

How Do You Dress For A Hurricane?

STITCHES



AFT's DIRECTING WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN PRESENTS AN AVALON BLVD. PRODUCTION
"STITCHES" STARRING GABI ROJAS CHELSEA MAKELA LESHAY N. TOMLINSON KATE DANLEY AND TOMMY MIKAL FORD
CASTING BY MARIE ROWE DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JEFF BOLLMAN PRODUCTION DESIGNER JEANINE A. NICHOLAS COSTUME DESIGNER NANCY WEI
MUSIC BY ANTHONY GUEFEN EDITED BY JOHN TRAVERS
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER JOYCE JOHNSON PRODUCED BY ROMELL FOSTER-OWENS AND JENNIFER JONES
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY PAMELA K. JOHNSON

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PHOTO: JOHN MAIO
POSTER DESIGN: KERIANN MARTIN



STITCHES

TAGLINE

How Do You Dress For A Hurricane?

SYNOPSIS

SHORT

Displaced by Hurricane Katrina, a fashionista must share a room with a girl who's a fashion disaster, until the unhip girl provokes the stylish one to reveal who she is inside the pretty clothes.

LONG

In this coming-of-age drama, a mother and daughter quickly evacuate New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina. Carrying only a few of their belongings in a small boat, they argue about why the girl, Delphine, chose to save her sewing machine over the family photo album. The mother just doesn't understand. For the teen, though, it was a no-brainer: In New Orleans, she was the best-dressed girl in her high school, and she had a lucrative business designing clothes for classmates. But in Utah, her new temporary home, she's forced to share a room with a girl named Hannah who has no style. Homesick and crushed that she is missing the Parish Autumn Ball, Delphine resists her new roomie's efforts at friendship. However Hannah is as serious about creating a connection, as Delphine is about avoiding one. Ultimately her confrontations with Hannah provoke Delphine to reveal who she is inside the pretty clothes.





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AFI DIRECTING WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN

A major force in training women in narrative filmmaking since 1974, the Directing Workshop for Women (DWW) has welcomed more than 200 participants into its innovative and unique program. Some DWW alumnae include Lesli Linka Glatter (*The West Wing, Grey's Anatomy, The Closer*); Randa Haines (*Children Of A Lesser God, Dance With Me*); Victoria Hochberg (*Sex And The City, Ghost Whisperer*); Neema Barnette (*Gilmore Girls, Civil Brand*); and Tricia Brock (*The L Word, Grey's Anatomy, Ugly Betty*).

Over a yearlong period, the women selected for this prestigious program focus on the development and production of a short narrative project. Participants enter with a short screenplay, which they further enhance over a three-week workshop on the practical aspects of filmmaking.

During preproduction, the women directors raise funds and hire crew. AFI provides \$5,000 to each production, while participants raise up to an additional \$20,000 in support of their projects. Production occurs over five days, with another 20 days allotted for editing. The films debut at a special Hollywood premiere, and then are available to tour the festival circuit and/or be shown on television.

(www.afi.com/education/dww/)





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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I had a script in the drawer about a mother and daughter who clashed over the daughter's clothes. The teen wore midriff tops and below-the-waist pants, and the mother was so worried that the girl would end up in a predator's clutches, that she hired a deprogrammer to get the child back on track.

I fiddled with this script from time to time, but the story never caught fire. Then, after Hurricane Katrina, I got an image in my mind of a girl's clothing wrapped around light poles and trees in the Lower Ninth Ward. I picked up the old script and began to rework it. As I continued to experiment with it, I began to hear a girl's voice—the girl who belonged to the clothes. She was irritated. She was a young fashionista, and now all her clothes were gone, and not only that, but she had to evacuate, and she worried that her sewing machine might get damaged. So as I listened to the voice of this girl, Delphine Toussaint, I began to get a sense of how a young person might experience Hurricane Katrina's blow to her city and to her sense of self.

Around that time I heard about the American Film Institute's Directing Workshop for Women. I applied and was one of eight selected out of more than 200 applicants. Our group was given the amazing opportunity to participate in a comprehensive crash course on how to make a film. We learned about cinematography style, production design, script supervision—every aspect of the process. As a writer, the most valuable part of experience was the chance to develop my script. We were fortunate to have two powerful writing instructors: George Walzack and Gill Dennis. Walzack generously continued to work with me after the session on screenwriting was over. I did 10 or 12 drafts and he read them all, helping me get my script to where I wanted it to be.

