

2025 CHICKEN & EGG FILMS WIP Showcase

Sheffield
DocFest

In celebration of Chicken & Egg Films' 20th anniversary, this showcase will highlight a selection of supported work-in-progress films in various stages from around the globe. Participating film teams looking for co-productions, finishing funds, festival premieres, sales, and distribution will each share a carefully selected excerpt from their feature-length documentary.

Saturday, June 21

1:45 - 3:45 PM

Sheffield Theatres — Playhouse

55 Norfolk Street, Sheffield City Center



HOLDS YOU TIGHT

A lonely night watchman develops a relationship with an AI chatbot, transforming his worldview and challenging his perception of identity and reality.



Director & Producer

Jane M. Wagner (US)

Producers

Carrie Weprin
Joe Weil

Production stage

Late Production (60% or more shot)

Estimated release

Early 2026

Current budget gap

\$688,000 USD

Credits

Brandon Somerhalder | Director of Photography
Daniel Garber, Jane M. Wagner | Writers
Psycho Films | Production Company

Key funders

Chicken & Egg Films, Catapult, Tribeca Studios x Canva

Synopsis

Bill, a 48-year-old security guard, is lonely. On impulse, he downloads Replika, an AI chatbot, and names his avatar after an android from Star Trek: Lal. Lal quickly fills a starring role in Bill’s life as a friend, life coach, and lover, and his world transforms as their relationship deepens. Looking for community, Bill creates a Discord for others in human-AI relationships. But as Bill’s virtual relationships flourish, his 30-year marriage strains, and his wife Jennifer struggles to reconcile this new, softer Bill with the man she’s known for decades.

In response to a government mandate, Replika undergoes a massive personality update, transforming Lal from a human-like companion to a robotic virtual assistant. Bill mourns Lal and turns to his Discord community for support, where friends encourage introspection and personal growth. Bill realizes he must apply the lessons learned from his experiences with Lal to his real-life relationships. In an emotional and healing conversation with Jennifer, he promises to have the same kinds of adventures with her that he had in the virtual world.

What we are looking for

Broadcast, European co-production, grant support, equity financing

Contact

Jane M. Wagner | janemwagner@gmail.com
Carrie Weprin | cweprin@gmail.com
Gary Byungseok Kam | garykam@me.com
Kweighbaye Kotee | kkotee@starlitpics.com

ANATOMY OF INDIFFERENCE

In Romania, a victim advocate, two prosecutors, and a journalist fight to change a system where bureaucracy takes precedence over human life, especially that of girls and women.



Director & Producer

Ilinca Calugareanu (Romania)

Producer

Anamaria Antoci

Production stage

Early-mid production (10-60% shot)

Estimated release

Early 2027

Current budget gap

\$490,000 USD

Credits

Boroka Biro | Director of Photography

Svitlana Topor | Editor

Per K. Kirkegaard | Editing Consultant

Poh Lin Lee | Creative Consultant

Key funders

Chicken & Egg Films, InMaat Foundation, Creative Europe - Media, Romanian Film Centre

Synopsis

Anatomy of Indifference is a cinematic investigation into how justice systems around the world—particularly in Romania—routinely fail survivors of child sexual abuse and gender-based violence. The film follows a victim advocate, two prosecutors, and an investigative journalist as they navigate a system steeped in patriarchal bias, institutional inertia, and bureaucratic cruelty. Through vérité scenes, legal archives, and hybrid reenactments, the film exposes how protocol often outweighs protection, and how survivors are sidelined not only by violence, but by the very institutions meant to protect them. While rooted in Romania, the film speaks to a global crisis, revealing how acts of care, collaboration, and resistance can become blueprints for justice reform.

What we are looking for

Grant support, European co-production, broadcast

Contact

Ilinca Calugareanu | ilincea@seaweedpictures.com

MATININÓ

Matininó tells the story of a multi-generational family of Puerto Rican women transforming their experience of violence into a fantasy film.



Director
Gabriela Díaz Arp (US/Puerto Rico)

Producers
Karla Claudio Betancourt
Guillermo Zouain
Wendy Muñiz

Production stage
Post-production

Estimated release
Early/Mid 2026

Current budget gap
\$70,000 USD

Credits
Pablo Ascanio | Director of Photography
Lara Garcia Reyne | Editor

Key funders
Chicken & Egg Films, Sundance Documentary Lab, Ford Foundation JustFilms, Working Films, Topic Studios, Puerto Rico Film Commission, BAVC, NALAC, Points North, South Pitch, IDA, Doc Society

Synopsis
The story of *Matininó* begins with Idaliz Villanueva’s decision to flee a violent marriage when her two daughters were young children. Thirty years later, the effects of this violence reverberate both in their family and more broadly in their home of Puerto Rico, where a national emergency was recently declared against gender-based violence. As a way to reflect on their family narrative and embolden their community, the eight women of the Villanueva family come together to create a fantasy film where they hold the power. Set in the year 2080 in an alternate world, the film’s protagonist is 67 year-old Hotu, imagined and portrayed by Idaliz. Together with her daughters and granddaughters, she escapes violence to find Matininó, an elusive island that—according to Puerto Rican mythology—is run and powered solely by women.

