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21 minutes // English & Spanish // 2023  
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## LOGLINE & SYNOPSIS



### LOGLINE

A self-involved teen and her overworked single mom confront their differences as their mobile home is towed away ... with them inside of it!



## SUMMARY

IN TOW is a 21-minute action-adventure short film dramedy that takes its audience on an emotional ride through fluctuating mother-daughter dynamics and different responses to poverty that can happen under one roof: with exhaustion on one end and an obsession to live beyond one's means on the other. The film's added complexity is that it is set in the tense divide that often forms between first-generation kids and their immigrant parents. Ultimately, IN TOW is a dramedy about losing home and rediscovering it through situations that you least expect.

## SYNOPSIS

On the morning of her senior homecoming game, a self-involved high school cheerleader (Sheila) and her overworked single mom (Bonnie) wake up to find that their mobile home is being towed away... with them inside of it!

As the women argue and clash over how to get themselves out of this predicament, the 70ft-long house is towed through rural Texas by an oblivious truck driver fully immersed in his quest to acquire wealth through self-help podcasts. Bonnie sets about saving the home she's worked so hard for while Sheila desperately attempts to escape the speeding single-wide trailer so that she can cheer at her last homecoming game.

## CAST

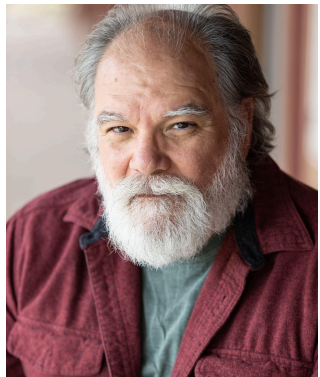




SHELIA (Daughter) played by KATY ATKINSON - Katy was born and raised in a small town in the Texas Rio Grande Valley called Rabbit Hill. She spent a good amount of her youth in a mobile home too, where her most treasured memories were made. She moved to central Texas to obtain a Bachelors in Psychology at the University of Texas at San Antonio and began her acting career while there. Atkinson is best known for her role in Lizette Barrera's short films *Mosca* (HBO Now) and *Chicle* (SXSW). She was also in Sharon Arteaga's last film *When You Clean a Stranger's Home* which was licensed by HBOMax. [IMDB](#)



BONNIE (Mother) played by SANDY ÁVILA - Sandy is an Austin transplant from the Rio Grande Valley. She relocated to Austin in 2005 where she worked as an attorney and pursued her passion for performing by singing with a local band and cutting her comedy teeth with the Emmy-nominated Latino Comedy Project. A former migrant farm worker, she appreciates how lucky she is to pursue two careers she loves. She recently started her own law firm and splits her time between her practice and her acting career, and now prioritizes spending time with her family and attending her son's basketball games. She was especially excited to join the cast of *In Tow*, as she wanted to pay homage to her mother and all the countless women who sacrifice so much for their families. [IMDB](#).



TRUCK DRIVER played by ALEC FRANCO - Alec Franco recently finished his work in the feature film, *Wonder London* sharing the screen with Vivica A. Fox. In Glenn's *Gotta Go* he played the title role of Glenn and his wife was played by Ruth Buzzi. Independent films have kept him busy for the past few years. Mr. Franco has worked on stage with Mary Crosby and Judd Nelson at the Los Angeles Theatre Center in a production of *The Seagull*. He started acting in Santa Barbara, CA but finished his studies at the Los Angeles Theatre Academy. He apprenticed at the Los Angeles Theatre Center where he worked and learned on stage from a great pool of talent. Presently, Mr. Franco studies with Sara Gaston in Houston. During a break from acting, Mr. Franco became an award winning western saddlemaker and participated in a National Endowment of the Arts project for saddlery that took him to Hawaii. Lately his carpentry skills have been called on to repair his home for the second time due to flooding. [IMDB](#).

## DIRECTOR STATEMENT



*Sharon Arteaga, Director/Writer/Producer*

I grew up in mobile homes with my immigrant, single mom. They were precarious structures, but there was also a magic to living inside of them. During storms, it felt like our house could blow away at any moment, and I might wake up in the Land of Oz. The thin walls and linear layout of the home played an essential role in the closeness between my mom and my sisters - the kind of closeness that comes with great joy and great conflict.

As I got older, our financial situation led us to move often, creating an unstable environment where home could literally be lost at any moment. My teenage angst often led me to be frustrated at my mom for our circumstances. However, over the years I came to realize that she provided the best home that she could, no matter where we moved.

Inside of these homes I was able to dream and begin pursuing my journey to become a filmmaker. My mom even bought me a video camera by borrowing my aunt's Sears credit card! Despite her obstacles as a single, immigrant woman, my mother raised my sisters and I to find magic and humor in everything, and it heavily influenced my filmmaking voice.

Although my films are based in unfortunate circumstances, they are offset by a playful tone and resilient characters. My goal is for audiences of all backgrounds - whether you live in a mansion or a mobile home - to reflect and have meaningful discussions on what home means.