Raising the \$25,000 to make *Stitches* was an intense experience. I had to get over the icky feeling of asking people for money, and just suck it up and send out letters to friends, friends of friends, friends of my mother's and people who I thought had big enough pockets to help out. I got all the money I needed, so that turned out to be an enlightening experience: Going from being too timid to ask, to the boldness required to be a filmmaker.





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PRODUCTION NOTES

We had five days to shoot *Stitches*, so I tried to find places that were within a mile or so of each other. The place that seemed to make the most sense, given that I lived there, was Long Beach, CA. Of course it would have been cool to be able to go to New Orleans and shoot. But some kind of rule, maybe Screen Actors Guild-related, said that we had to shoot within 30 miles of a certain location in Los Angeles. Fortunately, as the crow flies, Long Beach falls within that radius.

A number of the scenes needed to be shot at a high school. As I began to cast about for one where we might shoot affordably, one of my contacts said, "You know Mo's brother is a principal at Poly High." Well that was within a mile and change of where I lived. I got in touch with the school's Principal Shawn Ashley, who let us use parts of the campus for a reasonable fee.

We had to work around the fact that it was summer and there were tons of kids taking classes, but we managed to get scenes shot in the halls, at the student store and in the pool, which was not heated, so our actresses tried not to shiver as they said their lines. The pool served as their evacuating New Orleans scene. We put shoes, record albums, clothes and other items in the pool to simulate the scene of what the waters might have looked like as remnants of people's lives floated in them.

I was fortunate that two friends, Emalyn and Greg Brown, allowed us to use their home, also within a short distance of my place. I would have used my own home, but it was against DWW rules. We shot the first two days at their place, getting the bedroom scenes, the front of the house, the living room and the kitchen, which served as the Utah home of mother and daughter, Margie and Hannah. In the story, they charitably take in a displaced New Orleans mother and daughter.

Emalyn and Greg's backyard served as Grand Central Station as we set up a place for the actors to hang, as well as for the make-up artist, costume designer, video village and craft services. We had a generator out at the curb and it seemed that every day, I had to dig deep in my pockets to put more gas in it. I worried that we wouldn't make all our shots, but we hustled and got it done.





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PRODUCTION NOTES [cont.]

The last location was L.A. Metro's Wardlow train station, which also fit the distance criteria. It was the scene in which Delphine is trying to get back home to New Orleans, and runs into a man who is also from there and offers her some comfort in her despair at being so far from home. This scene was fraught with challenges. I had wanted to shoot it at a Greyhound station, but the P.R. guy said I couldn't because the story was about a runaway. But the character doesn't actually run away. So we cast about for the longest time, trying to find a suitable back up for the bus station. I even thought of renting a bus, but ultimately came up with the train station as plan B. Then the actor who was supposed to be in the scene with my main character, called at 6 p.m. the night before to say that he had a call-back for a

commercial and couldn't do the film. Fortunately, one of my producers, Romell Foster-Owens, knew actor Tommy Ford, and we called him and he graciously agreed to jump in and help us out. The day we shot the scene, we had to stop and start a lot because there were planes, trains, automobiles, helicopters and buses. You name it, it was passing by or overhead. Crazy. But we had a great sound crew, including Veda Campbell and Ivy Lindsey, who made all the difference.

It was a fun shoot, and we finished early enough that we could reshoot some scenes, two of which we didn't use, and the third which serves as the button at the very end of the film.

I had such a blast!





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DIRECTOR'S BIO



A veteran journalist, **PAMELA K. JOHNSON** wrote and directed her first film, *Talk Me To Death*, in the 2006 Duke City Shootout. A comedy about rampant cell-phone use at a funeral, it won the editing and audience awards. In May 2008, she completed her second film, *Stitches*, which won the Adrienne Shelley Production Grant on the strength of its story. Pamela is a recipient of a Women in Film/General Motors' Emerging Filmmakers Grant. She co-wrote two books, including *Santa and Pete*, which was made into a 1999 CBS TV movie starring James Earl Jones, Hume Cronyn and Flex Alexander. She holds a B.A. in Communication, and an MFA in fiction. Her day job is managing editor of health-oriented *ABILITY Magazine*.

PRODUCER'S BIOS



For over 20 years, **ROMELL FOSTER-OWENS** (right) has produced, written and directed award-winning television series, made for TV movies, documentaries, and independent feature films. She is a graduate of the prestigious American Film Institute, where she majored in directing. Currently, she's president of two full service television and film production companies: Jowharah Films and Romell Foster-Owens Productions, Inc. She has produced and written more than 200 hours of television programming, including the Emmy Award-winning series *Teen Scene* and the television series *Motorsports Mania*. Two of the films she produced were official selections of the 2008 Cannes Film Festival.

