

A FILM BY TRAE BRIERS

# CUATRE

LOVE FOR FAMILY RUNS DEEPER THAN BLOOD.





# LOG LINE

When a seasoned Hispanic trainer decides to take in and train a black boxer, an unlikely and close friendship develops. Together they come to realize that they may have more in common with each other than they have with their own families.

# SYNOPSIS



“Cuate” tells the story of two men, one African-American and one Hispanic, from two very different worlds, with two very different life experiences behind them. It is a story of an unlikely friendship that develops when those two worlds are brought into alignment.

Zinoris “Zino” Mitchell is a young black male who is trying to stay focused keeping a good job and providing for his wife and children. He’s been out of prison for three years now and has too much to lose if he goes back. In order to keep on the straight and narrow, he works his “program” by daily, intensive exercise and keeping his eye on the prize.

Jose “Cuate” Gonzales is a hard working Mexican-American who yearns to one day send one of the fighters he trains to the Olympics. He had a shot with his son Jaime, who was an exceptional fighter, but he ended up getting caught up in the gang life, and being incarcerated.

The two men are set on their road to meeting one night after Zino gets off work. Zino reluctantly goes to have a few drinks with his co-workers at a local bar. While there, a few unruly Mexican thugs show up and try to start trouble. Zino attempts to maintain order in a peaceful way, but the “street” side in him can’t be subdued. When the thugs challenge him to a fight outside, Zino takes them up on their offer. Once outside, Zino displays his superior boxing skills, skills he learned while in prison training with Mexican fighters, and beats the thugs decisively, looking like a true Mexican fighter.

Realizing Zino’s potential to be a great fighter, a co-worker takes him to a boxing gym run by Cuate. But there is one catch, the gym is 100% Mexican and Cuate only speaks Spanish to his fighters. It’s here that Zino

has to make a decision to step out of his comfort zone and to actually entertain the dream of becoming a fighter. He is met with disdain from the Mexican fighters in the gym and skepticism from Cuate. In this hostile environment, he must face his first challenge by winning over a room full of guys who don’t want anything to do with a black fighter. After a sparring match with Chuy, the gym’s top contender for the Olympic Gold medal, Zino’s boxing talent cannot be denied. He beats Chuy so thoroughly in an exhibition of skill and power that Cuate knows he has to train him.

And so begins the building of a relationship between trainer and boxer, older and younger, Black and Hispanic; different, yet somehow the same in many ways. Together, they fight towards a common goal of understanding and their desire to qualify for the Olympic Boxing team. And at Zino’s age it would be quite an underdog story. As the training progresses and the challenges mount, so does the toll on Zino’s non-boxing life. He is forced to make tough decisions with his work life, as well as his family life, knowing that if he makes the wrong choice it could lead to financial ruin, upend all of their lives and set him back on the path to prison.

Along the way, Zino faces temptations to leave Cuate’s gym from a slick African-American fight promoter who tries to drive a wedge between him and the mentor he’s grown to trust. Racial tensions and biases are exploited, and Zino is forced to confront prejudices that threaten to keep him from Olympic Gold. As the biggest fight of his life nears, Zino must overcome everything that stands in his way. For himself. For his family. For Cuate.

# CHARACTERS

## CUATE

A Mexican-American male in his early 60s, Cuate is a family man who operates his own landscaping business, as well as a local boxing gym, where he exclusively trains Mexican fighters. He speaks English, but has a strict rule of speaking only Spanish when he trains his fighters. His dream is to see his fighters represent their country in the Olympics, a dream that he once had for his own son before he was swept up into a life of gangs and crime.

## ZINO

An African American male in his early 30s. In his not-so-distant past he was a convicted drug dealer. He is now a family man, focused on staying away from the street life. He grew up in Oxnard and understands Hispanic culture, and is fully aware the racial tensions between black and brown. While incarcerated, he was “allowed” to box and train with Mexicans. Since his release, he’s kept to the “program”, a survival tool in prison, to channel his discipline and to stay focused. When things in his life take a dramatic turn, Zino must make the hard decision to follow his dream and become a boxer, or keep a steady but unfulfilling job. He must decide what sacrifices are the right ones to make for his family.

## CHUY

A Mexican American male in his early 20s, Chuy is known as the “pretty boy” who can fight. Chuy’s sole driving force is to follow his dream of making it as a professional boxer and to provide for his family. He has the raw talent and charisma, but he lacks the focus and dedication to make his dream a reality. This puts him at direct odds with Zino, whom he sees as a personal threat to his livelihood and an object to amplify all of his personal prejudices


## CYNTHIA

An African American female in her early 30s. She is Zino’s wife and mother to his children. She fully supports Zino and his focus to stay on the straight and narrow. When her husband’s opportunity to train as a boxer becomes a hinderance to his job, she has the tough decision to confront him or support him, knowing that it could lead to a disruption in Zino’s path to keeping clean.

## MILLER

An African American male in his early 50s, Miller is a flashy boxing promoter, who only promotes black fighters. He tries to recruit Zino from Cuate, using the racial angle of “black fighters train with black promoters”.





