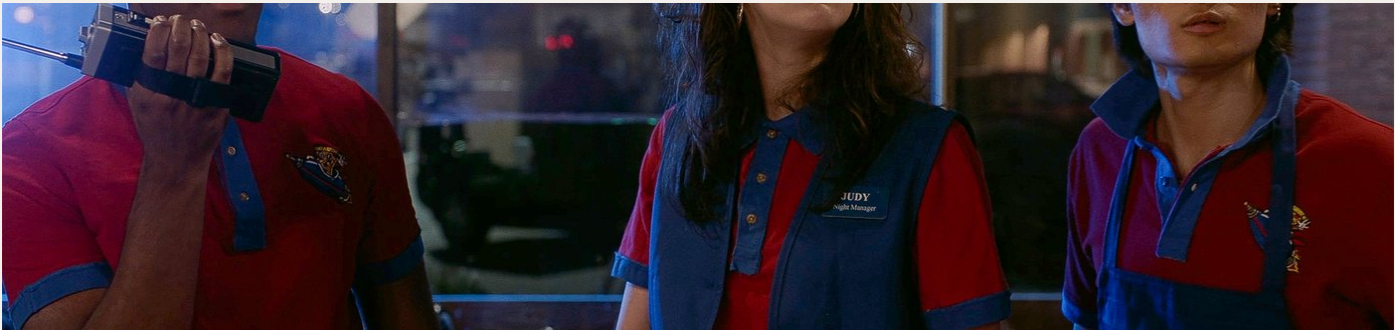
DIRECTOR Jordan Fox
PRODUCERS Mikey Ragusa; Jordan Fox
SCREENPLAY Mikey Ragusa
CAST Mikey Ragusa; Benjamin Tanner

Back home for winter break, Avery and Jonah find their bond shifting as long-buried feelings rise to the surface, forcing them to confront the desire and deep connection they've always tried to hide.

OFFICIAL SELECTION · SCREENING ORDER

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07 · FIRST BLOCK

SMALLTOWN OUTSIDERS

7:47 · SCI-FI, DRAMA, MYSTERY

DIRECTOR Michael Hill
PRODUCERS Tracy and Bobby Hill
SCREENPLAY Michael Hill
CAST **Gabriel D. Hill**; **Spencer Yang**; Peyton Elliot; Ethan Melendez; Altranecia Starr

In 1988, not much happens in Oakwood, Texas. That is until a supernatural radio frequency prompts Thomas Booker and his friends to uncover a multi-dimensional force plaguing their hometown.



08 · SECOND BLOCK

WHENEVER YOU'RE READY

8:08 · DRAMA

DIRECTOR Jack Savant
PRODUCER Nicole D'Arecca
SCREENPLAY Nicole D'Arecca; Daniel River
CAST Nicole D'Arecca; Daniel River

Mia is confronted face to face with her past on her wedding day.

OFFICIAL SELECTION · SCREENING ORDER

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09 · SECOND BLOCK

FOR YOUR EARS ONLY

17:31 · DRAMA

DIRECTOR Cyan Zhong
PRODUCERS Cyan Zhong; Christian Valentin
SCREENPLAY Cyan Zhong
CAST Corwynne Peterson; Christian Valentin; Ricardo Serrano-Padial

A lonely insomniac falls in love with a poetry podcast and embarks on an adventure to meet the voice behind it.



10 · SECOND BLOCK

LULLABY

4:44 · DRAMA

DIRECTOR Peyton Carson
PRODUCER Peyton Carson
SCREENPLAY Peyton Carson
CAST Peyton Carson

A young man with newfound responsibilities comes to find that everything might just be okay.

