



OLAN, TX



## LOGLINE

A retired soldier returns to a small Texas town to bury his father, only to find out that he's too late for the funeral.

## SYNOPSIS

Out of the Army, out of a job, and just out of a marriage, Olan returns to make his late father's funeral arrangements and to fulfill a final wish: a military burial at Arlington National Cemetery. Ever the prodigal son, Olan arrives too late and finds his father already in the ground, letting the old man down one last time. He's left with a stack of unpaid bills, an old pickup truck, and a quirky little terrier named Cicero. Before he can move on, Olan must make peace with the man he thought he knew and the past he left behind. And he'll have to do the unthinkable if he wants to make things right.

## TECHNICAL INFO

Title	<i>Olan, TX</i>
Genre	Drama
Production Year	2022-2023
Country of Origin	USA
Language	English
Run Time	13:31
Screen Ratio	21:9
Sound Format	Stereo



# CREATIVE TEAM



**Nathan Markiewicz** (director) is a filmmaker and stage director based in Austin, TX. After graduating from the legendary Vancouver School of Arts and Academics he earned a BFA at the University of Colorado where he got his start as an understudy at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. He holds an MFA in directing from East 15, University of Essex and was a protege of acclaimed British director Stephen Unwin. Known for *Love/Love* (2022), and *Liberty and the Pursuit* (2017).



**Christian Durso** (writer) is a Los Angeles native, playwright, screenwriter, and classically trained actor. He created, executive produced, and wrote for THE STRANDED series on Netflix. His plays have been produced at The Roundabout Theatre Company, The Flea, The Old Globe, The NOLA Project, FaultLine, and with the IAMA Theatre Company in Los Angeles and New York. He is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of The Arts and the USD/Old Globe MFA Professional Actor Training Program. A proud member of AEA, SAG-AFTRA, and the WGA.



**Angela Herr** (DP) is a queer, non-binary Director of Photography and Director based in NYC. They grew up in the outback of Australia and the Pacific Northwest. As a young child they spend the majority of their time running around the bush, climbing trees, painting and creating obscure art. Before moving to NYC they spent ten years in Austin, Texas working in the film industry and creating a dynamic community of filmmakers. Capturing emotion and beauty through lighting and movement is their specialty. As well as collaborating with other people and departments on set.

# CAST



**Matt Clark** (Olan) received his MFA in performance at East 15 Acting school in London in 2015. He has also trained at The Russian Academy of Theatre Arts (GITIS) in Moscow, and the Michael Chekhov Actor's Studio (Meisner) in Boston. Recent stage credits include Adolf in *Creditors* (London), Old Man in *Chairs* (London) and Edgar in *King Lear* (Worcester). He was principal in Under Armour's SuperBowl LI commercial "The Legend of Tom Brady." Matt is represented by Andrew Wilson of Andrew Wilson Talent Agency, Boston, and Barry Godin of BMG for New York bookings.



**Quevette Terrell** (Treece) hails from San Antonio, TX and now resides in Austin. Her passion for acting stems from her amazing career in education. She was awarded the 2015 Austin Independent School Districts first female African American Teacher of the Year. Quevette, has spent over a decade impacting the lives of her students. Quevette's film career has included being the lead actress in Cinema Squads *The Job*, *Element of Fear*, Bonner's *Bringem Black*, and Lonely Kid Productions *The Prodigal*. Quevette prides herself on ensuring that anything she is a part of will uplift and inspire others.



**Donnie Price** (Tom) has been a respected Texas musician since the 1970s. A peruse through his Facebook photos show him performing with the likes of such prestigious Texas artists as Augie Meyers and Flaco Jiminez (Texas Tornados); Rusty Weir; Steven Fromholz; Ryan Bingham; Tish Hinojosa; Billy Joe Shaver; Willie Nelson and more. Acting and hosting are a couple other interests of Donnie's, having had quite a few speaking parts in local indie films and commercials, as well as hosting online and live interview series' where his "never met a stranger" personality comes through to make his guests comfortable and open.

## CAST (CONTINUED)



**JoJo Ginn** (Billie) is a LA based actor she has a BFA in Musical Theatre and then graduated with her MFA in Acting from East 15 School in London UK where she performed on The Globe stage. She is a founder of *The Barrington Collective* theatre company and produces and acts in their productions, including the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, fringeNYC, and their continuing Holiday reading series which she is producing in LA now. She is thrilled to be a part of *Olan, TX*.



**Nick Wakely** (Bartender) is an American screen, stage, and voice actor. Known for *She, Who Dared* (2023), *Machine Gun Town* (2023), *Interview With a Genius* (2015), and *Real Love* (2014). He has performed all over the world, on stages in London, Moscow, Edinburgh, and beyond.



**Allison Porta** (Jess) is a NY based actor with an MFA in Acting from East 15 Acting School and a BA in Theatre Arts from Eastern Michigan University. In addition to their degrees, they have also trained with the Moscow Art Theatre (MXAT) Stanislavsky Summer School, the Russian Academy of Dramatic Arts (GITIS), and UK theatre company Frantic Assembly. They are also a Laban practitioner and instructor.