# A WORD FROM THE PRODUCERS

The story of “Cuate” invites the audience to the historical city of Oxnard, passionately known by locals as “Boxnard”. The city plays an essential character in the film, as it is a showcase for its people and its culture. Oxnard is currently home to over 73.5% Hispanic, 14.8% White, 7.3% Asian, 1.8% other but only 2.4% Blacks. With this disparage in numbers specifically, between African-American and Hispanics, blacks have had to learn how to delicately coexist with Hispanics in a city that began in the 1900’s as an agricultural town. From Sugar Beets, Lima Beans and Oxnard’s claim to fame, Strawberries, the demand of agriculture has attracted many migrant Hispanic workers, along with other races, resulting in an influx of diverse people making Oxnard their home.

About two-thirds of blacks and six-in-10 Hispanics think the two groups get along well, for the most part. But reality paints a different picture. Over the years, the coexisting cultures have had a tumultuous relationship, resulting in instances of racial violence. But simultaneously, there has been a growing movement to recognize the similarities between each other’s cultures. There will always be differences in terms of economic status, education, family values and racial inequality that will drive a wedge between the two groups, but a film like “Cuate” will endeavor to show both cultures and just how similar they are.

“Cuate” attempts to infuse these elements in the story with boxing as the vehicle. The story brings hope for finding a common ground and connection to close the gap because, “an unlikely friend can become family and have more in common with you than even your own.”

# THEME AND TONE

“Cuate” is all about the perseverance in one’s fight to stay on the right path and do the right thing. But at times when a person does the right thing, there is a cost that comes with it.

How does a person stay true to that mission, when opportunities and obstacles converge all at once?

The interaction of family is the foundation of the story. And sometimes, family isn’t always someone that lives in your home. When your back is against the wall, the unlikeliest person can help overcome and conquer, where others may not have faith in you.

“Cuate” is a story of hope and unity that shows in the end, we are all speaking the same language, it’s just a matter of are we truly listening?





## VISUAL STYLE

The cinematic style of “Cuate” will be in the vein of films like Gavin O’Connor’s “Warrior” and Cary Fukunaga’s “Sin Nombre”. We will use a handheld technique to enhance drama and to elevate energetic sequences in the film. This will give the audience a sense of raw authenticity, similar to watching a documentary on the characters life. The lens will be in extreme close-up on faces during key moments to bring the viewer closer into the characters personal experience. During the fight sequences we’ll use multiple cameras to capture various angles of the bout, increasing audience engagement. We will strive to capture what it’s like to be inside a real fight. The camera will push in close to reveal raw emotions and mental transformation. At times, we’ll find ourselves observing stillness, in order to establish the crucial importance of the locations in and around Oxnard. This will be achieved in conjunction with specific drone aerials of the area (ala “Ozark” – The Series)

“Cuate” will be filmed using an Arri-Alexa Mini LF with the camera’s full frame anamorphic setting. Our lens choice will be Panavision’s light weight C-Series anamorphic lenses. These lenses have a unique vintage characteristic with real skin tone rendering and beautiful bokeh for shallow depth of field. These lenses perform well in low light and are extremely sharp.

The color scheme will be very urban with cool tones. We’ll use orange and teal as a base along with realistic skin tones. Fluorescent lighting will be used in the gym scenes, and sodium vapor will be used in the street scenes. Daytime scenes will be a combination of orange and teal ranges. There will be a constant clash of warm and cool.





# CONFIRMED CAST

## CUATE



## EMILIO RIVERA - ATTACHED

Emilio Rivera has discovered that turning your life around is the key to making dreams come true. His acting credentials have allowed him to top the list of successful Latino actors. His resume continues to grow with starring roles in films such as HIGH CRIMES (2002) with Ashley Judd and Morgan Freeman and the much anticipated film CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND (2002) starring George Clooney and Julia Roberts. Emilio was born in San Antonio, Texas as the oldest child of four brothers and three sisters. When Emilio was a young boy his family moved to an area of Los Angeles nicknamed Frog Town and Emilio continued to seek the attention of those around him. His first experience with acting was in his third grade production of “Rumpelstiltskin”. Emilio admits his childhood was not easy growing up as a minority in a poor section of town.

Underneath the exterior Emilio’s passion for acting thrived and after much soul searching Emilio decided to take his biggest risk and pursue acting. The training, discipline and extensive hours of studying changed Emilio life forever. Those around him were amazed at the positive yet radical change in Emilio and realized he had found his true passion in life. In between his time studying Emilio worked as a mechanical engineer.

His first feature role was in the TV series RENEGADE (1992) with Lorenzo Lamas. He left his day job behind after he landed a role in the feature film CON AIR (1997) co-starring Nicolas Cage. Emilio has appeared in countless commercials, television programs and feature films including TRAFFIC (2000), THE CABLE GUY (1996), NYPD BLUE (1993), BEVERLY HILLS, 90210 (1990), WALKER, TEXAS RANGER (1993), JAG (1995), and ER (1994).