OFFICIAL SELECTION · SCREENING ORDER

THE FILMS

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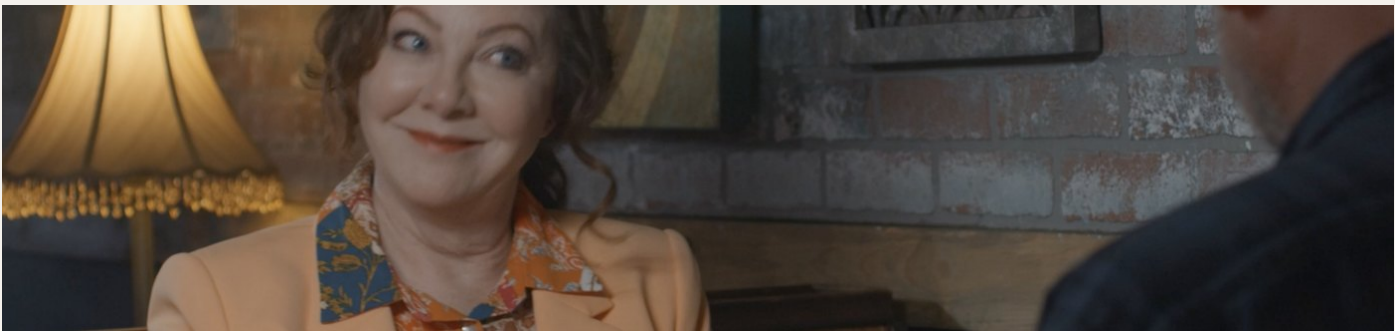
11 · SECOND BLOCK

ELLIE MAKES A FRIEND

17:00 · COMEDY

DIRECTOR Lauren Zoë
PRODUCER Lauren Zoë
SCREENPLAY Lauren Zoë
CAST **Anitaka Knight**; Stevie Marceaux

A woman calls looking for her ex and has an unexpected phone call with a stranger.



12 · THIRD BLOCK

THE PEP TALK

2:00 · COMEDY

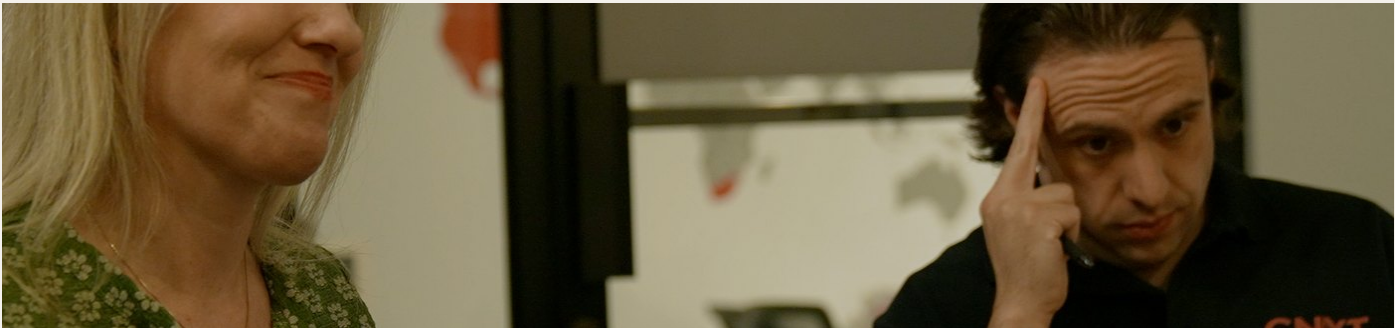
DIRECTOR Steve Whelan
PRODUCERS **Shannon Avnsoe**; Steve Whelan
SCREENPLAY **Shannon Avnsoe**
CAST **Shannon Avnsoe**; Steve Whelan

A literary agent gives her struggling, blocked author a Hollywood-style pep talk that is anything but confidence building.

