

m i c h a e l a j i l l m u r p h y

*the*

# LETTER







[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/THELETTERSSHORT2019/](https://www.facebook.com/thelettershort2019/)

INSTAGRAM: @THELETTERSSHORT

EMAIL: THELETTERSSHORTFILM2019@GMAIL.COM

## THE STORY

DEPICTING THE DOWNFALL OF AN ELITE SOCIAL CLUB'S PRESIDENT AT AN ESTEEMED UNIVERSITY, "THE LETTER" IS A GLIMPSE INTO A UNIQUE, FASCINATING WORLD OF COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO CRAVE EXCLUSIVITY, AND WHO HAVE A LITTLE TOO MUCH AT THEIR DISPOSAL—IN ORDER TO SHED LIGHT ON SOME OF THE UNIVERSAL ANXIETIES OF COLLEGE, PRE-ADULTHOOD, AND THE BASIC HUMAN NEED TO FEEL SPECIAL.

AFTER GIVING HER FINAL PRESIDENTIAL TOAST TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GRYPHIC CLUB ON THE EVENING OF THEIR ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY, GRADUATING SENIOR ELLIE HILL RECEIVES A LETTER IN THE CLUB'S MAIL. IT CONTAINS BAD NEWS...NEWS THAT FORCES HER TO RECKON WITH THE TRUE NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION AND PEOPLE SHE CHOSE TO SPEND THE PAST FOUR YEARS SERVING.

# THE BACKGROUND

IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT THAT YOU'VE JUST BEEN ACCEPTED TO AN ELITE UNIVERSITY, LIKE HARVARD. THAT YOU'VE WORKED TIRELESSLY IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE TO PRESENT YOURSELF, ON PAPER AND IN PERSON, AS DESERVING OF THE MOST EXCLUSIVE, ESTEEMED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE WORLD—AND ARE NOW VALIDATED. THIS EXCLUSIVITY COURSES THROUGH YOUR VEINS, BOOSTS YOUR EGO, AND INSTILLS A SENSE OF TRIUMPH. YOU FEEL ELEVATED.

AND THEN YOU LEARN THAT, AT THIS SCHOOL, THERE ARE CLUBS. SPECIAL CLUBS, THAT ONLY A SMALL PORTION OF THE STUDENT BODY CAN EVER ACCESS. CLUBS THAT ASSESS YOUR STATUS, CONNECTIONS, AND SOCIAL ABILITIES, AND ACCEPT ONLY THOSE THEY DEEM WORTHY.

SUDDENLY, YOUR SENSE OF ELEVATION FADES. BUT YOU MISS THAT FEELING. AFTER ALL, COMPARED TO YOUR FELLOW ADMITTED STUDENTS, YOU AREN'T SPECIAL ANYMORE. IN THE HOPES OF RECAPTURING IT, YOU CRAFT A NEW GOAL: TO GAIN ENTRY TO ONE OF THESE CLUBS. YOU SUCCEED. AND NOW, YOU'RE THERE.

AT THIS NEW TIER OF EXISTENCE, ONE BEGINS TO FEEL UNSTOPPABLE. NORMAL RULES STOP APPLYING. AND FOR MANY, IT BECOMES TRANSFORMATIVE.

THESE CLUBS EXIST. AT HARVARD, THEY ARE CALLED "FINAL CLUBS." AT YALE, THEY ARE SECRET SOCIETIES. AT PRINCETON, THEY ARE "EATING CLUBS." THESE CLUBS, IN TRUTH, ARE JUST KIDS FINDING WAYS TO HAVE A GOOD TIME—AND TO FEEL LIKE THEY ARE HAVING A BETTER TIME THAN THOSE AROUND THEM. WHAT IS SPECIAL, HOWEVER, IS THAT MANY SUCH CLUBS ARE EXTREMELY OLD, AND EXTREMELY RICH.

