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Vela & Niyah

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The Journey of *Vela & Niyah*

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
In
Film and Theatre Arts
Film Production

By
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B.A. Broadcast and Visual Media with a Concentration in Film & Television from
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ABSTRACT

In this thesis paper, I will document and analyze the process of making my graduate thesis film, *Vela & Niyah*. I will start by stating my overall goal of the film, then move into each specific area of the filmmaking process and what was done to accomplish this goal. I will detail my successes and struggles throughout the process. I will analyze my own work, and reflect on the important lessons learned while making my thesis film. In the end, I will determine if my thesis proves true, and if I was successful in the individual aspects of filmmaking, as well as the thesis film as a whole.

Key words: thesis, Afrofuturism, ADR

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Vela & Niyah is a story that grew out of dream I have carried with me since I was a child. A dream to see women that looked like me have a place in the fantastical world created in science fiction and fantasy films. Yet, to be a fan of this genre is to engage with films in which I did not see myself represented. No matter how much I loved these films, as I grew older the overall “whiteness” of the films became increasingly obvious.

A typical response when criticizing Hollywood’s lack of representation is to make the challenge “make your own work.” If it was as simple as that surely there would be more Black women in science fiction films, yet there are not. As an aspiring filmmaker, the amount of frustration this response brings up has become tiresome. So, when the time came to make my thesis film, I knew I could not allow this opportunity to pass without making my own story.

Vela & Niyah was a vehicle through which I could make that years old dream come true. I could portray a complex image of Black sisterhood in a way I had rarely seen onscreen before. I wanted this film to be unapologetic about its subject matter, about its cast and offer a different view on how we can be seen in film. Before I began writing the script, I reflected on a quote by Toni Morrison. “I never asked Tolstoy to write for me, a little colored girl in Lorain, Ohio. I never asked [James] Joyce not to mention Catholicism or the world of Dublin. Never. And I don't know why I should be asked to explain your life to you...If I tried to write a universal novel, it would be water. Behind this question is the suggestion that to write for Black people is somehow to diminish the writing. From my perspective there are only Black people. When I say 'people,' that's what I mean.”¹ This quote helped me to firm my resolve and erased the initial doubts I had about making the film.

¹ Morrison, Toni and Danielle Taylor-Guthrie, *Conversations with Toni Morrison*, (University of Mississippi 1994)

The journey of making *Vela & Niyah* was as much an emotional journey as a learning experience. I hope that those who see the film will be able to sympathize with both Vela and Niyah. The sisters are in an impossible situation and there is not a happy ending. They are able to find solace in their love for each other and Vela can draw on the strength of her mother's love. Niyah is and will always be firstborn and in the end, Vela comes to terms with that. She realizes that her jealousy is not worth sacrificing her sister. In terms of universality, this is the message of the film to resonate with those who watch it. Yet, I did not make this film with the idea of a universal message in mind. I did not make this film for everyone and anyone. Truly I made this film for myself. I made it for my sisters who did not think the genre of science fiction was for them for a long time. Most importantly, I made this film for the young Black child who did not see herself in the movies she loved so much. In this way, this paper will show how *Vela & Niyah* realized the goal I had when I began the process of making my thesis film. This film was a true opportunity to create a film that showcased Black women in a beautiful and complex way. In this, I believe I succeeded.

CHAPTER 2 INSPIRATIONS

It is hard to pinpoint a single source of inspiration for *Vela & Niyah*. Instead, I believe it is a story that came about as a result of several things. In many ways *Vela & Niyah* finds its origins in Afrofuturism, in Octavia Butler novels, in previous films directed by Black women and in the relationship I have with my own sisters.

In preparing to write my script, I researched Afrofuturism extensively. Afrofuturism is a genre that grew out of a desire to see Black people in the future. I read many short story anthologies centered under the genre of Afrofuturism and I found them to be very refreshing and inspiring. Most of the anthologies I read were written by authors of the African diaspora. This is an umbrella that covers a wide array of topics and stories so the creativity and subject matter varied immensely. These stories increased my faith that there was an audience for *Vela & Niyah* and that there were others who wished to see themselves in creative works that took place in the future.

