REFUGEES. RACISM. RECONCILIATION.

SEADRIFT

A TITLE 8 PRODUCTIONS FILM
"SEADRIFT"
EDITED BY TIM TSAI, ANGELA K PIRES
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY COLIN HARRINGTON
PRODUCED BY ANDREW LEEL, TENGAN NGUYEN,
CONSULTING PRODUCER: SARAH BULSTAD
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: SD N.
DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY TIM TSAI
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2013 SLAMDANCE FILM FESTIVAL
SEADRIFT
REFUGEES. RACISM. RECONCILIATION.

Director / Producer: Tim Tsai
Co-Producers: Andrew Lee, Tengah Nguyen
Consulting Producer: Sara Giustini
Executive Producers: SD. N.

Cinematographer: Colin Harrington
Editors: Tim Tsai, Angela K. Pires
Composer: Alex Lu

Runtime: 65 mins
Country of Production: United States

Logline: In 1979, a fatal shooting in a small Texas fishing village ignites a maelstrom of hostilities against Vietnamese refugees along the Gulf Coast.

TITLE 8 PRODUCTIONS
Director/Producer: Tim Tsai
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info@title8productions.com

Co-Producer: Andrew Lee
(512) 547-9823
andrew@ralphsmyth.com

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SYNOPSIS

After the fall of Saigon, millions of Vietnamese “boat people” escaped their homeland by sea in a desperate attempt to find refuge. Hundreds of thousands were eventually accepted into the United States, and many sought to build new lives along the Gulf Coast, finding available work and a favorable climate comparable to coast-rich, subtropical Vietnam.

But the sudden influx of the Vietnamese led to strained tensions in many fishing communities. In 1979, 20 year-old Sau Van Nguyen shoots and kills Billy Joe Aplin, a white crab fisherman, at the public town docks in Seadrift, TX. Later that night, Vietnamese boats are burned and a Vietnamese home is firebombed. Law enforcement rush in from nearby towns, and a curfew is imposed. What began as a dispute over prime crabbing territory has erupted into an all-out war.

Three months later, a jury acquits Sau Van Nguyen on the grounds of self-defense. This ignites a maelstrom of hostilities against the Vietnamese. The KKK came out in force, held cross-burning rallies, destroyed Vietnamese boats, and threatened further violence. Most of the Vietnamese in Seadrift packed up and left, but tensions continued to escalate across the Gulf Coast.

In 1981, this conflict came to a boiling point in Seabrook, Texas, where hooded Klansmen patrolled the waters brandishing semi-automatic weapons and showcasing a person hung in effigy. This caught the attention of civil rights lawyer Morris Dees of the Southern Poverty Law Center, who convinces the Vietnamese fishermen to file what would become a successful landmark lawsuit against the KKK.

Today, nearly four decades later, the Vietnamese are an integral part of the fishing industry, including in Seadrift. At the time of the shooting, local and national news media covered it widely, but Seadrift residents will tell you those reports were inaccurate. So what really happened in Seadrift? How does a community recover and heal after a deep rift that erupted in violence? “Seadrift” examines this turbulent yet little-seen chapter of American history, and explores its consequences that continue to reverberate today.
I first learned of the dramatic story of the Vietnamese Texan fishing community through a chapter in Irwin Tang’s book “Asian Texans: Our Histories and Our Lives,” published in 2008, and I was floored by the staggering challenges this community had to overcome. Theirs is a story of survival in dire circumstances, through war, migration, and racial hostility; a striking reminder that the American Dream is never freely given.

As I embarked on making this film, I began to see the complex economic and cultural dynamics that shaped this conflict, and realized there was another marginalized group in this story: working class commercial fishermen in rural communities. The native fishermen’s anger towards the Vietnamese may have been misplaced, but their feeling of neglect and mistreatment by the government and local agencies is real, and in a competitive industry dependent on limited resources, the Vietnamese were seen as an immediate threat to their livelihoods.

With “Seadrift,” I wanted to mediate both perspectives to this conflict that was rife with rumors and false assumptions, and to reflect on how a community can progress beyond its divisive past. At a time when our society is deeply polarized along racial, political, and economic lines, I believe the story of “Seadrift” can inspire conversations about refugee and immigrant experience, bridge differences, and help fractured communities move towards reconciliation.
CREW

TIM TSAI (Director/Producer/Editor)

Tim s a documentary filmmaker and editor. He directed KLRU's short doc series AUSTIN REVEALED: PIONEERS FROM THE EAST, which profiles some of the earliest Chinese American families to settle in Central Texas. Editorial work include YAKONA (SXSW ’14 Audience Award), a hybrid non-narrative film about the San Marcos river. He holds an MFA in film production from U.T. Austin, is a Berkeley Investigative Reporting Program associate, and a Firelight Media Documentary Labs fellow. SEADRIFT is his first feature.

