

# THE WHISTLER



a Diego Velasco film



## LOGLINE

■ Nicole and Sebastian are grieving the death of their child when they unexpectedly inherit a farm in the remote plains of Venezuela. They arrive to find it overrun by mysterious squatters who claim they can conjure spirits. Desperate to contact her son, Nicole opens the door to the spirit world. But when the farm is hit by a string of chilling deaths, Nicole realizes survival will require confronting both an evil spirit and the darkness of her own inner demons.



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

■ This is a deeply personal film to me; it was born over thirty years ago, during many summers at my uncle's remote farm in Los Llanos, Venezuela. There's a unique energy there, one which feels even more dangerous today than it did then. It's cattle country surrounded by lush fields and circled by menacing mountains. It can be paradise or hell.

Today, Venezuela is more polarized, more violent and more isolated than ever. Day after day, our reality worsens. As does our hatred and fear for "the other." That's what this film is about: the seemingly irreconcilable divide between two worlds: the haves versus the have-nots... the believers versus the nonbelievers.

# VISUAL INSPIRATION

- Inspired by the pioneers of horror, I want to create stunning images that will haunt the audience through out the film.



# VISUAL INSPIRATION



# TO NE

■ Magical realism is defined as what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe. This is a film that deals in that magical reality; set within the all-too real chaos of the current Venezuelan struggle, and invaded by the surreal religion of a people who have nothing left but their beliefs. Unlike the literary magic realism of the 60s and 70s, this is a dark kind of magic realism.

Based on the hugely popular cult of Maria Lionza, this film explores the grit, raw emotions and mysterious force of this powerful religion which has spread all over South America.

The tension will build slowly as the mystery grows and unravels. Here, stillness becomes far more visceral than fast cuts. Long takes allow the audience to take in both the scenery and the subtext, while leaving them to wonder what lies just beyond the frame... I want to push the boundaries within each scene, challenging the audience to question what is real and what is not.



# LOOK

- The story is set in a land forgotten by time. A place where the days are magical and the nights are terrifying. A mix of beauty and horror at every turn. Where reality is stranger than fiction.



# PRODUCTION DESIGN

- The world will be exotic and dangerous. I want everything the audience sees to reflect the constant push and pull between life and death.





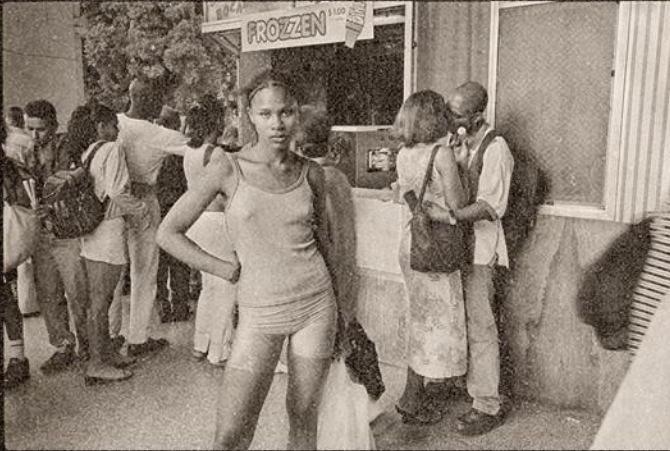
# LOCATIONS

- Real locations that become characters in the film.
- Settings that stay with the audience long after the film has ended.



# PEOPLE

- Faces that tell a story.



# CINEMATOGRAPHY

- Inspired by the classics, our cinematography will feature practical and natural sources to emphasize what the characters are seeing and feeling.



# CINEMATOGRAPHY

- During the day, the warmth of the Venezuelan sun will create soft flares on rippling fields, and a desaturated look that will feel vintage.



# CINEMATOGRAPHY

- But at night, the depth of true darkness will pervade, interrupted only by the glare of flashlights and the glow of candles.