Science fiction author Octavia Butler further expanded my foray into Afrofuturism. It was inspiring to read her novels and have a sense that even if Black women are excluded, we can create our own futures that center us. Her novels had a profound impact on me as a person. From this grew my desire to have a film where Black women were at the forefront of a story that took place in the future. A story that would show women in the future in a positive and complex way. I think back to films such as *The Abyss* (James Cameron, 1989), *Star Wars: A New Hope* (George Lucas, 1977), and even *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982). These films were significant parts of my childhood. Yet, I did not see myself in them. Neither in front nor behind the camera. *Vela & Niyah* grew out of a desire to change that.

It was also important to watch films by Black women filmmakers center on Black women and sisterhood. If my goal was to show Black sisterhood in a dystopian setting, I felt it was important to see how it had been brought to the screen without a science fiction setting. Although there were not many films, the ones I watched had a great influence on *Vela & Niyah*. *Daughters of the Dusk* (Julie Dash, 1991) resembled my basic idea in the themes of sisterhood between women of African descent. *Eve's Bayou* (Kasi Lemmons, 1997) centers on the story of young Eve, her struggle with her family, and her transition into adulthood. It has always been one of my favorite films and while watching it in preparation for my thesis film, I focused primarily on the relationship between the sisters, Eve and Cisely. The film ends on an embrace between the two sisters that I knew I wanted to emulate in *Vela & Niyah*. *The Secret Life of Bees* (Gina Price-Bythewood 2008) also deserves a mention. Although it centers more on the relationship between a young Black girl and her chosen caregivers, it was still a good film to watch in preparation for *Vela & Niyah*.

CHAPTER 3 WRITING *VELA & NIYAH*

At the onset I was certain of two facts regarding my thesis film: that it would be a science fiction film and it would be about sisters. The film would focus on the sisters and their relationship, but it was important to me that the film had a science fiction background. The story and specific backdrop went through many changes before I arrived at the final script.

I was and still am extremely passionate about this project, but the writing of it was a definite challenge. Yes, the genre was science fiction but the challenge then became the scope. How could I write a short film that takes place in the future, let alone a film that I could feasibly shoot? It was important that the film was a science fiction film as it was the entire basis of my original idea, but the question became how I could accomplish this with a degree of believability. I did not want the film to have an air of a low budget film and distract the audience. I needed the scope to be feasible and other worldly at the same time.

On the other hand, I had the relationship of the sisters. In the beginning, I knew nothing of their relationship, but I knew that I needed it be both dynamic and simple enough to convey what I needed in a short film. It was important to show a side of sisterhood between Black women I had not seen in a film before, but I needed that relationship to be grounded in reality. The audience would already have to adjust to the strangeness of the setting. The relationship of the sisters had to be both strong and relatable enough to ground the audience in that setting.

There are two classes that definitely shaped the script: The Thesis Writing Class and Film Theory. The screenwriting class proved to be a great environment for building the script. Erik Hansen and others in the class were extremely helpful. I received feedback that helped the script to develop. In the Film Theory class, for my paper topic I chose to do a piece on people of color

in recent dystopian films. The paper provided the opportunity to research and watch films that were in the same genre as *Vela & Niyah*.

The best part of the thesis class was that it helped me to scale down my project significantly. The initial synopsis of the film involved alien invasions, without ever showing the aliens, and one sister killing off the other. This idea was rightly cast aside. Another early idea focused primarily on one sister's relationship with their father and that too was cast aside. It was not in keeping with my original ideas for the film. At that point, Erik gave me an extremely critical direction: focus on a small aspect of the sister's relationship, such as a single day in their lives. I do not think *Vela & Niyah* would be what it is if Erik had not said that at a crucial moment in the writing process. It became obvious that I was allowing the science fiction aspect of the film to overwhelm the relationship about the sisters. My ideas were too big to be contained in a short film with the limitations of what was feasible. I needed to think smaller. So, I went back to the drawing board. I settled on the idea of a coming of age ceremony that takes place in the future and how the sisters were affected by it. There would be two sisters and in this futuristic society, one would be able to take part in the ceremony and one would not. The film would focus on this single day in their lives and how they each reacted to it.