Most recently, Emilio has had co-starring roles in television series MAYANS, M.C. (2018-2021), Netflix’s ON MY BLOCK (2018-2021) and THE FAMILY BUSINESS (2018-2021).

# FILMMAKER BIOS



## TRAE BRIERS

### WRITER, DIRECTOR, PRODUCER

Trae received his Bachelor's Degree in Film Studies from University of California, Santa Barbara and holds an MBA specializing in Finance. While in film school, Trae did an independent research with one of his professors on "How to make a movie for \$100,000." And with that newfound knowledge, he used the research and made the Black and Mexican dramatic love story, IN YOUR EYES, which was the first film to be shot in its entirety within Ventura County and receive national distribution, becoming a popular DVD rental. Trae Briers followed up with the independent hit, TRADE, which has streamed over 500,000 hours since its 2019 release and has virally grown to over 10M views between Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube, with over 20 Million impressions. Trae uses his Financial Analyst skills to ensure his productions are managed with efficiency. Trae has taken the mantra "consistent persistence", and is focused on making quality films.

## RUBIN BRYANT

### EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Rubin holds a Bachelor's Degree in Communications Studies and a Masters in Management. In addition to being a Certified Life Coach, and a member of the Golden Key Honor Society, Rubin has over 14 years of corporate experience as a Senior Executive Advisor. He was the Production Coordinator for IN YOUR EYES, which was the "First" film to get shot in its entirety within Ventura County to get national distribution. Rubin served as the Executive Producer for the independent hit, TRADE, which has streamed over 500,000 hours since its 2019 release and has virally grown to now over 10M views between Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube, with over 20 Million impressions.



## ALESSANDRO GENTILE

### DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The son of hard working immigrants, Alessandro Gentile grew up in the San Gabriel Valley where he learned two languages and expanded his imagination for storytelling. Currently Gentile is a professional cinematographer working in Los Angeles. In 2000, Gentile received his Bachelor's Degree in Film Studies from the University of California at Santa Barbara. In 2012 Gentile shot the original Emmy Nominated television pilot "Schitt's Creek," created by Eugene & Daniel Levy (featuring Catherine O'Hara and Chris Elliott), the short film, "Botes al Amanecer," which screened at The Cannes Film Festival and was a winner of 3 best short film awards, "Marisol" a multi-award winning short film and an Academy Award qualifier, the feature film, TRADE, now available on Amazon Prime, iTunes and iFlix. Past projects that have streamed on Netflix and iTunes in 2018 are "2307: Winter's Dream," "Something Real and Good," and documentary "Lost City of Cecil B. Demille" on Amazon Prime. Gentile's work has garnered a Telly Award in innovation in youth education.



## MAURICIO SULAIMAN

### PRODUCER

Mauricio Sulaiman is the president of the Mexico based World Boxing Council, which is one of the four major international boxing championship recognizing groups. A man passionate about music and sports, who from childhood followed in the footsteps of his father Don Jose Sulaiman, the man who taught him to serve others. He graduated in Business Administration from the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Campus Estado de Mexico. His academic achievements include two more specialties, a diploma in finance and another in High Responsibility Management by the Association of Presidents from America.



## TOM LOEFFLER

### PRODUCER

Tom Loeffler has worked in the boxing industry for over 30 years. He started by successfully managing fighters and in 2003 he founded K2 Promotions with Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko, enabling them to take control of their careers. K2 holds the record for having promoted the most heavyweight world title fights this century while promoting all the world championship fights of the Klitschko brothers. Tom brought the Spotlight to the Flyweight division launching the Superfly Series on HBO that highlighted stars including Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez, Juan Francisco Estrada, Kazuto Ioka, Srisaket Sor Rungvisai and Carlos Cuadras. Loeffler is best known for his work with Gennadiy "GGG" Golovkin, securing his HBO debut in 2012 and then strategically building him into an international superstar, selling out arenas such as Madison Square Garden in New York City, T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, The Forum in Los Angeles, and The O2 in London. He secured sponsorship deals with global brands such as Jordan Brand, Hublot, Tecate, Chivas, and Bijan. Tom has also worked with Hall of Fame fighters Shane Mosley, James Toney and Laila Ali.

## MANUEL HERRERA

### PRODUCER

Manuel Herrera was born and raised in Oxnard and grew up in La Colonia area. Manuel states, "Growing up in a low income household of 14, (12 kids, 2 parents) and under the welfare system, I quickly learned the importance of giving back to my community. This is why I dedicate most of my time volunteering."

Manuel is deeply involved with the growth and success for the City of Oxnard, where he holds positions with; President of La Colonia Youth Boxing Association Board Member for the Oxnard Performing Arts Center, creator of Citizens for a Better Oxnard, Commissioner for the Oxnard Community Relations Commission, Chairperson for the Oxnard Multicultural Festival, organizer of the "A Street Cruise" Nights in Downtown Oxnard, wish granter for The Make-A-Wish Foundation, graduate of the Oxnard Police Citizens Academy, & volunteer with the Ojai Raptor Center.





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