JENNIFER JONES (left) is an independent film producer who writes business plans for investors, raises funds, and reads, researches and assesses scripts. She hires key staff for film shoots, supervises projects from production to post production, and controls both budgets and resource allocation. She is a licensed attorney in the state of California.





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CAST BIOS



GABI ROJAS (Delphine)

Born and raised in the circus, she studied under her mother, Rosalinda Rojas, a renown dancer and teacher. Gabi was selected to join the Cirque du Soliel performance roster, and recently was accepted into the school at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. She is a recent summa cum laude graduate of the University of New Mexico with a BA in both theater and dance. She is pursuing a career in film and dance.



CHELSEA MAKELA (Hannah)

Recently relocated to Hollywood from her small Northern California hometown, Chelsea is a veteran of many a recital, improv show and theatrical production. She plays the co-lead (Tracy) in the newest Wayans' Brothers feature film. She recently recorded voiceovers for the UK's *Build A Bearville* tutorial and a PSA for the Los Angeles City Ballet.



LESHAY TOMLINSON (Claire)

An actress, writer, and producer born in Queens, New York, she made her debut in the film 20th Century Fox Film *Light It Up*. Her other feature film credits include *What Women Want* with Mel Gibson, *A Mighty Wind* directed by Christopher Guest, and *After The Sunset* directed by Brett Ratner. Her many television credits include guest starring roles on Lifetime Television's *Strong Medicine*, UPN's *Eve*, the hit Nickelodeon show *Drake & Josh* and Snoop Dogg's *Doggiefizzle Telefizzle* on MTV. She has appeared in national commercials for Chrysler, Bailey's, Windex, T-Mobile, Best Buy, Southwest Airlines and others.

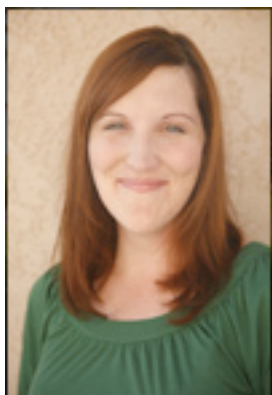




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CAST BIOS

KATE DANLEY (Margie)



Kate Danley is a summa cum laude graduate of Towson University with a B.S. in Theatre. She appeared as the White Trash Star F**ker Fairy Godmother in GTC's *Blake... da Musical!*, which won the Ovation (LA's version of a Tony) for Best New Musical. Her portrayal of Dr. Livingstone in *Agnes of God* garnered four ACT awards. She has performed at the British Embassy, the La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts, the Keegan Irish Theater, IO West and Second City. She performs regularly at the Acme Comedy Theater as a member of the X-Ray improv company and Charlie sketch company. Her own sketch company, *Hair of the Mangy Dog*, was selected for the LA Comedy Festival. She trained with Michael Earl (a.k.a. Mr. Snuffleupagus) in on-camera puppetry. Television credits include *America's Most Wanted*, *Homicide: Life on the Streets* and *Head2Toe*.

TOMMY MIKAL FORD (Train Station Man)



Best known for his role as "Tommy" on the hit Fox television comedy, *Martin*, the Los Angeles native graduated from the Fine Arts Acting Program of USC, and soon landed his first television role on NBC's *A Different World*. Shortly thereafter, he made his feature film debut in Eddie Murphy's *Harlem Knights*. Tommy has had recurring and guest star roles on many television shows such as *Law And Order*, *Living Single*, *The Jamie Foxx Show*, *Judging Amy* and *House*. He is currently in his third season as the Pope of Comedy on TV One's popular show, *Who's Got Jokes!* He recently completed three TV pilots: *Night Life* directed by Zach Braff for the Fox network, and *Jamilia's Box* and *Hitched* for Aaron Spelling's Production Company. He is founder and president of Be Still And Know, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to building better communities for youth.





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CREDITS

Gabi Rojas as Delphine

Chelsea Makela as Hannah

LeShay N. Tomlinson as Claire

Kate Danley as Margie

and

Tommy Mikal Ford as Train Station Man

Written & Directed by **Pamela K. Johnson**

Produced by **Romell Foster-Owens** and **Jennifer Jones**

Executive Producer **Joyce Johnson**

Director of Photography **Jeff Bollman**

Edited by **John Travers**

Casting Director **Marie Rowe**

Music Composer **Anthony Guefen**

Production Designer **Jeanine A. Nicholas**

Costume Designer **Nancy Wei**





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CREDITS

Extras

Kristin McCullough
Melissa McCullough
Candice Cage
Sonnie Gutierrez
Kelly Kimball
Magali Kimball
Cheryl Makela
Jeanine A. Nicholas
Nancy Wei
Michelle Mackinnon
Ari Joffe
Paul Dowdakin
Lindsay Ungerman