This new idea seemed to be the solution to all my problems with scale. But the challenge became adapting this idea to a futuristic setting. My paper for the Film theory class was titled "Dystopias and the Allegory of Oppression." It focused specifically on the seemingly post-racial stance of dystopian films that deal with allegories or metaphors of oppression. The research of my paper fueled the desire for this to be a science fiction film and helped me to come to the conclusion that the film should take place in the distant future, specifically, in a dystopian future. The presence of Black women in science fiction films is already lacking, yet in dystopian films,

our presence is even more diminished. I wanted the film to counter the stereotypical roles that I found doing my research. Black women were most often reduced to role of the Magical Negro meant to help the White protagonist achieve their goal: Rue in *The Hunger Games* (Francis Lawrence, 2012) dies after helping the protagonist Katniss, the Oracle in *The Matrix* (Lana Wachowski and Lily Wachowski, 1999) appears only to give the protagonist a crucial piece of advice and then is never seen again.

Now, I had a specific dynamic on which to base the relationship of the sisters and a futuristic setting that was much more feasible to accomplish than an alien invasion. The work then became scaling down this idea. Each new draft saw a decrease in the scale of the project. Some versions of the script involved too many elements. Originally, the ceremony itself was within the script and Vela had to go before a council of elders who refused to allow her to take part in the coming of age ceremony. In another draft of the script, the father of the sisters actually made an appearance, but it proved to detract from the relationship between Vela and Niyah, and focused more on Vela's relationship with her father. I had to remind myself that this was a film about sisters and it should remain that way.

After removing extraneous characters and elements, I believe the final script became what I originally intended for it to be. The idea that one sister is favored over the other is an aspect of the film that I believe audiences can relate to. Dystopian films are a growing trend in the science fiction genre. After the success of *The Matrix* and *The Hunger Games* franchises, I believe that the setting will not be so strange as to prevent an audience member from enjoying the film. I cannot say enough how helpful the screenwriting class was in making *Vela & Niyah* what it is. The class helped to contain my sometimes extravagant ideas and make the sisters the focal point of the script. The research and the screenwriting class helped me to write a script that

I was happy with. I believe it is a script that accomplishes what I set out to show: A story of Black sisterhood in a dystopian future.

CHAPTER 4 THE BUDGET AND NIMS SCHOLARSHIP

Throughout the writing process, I began to realize that in order to create the story world I wanted I would need to allocate more money to the art department than I had originally anticipated. My producer and I researched many methods about creating a ‘cave’ or ‘underground’ space in the soundstage. Our research cemented the decision that more money should be spent towards art for this film. Of course, the idea of the Nims Scholarship was in the back of our minds, but it was not a sure thing so we had to plan accordingly. We researched different grants we could apply for, and in addition we planned on going the traditional route of having an Indiegogo campaign.

The fact that I was awarded the scholarship is still shocking to me. Even now, reflecting back on the project, the Nims Scholarship definitely allowed me the freedom to make the film that I visualized in my head and heart. The scholarship also came with the pressure to make a quality film. I looked back on past thesis films that had won the award, such as *Call Me Cappy* and *Just Like Wild Pete*, I knew that I was in the company of talented women filmmakers and I was proud to be grouped with them.

Our first meeting after the winning of the Nims Scholarship, my producer and I decided to keep with our original plan of allocating a significant portion of the budget to the art department. This film is very art heavy: the set build, dressing the set, the wardrobe. I believe the final estimate on art was \$3,000.

