



1985

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SYNOPSIS

Inspired by the award-winning short film of the same name, *1985* follows Adrian (Cory Michael Smith), a closeted young man returning to his Texas hometown for Christmas during the first wave of the AIDS crisis. Burdened with unspeakable tragedy in New York, Adrian reconnects with his brother (Aidan Langford) and estranged childhood friend (Jamie Chung), as he struggles to divulge his dire circumstances to his religious parents (Virginia Madsen and Michael Chiklis).

SPECS

1.66:1

Super 16

B&W

5.1 Surround

85 minutes

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I was inspired to write and make *1985* when I was feeling oppressed and dispirited as a queer filmmaker of color. I kept thinking about the heartwrenching stories I heard in my early 20s, largely from and about marginalized people in a culturally conservative era, and wanted to deflect and distill what I was going through in my own time. How does one carry on when the tide is relentlessly against you and there's no respite in sight?

My first job after college was working at a viatical settlement firm, where I'd interact with countless clients who were living with HIV/AIDS as they'd negotiate the sale of their life insurance policies to third parties. Seeing how they were proactively taking charge of the end of their lives ultimately inspired me to be more proactive about pursuing my own ambitions, specifically my childhood dream of filmmaking. Two decades later, I found myself revisiting these encounters, examining my observations, and discovering a different resonance. Why did that young man designate his father as the beneficiary of his life insurance policy when he's already disowned? Or that time when one sickly patient sighed to me: "The saddest thing is when your family doesn't know." Did they ever find out?

As a filmmaker and a filmgoer, I recognize that some may consider a period film that deals with AIDS, coming out (*or not* coming out), and religion as passé in this day and age, but the present political climate has demonstrated that bigotry and homophobia are still deeply embedded in the American culture. I see *1985* as an opportunity to connect with those who are still experiencing any type of discrimination or resistance in 2018, and to construct a familiar narrative with the benefit of hindsight. Acknowledging that most audiences will arrive knowing what happened during this time (i.e. the disease, the Reagan years) allowed me to focus attention instead on the timeless universality of what the characters experience in the context of those realities.

When Adrian wistfully relays to his younger brother Andrew that things will be different for him by the time he grows up, it's difficult to imagine how that could even come to be in the mid 80s, a quarter of a century before "It Gets Better" became an LGBT mantra. Now, we've come to accept that idea as an inevitable sign of social progress. This sense of juxtaposing the past with the present is one of the predominant themes of *1985*. It is my hope that audiences today still identify and relate to the classic themes it grapples with, those of family dynamics, unconditional love, being true to yourself, and the stirring idea that there can be beauty and possibility even at the darkest hour.

– Yen Tan

THE LOOK

Our decision to shoot on film is informed by the experience of making the short. We learned that the inherent grain structure immediately takes us back in time. Everything looks “period” very effortlessly. From the set to the wardrobe, film has the organic vintage quality right out-of-the-box. This is not the case with digital cinematography, which always requires costly and extensive grading in post.

The short was made in color, but we intend to push the aesthetic further into an auteurist and classical realm by shooting the feature in black-and-white. Since we’re covering more ground and locations in the feature, black-and-white brings another layer of believability. It’s much easier to hide what is contemporary when things are not in color. This is ideal since we’re working with a small budget. Black-and-white also enables the audience to pay more attention to the subjects on the screen. This quality is especially cherished in an intimate and character-driven piece where faces and expressions are our biggest “visual effects.”

“Every performance looks better on black-and-white.” – Orson Welles

“Most filmmakers, if you ask them, at some point would like to make a black-and-white movie. It’s such a specific and whole other way to photograph a story. Black-and-white focuses your attention because you’re not distracted by associations that color brings you.” – Noah Baumbach

“Black-and-white still plays a significant role in the world of fine art photography, it should be a normal part of every director’s creative palette. It’s only for commercial reasons that black-and-white left our cinemas, but it remains a beautiful form. When you no longer have color, you’re dealing with tone and texture.” – Alexander Payne

“The thing about black-and-white is you’re so much more aware about the composition of the frame, the depth of the frame, and the way the light is falling in the frame. I think that black-and-white focuses you, the viewer, on the subject of the frame.” – Roger Deakins

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– Yen Tan

REVIEWS

"Sensitively observed... a model of eloquent restraint."

David Rooney | *The Hollywood Reporter*

"Richly hypnotic... a rare, miracle of a film."

Tomris Laffly | *Film School Rejects*

"Subtle and gripping... a fine piece of cinematic craftsmanship."

Jude Dry | *IndieWire*

"A poignant, provocative meditation."

Kevin Fallon | *The Daily Beast*

"Deeply emotional... earns its tears honestly."