OFFICIAL SELECTION · SCREENING ORDER

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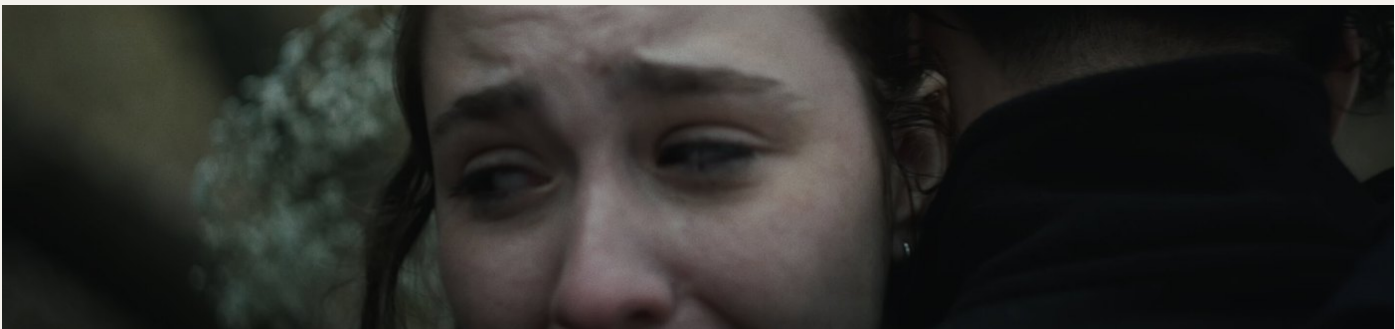
13 · THIRD BLOCK

NOT SAFE FOR WORK

13:51 · DARK COMEDY

DIRECTOR BJ Barretta
PRODUCERS Erica Moody and BJ Barretta
SCREENPLAY Erica Moody and BJ Barretta
CAST Erica Moody; Sarah Morrison-Cleary; Jon Owens; Erica Everett; David Piccinetti; Richard Frohman; Amos Quoi; Roben Jaoude

An award-winning filmmaker, adrift at a soulless social video agency and losing her grip on her team, obeys a cruel ultimatum from her boss, disguised as mentorship.



14 · THIRD BLOCK

FROM NOW

16:20 · DRAMA

DIRECTOR Jon Owens
PRODUCER Maansi Joshi
SCREENPLAY Jon Owens
CAST Rachel Poletick; Jon Owens; Chris Valentin

A young woman, reeling from the sudden loss of her husband, must confront her grief, her past and her future as she hikes through the woods searching for their tree.

OFFICIAL SELECTION · SCREENING ORDER

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15 · THIRD BLOCK

BOUNTY

13:20 · DRAMA/SUSPENSE

DIRECTOR Peter Anastasiadis
PRODUCERS Robert Boyd; **Peter Anastasiadis**; **Matthias Lojewski**; Melitza Iglesias-Colon; **Brandon McDowell**
SCREENPLAY Peter Anastasiadis
CAST Peter Anastasiadis; **Matthias Lojewski**; Robert Boyd; **Ajinkya Dhage**; **Charles Washington**; **Andrew Spence**

A detective makes a harrowing discovery while assigned to a detail for Homeland Security.



16 · THIRD BLOCK

RISE OF THE GINGERBREAD MAN-CONVERSATIONS

13:33 · EXPERIMENTAL

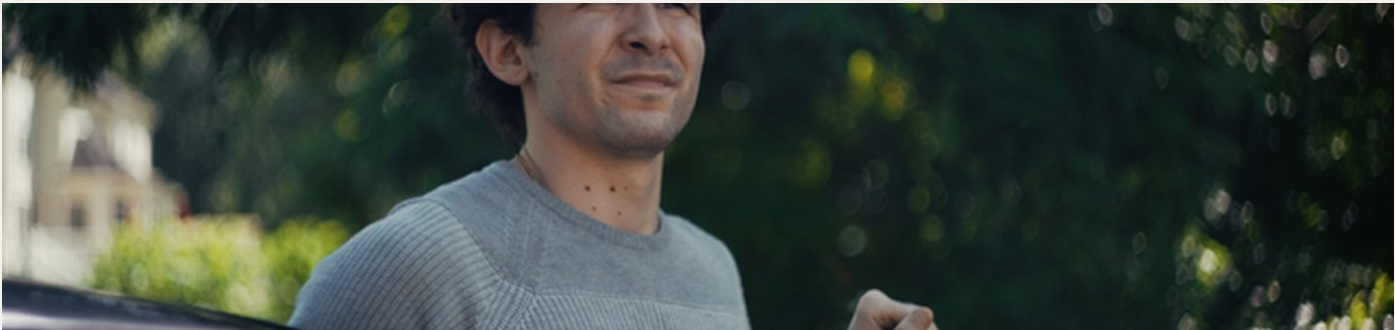
DIRECTOR Phoenix N. Brown
PRODUCER Phoenix N. Brown
SCREENPLAY Phoenix N. Brown
CAST Phoenix N. Brown (Ambience Brooks); **Bryan Harris** (Brice Wilder); **Johnny R. Williams** (Danny Calmman); **Rose Fogleman** (Shelby Tanner); **Freddie Noesk** (Playhouse Lovercheck); **Malia Oldham** (girl at the elevator)

As Ambience Brooks sets out to cast her debut feature on cognitive dissonance, she confronts clashing ideologies and the harsh realities of filmmaking.