The next biggest expense was catering and craft services. I spent a little over \$1,000 on food. My producer’s longtime family friend, Crystal Lirette catered the production and provided delicious home cooked meals for the crew. This allowed us to come in under budget and the remaining money was put towards replenishing craft services. Another important expense was

hair and makeup. My cast was entirely African American actresses and hair was a central part of the script. I knew from day one we would need a Black hairdresser experienced in working with natural hair. My producer was able to find Amber Ward through mutual friends. Amber owns her own natural hair shop in New Orleans and she did an excellent job in styling everyone's hair for the film. The makeup artist, Rolexis Shinscing, had originally come in and auditioned for an actor role in the film. Even though she was not cast, she was so excited about the project that she worked all four days at a significant discount. I am really happy with the work that Amber and Rolexis did and I believe that the \$975 that was spent was well worth it.

I also decided to pay my talent which resulted in \$1,000. I had originally budgeted for six days of production but we only shot four, so the total above the line came in under budget. In total I spent a little under \$8,000 throughout production. There were some surprises, such as renting the generators for the night scenes and the seemingly never ending art department purchases. But as there were less shooting days than we had planned for, we did not overspend. Overall, I am very happy with how the money was spent on the film and I am very grateful to my producer for helping me through the whole process.

CHAPTER 5 PRE-PRODUCTION

My second year as a graduate student I worked on a total of six thesis films. I believe that more than anything helped prepare me for the daunting task of producing my own thesis film. If there were such a thing as mentoring in the program, I would absolutely consider both Jade Hewitt and Andrea Kuehnel as such. Both were a tremendous help in the beginning stages of *Vela & Niyah*. Jade was a huge help in the writing and planning out of my prospectus. Andrea was an essential part of the casting process as my casting director. I was able to draw on their expertise and my own experiences working on previous thesis films to formulate a game plan that I believed worked well for *Vela & Niyah*. I also used my past experiences to assemble a team that I knew would support me throughout this process.

The Team

There was never a question in my mind who would be the producer for *Vela & Niyah*. I had worked with Rebecca Llorella on other thesis films and she produced my second year film. I trust her implicitly and truly admire her work ethic. I was especially confident in her skills as she had taken the Producing class. Rebecca expressed a dedication to the script and the idea behind *Vela & Niyah* that greatly comforted me. I knew she would be my biggest supporter and be with me every step of the way.

The visual aspect of the film was really important to me. I knew from the beginning that cinematography and production design could make or break the film. Trenton Mynatt was my first choice for cinematographer. Our working relationship is one of the best I have had with a fellow student. It is a relationship that was built over working closely together as 1st AD and cinematographer on many films. I knew that it would be hard to trust any other person but Trenton with my project. Also, we both share a love of science fiction films which was important

to me. Trenton knew many of my film references immediately and had great insight on how to visually create the world of *Vela & Niyah*.

Rebecca and Trenton were always a lock for their respective positions of producer and cinematographer. However, the production designer was a position we struggled to fill right up until August 2015. Rebecca and I had tossed around a couple of names, but we couldn't agree on anyone. We both knew how important the look and feel of the movie would be and that with the benefit of the Nims Scholarship we needed someone we could trust. Kathleen Vieira was not the first person that came to mind when we were considering who to ask, and now reflecting back on it, I cannot understand how she was not. I had seen Kathleen work in the art department for other films and I was really impressed with her attention to detail. I can truly say that *Vela & Niyah* as a film would not be what it is without her. Kathleen joined the team in August and we hit the ground running. We had weekly art meetings and created a feasible look and an environment of getting things done. I have come to value her skills as a production designer and filmmaker immensely and I will be forever grateful for the amount of work she put into the film.

The final member of the team was Kyndra Periban as my 1st AD. Kyndra is an undergraduate student in her second year. She impressed me as a freshman on the first thesis film we worked on together, she as a production assistant and I as 2nd AD. Since that film, Kyndra has been on nearly every student film I have worked on. Although young, Kyndra carries a maturity and dedication to film that I admire. Her passion for learning every aspect of filmmaking is something I admire about her and I knew I would need on my team.

I believe that these key people were essential to the making of this film. They were people I am comfortable with but that I knew would bring a 'get it done' mentality to the project. Also, Rebecca, Kathleen, and Kyndra are also women of color, so I knew that they would

understand my desire to make *Vela & Niyah* on levels other people could not. This was the team I knew could meet whatever challenges would arise and still perform at their best. I am grateful for every person who worked on my film, but these four are key crew members I would consider irreplaceable.