THE DRAW OF EXCLUSIVITY EXISTS AT ALL COLLEGES AND, FRANKLY, IN ALL SPHERES OF LIFE. FRATERNITIES, HONORS SOCIETIES, AND THE LIKE ARE ALL WAYS TO CULTIVATE A SENSE OF SELF-WORTH VIA ACCESS TO THAT WHICH OTHERS DON'T (OTHERS WHO, OFTEN TIMES, ARE A DIFFERENT RACE OR GENDER FROM YOU). IT'S HUMAN NATURE. AND IN MANY COLLEGIATE CASES, THERE ARE NO REAL STAKES INVOLVED—ONLY PERCEIVED ONES.

BUT ON MODERN COLLEGE CAMPUSES, CORROSIVE EXCLUSIVITY HAS BECOME A TARGET. AND SOMETIMES, FAKE STAKES DO BECOME REAL. IN AN ERA OF INCREASING TENSIONS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND SOCIAL CLUBS, REAL CONSEQUENCES FOR COLLEGE "DEBAUCHERY" MATERIALIZE MORE OFTEN THAN EVER. CONSEQUENCES THAT CAN CHANGE A 21-YEAR-OLD'S LIFE FOREVER.

IN "THE LETTER," ELLIE HILL HAS NEVER QUITE FIT IN WITH THE GRYPHIC CLUB FOR GENTLEPEOPLE, ALTHOUGH SHE HAS NEVER SHOWN IT. SHE HAS LET IT TRANSFORM HER FROM A HARDWORKING ACADEMIC SUPERSTAR OF HUMBLE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND TO A LEADER AND SCAPEGOAT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN TOLD "NO."

IN ONE FATEFUL NIGHT, THE REALITY OF THE WORLD SHE HAS CHOSEN COMES CRASHING DOWN ON HER.





# THE CREATIVE TEAM

## ALEX COHEN (WRITER/DIRECTOR/EDITOR)

GRADUATED FROM HARVARD UNIVERSITY IN FILM IN 2018, HAVING PRODUCED AND SHOT THREE FICTION SHORTS, THREE MUSIC VIDEOS, AND FOUR DOCUMENTARY SHORTS. SINCE GRADUATING, HE HAS WRITTEN AND SHOT A FOURTH SHORT AND SHOT A 4-EPIISODE WEB SERIES. IN ADDITION TO DIRECTING, SCREENWRITING, AND EDITING, ALEX HAS A BACKGROUND IN VISUAL ART AND CARTOONING—HE PROVIDED ALL CONCEPT ART AND STORYBOARDS FOR “THE LETTER.”



## AARON CASSARA (DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

GREW UP IN CHICAGO, AND GRADUATED WITH HONORS FROM COLUMBIA COLLEGE WITH A DEGREE IN FILM AND VIDEO. HIS FIRST FILM OUT OF SCHOOL WENT TO SEVERAL FILM FESTIVALS, INCLUDING SARASOTA AND HOLLYSHORTS, AFTER WINNING AUDIENCE CHOICE IN ITS MONTHLY SCREENING SERIES. HE HAS BEEN FREELANCING IN TELEVISION, FILM AND VIDEO FOR 8 YEARS, WITH EXTENSIVE CINEMATOGRAPHY AND EDITING EXPERIENCE. HE HAS DIRECTED AND PRODUCED SEVERAL SHORT FILMS (DOCUMENTARY AND NARRATIVE) AND A 5-EPIISODE WEB SERIES.

## DANIEL PROSKY (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)

IS A NEW YORK-BASED SET DESIGNER FOR THEATER, FILM, MUSIC, AND EVENTS. RECENT THEATER DESIGNS INCLUDE *1969: THE SECOND MAN* (NEW YORK THEATER WORKSHOP NEXT DOOR), *TWO BY FRIEL* (IRISH REPERTORY THEATRE), *MEDEA* (ATLANTIC ACTING SCHOOL), AND *RAGTIME* (ELLIS ISLAND). HIS PROJECTS INCLUDE WORK WITH A\$AP ROCKY, THE NEW YORK TIMES, THE FUTURE OF STORYTELLING, AND THE PULITZER PRIZES AT VENUES LIKE SOTHEBY’S, THE WILLIAMSBURG SAVINGS BANK TOWER, AND HARVARD UNIVERSITY’S SANDERS THEATER. OTHER DESIGNS INCLUDE WORK WITH THE FLEA THEATER, COMMONWEALTH SHAKESPEARE COMPANY, AND THE AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER. HE RECEIVED HIS B.A. FROM HARVARD UNIVERSITY.