Dan Callahan | *The Wrap*

"Full of life... a beautiful, shockingly hopeful story."

Sarah Marloff | *The Austin Chronicle*

"Riveting... turns a year of tragedy into triumph."

Stephen Saito | *The Moveable Fest*

"1985 breaks your heart in the precise way it sets out to."

R. Kurt Osenlund | *Out Magazine*

"5 out of 5. Expertly crafted and masterfully told."

Brooke Sjöberg | *The Daily Texan*

"A stunning love letter... a gripping reminder that the social drama need not be loud and tumultuous for it to be effective."

Hazem Fahmy | *Film Inquiry*

BIOS

Yen Tan (Writer/Director/Co-Editor) premiered the critically-acclaimed *Pit Stop* at Sundance 2013. It was nominated for a John Cassavetes Awards at the 2014 Film Independent Spirit Awards. His previous feature, *Ciao* (2008), was a Queer Lion contender at Venice Film Festival. Yen also co-directed *Until We Could* (2014) with David Lowery, an Addy-winning PSA for Freedom to Marry that was narrated by Robin Wright and Ben Foster. Yen has been a fellow of Austin Film Society's Artist Intensive, IFP's Film Week, and Film Independent's Fast Track. He was born and raised in Malaysia and now lives in Austin, where he also works as an award-winning key artdesigner for independent films and documentaries. He was profiled by director Maris Curran (*Five Nights in Maine*) for Adobe Create. 1985 is inspired by his Short of the Week of the same title, which won a Special Jury Award at SXSW 2016.

Cory Michael Smith ('Adrian') is known for his work in director Todd Haynes' films, *Carol*, opposite Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara, and *Wonderstruck* opposite Julianne Moore. Prior to that, he was featured opposite Frances McDormand in the HBO miniseries *Olive Kitteridge*, directed by Lisa Cholodenko. His performance in that role earned him a Critics' Choice Television Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor in a Movie or Limited Series. He will next be seen starring in the film *1985* with Virginia Madsen, Michael Chiklis and Jamie Chung for director Yen Tan, and opposite Ryan Gosling as astronaut Roger Chaffee in Damien Chazelle's *First Man* for Universal. He can currently be seen playing 'The Riddler' aka 'Edward Nygma' on the hit Fox series *Gotham*. Smith made his Broadway debut starring opposite Emilia Clarke in Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Also during the 2012-2013 theater season, he starred Off-Broadway in the U.S. premiere of *Cock aka The Cockfight Play*, by Mike Bartlett, at the Duke on 42nd Street; and the New York premiere of *The*

Whale, by Samuel D. Hunter, at Playwrights Horizons. Prior to that, he was seen in the New York premiere of *The Shaggs: Philosophy of the World*, produced by Playwrights Horizons and New York Theatre Workshop. He is a graduate of Otterbein University. Originally from Columbus, OH, Smith resides in New York City.

Virginia Madsen ('Eileen') received Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations for her performance as 'Maya' in Alexander Payne's hit film *Sideways*, as well as winning Best Supporting Actress prizes from the Independent Spirit Awards, National Society of Film Critics, New York Film Critics Circle, and Los Angeles Film Critics Association. In 2015, Virginia appeared alongside Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro and Bradley Cooper in *Joy*, directed by David O. Russell. Prior to that, she starred in Kenny Ortega's *A Change of Heart*, the Rob Reiner-directed film *The Magic of Belle Isle* opposite Morgan Freeman, as well as in the independent feature *The Hot Flashes* with Brooke Shields, Daryl Hannah, and Wanda Sykes. In 2011, she costarred in *Red Riding Hood* with Amanda Seyfried, Gary Oldman and Julie Christie. She also starred in the 2011 Lionsgate thriller *The Haunting in Connecticut*. Her other films include the action thriller *Firewall* opposite Harrison Ford, *The Number 23* with Jim Carey, *The Astronaut Farmer* starring Billy Bob Thornton, and Robert Altman's final film *A Prairie Home Companion* alongside Meryl Streep, Kevin Kline, and Lily Tomlin. Virginia also starred in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Rainmaker* with Matt Damon, the cult classic *Candyman* with Kasi Lemmons, *The Hot Spot* directed by Dennis Hopper, HBO's first feature *Long Gone*, the independent feature *Almost Salinas* opposite John Mahoney, *American Gun* with James Coburn, and David Lynch's *Dune*. On the TV side, Virginia recently completed filming the EPIX miniseries *The Truth About the Harry Quebert Affair* opposite Patrick Dempsey. She also starred in season one

of the CBS drama *American Gothic*, the Lifetime series *Witches of East End*, and recurred on CBS's *Elementary* and the ABC drama *Designated Survivor*. She previously starred in the Lifetime Television feature *Anna Nicole*, AMC's *Hell on Wheels* and ABC's *Scoundrels*. She appeared on USA's final season of *Monk* alongside Tony Shalhoub, and on *Frasier* in a recurring role as promotional manager Cassandra Stone.

