



THREE NINETY FIVE

A short film

Written & Directed by
Nicholas Thurkettle

"THREE NINETY FIVE" STARRING MILO ANA NGUYEN
PRODUCERS MIKI ANA NGUYEN, ELIZABETH SEBBA, NICHOLAS THURKETTLE
WRITER/DIRECTOR NICHOLAS THURKETTLE



CONTENTS

Project Summary	3
Director's Statement	4
Bios	5
Production Notes	8
Credits	11
Screenings/Honors	12

THREE NINETY FIVE

3

PROJECT OVERVIEW



Three Ninety Five is a sci-fi short film from writer/director Nicholas Thurkettle and designer/performer Nikki Nina Nguyen. They, with the help of a single crewperson, undertook a self-described “guerrilla road trip” to tell an emotional story of visual splendor for a minuscule budget. It’s a post-apocalyptic journey of fortitude and hope, captured along a world-famous California highway.

THREE NINETY FIVE

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

People often ask “Where do your ideas come from?” And the truth is I still don’t know, but I’ve improved at tricking them out of wherever they hide. In college I carried a second major in music, and I never tired of feeling out unusual chords and chord progressions on the piano, asking “how do *these* notes together make me feel?” I’m still doing a version of that – looking for the unexpected resonance between elements, the path to a feeling that surprises you.

My life-long fascination with the line between humanity and artificiality, the landscapes of inland California that can look so astounding and so alien, the mythology of energy currents in nature, and yes, music as the key to it all...these elements combined struck a feeling in me I wanted to share; and as I described it to people, I saw in their excitement that this story had the potential to create that same feeling on the screen.

I believe filmmaking needs to have an element of adventure to it. There has to be something about a movie that you’re not quite sure how you’ll pull off yet. Venturing forth, three of us in one SUV, exploring for three days, setting up shots anywhere whose vistas captivated us, was one of the most challenging filmmaking adventures I have yet enjoyed.

To me, *Three Ninety Five* is about the mystery of what keeps us going when hope doesn’t reveal itself; and about the qualities that I think will save humanity in our darkest times - even if the character who shows us the way isn’t 100% human.

THREE NINETY FIVE

FILMMAKER BIOS (1/3)

NICHOLAS THURKETTLE

(Cinematographer/Editor/Producer/Writer/Director)



Nicholas Thurkettle's short films have played over 50 worldwide film festivals, winning awards including Best Director and People's Choice – Best Short Film. A WGA screenwriter, he sold the comedy *Queen Lara* to Room 9 Entertainment (*Thank You For Smoking*), optioned the thriller *7 Red* and the comedy *Sir Sandy* to producers, and collaborated with director Antonio Negret ("Arrow", "Lethal Weapon") on the action thriller *Under the Knife*. He wrote the sci-fi anime *Children of Ether* for the Crunchyroll Network, which debuted on over 300 U.S. movie screens.

He co-produced the award-winning horror/romance feature *A Ghost Waits* from director Adam Stovall, distributed by Arrow Films; and produced the horror feature *The Buildout* from writer/director Zeshaan Younus. He is the co-author (with MF Thomas) of two sci-fi/thriller novels – *Seeing by Moonlight* and *A Sickness in Time*, and author of the short story collection *Stages of Sleep*. Formerly an Associate Programmer of short films for the Newport Beach Film Festival, he regularly consults with other filmmakers on their own festival submission strategies.

THREE NINETY FIVE

6

FILMMAKER BIOS (2/3)



NIKKI NINA NGUYEN (Costume & Props/Cast)

Nikki Nina Nguyen studied makeup design at the El School of Professional Makeup in Hollywood, and is an enthusiastic creative that enjoys cosplaying and fabrication, as well as a martial artist and professional archery instructor. She has provided makeup and special effects makeup for short films like *R&R*, *Crappy Birthday*, *Evie*, *For Closure*, *Sunspot*, *What Katy Did*, and web series such as *Isla Vista: The Rock Opera*, *BIFL*, and *Passage*. *Three Ninety Five* is her first major acting role.

THREE NINETY FIVE

7

FILMMAKER BIOS (3/3)



ELIZABETH SERRA

(Assistant Director/Production Crew/Producer)

Elizabeth Serra studied at the American Conservatory Theatre and British American Drama Academy in London. After moving to Los Angeles, she transitioned from directing theatre to directing film, writing and directing *True Colors* and *Hell's Little Angel*. She won the Best Woman Filmmaker Award at the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival for her dark comedy, *Skin Deep*. Her short comedy *A Made Bed* won the Grand Jury Prize at the Broad Humor Film Festival while playing headline festivals such as Newport Beach, Pasadena and Julien-Dubuque.

