



“A promising debut packing a resonant and unflinching wallop.”

- Geoffrey Fletcher, screenwriter of the movie ‘Precious’

SYNOPSIS

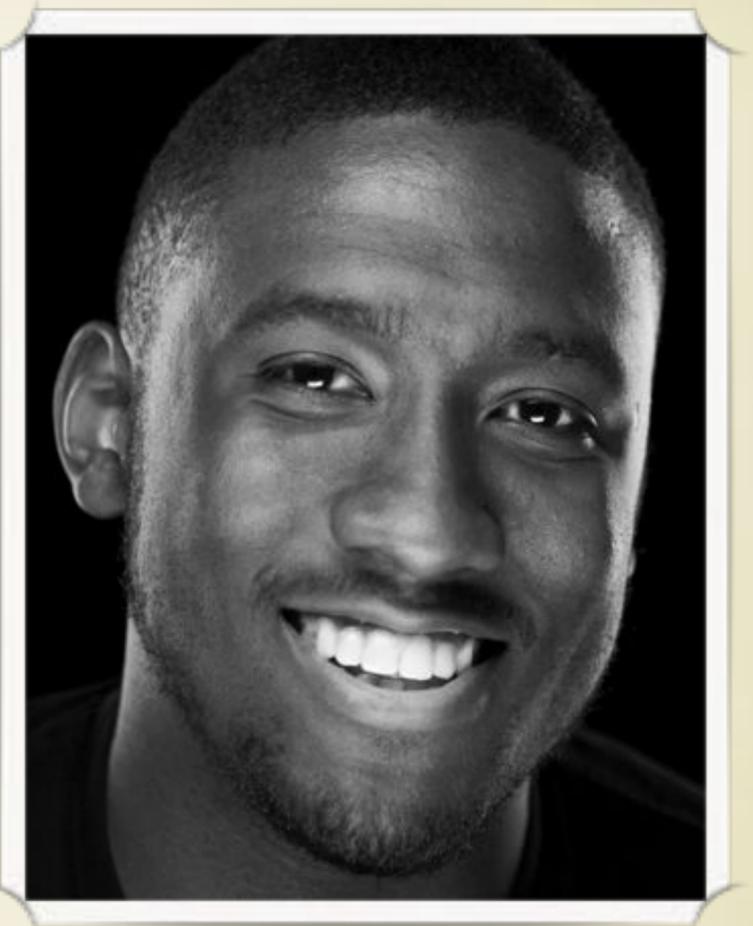
Two African American sisters grow up in racially charged 1960s Georgia, but one is born with fair skin. And when schools integrate in their small town, she decides to change her destiny - by passing for white.

The story begins with the sisters older and living very separate lives. The death of their mother brings them together again in the small town of their youth. As they lay their mother to rest, the past rises up to meet them and we witness the moment that tore their family apart. This short film tackles issues of identity, colorism, peer pressure and bullying and explores the damage that one momentary lapse in judgment can have on an entire life.

PRODUCER BIOS

Michael Cooke, Writer, Director & Cinematographer

An Atlanta native, Mike began his career at Turner Broadcasting, parent company to notable networks like CNN and Cartoon Network. They put him to work shooting all kinds of brand content and with his unique perspective and strong work ethic, it wasn't long before he took the lead on projects as Director of Photography. Turner gave him the opportunity to hone his skills, but music videos and commercials crafted Mike's shooting style. His first feature film, *God Loves the Fighter*, was filmed on location in Trinidad and won Best Narrative feature at the 2013 Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival. His first NY feature *Home* has received more than 10 awards around the world and is where he met his producing partner, Kimberly. Mike has shot for clients and brands all over the world, including upstart interactive software companies and Billboard 100 artists who trust him to execute their vision and bring their story to life.