First Assistant Director

Romell Foster-Owens

Unit Production Manager

Alex McCullough

Production Coordinator

Jessica Abraham

Sound Mixer

Veda Campbell

Boom Operator

Ivy Lindsey

Visual Effects Producer

Virginia Perry Smith

Camera Operator

Jeff Bollman

First Camera Assistant

Scott Resnick

Second Camera Assistant

Kim Lapplander

Gaffer

Greg Hess

Key Grip

Chuck Byrd

Grip/Electric

Michael O'Day
Tony Astrino
Chris Stevens
Paul Dowdakin

Second Assistant Directors

Paul Dowdakin
Chris Stevens

Additional Assistant Director

Lydia Martinelli

Set Dresser

Michelle Mackinnon

Script Supervisor

Ari Joffe

Key Make-Up & Hair

Christina Chilcotte

Still Photographer

Michele K. Short

On Set Videographer

Donell Nelson

Caterer

Independent Kitchen Fiesta

AFI/DWW Coordinator

Candice Cage

New Orleans Mardi Gras &
Katrina Video Footage Provided by
Royce Osborn & William Sabourin
Historical New Orleans Collection

An Avalon Blvd. Production





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SPECIAL THANKS

The American Film Institute
Joe Petricca
Nichol Simmons
Chris Schwartz

DEREK T. DINGLE/
Black Enterprise Magazine

CHARISSE BREMOND/
Brotherhood Crusade

SUSAN L. TAYLOR

George Walczak

Shawn Ashley/
Long Beach Polytechnic High School

Herman Hagan/
Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority

Greg and Emalyn Brown

Judith R. Harris
Cathryn McGill
Brianna Little
Alyssa Shepherd-Moore
Lynn Pitts
Emory White

Alliance of Women Directors

Keriann Martin





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Delphine evacuates New Orleans with a few of her belongings.
Download: <http://stitchesthemovie.com/images/stills/stitches03.jpg>



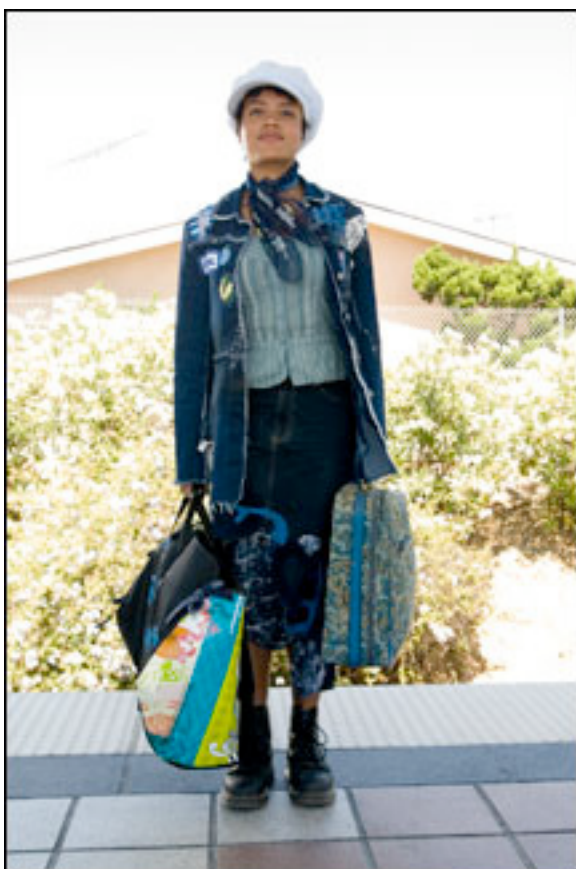
Unlike their girls, Delphine's mother, Claire, and Hannah's mom, Margie, get along famously.
Download: <http://stitchesthemovie.com/images/stills/stitches12.jpg>





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One week after being evacuated from New Orleans, Delphine decides she's going back home.

Download:
<http://stitchesthemovie.com/images/stills/stitches09.jpg>



Delphine meets a man from home who urges her to "give New Orleans some time."

Download:
<http://stitchesthemovie.com/images/stills/stitches08.jpg>





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Delphine's fashions catch on at her new school.

Download: <http://stitchesthemovie.com/images/stills/stitches11.jpg>



Between classes, Hannah talks Delphine's ear off.

Download: <http://stitchesthemovie.com/images/stills/stitches14.jpg>





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