Michael Chiklis ('Dale') is an American actor and television producer. He is perhaps best known for his portrayal of corrupt LAPD detective Vic Mackey on the FX police drama *The Shield*, which aired from 2002-08, and for which he won the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series. Chiklis began performing professionally at the age of 13. A graduate of the Boston University School of Performing Arts, he spent his early career in New York performing in off-Broadway plays. His first big break came when he was chosen to play John Belushi in the 1989 film *Wired*. From 1991-96, he played Commissioner Tony Scali on the ABC police drama *The Commish*. After six successful seasons on that show, he starred in the ABC science-fiction comedy-drama *No Ordinary Family*. He then starred opposite Dennis Quaid in the CBS crime drama *Vegas*. In 2014, Chiklis joined the cast of *American Horror Story* for its fourth season, *Freak Show*. The following year, he was cast as Nathaniel Barnes in the second season of *Gotham* as a series regular. His other credits include the one-man Broadway show *Defending the Caveman* and as comic book hero The Thing/Ben Grimm in *Fantastic Four* and its sequel *Rise of the Silver Surfer*. In the animated version of *Spirited Away* released for English-language audiences, Chiklis was the voice of Chihiro's father.

Jamie Chung ('Carly') was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay area. She can currently be seen starring as the mutant 'Blink' in the series *The Gifted*, based on Marvel Comics' X-Men properties. Recently, Chung starred

alongside Zoe Lister-Jones and Adam Pally in the indie film *Band Aid*, and the 2016 comedy *Office Christmas Party* alongside Jason Bateman and Jennifer Aniston. She also appeared in FOX's hit show *Gotham* as 'Valerie Vale,' and as Mulan in the ABC hit show *Once Upon a Time*. She made her mark on the TV streaming circuit with her role as 'Olivia' on the Hulu original series *Resident Advisor*. She had several guest starring roles on fan favorite shows such as ABC's *Grey's Anatomy* and *Castle*, and NBC's *ER* to name just a few. In 2015, she starred in Emily Ting's *Already Tomorrow in Hong Kong* as an American Chinese woman visiting her home country, who quickly falls in love with an American expatriate. Chung is well known for playing 'Lauren' in parts 2 and 3 of the hit *The Hangover* series. Prior to that, she was seen as 'Lady Silk' in Universal's film *The Man with the Iron Fists* with Russell Crowe, produced by Quentin Tarantino. Chung is known for playing strong female characters such as the kick ass role of 'Amber' in Zack Snyder's *Sucker Punch*, and received critical acclaim as the lead of Megan Griffiths' *Eden*, based on the true story of a young Korean girl who saves herself following being abducted and forced into sex trafficking. Chung won the Special Jury Award at SXSW for her performance and the film won the Audience Award. Chung has also appeared in David Koepp's *Premium Rush* opposite Joseph Gordon Levitt and Michael Shannon, Fox's *Dragonball*, and Summit's *Sorority Row*. Chung had her Sundance debut in 2012 playing the lead in short film *Blue Dildo* directed by Joseph Gordon-Levitt. Additionally, Chung got her start in comedies such as *I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry* and *Grown Ups*. She also voiced the role of 'GoGo Tomango' in *Big Hero 6*, which she is reprising in *Big Hero 6: The Series*. Chung is based out of Los Angeles and New York City.

Aidan Langford ('Andrew') is a young creative who has been involved in the arts since he was 14 months old. Always "on" Aidan has a love for animals, art and performing. He has been a commissioned artist since the

age of 6 and frequently has been hired to do murals in downtown offices and city buildings. He has been acting since age 7 in numerous regional theater productions. At the age of 9 he was nominated for best supporting actor for his portrayal as 'Dil' in *To Kill A Mockingbird* at the Tony Award winning Dallas Theater Center. Aidan quickly transitioned to television with roles in *NCIS New Orleans*, Adam Devine's *House Party* and most recently playing Young Bosch in Amazon's *Bosch*. He has been lucky to have a varied career in film but is most excited by his role as Andrew in Yen Tan's *1985* alongside Cory Michael Smith, Virginia Madsen, Michael Chiklis and Jamie Chung. This marks the second film he has done with writer/cinematographer Hutch and he is thrilled to be a part of such an incredible cast and crew telling a remarkable story. Aidan attends the prestigious Booker T. Washington High School of the Performing and Visual Art and splits his time between Los Angeles and Dallas.