## THE MAKING (AND MEANING) OF OLAN, TX

I thought I was making films so I could *tell* stories, but I was wrong. I discovered that I'm really in it to hear them. They say life imitates art, but that's a bunch of horseshit. A not-so-clever inversion of what everyone already knows: movies are make-believe. Right? As usual, the truth is a little more complicated. You see, I used to be just like the hero of this short film. Broke and out of work, with the ink still drying on my divorce, I washed out of New York City at the age of thirty-seven and moved in with my mother at the dead-end of a country road. It was these very events that spurred Christian Durso to write the first draft of *Olan, TX*. I found solace in long solitary road trips through west Texas. Along the way I met the people who are at the core of this film and I fell in love with the landscape that has become this fictional town.

In the opening shot, director of photography Angela Herr captures a potent image, a rusty oil well sputtering against a backdrop of churning wind turbines. It's easy to see which way the

wind blows. Fossil fuels are running out and their extraction has damaged the land. Renewable energy like the vast wind farms featured in Olan, TX must be our future. Once again though, the truth isn't so simple. Many locals oppose the turbines. The industry is not well regulated and some folks who live among them were unable to share in the profits, not in the way their grandparents did when oil was struck on the farm. These stories get told in whispers. Up close, the turbines make funny noises—enough that our sound techs earned their money—and they do occasionally spew industrial lubricant. I saw a cow walking around with a huge splotch of axle grease running down its side. Furthermore, some people call them an eyesore—though I suppose there is no accounting for taste, because I find them beautiful. So beautiful, in fact, that I knew instantly we had to shoot this film here. I'm just saying, it's complicated.

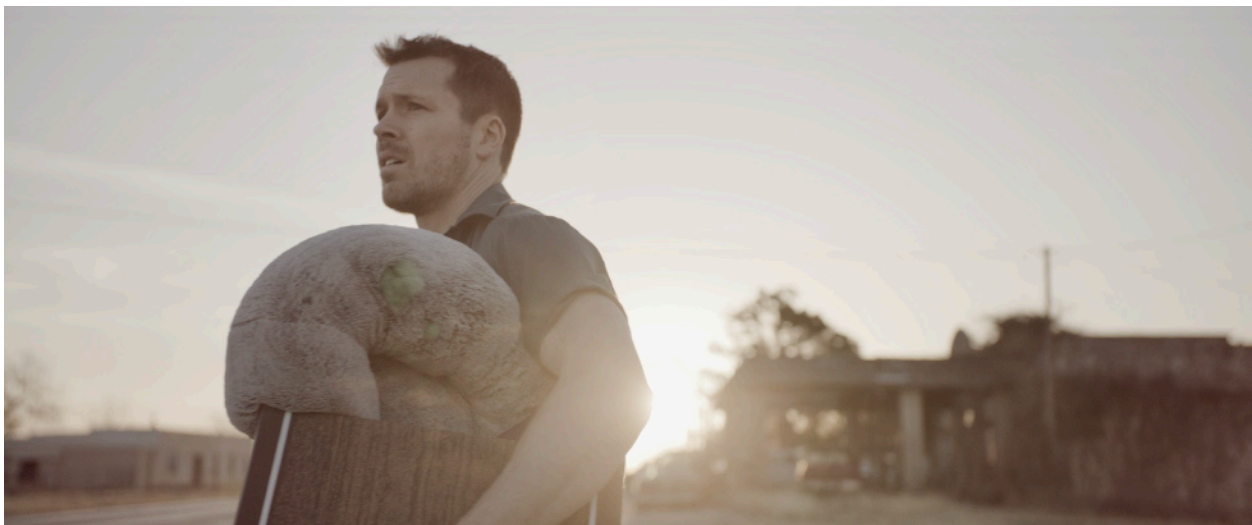
In the story, Olan's father was a decorated Vietnam veteran. In real life, so is Vic, who runs the Elks' Lodge where

we filmed. I sat with him and explained the movie while he chain-smoked cigarettes, and I could see that the story meant something to him. He told me about when he was drafted, and said that even forty years on, he still didn't like to talk about the war. He sure said a lot with the things he didn't say.

Later, at the antique shop, I was trying to give the actors something juicy. I asked the lady who ran the store if she ever gets a customer like our man Olan. Somebody so desperate for cash they might sell the shirt off their back. She just laughed and said, "Honey, I see him in here every damned day." I think a lot of folks are going through hard times, everywhere.

Before we hung up, the foreman said, "You know, it's bad luck to buy one before you need it." Geez, I'm just trying to make a short film, I thought.

I stashed the casket in my ex-girlfriend's garden shed. She wasn't super happy about it, and the guy who mows her lawn almost had a heart attack. I promised to get rid of it by Halloween. I figured some rich guy would give me five hundred bucks to have a real coffin in his front yard for trick-or-treat. Wrong again. I was contacted a family who needed to bury their father and couldn't afford a casket. They wanted to know if it was real. Their old man been a veteran too, and he'd gotten swindled in his final days. The family was left with a stack of bills. It was



Meanwhile, in the props department, you'd be surprised how much a coffin costs. Even a cheap one. Nobody rent's them and it turns out to be nearly impossible to find one second hand. Pretty much everybody who ever bought a coffin is still using it. Except me. I was able to locate a manufacturer in Dallas and get a price on a unit that had been scratched in the warehouse. Same deal as when I when I bought my first TV set.

just like in the movie, you can't make this stuff up. In the end, they talked me down to four hundred, and I felt okay about it.