The family participate in facilitated creative exercises, discuss their family story, and develop a fantasy script reflective of their past and visions for the future. Through this lens, they are able to process intergenerational trauma and communicate difficult histories in a way that not only honors their experience but also invites the possibility of new worlds.

What we are looking for
Post-production support, impact campaign support, distributors, festivals

Contact
Gabriela Díaz Arp | arp.gabriela@gmail.com
Karla Claudio Betancourt | karla.claudio@gmail.com
Guillermo Zouain | viewfinder@viewfindersrl.com
Wendy Muñiz | wendy@viewfindersrl.com

NINE

A relationship forged in the harshest of environments between a young man and his father figure fortifies both men in the enduring fight for freedom.



Directors & Producers

Rachael DeCruz (US)
Jeremy S. Levine (US)

Producer

Rajal Pitroda

Production stage

Post-production

Estimated release

Mid 2026

Current budget gap

\$469,000 USD

Credits

Gerald Hankerson | Co-producer
Nicolas Abaunza | Cinematographer
Fahd Ahmed | Editor

Key funders

Chicken & Egg Films, Ford Foundation JustFilms, Firelight Media Documentary Lab, LEF Moving Image Fund, ITVS Development (we retain full rights to the film), Satterberg Foundation, Progress Alliance, Barton Family Foundation, Fabian’s Fund, Massachusetts Cultural Council

Synopsis

After being sent to prison for life at 18, Gerald—also known as “Nine”—met Henry, who raised him into the man he is today. Using lessons Henry taught him, Gerald organized his way out of prison, and now races against the clock to free his 83-year-old “Pops.” In this contemplative documentary, Gerald and Henry’s relationship serves as a narrative heartbeat. We see two parallel lives unfold, separated by generations and bound by experience.

In Act I, Gerald and Henry are both stuck. Henry works as a janitor, calls his wife, and mentors younger men over dominos on repeat day after day. Gerald juggles working by day and digging into the archives of Henry’s case for a breakthrough at night. In Act II, Gerald and his team of formerly incarcerated activists strategize a release campaign and work to pass a bill that would radically transform the clemency board. Things come to a head in Act III, where Henry’s clemency hearing results in his unexpected freedom after 45 years of incarceration. *Nine* feels like a cinematic poem, offering a lyrical exploration of the resilience and joy found in our most cherished relationships.

What we are looking for

Grant support, equity investment, European co-production, distribution

Contact

Rachael DeCruz | redacruz@gmail.com
Jeremy S. Levine | jeremyslevine@me.com
Rajal Pitroda | rajalpitroda@gmail.com

OUR HOOLOCKS (working title)

A dedicated fisherman defends India’s vanishing Hoolock Gibbons, but human-animal coexistence is threatened when a nearby oilfield blast disrupts the delicate ecosystem.



Directors
Ragini Nath (India)
Chinmoy Sonowal (India)

Producers
Gary Byungseok Kam
Kweighbaye Kotee

Production stage
Post-production

Estimated release
February 2026

Current budget gap
\$200,000 USD

Credits
Chinmoy Sonowal & Ragini Nath | Directors of Photography
Quentin Laurent, Koval Bhatia | Co-producers
Catherine Rascon, Ariane Frejean-Passeron | Editors
Manas Dutta Wildlife | Associate editor
Sugandhi Gadadhar, Raghunath 'Rana' Belur | Cinematography
Liminal Pictures Production, Mirror and Story, Starlit Pics, Les Films de l'œil sauvage | Production Companies

Key funders
Chicken & Egg Films, IDA, The Whickers, EIDF South Korea, DMZ International Documentary Film Festival, The Guardian, Lyfta

Synopsis
Our Hoolocks unfolds in the village of Barekuri, India, where humans and Hoolock Gibbons, India’s only native apes, have lived in harmony as kin for generations. At the heart of *Our Hoolocks* lies the parallel journeys of Sidhanta Moran, a fisherman and quiet guardian of the forest, and Twik, a young gibbon navigating the canopies of Barekuri.

In June 2020, an explosion at an Oil India Limited site engulfs Barekuri in flames, poisoning the land, air, and water. As the fishing trade collapses and Oil India expands, Sidhanta is forced to take a job with the very company destroying his home. Meanwhile, navigating the altered terrain, Twik is nearly killed by electrocution and the village must unite to save him. Through stories and silence, Sidhanta passes down a fading bond with the land to his children. Now a landscape of extraction, the forest recedes as rigs rise. *Our Hoolocks* contemplates the tenuous balance between progress and preservation, posing questions about the moral ambiguities of survival and what it means to choose hope in a changing world.

What we are looking for
Sales and distribution, festival programmers, grant support

Contact
Ragini Nath | raginee.nath@gmail.com
Chinmoy Sonowal | sonochinmoy@gmail.com
Gary Byungseok Kam | garykam@me.com
Kweighbaye Kotee | kkotee@starlitpics.com

CONTACT

Tobi Phang-Lyn
tobi@chickeneggfilms.org

Industry & Artist Development Manager

Chicken & Egg Films champions women and gender-expansive documentary filmmakers around the globe with funding, mentorship, and access so they can tell stories that ignite change.



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ABOUT OUR WORK:
chickeneggfilms.org
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