

HURRICANE CHASER

**How a Miami girl
finally made her
first feature film.**

**From kickstarter
to self-distribution
Including tips,
tricks, and
templates.**

By

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I'd also like to thank my two amazing sisters and producers on this film, Lisa Michelle and Karina. No one else would have rallied as hard as they did or support me in this challenging endeavor the way they did. Because of them I finally got the confidence to perform this crazy high wire act we call filmmaking.

Speaking of high wire acts; I'd like to thank my parents, Otto and Miriam, who raised my sisters and I to believe that we are strong and capable, and to always go after our dreams. This is everything. We are lucky.

I am also grateful for our incredible cast and crew – Nick Puga, Edy Ganem, Kandis Erickson, Mr. R (for believing in this Kickstarter project when he could have supported so many others), Alex Martinez, Juan Barriga, Tim Quackenbush, Charlie Davis, Pedro Vivas Hernandez, Sean vonLembke and so many others that were a part of this film in big and small ways.

Finally, I am thankful to our wonderful Kickstarter supporters with whom this film would not exist.

Introduction

I was on the fence about sharing my journey on making *After the Wedding*. It took me longer than most to complete this film (six years!) and the film didn't win any major awards. So my filmmaking experience should hardly be viewed as a role model. But then I started thinking of all the supportive emails and tweets I've received over the years, from fellow filmmakers like myself looking for advice or not wanting to feel alone, and thought if I help one person make their film by sharing my story then it's worth it.

So here it goes, one person – I'm sharing my journey/ written a first-time filmmaking guide just for you! I've included notes, tips and tricks, and even including my business proposal template. Whether you're kicking around an early idea or already have a script and wondering what to do next – I hope you'll find something useful here. However, if you're looking for juicy gossip or stories of in-fighting you should probably look elsewhere. (Although my crew did almost walk off my set before a major Hurricane was expected to hit our location. In the end, no one walked off, the hurricane was a beautiful photogenic storm, and we all had celebratory beers in Wynwood afterwards.)

Speaking of beers, a lot has changed since the filming of my movie. I have a sleeping toddler in the other room so the only thing I'm really drinking these days is a lot of coffee to keep up. So forgive me if there are some things missing from this guide. It's mostly been written in quiet, early morning hazes, in a bit of haste, as I know my little person will wake up soon and ask for cereal.

Good luck on your filmmaking journey. See you on the other side!

– Claudia Cifuentes
Director of *After the Wedding*
December 7th, 2016
5:19 am

After the Wedding: The Big Idea

It was November 8th, 2010 and we were in Hudson, NY for the weekend. I remember the day I got the idea for my film because I was writing a lifestyle blog at the time called "Dreaming of Palm Trees", and documenting everything. (Things you have time for before kids.) My husband and I were just about to celebrate our 1st wedding anniversary and not really getting along. Most people have a great first year of marriage, but that just wasn't us. But where there's hardship there's also an opportunity (or so my Guatemalan immigrant parents taught me.)

And there, in a 2-star bed & breakfast hotel room, my script idea was born. My husband was napping, and I was tossing and turning, when the idea came to me to write a love story about newlyweds. After all, most romances are about how two people meet, but rarely do we get to spend time with characters after they're living "happily ever after." So I jotted down a few ideas on the hotel notepad, and promised myself that this was it. No matter how difficult things got, or if another idea came along, I would stick with this one. THIS was going to be my first feature film.

At the time, in addition to being frustrated in my new marriage, I was also feeling very frustrated as a creative person. Because I wasn't creating. I was 31 years old, and assisting a high-level Hollywood producer on big-budget Hollywood films (being shot in New York.) While it was fun to be on sets admiring the beautiful people, I was in charge of restocking my boss's trailer with energy bars, not providing any creative input to these films. Something needed to change. It didn't matter that I didn't have money to make my film or even the script. The most important thing that happened at that moment is that I chose to begin. Now your turn...