ANDREW LEE (Co-Producer)

Andrew is an Austin based film producer who launched his feature film producing career with the documentary DMT: THE SPIRIT MOLECULE (Gravitas/WB Digital) about the world's strongest naturally occurring psychedelic drug and sports comedy BALLS OUT (MGM/Orion Pictures) a NYT Critics Pick starring Kate McKinnon, Beck Bennett, Jake Lacy, and Nikki Reed. He co-produced DEALT (IFC Films) about the world's greatest card magician who is also completely blind. He’s currently producing the feature documentary JUMP SHOT about the inspiring man who revolutionized basketball with the jump shot but never let that define him.

TENGAH NGUYEN (Co-Producer)

Tengah is a Houston based film and video producer. Her company Brilliart Films promotes film, photography, visual media projects, creative marketing campaigns, and much more. She is actively involved in the AAPI community and is Co-Director of OCA-GH's Houston AAPI Film Festival.

SARA GIUSTINI (Consulting Producer)

Most recently, Sara produced PJ Raval’s award winning documentary BEFORE YOU KNOW IT (SXSW 2013), which follows three gay seniors as they navigate the challenges, adventures, and surprises of their golden years. Sara has worked as the American Experience project manager for COMMAND AND CONTROL (Tribeca 2016) and LAST DAYS IN VIETNAM (Sundance 2014), as well as the outreach coordinator for the Emmy Award winning FREEDOM RIDERS (Sundance 2010). Other producing credits include PBS’ GOD IN AMERICA, TRINIDAD (Showtime, LOGO) and HANSEL MIETH: VAGABOND PHOTOGRAPHER (Independent Lens).
CREW (CONT'D)

COLIN HARRINGTON (Cinematographer)

Colin is a cinematographer and filmmaker based in Austin. His production credits as gaffer include PRINCE AVALANCHE (dir. David Gordon Green, SXSW 2013) and the Student Academy Award winner FATAKRA. He is co-creator of the digital short series WHEEL LOVE SHOW. Colin was the cinematographer on Tim Tsai’s KLRU series AUSTIN REVEALED: PIONEERS FROM THE EAST, as well as Tim’s MFA thesis film POST-RACIAL. They continue their collaboration on SEADRIFT.

ANGELA PIRES (Editor)

Angela is a film editor with over 15 years of experience. Her work has been screened at festivals around the globe: Berlin Film Festival, SXSW, Lincoln Center’s New Directors/New Films, AFI Docs, Full Frame, Rotterdam, Havana, and That’s All True, among many others. Her credits include THE PRISON AND THE STREET (“Elegantly shot and extremely well-structured documentary... impressive.” - Variety), TRASH DANCE (“Magical” – The New York Times), and 61 BULLETS (“A unique and intimate perspective that will prove irresistible to history buffs.” – The Times-Picayune).

ALEX LU (Composer)

Composer Alex Lu’s scoring work has been praised by the Huffington Post as “a graceful counterpoint” and the Austin Chronicle describes his composition and performance as “lovely music... the audience was transfixed.” He was nominated for Outstanding Achievement in Original Score by Cinema Eye Honors for IN PURSUIT OF SILENCE (SXSW 2016). Notable projects include NOMIS (LA Film Festival 2018 Closing Night Film), CARPE KILIMANJARO (Best Documentary, Mallorca Int’l Film Fest), and the SXSW award-winning film, MINE: TAKEN BY KATRINA. Alex has also contributed music to the Emmy Award winning documentary series, HAVE YOU HEARD FROM JOHANNESBURG? He is an alumnus of the acclaimed ASCAP Film Scoring Workshop and a recipient of the ASCAP David Rose Award.
SELECT CHARACTERS

Sau Van Nguyen & Chinh Van Nguyen

Billy Joe Aplin

Bang "Cherry" Nguyen
Crabber, Sau's friend & former roommate

Beth Aplin-Martin
Billy Joe's daughter

Thế Nguyen
Crabber, Sau's friend

Diane Wilson
Former Shrimper/Crabber

Butch Hodges
Vietnam Veteran, Former Shrimper

Johnny Davenport
Former Seadrift Constable
SELECT CHARACTERS (CONT'D)

George Castro
Former Shrimper

Bubba Hal
Owner, Bubba’s Cajun Style Seafood

Hoan Nguyen
Crab Plant Worker

Joe Surovik
Former Marine Agent

Ron Galloway
Shrimper, Billy Joe’s Former Brother-In-Law

Steve Pham
Shrimper

Johnny Butler
Former Shrimper, Aplin Family Friend

Morris Dees
Founder, Southern Poverty Law Center
SELECT CREDITS
Full credit list available upon request

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<th>Directed &amp; Produced by</th>
<th>Editors</th>
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<td>Tim Tsai</td>
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<td>SD. N.</td>
<td>Leah Marino</td>
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<td>Sara Giustini</td>
<td>Dan Stuyck</td>
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<td>Thao Ha, Samantha Bruce, Keeley Steenson</td>
<td>Joe J. Chan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colin Harrington</td>
<td>Miles Foster-Greenwood</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jannette Diep, Andrew Garrison, Dr. Thao Ha, Dr. Madeline Hsu, Dr. Paul Stekler, Nadia Shihab, David Felix Sutcliffe, Irwin Tang, Dr. Linda Vo, Dr. Sam Vong</td>
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