Kimberly James, Writer & Producer

Kimberly is a Writer and Producer with more than a decade of experience in international TV & Film. Born and raised in the Midwest, she spent half her life moving to Asia, Africa and different parts of the US, and has worked in over 30 countries and wandered through 17 others. Three of her concepts were official selections in major TV pitch competitions in Asia. Her first feature film *Sandcastle* premiered at Cannes and her first NY feature *Home* (where she met Michael) has won more than 10 awards while traveling the film festival circuit this past year. Kimberly has worked with film greats such as Morgan Freeman, Diane Keaton, Anna Kendrick, Richard LaGravenese and Ed Burns and has learned great lessons in storytelling from all of them. Various seasons of *The Amazing Race* she has worked on have won 5 awards internationally, including an Emmy Award for *The Amazing Race Australia*. She has dangled off of skyscrapers and snuggled up to cheetahs, but she counts this film as her greatest leap of faith. Kimberly is a member of the Producer's Guild of America and is now based in New York City.

PRODUCER BIOS CONTINUED

Errol Sadler, Producer

Errol Sadler, raised in Brooklyn, NY is the founder of Supremacy Films, an Atlanta based film company, and he is one of the most sought after producers in the Atlanta Film Industry. He produced four short films such as Up In Smoke, No Crime, Letters to a Father, Prognosis, that were featured in numerous film festivals across the US. His feature film Echo at 11 Oak Drive premiered at Sundance, which was the feature length version of Echoes that premiered at Cannes. It is currently pending distribution.



Don Battee, Producer

Don has appeared in numerous television, film, theatrical and commercial productions across the globe, including The Matrix Trilogy, X-Men Wolverine, and recently in the Weinstein Company's musical hit, The Sapphires, which received a 10-minute standing ovation at Cannes. Don recently accepted the position of Asia-Pacific Director of The Collective Initiative, an organization set on promoting media that celebrates diversity. He's been on panels discussing diversity in filmmaking and has great distribution contacts all over Asia and Australia. Recent projects produced and acted include Things You Shouldn't Know About Me and the long awaited LADY LUCK.

CAST BIOS

Young Ella ~ Berkeley Clayborne

Berkeley Clayborne was born in Chicago and splits her time between the Windy City, Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta and Miami. She began acting and modeling at the age of five and has appeared in dozens of films, commercials and print campaigns. As a fifth grader, she enjoys playing soccer, hip-hop dance, singing and hanging out with her siblings. She can be seen currently as the host of Building With Friends on the LEGO Channel and in advertising for American Girl and Kohl's. Berkeley was honored to play the role of Ella because, as a girl of mixed race whose ethnicity is often classified as "ambiguous", she could relate to Ella's struggle.



Young Tara ~ Brynn Crosby

Brynn Crosby was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana and moved to Georgia in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina. Her love of acting began when she was a sophomore in high school and she has been pursuing her dreams ever since. She is a recent honors graduate of Kennesaw State University with a degree in Theatre and Performance Studies. While attending KSU, she mastered skills in script analysis, performance art, acting for the camera, and musical theatre performance. Brynn is currently living in Atlanta and her next project will be performing in Atlanta's One Minute Play Festival at Actor's Express. Her other hobbies include traveling, scrapbooking, and reading new plays. Regarding this film: I was excited to be a part of this project because Tara was a bold, courageous character who always spoke her mind and had a deep love for her sister. The content of this short film is so relevant to today's issues of race relations and audiences needs to see all perspectives of the matter, so we can get a better understanding of one another.



CAST BIOS CONT...

Ella - Carla McCullough

Film and television actress Carla McCullough was called to acting much later in life. She has translated her diverse life experience into a variety of roles in film and television. She has currently set her sights on performing in local theatre. Not only a talented actress, she plays the violin and is studying various languages to add to her arsenal. The ethnically ambiguous actress she is also looking forward to creating her own projects where she can showcase her diversity.