Hutch (Producer/Director of Photography/Co-Editor) is an award-winning director of photography and producer based in Dallas, Texas. His most recent work includes Cameron Nelson's *Some Beasts* (2015) for which he was awarded a Special Jury Prize for Cinematography at DIFF 2015. With several years of experience shooting everything from reality television to ultra-low budget features and shorts, Hutch has an uncompromising vision and talent for utilizing the natural assets in any location to bring out its raw beauty with minimal resources. His credits include Yen Tan's *Pit Stop* (Sundance 2013) and short films, *The Outfit* (DIFF 2015) and *1985* (SXSW 2016); James M. Johnston's *Knife* starring Charles Baker (SXSW 2011); Augustine Frizzell's *I Was A Teenage Girl* (SXSW 2014) and *Minor Setback* (SXSW 2016); and Kim Hughes' *The Price* (2016), starring Randy Travis.

Ash Christian (Producer), at age 20, produced *Fat Girls* starring Jonathan Caouette, Ashley Fink and Robin DeJesus. An official selection of the 2006

Tribeca Film Festival, the film was picked up by MTV Networks as a pilot for their network at the Tribeca Film Festival and hired Ash to executive produce the series for MTV. In 2009, Ash was a co-producer on the hit Broadway musical *Next to Normal* which garnered 11 Tony nominations and 3 Tony awards including Best Score. It later won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. In 2013, he co-produced a show for Sony's network Crackle entitled *Cleaners* starring Emmanuelle Chiriqui, Emily Osment, Missi Pyle, Gina Gershon and David Arquette. He won a 2014 Emmy Award for producing the web series *ml Promise*. In 2016, Ash produced *Miles* – a dramedy which stars Molly Shannon, Paul Reiser, Missi Pyle and Stephen Root – which is currently available on Netflix. He executive produced the Zach Clark film *Little Sister*, starring Addison Timlin and Ally Sheedy, which was named the #1 film of 2016 by *The New Yorker*. His film *Hurricane Bianca*, starring Bianca Del Rio (winner of *RuPaul's Drag Race*), Alan Cumming, Rachel Dratch (*SNL*) and Margaret Cho, was released in the fall of 2016. Ash is currently producing the sequel *Hurricane Bianca: From Russia with Hate* starring Wanda Sykes, Lady Bunny and Janeane Garafalo. In 2017, Ash produced the teen thriller *Coin Heist*, directed by Emily Hagins, for Netflix, and *Hello Again* – a film adaptation of the Michael John LaChiusa musical starring sixth time Tony Award winner Audra McDonald, Martha Plimpton, Cheyenne Jackson and T.R. Knight, directed by Tom Gustafson. Ash recently produced and sold *Social Animals*, starring Josh Radnor, Noël Wells, Aya Cash and Samira Wiley. He is currently in post production on *Southern Pride* a documentary by Malcolm Ingram which he is executive producing with Kevin Smith. He also executive produced *Shotgun*, starring Maika Monroe, Jeremy Allen White, Marisa Tomei and Gina Gershon. Ash is developing a slate of films for 2018 including *La Ronde* directed by Tony Nominee Michael Arden (*Spring Awakening*, *Once on this Island*) and Sono Patel's *Platonic* starring Brittany Snow.

CREDITS

Adrian.....Cory Michael Smith
Eileen Virginia Madsen
Dale.....Michael Chiklis
Carly.....Jamie Chung
Andrew.....Aidan Langford
Marc.....Ryan Piers Williams
Leo..... Michael Darby
Cashier.....Tina Parker
Pastor Jon..... Bryan Massey
Slow Dancer 1Bill Heck
Slow Dancer 2.....Marcus Deanda
WaiterChris Gardner
NurseGidget Taylor
Landry..... Talir

MuseLessMime Productions and Cranium Entertainment in association
with Floren Shieh Productions and Rainmaker Films presents

a Yen Tan film

"1985"

Written & Directed by Yen Tan

Story by Yen Tan & HutCH

Produced by HutCH & Ash Christian

Executive Producers: Clay Floren, Clay Pecorin, Aimee Shieh,
Russell Geysler, Cory Michael Smith, Nancy Schafer, Ian Brownell,
Monte Zajicek, Stacey Davis, Grey Sample, Brooke Christian,
Brent Brewer, Brett Brewer

Co-Producers: Kat Candler, Mark Osborn

Associate Producers: Geenah Krisht, Kelly Williams, Jonathan Duffy,

Richard C. Jones, Lawrence S. Dickerson, Lisa Jenkins

Director of Photography: HutCH

Edited by HutCH & Yen Tan

Production Designer: Brittany Ingram

Costume Designer: Nichole Hull

Sound Designer: Eric Friend

Score Composed by Curtis Heath

Original Music & Additional Score by Dutch Rall

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