THREE NINETY FIVE

PRODUCTION NOTES (1/3)



The 395 highway is one of the most breathtaking roads in the United States, spanning desert, forest, and mountain as it winds north towards the Nevada border. Filmmaker Nicholas Thurkettle has taken multiple road trips along it, and has always found it captivating. “You feel like you’re crossing through a half-dozen worlds in a single day,” he says, “I’ll take any excuse to make the journey.” These trips became, effectively, location scouts for a story dependent on visual impact.

The cinematographer with whom he’d collaborated on a half-dozen projects was leaving California for work on the east coast. Thurkettle, who came to film from a live theater background, decided it was the right time to force himself to learn more about cinematography by shooting a project himself. It was Nikki Nina Nguyen, one of his closest friends and collaborators, who suggested a weekend road trip with a camera. Thurkettle immediately started envisioning his favorite sights along 395, and the fantastical story concept emerged from there. “I admit it gave me a thrill to wonder just how ‘big’-looking a film we could make with the smallest possible resources.” In the end it was just three people – Thurkettle and Nguyen, joined by filmmaker Elizabeth Serra – traveling the highway with only the gear they could fit in an SUV, shooting scenes at found locations.

THREE NINETY FIVE

PRODUCTION NOTES (2/3)

Inspiration came from the animated works of Hayao Miyazaki – both his treatment of nature as a powerful character, and his willful, courageous female protagonists. Thurkettle and Nguyen also studied stories of artificial life forms yearning for humanity, like the *Blade Runner* films and *WALL*E*. With these touchstones to guide them, they believed they could tell this emotional story with no spoken dialogue.

Nguyen, a longtime cosplayer who built crucial makeup and costuming skills interpreting other fantastical characters, embraced the challenge of creating an original character of her own; working closely with co-designer Lark Arrowood to create Three Ninety Five's wardrobe and equipment.



“I had to tap into all my past skills as a makeup artist and cosplayer to ensure I created a dynamic enough but still relatable design for 395,” Nguyen says. “With her design so fleshed out, I felt that same ease as when I step into one of my cosplay characters. All the beautiful wilderness and nature also helped me center myself. I felt so small, and a bit lost in my surroundings; but it was a peaceful kind of lost. And it definitely gave me a jolt of wanderlust - I’m craving my own adventure now!”

THREE NINETY FIVE

10

PRODUCTION NOTES (3/3)



While budgetary limitations dictated a tiny crew and sparse equipment, it fit the film's theme of feeling small and humbled in vast landscapes. "We were always at the mercy of our environment." Thurkettle admits, "But it gave everything we did a sense of discovery and gratitude. We knew what images would communicate the plot, but a movie is so much more than plot and, hour by hour, the locations were providing that other piece on their own terms. It's an awesome feeling."



Collaborating with longtime friend Thurkettle on a film for the first time, producer and assistant director Elizabeth Serra embraced the circumstances that took them down trails and up mountains, to campsites under the stars and freezing roadsides before sunup. "Working on *Three Ninety Five* was a whirlwind!," she says. "Each new location provided a new filming challenge (like getting stuck in the snow and having to be towed out by a very nice young man with a truck and some cable,) but it was an amazing experience made even better by having it with my friends."



Three Ninety Five (2022, USA, 6'58'')

starring Nikki Nina Nguyen

producers

cinematographer/editor/writer/director

production design

assistant director/production crew

composer

sound design/mix

visual effects/coloring

singing voices

marketing artwork

Elizabeth Serra, Nicholas Thurkettle

Nicholas Thurkettle

Lark Arrowood, Nikki Nina Nguyen

Elizabeth Serra

Holly Amber Church

Joel Wetterstein

James Dunovan

Cindy Nguyen, Deva Marie

Cullan Bruce

Shot at locations on or near the 395 highway on the Panasonic GH4 Lumix. Edited in Adobe Premiere Pro.

THREE NINETY FIVE

SCREENINGS/HONORS

Three Ninety Five world premiered at the 2023 Borrego Springs Film Festival; and followed in February at the Boston Sci-Fi Film Festival, the longest-running genre festival in America. In March it played the Mammoth Film Festival in the very region of California where it was filmed; then played the beloved Sunscreen Film Festival in Florida. It became the first short directed by Nicholas Thurkettle to play in the Southern Hemisphere at the Sydney Sci-Fi Film Festival in Australia, then won Best Sci-Fi Short Film at the Miscon Film Festival. It ended its festival run with a standing-room-only screening at the 2024 Ocean City Film Festival in Maryland. For news about its online debut, visit www.395film.com, or follow @NThurkettle on Facebook, Instagram, and Vimeo.



Contact: Nicholas Thurkettle (Filmmaker) nt@nicholasthurkettle.com

Behind-the-Scenes Photos by Elizabeth Serra