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17 · THIRD BLOCK

I PROMISE

16:25 · DRAMA

DIRECTOR Morgan Avery Stizler
PRODUCERS Michelle Reale-Opalesky; Bubacarr Sarge; Christopher Castagna
SCREENPLAY Michelle Reale-Opalesky; Bubacarr Sarge; Christopher Castagna
CAST Michelle Reale-Opalesky; Bubacarr Sarge; Christopher Castagna

A promise made from a mother to her son.



18 · THIRD BLOCK

INEVITABLE DECEPTION - MY ANIMUS VALENTINE

5:39 · THRILLER

DIRECTOR Erica Howard
PRODUCER Stacy Okafor
SCREENPLAY Erica Howard
CAST Erica Howard; Stacy Okafor; Florida Palmore

A Valentine's Day celebration takes a dark turn when love isn't what it seems.

OFFICIAL SELECTION · SCREENING ORDER

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19 · FOURTH BLOCK

UNREMARKABLE

33:44 · DRAMA

DIRECTOR

Tony Savant

PRODUCERS

Elizabeth Lauryn Reynolds; Tony Savant

SCREENPLAY

Tony Savant

CAST

Rich Frohman; Lucie Paige; David Piccinetti; Chris Valentin; Corwynne Peterson; Kasie Sandifer; Ed Aristone; Michelle Reale-Opalesky; Kate Holt; Timour Triplet; Sarah Morrison-Cleary

Two misfits, unremarkable and overlooked by the world, find each other, and maybe love.



20 · FOURTH BLOCK

CORRUPTION

4:44 · DRAMA

DIRECTOR

Annie R. Such

PRODUCERS

Richard Fiske & Rick Andosca

SCREENPLAY

Richard Fiske

CAST

Richard Fiske as John; Annie R. Such as Wife

While on a stakeout, a federal agent receives a call from his wife that will change the course of his life and career forever.

OFFICIAL SELECTION · SCREENING ORDER

THE FILMS

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21 · FOURTH BLOCK

THE FREEZE

8:40 · COMEDY

DIRECTOR Caitlyn Cutler
PRODUCER **Hannah Bate Nelson**
SCREENPLAY **Hannah Bate Nelson**
CAST **Hannah Bate Nelson**; Gary Giles; Carolina Pizarro

New to town, a woman experiences the legendary Seattle Freeze for the first time.



22 · FOURTH BLOCK

A QUART OF SALT

6:55 · DARK COMEDY

DIRECTOR BJ Barretta
PRODUCERS BJ Barretta; **Erica Moody**; Kathryn Sanders
SCREENPLAY BJ Barretta; **Erica Moody**; Kathryn Sanders
CAST **Erica Moody**; **Corwynne Peterson**; **David Piccinetti**; **Peyton Carson**

A woman's attempt at a romantic dinner derails when her jealous AI assistant sabotages the evening—and her marriage.

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23 · FOURTH BLOCK

PILLOW

9:08 · COMEDY

DIRECTOR Christian Liatos
PRODUCERS Christian Liatos; Robert Boyd; Matt Hanisch; Connor Johnson; Shaunpaul Costello
SCREENPLAY Frederick Stoppel
CAST Holly Gagnier; Jodi Adler

A prudish mature woman learns that her friend's dating life is much more adventurous than she expected, and that might not be such a bad thing...