## DIRECTOR BIO

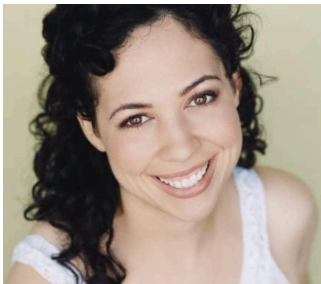
SHARON ARTEAGA (she/her) is a writer/director who convinced her mom to buy her a video camera instead of a Quinceañera. A first-generation Mexican-American, from Corpus Christi, Texas, Arteaga's work playfully navigates themes of generational, linguistic, and cultural differences between people. Her award-winning short films include the 2021 HBO Latinx Short Film Competition Winner, *When You Clean a Stranger's Home*, now streaming on Max. Arteaga is a WarnerBros. Discovery 150 Artist, a Rainin Grant Fellow, and was a Gotham Market participant in 2022. She was a 2019 Tribeca Chanel Through Her Lens finalist with *IN TOW* and earned a Gold Signal Award while working as the Story Producer on the Austin NPR affiliate podcast *Tacos of Texas*. Arteaga is the Sr. Manager of Filmmaker Support at the Austin Film Society, where she gets to empower others to make their own films. She is working on a couple more shorts while she tries to crossover into feature-length work.



## THE FILM TEAM



CHELSEA HERNANDEZ (she/her) | PRODUCER - is an Emmy®-nominated Mexican-American Director and Producer based in Texas. Named as one of Texas Monthly's "10 Filmmakers on the Rise," she is a 2021 Telly Award Winner for her feature documentary *Building The American Dream*, which was also nominated for a National Emmy® the same year. Chelsea's producing work spans over 15 years in television and film including PBS special, *Fixing The Future*, hosted by NPR's David Brancaccio and directed by Ellen Spiro; *United Tacos Of America* (El Rey Network series); and *That Animal Rescue Show* executive produced by Richard Linklater (CBS All-Access). Chelsea's second feature documentary *Breaking the News* world premiered in June 2023 at Tribeca Film Festival and is a co-production of ITVS. She is a member of the Documentary Producers Alliance and Brown Girls Doc Mafia and is a WarnerMedia150 Artist. <http://www.pandabearfilms.com>



SOMMER GARCIA SAQR (she/her) | PRODUCER - Born, raised, and based in Houston, Texas, Sommer Garcia Saqr is a Mexican-American and a first generation Palestinian-American producer and actor. She holds a BA in American Literature from USC and a Masters in Film & Media Production. She produced the award-winning short film *Sepia*, which premiered at the 2018 El Paso Film Festival and is a producer on the indie feature *Carnage Radio*, which was filmed in West Texas. Her work focuses on the struggle to find community and belonging, greatly informed by her multicultural upbringing. In addition to being a filmmaker, she is a proud member of SAG-AFTRA, having worked in TV & Film with acclaimed directors such as Ron Howard in Universal Pictures' *ED-TV* and Gregory Nava on the Golden Globe and Emmy nominated PBS series, *American Family*. She is a 2022 Fellow of New Orleans Film Society's Southern Producers Lab.

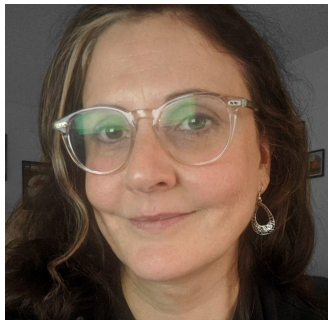


ASHLEY LANDAVAZO (she/her) | PRODUCTION DESIGNER - is an award-winning Production Designer whose films have premiered at festivals like SXSW, Fantastic Fest, Tribeca, Chattanooga Film Festival, and many others. She has designed for numerous features, shorts, and commercials. Ashley has also designed items for social media projects on SnapChat including a horror short called *First Kiss*. Her first design project titled *Givertaker*, has been viewed online over 300k times. Believing the Art Department to be her destiny, Ashley founded and runs her own production design company *Hola Productions* in Austin, Texas. <https://www.holaproductiondesign.com>



ZACH MORRISON (he/him) | DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY - Cinematographer, Texas native, and Hawaiian shirt enthusiast, pretty much sums up Zach Morrison. Projects Zach has shot have been screened at New Orleans Film Festival, SXSW, Inside Out Toronto, and on HBO after winning the HBO Latino Short Film Contest. Zach also works as a community organizer for Austin Cinematography Group, an organization that promotes cinematic arts and provides free educational resources for those looking to learn more about the inner workings of the camera department. Most recently, Zach

completed the AFI's Master's program in cinematography.