CHAPTER 6 CASTING TWINS

As I stated previously, even at the beginning stages, it was my intention to make a film about sisters. In every adaptation of the script, a relationship between two sisters was always at the center. I also knew that the sisters, in fact the entire cast would be African American. Casting twin African American actresses seemed almost an insurmountable challenge, but I was married to the script and the ideas that it grew out of. I immediately asked Andrea Kuehnel to be my casting director. It is a position she excels at and we had worked together previously. She was excited about the script and ready to meet the challenges it presented. The three things we were tasked with: finding African American actresses, finding African Actresses that had a familial resemblance with each other that could pass as sisters and then finding the actresses to play the aunt and grandmother to those cast as the twins.

Our first step was open auditions and they were extensive. I believe we auditioned between forty and fifty people for the twins. I was surprised by the amount of people we were able to find, but the audition process was draining. The scenes between Vela & Niyah are very emotional and there was little variety in terms of deliverance. Finally, we were left with eight or ten women that I had liked but with no clear Vela or Niyah. Andrea invited the women to callbacks and we paired them off with each other and switched their roles. At the end I was left with two choices: casting young or casting slightly older. There were pros and cons to each choice. The older pair was more experienced, while the younger pair had an innocence to them that was beautiful on camera. I was worried that the younger pair was too inexperienced and directing them might require more skills than I have. On the other hand, I was worried that the older pair was too old and did not resemble each other enough. In the end, I went with the older

pair: Kamille McCuin as Niyah and Ariadne Joseph as Vela. Unfortunately, Ariadne had already booked a project so I was back to square one.

At this point I had to decide if I should recast the twins or keep Kamille and try to find someone to match her. Andrea was not worried. She suggested pairing Kamille with one of the actresses from the younger pair and have the younger woman play Vela. Kathleen Moore had impressed me in auditions and I enjoyed her portrayal of Vela. I was hesitant at first and Andrea suggested reviewing the footage from auditions and callbacks. Afterwards, I felt more confident about the choice. I contacted the two and asked them to come in and do a table read. Kathleen and Kamille were great together. Kamille had a maturity and air about her that distinctly reminded me of Niyah. She immediately connected with Niyah as a character and was already as protective of her as I was. Kathleen gave off air of wild innocence when next to Kamille that was very refreshing. I was more confident with casting them after that meeting. Reflecting back on it now, I believe that it is a true stroke of luck that Ariadne had booked another project and I cast Kathleen. Kathleen brought a vulnerable innocence to Vela that I'm not sure Ariadne would have, despite how talented she is. Kamille and Kathleen together on set would turn out to be a great pair.

Casting the roles of Amma (the grandmother) and Ta Simma (the aunt) was significantly easier. I had an actress in mind for the role of Amma prior to having auditions. Rhonda Dents was in my first year film and I admire her talent. I was prepared to cast her as Amma without auditioning someone for that role, but Andrea suggested waiting. That was the right choice, as Summer Selby auditioned for the role and she blew it out of the park. She was older than Rhonda and had a true dignified air about her. Another bonus was that her hair was natural and gray. Her talent and presence was enough that she would present an Amma that would be closer to what I

had originally imagined. Yet, I didn't want to give up on Rhonda. None of the actors that had auditioned for Ta Simma were right for the part, so I cast Rhonda as Ta Simma. Both actresses accepted and they rounded out the cast for *Vela & Niyah*.

The casting process was long and sometimes frustrating, but the end results definitely made it worthwhile. Casting *Vela & Niyah* was harder than casting any of my previous films at UNO. Andrea and Rebecca definitely made the process easier and I am glad that at the end of hours spent watching actress audition, I was able to find Kathleen and Kamille. Both actresses brought a side to the twins that I had not thought of but now find I cannot picture them any other way. I was truly excited to work with them on set.