Back in 2017, I only lived with my mom for about six months, but that time in my life is at the root of this story. After I moved out and made my home in Austin, it was mom who encouraged me to make this film. She also stepped in with the gap funding when the budget ran amok. Mom was my biggest supporter. Last fall,

not long after I sold the coffin, a scan revealed a baseball sized tumor in my mother's lung. Suddenly I was measuring my postproduction schedule against trips to the chemo ward. *Ars longa, vita brevis*, they say: art is long, life is short. Now there's a cliché with some truth to it. Editing, music, sound, and color all take time. Small-cell lung cancer, on the other hand, doubles every month. Mom lived to see the first few rough cuts, but that's all. *Olan, TX* is dedicated to her memory.

I started making a film about grief before I knew the first damned thing about it. Grief or filmmaking. But I found out along the way. If life does imitate art, then I would sternly caution you against making a film about losing a parent. But like I said, I don't think works that way. It's a chain, you see. Art imitates life, and then life imitates art, and then art imitates life again. It's the same with any kind of storytelling. It must always be matched by storylistening. I came here to tell you a story, but it's yours that I really want to know. That's why we're here isn't it? Welcome to *Olan, TX*.



Nathan Markiewicz, director.



# PRODUCTION TEAM

**Editor/Visual Effects:** Charles Carter  
**First Assistant Director:** Bianca Greene  
**Sound Mixer:** Benjamin Marchi-Hilton  
**Gaffer:** Konstantine Belyshev  
**Key Grip:** Graham Young  
**Sound Designer:** Nihar Gagneja  
**Catering/Craft Services:** Cyree Hyde  
**Graphic Design:** Jeremy Cox



## Executive Producers

Ivy Chiu, Matt Clark, Christian Durso, Jerrie Cooper, Edward Markiewicz, Josh Raff, Hannah Varnell, Sarah Wallace, Swng Productions

# Original Music by THE LONESOME HEROES

Austin's Lonesome Heroes reside at the cosmic junction of indie rock and country. Led by frontman Rich Russell's never-ending call of the road, the group have toured extensively behind two acclaimed albums across continents on both sides of the world, while never straying too far from their "Cosmic Americana" roots.



An ethereal reverence for the troubadour spirit is evident in stand out tracks "Western Style Saloons" - an homage to small town dance halls featured on the final season of Netflix's Bloodline - and the linking of asphalt, mind and body in "Steel" - named KCRW's Top Tune Download of the Day. Both appear on 2015's Can't Stand Still, which became more of a state of being than a sophomore album for the Heroes as the number of shows across the U.S. paired with an Australian tour turned into 100+ dates. Can't Stand Still was praised at home by the Austin Chronicle as one of 2015's best albums, featured abroad in Rolling Stone Australia, and received airplay on radio stations throughout the U.S., Europe and Australia.

With a new album on the horizon, Lonesome Heroes are picking up where Can't Stand Still left off, not only returning to Jim Eno's (Spoon) Public Hi-Fi, but continually deriving inspiration from the miles put behind. Recorded by Brad Bell and produced by Gary Newcomb, this will be their 4th studio album to date with another one in the works.

Brooklyn-raised Russell formed The Lonesome Heroes in 2006 after relocating to Austin. The release of 2012's Daydream Western won that year's Vox Pop award at the Independent Music Awards, with the single "Something Reckless" featured on ABC's Nashville in 2013. Described by KUTX as "the soundscape that occurs when indie rock and country artfully cross paths," The Lonesome Heroes have played over 1000 shows, turning indie-rockers into two-steppers (or vice-versa) by way of the rhythm of the road.

# NEWS, AWARDS, & LINKS



- Official Selection Indie Vegas Festival, Screening April 25  
<https://www.indievegASFilmFestival.com/>
- Official Selection Austin Lift-Off Festival  
<https://liftoff.network/austin-lift-off-film-festival-2024/>
- Premiere screening at the Oregon Short Film Festival. March 17, 2024  
Winner, "Best Drama."  
<https://filmfestivalcircuit.com/event/oregon-short-film-festival-spring-2024>
- Director of Photography Angela Herr has been awarded "Best Cinematography" for *Olan, TX* by the Venice Short Film Awards, winter 2024.  
<https://www.veniceshortsfest.com/25th>
- Semi-finalist at Dallas Shorts, winter 2024  
<https://dallassshorts.net>
- Article in Killeen Daily Herald  
["Lampasas native has role in new short film set in Central Texas"](#)

OFFICIAL TRAILER: <https://vimeo.com/nathanmarkiewicz/olantrailer>

ON IMDB: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt30954812>

## CONTACT

Nathan Markiewicz  
namarkiewicz@gmail.com  
(646) 460-5333

[www.mdiproductions.com/olantx](http://www.mdiproductions.com/olantx)