# PRINCIPAL CAST

## MICHAELA JILL MURPHY (ELLIE)

IS AN AMERICAN ACTRESS AND SINGER BEST KNOWN FOR HER EARLIER VOICEWORK AS TOPH BEIFONG IN NICKELODEON'S *AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER*, CHACA IN DISNEY'S *THE EMPEROR'S NEW SCHOOL*, AND YOUNG FRANNY IN *MEET THE ROBINSONS*. AFTER GRADUATING FROM YALE UNIVERSITY WITH A DUAL DEGREE IN FILM AND THEATER STUDIES, SHE MOVED TO NEW YORK TO PURSUE ACTING AND CURRENTLY PERFORMS WITH THE BAND FACES FOR RADIO.



## SARA RAHMAN (SARAH)

IS A NYC BASED ACTOR. WHEN SHE'S NOT PERFORMING VOICEOVER AND HOSTING HER KIDS YOUTUBE CHANNEL, ELLIE SPARKLES—NOW 2 MILLION SUBSCRIBERS STRONG—SHE IS LISTENING TO AUDIOBOOKS AND TEACHING TWO YEAR OLDS HOW TO SHARE.



## DAVID KLEIN (JOHN)

IS A NYC-BASED ACTOR, COMEDY WRITER, AND FILM/THEATRE CREATOR ORIGINALLY FROM TORONTO, CANADA. HE IS A RECENT GRADUATE OF NYU TISCH WHERE HE TRAINED AT THE STELLA ADLER STUDIO AND STONESTREET STUDIOS.



# THE PRODUCERS

## TIFFANY FISHER-LOVE

IS A QUEER, BROOKLYN-BASED PRODUCER. RECENT PROJECTS INCLUDE: PRODUCER, *STORMING* (CHICKEN & EGG NEST KNIGHT FELLOW 2019); PRODUCER, *UNDER THE RED UMBRELLA* (TRANSGRESS STUDIOS); ASSOCIATE PRODUCER, *UNTITLED - FREE SPEECH* (JUSTVISION); AND ARCHIVIST - *UNTITLED, 40 DAYS* (BRAVA MEDIA). OTHER PROJECTS INCLUDE: CO-PRODUCER, *UNITED SKATES* (HBO 2019, TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL AUDIENCE AWARD WINNER, 2018); PRODUCER, *OUT TO DRY* (SOLIPSISTIC PRODUCTIONS), PRODUCER, *BARISTA* (SOLIPSISTIC PRODUCTIONS) AND PRODUCER, *#GOINGHOMELESS* WEB SERIES. WITH 10+ YEARS OF THEATRE BACKGROUND SPANNING JOBS WITH BROADWAY ACROSS AMERICA AND VAN WARPED TOUR TO DIANA WORTHAM HOUSE AND OPERA IRELAND, TIFFANY IS THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NEW YORK MADNESS, PROMOTING FEMALE & LGBTQIA+ WORKS. SHE HOLDS A GUINNESS WORLD RECORD AS THE YOUNGEST FEMALE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR IN OUTDOOR THEATRE HISTORY (MPP, 2013).



## JULIANNA AUCOIN

CURRENTLY WORKS IN MEDIA, HELPING GROW AUDIENCE AND DISTRIBUTION FOR SHORT FORM CONTENT. AS A STUDENT AT HARVARD, JULIANNA RAN A SUCCESSFUL YOUTUBE CHANNEL WITH MILLIONS OF VIEWS. SHE ALSO WORKED ON DEVELOPING AND PRODUCING UNSCRIPTED TELEVISION SHOWS IN LA. JULIANNA NOW RESIDES IN BROOKLYN, NYC.