CHAPTER 7 DIRECTING

My usual position on set is that of a 1st AD. Assistant Directing and Directing are very different jobs. I had to change my mindset in preparation for production. In the days leading up to production I knew I had to work to let go of some ingrained habits. My plan was to focus on the script. I set time aside each day to review my notes and breakdown. I wanted to be as prepared as possible to speak with the cast about the script. My primary focus was Vela and Niyah. Their relationship was the centerpiece of the film and I felt it deserved the most attention.

The only rehearsals I had were with Kamille and Kathleen. After the initial table read, we were able to rehearse their scenes together on the sound stage. A huge benefit to building the set on the soundstage was that it was available to us at any time. Trenton and Kathleen Vieira were both able to attend a rehearsal session, which helped out immensely with the shot list planning. Also, Kathleen and Kamille were able to see the space prior to our actual shoot dates.

At my first rehearsal it became clear to me that I had a huge advantage in casting Kamille along with Kathleen. *Vela & Niyah* is Kathleen's first speaking role in a movie while Kamille had been in several short films prior. Previously, I had been worried about Kathleen's lack of experience and how to direct her, but Kamille proved to be a great asset in helping Kathleen with the material. After each rehearsal, Kamille would spend a few moments mentoring Kathleen and the three of us would discuss each scene at length. The mentee and mentor relationship between the two gave them a great foundation on which to build the older sister, younger sister dynamic. Unfortunately, due to the schedule conflicts of Rhonda and Summer, I was unable to have a full cast rehearsal prior to production. At first I stressed about this fact, but we reserved two days for the family scene, so that I could devote time to rehearsing the scene the day of.

The first day of shooting was just scenes with Kamille and Kathleen in the twins' bedroom. My initial approach of the day was to focus more on Kathleen. I knew she was really nervous about the first day and worried about her performance. I made a point to speak to each of the women before and after each take. In fact, that day I don't believe I was at the monitor at all and instead stayed by camera. As the day progressed, Kathleen became more and more comfortable with the process and I am happy with her performance.

Kamille as Niyah was everything we rehearsed and more, with each take she was able to give me something new. The biggest challenge came at the end of the day. Kamille approached me at wrap and brought up an issue she was having with the camera team. The camera operator had the experience and knowledge to pull it off but at times, she would get self-conscious and would verbalize her disappointment if she made a mistake while operating with a sigh or a grunt. I knew that the operator had this habit and did not think anything of it. But I did not think of how this would come across to Kamille or Kathleen. This was a mistake on my part. I apologized to Kamille. It amazes me that Kamille waited until the end of the day to say anything at all, and I thank and respect her for doing that. I talked to Trenton after Kamille left and trusted him to discuss it with the camera operator.

After that slight bump, the following days went well. The second day was our night shoot. The day started off slowly because of the problem with the generator, but once we solved that issue, we worked to finish out the day. The scene where Vela tries to leave Niyah above ground was emotionally the hardest scene for me and Kathleen and Kamille. It was the scene we rehearsed the most and discussed at length. The hardest part of the day was when we shot Kathleen's coverage of the scene. Although she was doing her best, I felt that something was still missing. Kamille was able to bring her performance from our rehearsals and much more. But for

some reason Kathleen was not able to meet Kamille's intensity as well as she had done in the rehearsals. After the third take, I took her aside and we discussed her feelings about the scene. She admitted that she was having a hard time getting into that same space. She tried thinking of her mother who had passed years earlier but it just wasn't working. I told her if her mother was not helping her, we should instead try something else. I asked her if there was ever a time she had ever disappointed someone so greatly it hurt every time you looked at them, and she said yes. For Kathleen, that person had been her mother. I gave Kathleen a moment to bring up those feelings and then we did another take. The last take was definitely the best one, and it is the one that is in the film. Her performance was so moving that she brought Kamille to tears as well.

The third day of shooting was with the full cast. Just as we had planned we were able to rehearse for an hour the day of the shoot. Kamille and Rhoda had worked together previously so they had an immediate repartee with each other. But neither of them had worked with Kathleen or Summer before. Out of all the days of the shoot, I would say my favorite moment is when we were shooting the initial hair braiding of the scene. At that moment it truly hit me that yes, we are making the movie I intended to make. I believe that Andrea really helped me to get a talented cast. Their stamina was simply amazing. We were able to shoot the big opening scene all in one day instead of the two we had previously planned.