24 · FOURTH BLOCK

PROMISES

13:51 · DRAMA

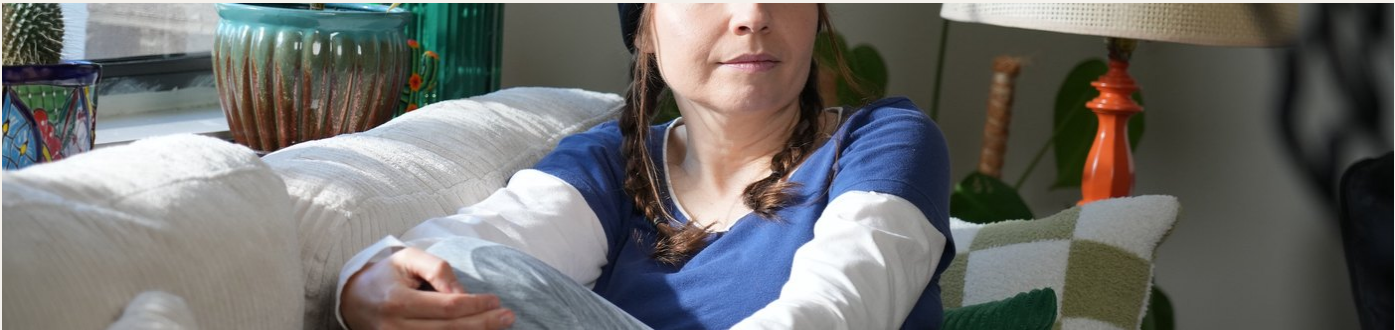
DIRECTOR Christian Liatos
PRODUCERS Christian Liatos; Grant Hall; Matt Hanisch; Heather-Ashley Boyer; Robert Boyd; Shaunpaul Costello
SCREENPLAY Christian Liatos
CAST Grant Hall; Defecio Stoglin; Chimechi Oparanozie; Xhaania Wright; **Kylia Azevedo-Jones**; **Roman Mathis**; Andre Anthony; Tramall Ferguson; Darian Michael Garey; Cole Wynter; Sabaea Wynter

Struggling to cope with his mother's death and his father's alcoholism, a young baseball player must make a difficult decision: remain loyal to his team to safeguard his sister, or venture into the perilous world of drug dealing.

OFFICIAL SELECTION · SCREENING ORDER

THE FILMS

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25 · FIFTH BLOCK

WHALE OF A TALE

12:55 · COMEDY

DIRECTOR Susan Willis
PRODUCERS Susan Willis; Tina Rich
SCREENPLAY Susan Willis
CAST Peggy Schott; Emily Giuffré; Suzanne Jennings; **Hannah Bate Nelson**

A widow, restarting her life, takes a job monitoring smart home devices, only to find herself tethered to a paranoid, conspiracy-loving client, leading her to finally use that dusty psychology degree.



26 · FIFTH BLOCK

BETWEEN PEAKS

43:44 · COMEDY

DIRECTOR Jack Savant
PRODUCER Jack Savant
SCREENPLAY Jack Savant; Olivia Prado; Richard Frohman; Jacob Cauthron
CAST Olivia Prado; Richard Frohman; Jacob Cauthron

Milo, after being blindsided by some unfortunate news, goes on a camping trip with a complete stranger.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN FILM

AWARDS

- BEST PICTURE / FILM

BEST DIRECTOR
- BEST SCREENPLAY

BEST ACTRESS & ACTOR
- BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS & ACTOR

GRAND JURY

WITH GRATITUDE

THANKS

SPECIAL THANKS

- PHOENIX N. BROWN

Festival Coordinator
- JONATHAN WOMACK

Technical Coordinator
- GENE BRADLEY JOHNSON

Graphic Design Director

FESTIVAL DIRECTORS

RIC MADDOX · TAMARA OLSON

FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS

- PHOENIX BROWN

• JONATHAN WOMACK

• GENE BRADLEY JOHNSON

• ANDREW CASEY

• CANNON WILLIAMSON
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• ERICA HOWARD

• GABRIEL HILL

• JON BILLINGSLEY
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• LAWRENCE WHITE

• MASON BEAUCHAMP

• NY LOVE



PLAYHOUSE WEST
FILM FESTIVAL

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DALLAS · 2026

SCAN FOR FESTIVAL INFORMATION



playhousewestdallas.com

SEPTEMBER 19 · EAST DALLAS CHRISTIAN CHURCH

First Annual Dallas Festival · Established in Los Angeles, 1997