LAURIE POWERS-GOING (she/her) | VFX SUPERVISOR & ARTIST - Deacon Finn was founded by long-time visual effects artist and filmmaker, Laurie Powers Going, who brings years of experience and insider knowledge to projects. Originally from west central Texas, Laurie spent a decade in Hollywood working on features such as *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *The Notebook*, and *The Amazing Spiderman* before returning home to work in the expanding Texas/Louisiana film industries. As a filmmaker herself, Laurie understands the importance of quality and value and strives

to bring excellence to every project, no matter how big or how small.



MANUEL TSINGARIS (he/him) | EDITOR - With over 20 years of editing experience, Manuel consistently brings an intuitive sense of storytelling and a deft aesthetic style to the films that are placed in his hands. An editor who believes in the writer's adage, "you get to the head through the heart", the story is paramount to Manuel.



AMANDA DURAN (she/her) | COMPOSER - Amanda Duran is a Mexican-American composer, songwriter and music editor from Los Angeles, California. She has composed for several award winning projects including the TV series, *Vindication* and the short films *Hide & Seek* and *The First Boy I Loved*. Amanda has also worked as an independent contractor for DreamWorks Animation Television, Puny Entertainment, Disney TVA, and Mattel. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from Berklee College of Music with a degree in Film Scoring

and studied voice, classical piano, jazz piano, and music theory at the prestigious Colburn School of Performing Arts. [www.amandaaliciaduran.com](http://www.amandaaliciaduran.com)

## CREDITS

Written and Directed by	Sharon Arteaga
Starring	Katy Atkinson Sandy Avila Alec Franco
Executive Producer	Craig Wagener
Produced by	Sharon Arteaga Chelsea Hernandez Sommer Garcia Saqr
Director of Photography	Zach Morrison
Production Designer	Ashley Landavazo
Editor	Manuel Tsingaris
Original music by	Amanda Duran
VFX Supervisor	Laurie Powers Going
Sound Design & Re-record Mixing	Morgan Honaker
Unit Production Manager	Mireydi Mendieta
Assistant Director	Larissa Garcia-Baab

### FUNDING PROVIDED BY

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### ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY

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## Questions & Answers

### Q: What inspired you to make this film?

A: Growing up, I lost home several times, especially when I was in high school. Just 4 years ago, my parents had to give up the home that they'd owned for the longest time. That's around the time that I started writing this film.

When I was a teen, I was frustrated with my mom for how unstable things were in our home, but now as an adult, I'm realizing how hard it is to even secure a home. So many people struggle to meet this very basic need.

I wanted to capture how even within these unfortunate circumstances, we can laugh, cry, and that we are humans who are also just trying to figure out our relationships with our parents, our children, and the world around us.

### Q: How long did it take to make the film?

A: We started developing this idea in 2019 and raised funds between 2020 and 2022. We filmed for 7 days in Hays and Bastrop County with the help of a lot of fantastic people. Post-production took about a year since this is none of our full-time jobs.

### Q: What was the most exciting part about making this film?

A: I was so excited to take big risks and play with new toys on this project. And it was all thanks to our incredible team of producers, talented crew members, and an enthusiastic cast. It was my first time working with stunts, this many visual effects, and it was my first time shutting down a road. We got to actually haul this 70 ft mobile home on our last day of filming. I couldn't believe that I went from making 0-\$300 films to working with a semi truck and a much higher valued production. It's been such a rewarding journey, and I'm so grateful for all the people I got to collaborate with along the way.

### Q: Are there any easter eggs in the film?

Yes, I have a few :) I often joke that this is my Mexican American version of the Wizard of Oz. I had our protagonist wear a glittery red bow as a nod to Dorothy's ruby red slippers.

Close to the end of the film, there is a shot where you can see printouts in the window of a mobile home in a sales lot. They are the actual printouts that were on my childhood mobile home when we bought it. My mom was so proud of her purchase that she kept them all these years and gave them to me to immortalize them in the film.

Q: What is a homecoming mum and why does your team wear them to screenings?

A homecoming mum is a large decorative flower with lots of ribbons, bells, and charms hanging from it. It's an ornate and festive accessory worn all day the day of a football homecoming game in Texas and a couple of other states. Because many are pricey, they can sometimes be seen as a status symbol in the halls of Texas high schools. In our film, our protagonist has a mum that she's going to wear to her homecoming. Even though her mom has been struggling to stay afloat, she's ensured that her daughter has this special high school flair. I never had a homecoming mum growing up, several people on our team never did. We decided to show our IN TOW team spirit by wearing small theater-friendly (bells removed) mums to our screenings.



Q: What is your next project?

A: My feature film is a dramedy based on my last adventure with my grandmother. It's a film where a short trip to get ice cream becomes a hands-on lesson in caretaking, empathy, and being present. But I have another short film that I am trying to squeeze in before that about a newly-divorced father who is trying to figure out how to salvage his relationship with his two daughters, after a very messy divorce. I am also part of a feature-film anthology where 5 Texas-based Latinas are all writing and directing segments based in their hometowns.