I am very happy with my cast and their performances. As a director, I know that I am lacking in some aspects, but with this project I felt that I was truly working with my cast on a level I had not achieved before. I feel that it was truly a collaborative effort between all five of us. Each of them worked hard to bring the characters to life and I would work with any of them again in an instant. As with any project, there are regrets. If I had only did one more take, or I wish that we had shot that one shot we cut for time, but it is not in my nature to over think those

moments. Those moments are gone and the best thing I can do is learn from them. Directing this film was genuinely a challenge I enjoyed. My cast was as dedicated to this film as I was and extremely supportive of the idea and message behind the film.

CHAPTER 8 LOCATION AND SET CONSTRUCTION

The script calls for the majority of the action to take place underground in a living space unique to this dystopian community. As it would have been difficult to find an available location underground that meet all the needs of script, it was decided we would build the set on the UNO sound stage.

I already had on my team Kathleen, and Jacob Hoyson joined us soon after. Jacob had helped to build the set for my second year film and I trusted in his skills. We researched methods to create a believable cave and there were many. The most feasible ones we settled on were spray foam, to carvable foam and plaster. Unfortunately, the spray foam was both expensive and could prove to be toxic if it did not dry correctly. The carvable foam was just as expensive and doing that method would have used up the entirety of the art budget before set dressing or props was even considered. As a result, we decided to go with the plaster process. Jacob said something then that I will never forget: we could either spend a lot of money or get it done fast, or spend a lot more time and less money. He was entirely right. We started prep for the plaster on September 19th and did not finish until the week of shooting nearly a month later. There were many sleepless nights spent in “The Cave” but the end result was truly worth it. We accomplished our goal of keeping the cost of building the set down but without compromising on the look of the cave.

The other location needed for the film was easier to secure. Rebecca and I spent a couple of weekends scouting for the above ground location where Vela would try to leave Niyah. I wanted it to have a wild and overgrown look but also be accessible for a crew of thirty people and the cast. We settled on Bayou Segnette, a State Park on the West Bank. There was a part of

the nature trail that still had the ravaged effect of Katrina. I immediately brought Kathleen and Trenton to the location and both saw the potential of the location as Rebecca and I had.

CHAPTER 9 CINEMATOGRAPHY AND PRODUCTION DESIGN

The Look of the Film

Deciding the visual look of this film was an important task. At the start I knew that I wanted it to be a visual difference between the scenes underground and the scenes above ground. After some thought I felt that the scenes underground should be warm with reds and browns, while the scene above ground would be cold and blue. I wanted their home dwelling to give off a sense of home. The reasons they lived underground was not important. Instead, it was more important to me to show that society had survived and found a way to live comfortably. This would contrast with the visual look of the scenes above ground, which would have a colder and other-worldly feel to them.

I felt that this difference would reflect Vela's struggle in a visual way. In her own home she is an outsider and does not match well with the others in her family circle. Niyah is the treasured sister. She is first born and heir so her look would complement the surrounding environment. On the other hand, when the sisters go above ground, Vela's look would complement their surrounding environment while Niyah did not. This would serve Vela in two ways. First, it is where she intends to remove the obstacle of her sister Niyah would be lost in the cold abyss of the environment above ground and allow Vela to take the coveted position as firstborn. Second, above ground is where Vela finds solace in her very existence and gains the confidence in herself and the love from her Mother and sister to continue despite everything. It was my intention to have all of this reflected in the film.

Cinematography

Trenton Mynatt and I are very close and have a great working relationship. We share a similar taste in films and both enjoy science fiction films. I shared with him my plan of a warm underground against a blue above ground and he was immediately on board. Our biggest visual references for the underground films were films such as *Stargate* (Roland Emmerich, 1994) and *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* (Guillermo del Toro, 2008), *Pan's Labyrinth* (Guillermo del Toro, 2006). In terms of pre-visualization, I wanted the film to be shot almost entirely static. There are not many camera moves in the film and the only scene with a lot movement is the scene with first argument between the two sisters. I wanted there to be a stillness to the camera in order to contrast the emotional rollercoaster that the sisters, especially Vela, go through in the film. Trenton and I have created many shot lists together working as DP and 1st AD, so I know his thought process. I prepared by going through each scene several times and made a loose plan before we agreed on the final shot list.

