

MARKING TIME

Producers on four new films share their experiences of making the projects that earned them the Producers Mark certification.

Certification via the Producers Mark indicates that a producer performed a major portion of the producing functions on the motion picture. The full list of Producers Mark certifications can be viewed at producersguild.org.

Clifford the Big Red Dog - Jordan Kerner, p.g.a.

A little girl and her uncle go on a Manhattan adventure with a big red dog with a heart of gold. *Out in theaters on September 17.*

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU ENCOUNTERED, AND HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO OVERCOME IT?

The challenge was that Clifford was red! Having learned on *The Smurfs* that the two hardest colors to hold their shade in digital media were blue and red, we spent the better part of two years getting the color to hold on cinema screens across the globe as well as on smartphones or iPads. That was the creation of a painstaking myriad of algorithms. We issued a first-look image of Clifford on the internet that did not hold. All of my digits are crossed, hoping that we have solved the color conundrum, and that he is a beautiful color of Clifford red for everyone. He is very much red and very much a photo-real puppy. As in the series of books, Clifford does not speak as he did in the cartoons. We always chose to be as faithful as possible to *Clifford* author Norman Bridwell.

HOW DOES THIS STORY RESONATE IN THE PRESENT DAY?

We are living in a time of great division and uncertainty. I have always admired and worked hard to produce films that elevate and do not denigrate. Films that recognize both complex sides of beliefs, but ultimately give the diverse audience

the ability to laugh and cry at the same things. I believe that it is incumbent upon filmmakers to make films that allow us to honestly embrace the idea that we are much more similar in our embrace of family and love than we are different. At the end of this film, I hope that we will all love and understand each other just a "little bigger."

6:45 - Craig Singer, p.g.a.

A dream vacation turns into a time-loop psychological thriller. *Out in theaters on August 6.*

WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST COMPELLING ABOUT THIS STORY?

When I thought about *6:45*, there wasn't an abundance of time-loop stories. Lately it's almost become a cottage industry! *6:45* really was about crafting a story that didn't give away too much while at the same time avoiding the trap of being overly repetitious.

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU ENCOUNTERED, AND HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO OVERCOME IT?

I had been a creative VP at Disney and was spoiled by the tremendous resources that Disney provided. *6:45* was getting back to my indie roots with films like *Animal Room* and *Dark Ride* and working with a remarkably young team of talented individuals who shared a vision of making a powerful film with a limited, almost micro,



Clockwise from top left:
 Craig Singer on the set of time-loop thriller *6:45*; Kelly Carmichael with director Michael Showalter on the set of *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*; Joseph Patel sitting with Al Sharpton for documentary *Summer of Soul*; Jordan Kerner with actor Jack Whitehall while filming *Clifford the Big Red Dog*.



budget. Naturally pulling the funding together is always its own journey, and then having to both produce as well as direct. It was, in many ways, liberating to create the sort of film I envisioned without anyone over my shoulder—but also at times very challenging. Making films on any level is a test and I had to overcome our lack of resources with creative alternatives—finding my own

locations, casting the film with folks I've worked with in the past along with some fresh faces, production designing the film, pulling in favor after favor.

The Eyes of Tammy Faye - Kelly Carmichael, p.g.a.

How televangelists Tammy Faye Bakker and Jim Bakker rose to power in the 1970s. *Out in theaters on September 17.*

WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST COMPELLING ABOUT THIS STORY?

It was incredibly compelling to consider this exact moment in history. Jim and Tammy were revolutionary—at the forefront of creating a new medium in broadcasting, sharing their lives daily with their followers and spreading their message. It was so exciting to look at a story that we all *think* we know or remember—the mascara, the tabloids, the scandal—but to examine what really happened and view it through today's lens.

WHAT SURPRISED YOU THE MOST DURING THE COURSE OF PRODUCING THIS?

It's not surprising, but rather inspiring, that when you bring a great group of people together, they rise to meet a challenge. We wrapped production in December 2019. A few months later in March, when Michael (Showalter) was sharing his director's cut, the world shut down. Much of our postproduction happened remotely, but it was incredibly exciting because everyone—editorial, music, our mixers, etc.—stepped up, addressed the challenges and did an amazing job. If anything was surprising, that would be what we can do with technology. But I will be very happy to be back in a edit suite and a mix stage on our next production.

WHAT WAS ONE THING THAT YOU LEARNED THAT YOU'LL CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT IN

YOUR FUTURE WORK?

A passion for telling the story is always the most important piece of the puzzle. Working with a director, actors and HODs who are committed and inspired to dig in is always the greatest experience.

Summer of Soul - Joseph Patel, p.g.a.

Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson examines the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival. *Out now on Hulu.*

WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST COMPELLING ABOUT THIS STORY?

When I was first introduced to it, I didn't believe it happened. I'm a music nerd and I know Ahmir is a music nerd too, and the fact that we hadn't heard about it was really mind-boggling. For me as a producer, the opportunity to rescue or find this footage and tell the story that we wanted to tell was a chance to put this festival back on the timeline, and a chance to show something that I personally innately believe in, which is that Black history is American history. For many decades, that hasn't been the case, and I thought if we did our job right, and we told the story the right way, you would never be able to talk about the summer of 1969 again without mentioning this festival. Those opportunities to put things back on the timeline in a profound way, that was very compelling to me.

WHAT WAS ONE THING YOU LEARNED THAT YOU'LL CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR FUTURE WORK?

The thing that this process confirmed for me is that in order to produce or direct or tell stories the right way, you have to have a lot of conviction in the material, in the way you want to tell the story. You can't just leave it to chance. You have to have a team around you that you trust. And all of you have to have the conviction to pull in the same direction. When you do, you end up with something special. ■



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