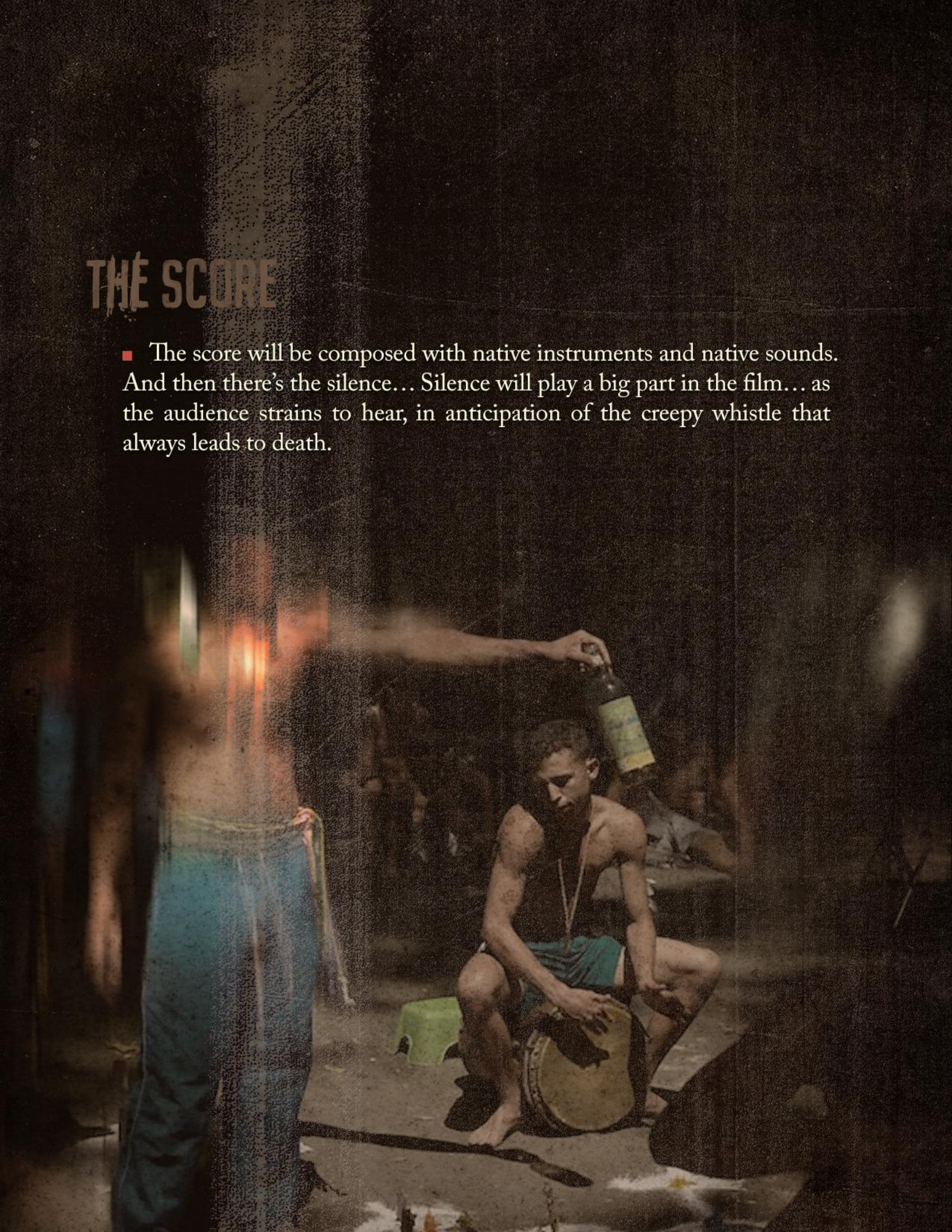
# CINEMATOGRAPHY

- Long shots that create discomfort.
- The framing will always leave negative space to remind the audience that something could always be hidden beyond our view.



## THE SCORE

- The score will be composed with native instruments and native sounds. And then there's the silence... Silence will play a big part in the film... as the audience strains to hear, in anticipation of the creepy whistle that always leads to death.



## SYNOPSIS

■ Nicole and Sebastian have very different ways of grieving the death of their only son. While Sebastian seemingly ignores their painful past, Nicole can't seem to emerge from it. Their relationship is further tested when they inherit a farm in the remote plains of Venezuela. Upon arriving, the couple discovers the land has been taken over by a strange and mysterious cult that claims to conjure spirits. While Sebastian tries desperately to run the squatters out, Nicole finds herself secretly drawn to their otherworldly religion, pulled by her unrelenting desire to reunite with her son.

When a rash of chillingly violent deaths occur, Sebastian is sure the cult is to blame. But Nicole suspects something far more sinister: El Silbón (the Whistler), an evil spirit that whistles to trap his prey. The further you hear him, the closer he is...

As the couple grapples with ever-mounting terrors, Nicole must decide whether to confront her grief and fight for a life with her husband, or give in to it, surrendering to the spirit world, finally fulfilling her desire to be with her son...





# BIOGRAPHIES

## ■ WRITER/DIRECTOR

Writer-Director Diego Velasco was featured as one of the 10 Movers and Reshapers of Latin American Cinema by *Variety Magazine*. He broke all box-office records in his home country of Venezuela with his first feature, *La Hora Zero* (*The Zero Hour*), which won over 35 awards in festivals around the world. He recently directed his first US project: *Cybergeddon*, an action/thriller about hacking and computer crimes from *CSI* creator Anthony E. Zuicker.

## ■ WRITER/PRODUCER

Guatemalan native Carolina Paiz began her career as a writer on *Grey's Anatomy*, and has since written for a variety of popular shows on Fox and other major networks. She worked as a writer and Consulting Producer on *Narcos* and is presently a writer and Co-Executive Producer on *Orange is the New Black*. She co-wrote and produced the feature *La Hora Cero*, which has been optioned for an English language remake.



## ■ PRODUCER

Dillon D Jordan founded PaperChase films in 2013 and rapidly achieved success at producing provocative, award-winning material and protecting investor relationships.

His recent projects include: *The Kindergarten Teacher* (Executive Producer), which won Best Director (US Drama) for Sara Colangelo at Sundance, and was acquired by Netflix for North American distribution. Maggie Gyllenhaal and Gael Garcia Bernal play the lead roles.

*Bodied* (Associate Producer), directed by the legendary Joseph Kahn and produced by Adi Shankar and Eminem has received rave reviews in the press and won three Audience Awards — TIFF (Midnight Madness category), AFI (American Independents category) and Fantastic Fest.

He is currently producing two films: *Skin* written and directed by Guy Nattiv, starring Jamie Bell, Danielle MacDonal & Vera Farmiga, and *Heavy*, directed by Jouri Smit, starring Sophie Turner and Daniel Zovatto.