Tara - Thursday Farrar

Thursday Farrar, born to a Puerto Rican mother and African American father, is a New York actor who has worked hard to overcome the challenges of colorism. Performing non traditional roles through out her career, she most notably was the second African-American actor to be cast as Fantine in the commercial history of Les Miserables. On Broadway, she performed in Once Upon a Mattress starring Sarah Jessica Parker and was the original stand by in Elton John and Tim Rice's Aida where she performed the role both in Chicago and New York. She is a Drama- Logue recipient for her performance in Barry Manilow's Harmony at the LaJolla Playhouse, New Hampshire Theater Award recipient for Best Supporting actor for her performance in Slow Dance With a Hot Pick-up written by John Pielmeier (Pillars of the Earth/Agnes of God) and Matty Selman, and an Audelco Award for her ensemble work in August Wilson's Women in New York. Her musical theater career has garnered cast recordings on the Lincoln Center Theater production of Parade (Jason Robert Brown and Alfred Uhry), St. Louis Woman starring Vanessa Williams, and a Richard Rogers tribute You Oughta Be on Broadway. She most recently finished her work on the first National tour of Flashdance, the Musical in the supporting role of Louise. Her most recent television work was on The Americans for FX starring Kerry Russell and a television pilot called Handle Your Business featuring Kene Holliday (Matlock). Currently, you can see her across the US in the new ION Effects campaign for ION Television. Billboards, phone booths, subway stops near you!



CAST BIOS CONT...

Daddy ~ E Roger Mitchell

E. Roger Mitchell is a Miami Florida native and has starred in numerous films and tv shows including Selma & The Walking dead. He has also had starring roles along side Hollywood heavy weights Denzel Washington (Flight, The Equalizer,) & Jennifer Lawrence (Hunger Games: Catching Fire) in Across The Tracks E. Roger plays the role of 'Daddy' setting an example for Ella and Tara as young girls on how they should go about living their lives.



Mama ~ Nicky Buggs

Nicky has performed as a member of the NBA Dallas Mavericks Dancers, as well as the Captain of the Dallas Texans/ Desperados Arena Football Cheerleaders. This Dancer, Actor and Singer is a native of Manhattan, New York that began her dance training with DTH and ultimately received multiple scholarships with Alvin Ailey, Gus Giordano, Tremaine, LA Dance Force and a few other revered and acclaimed companies. She has performed in several Super Bowls and Playoff Championship games. Nicky is a technically trained dancer of 14 years in Ballet, Pointe, Modern and Jazz and has also choreographed for the NBA, NFL, NCA and UDA dance teams as well as for numerous Collegiate and High School competition Cheer/Dance teams. As an actor (film, television and commercials), a few of her National and Regional accolades include: The WB station's "One Tree Hill", recurring role on the lifetime channel's "Army Wives", "Fighting Temptations", Nicky guest starred along side Queen Latifah, Alicia Keys, Dakota Fanning, Jennifer Hudson and Sophie Okonedo in the critically acclaimed book written by Sue Monk Kidd now turned movie "The Secret Life of Bees"



CREW BIOS

Isabella Way, Co-Producer & Casting Director

Isabella has been in the business for over 10 years as an actor/dancer/singer and has recently jumped into casting and producing. She's enjoyed dancing in the Making of Frozen to the BET Awards and acting credits include Criminal Minds, Entourage, Master Class, Cabaret and many commercials. She recently directed the LA-Northwestern Alumni Showcase and cast a super top secret video game voiceover project. Currently, she's writing/producing her own webseries, thirtydumpling. Isabella can be found splitting her time between Los Angeles and New York City.

Kyle Wullschleger, Steadicam & Camera Operator

Kyle is an internationally traveled IATSE Local 600 Cameraman and Steadicam Operator. For the last 4 years he has worked on countless TV series and feature films, including Saturday Night Live. He has worked under some award winning directors and cinematographers. Kyle will bring a level of advance operating and technical prowess not seen in most indies.