## JACOB QUESENBERRY

IS A PRODUCER, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY, AND PHOTOGRAPHER HAILING FROM THE 54TH HIGHEST MOUNTAIN IN WEST VIRGINIA, CURRENTLY RESIDING IN NYC SINCE LATE 2014. HIS WORK HAS VARIED FROM BEING ON THE SET OF FEATURE FILMS TO PRODUCING AND SHOOTING SHORT FILMS, MUSIC VIDEOS, RUNWAY FASHION AND DOCUMENTARY.

## STEPH FERRARIE

CURRENTLY WORKS IN THE MEDIA RIGHTS DEPARTMENT AT ANONYMOUS CONTENT IN LOS ANGELES. SHE PREVIOUSLY WAS A PRODUCER AT SHOUT! FACTORY AND WORKED ON *SUBLIME: THE DOCUMENTARY* WHICH PREMIERED AT TRIBECA IN APRIL 2019. STEPH GRADUATED WITH A DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY FROM HARVARD, WHERE SHE PRODUCED NINE STUDENT THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS INCLUDING *COLUMBINUS* AND *GYPSY* ON THE AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER'S LOEB MAINSTAGE.





# CREDITS

*WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY:* ALEX COHEN

*PRODUCED BY:* ALEX COHEN, STEPH FERRARIE, JULIANNA AUCOIN, JACOB QUESENBERRY, TIFFANY FISHER-LOVE

*ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS:* JOAN SCHULMAN, ALAN C. DREWSSEN

*DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:* AARON CASSARA

*PRODUCTION DESIGNER:* DANIEL PROSKY

*EDITED BY:* ALEX COHEN AND DAVID CARSON

*MUSIC BY:* GRANT HOECHST

*FULL CAST:* MICHAELA JILL MURPHY, SARA RAHMAN, DAVID KLEIN, UMA PARANJPE, NATHANIEL JAMESON, ALEXANDER RIOS, MEGAN KHAZIRAN, PADDY O'SULLIVAN

*1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:* GERALDINE PETROVIC

*2ND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:* MAX MCGILLIVRAY

*SCRIPT SUPERVISOR:* WESLEY RUMM

*A-CAM OP:* AARON CASSARA

*B-CAM OPS:* JONATHAN NELSON, JOSHUA PEREZ, JACOB QUESENBERRY, BRENDAN WARD

*1ST AC:* DAVE BURDETTE

*2ND AC:* BRENDAN WARD, JACOB QUESENBERRY

*SET PHOTOGRAPHERS:* DUANE HARPER GRANT, KURT GREMER

*POSTER PHOTOGRAPH BY:* GERALDINE PETROVIC

*PRODUCTION SOUND RECORDIST/MIXER:* JONAH PRENDERGAST

*AUDIO RE-RECORDING, EDITING, AND MIXING:* TRAVIS DEVIN

*GAFFER:* JOSHUA PEREZ

*BEST BOY ELECTRIC:* KURT GREMER

*GRIP:* TREVOR MACK

*MAKEUP AND HAIR STYLIST:* LEA BAGLEY

*WARDROBE SUPERVISOR:* ERICA SCHULMAN

*COLORIST:* RICK OKRAY

*PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS:* PETER CAPOZZI, RICHIE DUQUE, JUSTIN HOLNESS, HYE-JEUNG KANG, ANTHONY LONGO, JASSMEEN MARIE, KACEY MONTANA, ANJALI RAWAT, JIHYUN SHIN, ALLISON SILBERBERG, NICHOLAS STARIKOVSKY

*GENRE:* LIVE-ACTION, NARRATIVE SHORT, DRAMA

*FORMAT:* SONY F55, FS7, A7S II

*TRT:* 13.5 MIN | COLOR | DIGITAL | 2.35:1 | STEREO | 23.98 FPS | ENGLISH