Lindsey Wiseman, Hair Artist

Since childhood, Lindsey has seen herself as a Hair Stylist. She has been sharing her passion for the beauty industry for over ten years and continues to learn innovative techniques by attending educational seminars and hands-on workshops to stay up-to-date on the latest trends. She is also the Creative Director for Salon Modello, where her hair and makeup team resides, and a National Educator for Aquage. Over the years, she has earned several awards and certifications. With a Master Cosmetology License, Lindsey's talents include specializing in color, cutting with precision, sculpting beautiful eyebrows, and special occasion hair artistry. When she's not in the salon, Lindsey is on set producing photo-worthy hair styles that grace the pages of top magazines.

CREW BIOS CONTINUED

Anna Bearman, Special Effects Makeup & Makeup Artist

Anna's make up abiltites are not limited to one style. She is an artist at both tradition and special effects makeup. With her talents Anna's has had a successful career, styling for award winning films and photo publications throught the country.

Talysha Monee, Wardrobe Stylist

Talysha has been styling herself since she was in single digits. For almost half a decade, here, in New York City, she has steeped herself in the Art Department's on countless films, TV shows, and editorial shoots. Her unique style and keen thrifting abilities bring depth and authenticity to each story she encounters. She specializes in period pieces, because the history of clothing and artifacts are timeless.

Cam Williams, Camera & Electric Swing

Cam draws from more than 5 years of professional experience working in both the film and photography industry. Multi-talented professionals are such a growing demand in production. Cam will take his extensive knowledge of lighting and camera maintenance and support both departments on this film.

Erin Ryan, 1st AC

Erin considers it a privilege to pull focus as 1st AC for a script with such storytelling power as *Across the Tracks*. Her aptitude for focus-pulling roused from her early beginnings in live television production. While operating robotic cameras as director for the *Centre County Report*, Erin directed the 2013 Emmy-award winning newscast in the Mid-Atlantic, which also won BEA's Best of Festival that year. She is the show's youngest director to date. Erin currently operates and assists cameras out of NYC and Philadelphia and has since worked under highly decorated directors of photography. She loves working in the camera department because it allows her to remain precise and mechanical in execution, yet passionate and stylistic in her approach to filmmaking.



Top questions people ask about Across The Tracks

1. How did this story come about?

A very cold winter in New York city, and a life long attachment to our filming location in Arlington, GA. Director, Michael Cooke, and Camera Operator Kyle Wullschleger got on the phone one evening. Kyle had become interested in knowing more about the historical origins of passing. Michael, was a native son of Albany, Ga, where many Civil Rights demonstrations took place in the 60s. He grew up with first hand knowledge from his parents and Grandparents of the many stories that took place when you live in such a climate. Passing, being one of them. Out of this conversation came the pretense for what would become the basis for Across The Tracks. Michael brought his idea to Kimberly James, and from there they both develop the story that would be Across The Tracks.

2. Why a short film? Why not a feature?

Kim & Michael both have an extensive history in production. They met the previous year on Jono Oliver's critically acclaim feature film, Home, starring Gbenga Akinagbe. Both were familiar with the notion of what a feature film can do to a creative vision. At some point along the way it stops being about the story and you have to focus on selling and making your money back. Kim & Mike were not willing to risk such a fate on a story that was so important to both of them.

3. How was casting?

All of our Actresses and Actors shared some close relationship to the subject matter. In the casting process we asked all the potential actors what drew them most to this subject mater. All of our final picks in one way shape or form had gone through an experience of colorism. We felt that real life experience just enforced the actors resolve on screen.

4. Why did you chose to film in Arlington, Ga?

Arlington Ga essentially made the film. The director, Mike Cooke spent many summers there as a kid. It was the birthplace of his grandparents and just a short drive outside of his home town of Albany. He knew from a young age that he wanted to film something there and a lot the scenes Kim and Mike wrote had specific locations in mind that they knew they could find in Arlington, Ga.

BEHIND THE SCENES

2 minute BTS featurette on Across The Tracks



Full 10 minute BTS

TRAILER



<https://vimeo.com/126526514>

PRESS

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- WALB Albany

[Racism and Segregation w/ Michael Cooke & Kimberly James](#)

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