Production Design

Kathleen and I met each week after she joined the team. I presented the same visual plan that I had shared with Trenton and we went from there. In the script level, the color divide is clearly established: Vela is dressed in blue and Niyah in red.

Set Dressing

Set dressing was an essential part of this project. Amy Laws and Kathleen worked well together to execute our plan. Our inspiration for set dressing the film came from such films like *Stargate*, *Star Wars: A New Hope*, and others. Vela's paintings were also very important. I am extremely happy with how they turned out, although I wish we had shot more footage of them. The little

touches that Kathleen and Amy created from Vela's paintbrushes and Niyah's mirror helped to cement the story world.

The family room was also very important. I knew that we needed to create a space that looked lived in. It needed to be a space that an audience member could believe that a family was surviving there. We planned out each corner of the room, including the kitchen, the altar, and sitting area. I am very happy with the execution of the set dressing and I will never forget the moment when I walked into the completed set.

Wardrobe

The general feeling of the whole art team was that the wardrobe needed to be unique and specific to the style and genre of the film. This meant that they would need to be handmade. The costume designer, Kellie O'Sullivan, designed and made almost all of the costumes, including those of Niyah and Vela. The ceremonial robes were her design and we talked at length about how they should look and what embellishments would be on Niyah's compared to Vela's. The ceremonial robes turned out beautifully. I am truly grateful to Kellie for all her hard work and the finished product.

Props

The props in this film were just as crucial to establishing the story world of the film as the set dressing and wardrobe. The central props were the Vela's necklace and also the combs that would be used for the hair braiding. Lauren Erwin was the prop master and she did a lot of research into finding a stone that fit the story but was also the right color. In accordance with the color palette we had already established, the stone for the necklace had to be red, and we went with a leather cord for the necklace. For the combs we decided to go with wooden combs in keeping with the 'warm' aesthetic. The props that were used above ground had a different color

palette. The masks and air tanks were white and silver respectively, and even the tethering hook was silver.

CHAPTER 10

EDITING

My plan had always been to edit my film myself. In the end it turned out to be a more daunting process than I had imagined. The dailies process took longer than I had wanted it too. I switched computers before I exported and even though I followed Jade's instructions very carefully something was still not right. Thankfully I had Jade Hewitt and Madison Beaudet to help me through it. Jade was able to narrow my problem to settings that changed when I switched computers. I was able to export, but unfortunately changing those settings put all the footage out of sync. After re-syncing and re-exporting I was finally ready to edit the film.

The first cut of the film closely resembled the script. The duration of the cut was around 16 minutes and I felt that it dragged quite a bit. In particular, the scene with Vela contemplating the cloaks went on too long. Vela going from her comb to the cloaks, to the gauge just took too much time. Also, the scene with Vela and Niyah arguing for the first time was not playing how I wanted it to. Some of the dialogue felt chunky and too on the nose following the opening scene.

I showed the first cut to several people and each had their own suggestions. After implementing those suggestions, the second cut was down to 13 minutes. However, this turned out to be too short and I had cut out too much. Many of the important elements of the story were lost. I knew I needed to find a happy medium between these two extremes. Thankfully, Danny Retz was there to help. After many sessions spent in an edit suite, I think we were able to find that happy medium. Danny was able to help refine the edit and make use of the coverage we shot in production, especially in the first scene with all the characters. I think the end result is a definite improvement on earlier versions.

CHAPTER 11 FINALYZING THE FILM: POST SOUND AND COLOR CORRECTION

The process of bringing the film back in to Scratch was easier than I had expected it to be. I had watched previous graduates struggle with their films for weeks in Scratch, so I was prepared for many nights in the finishing suite. But I was able to bring the film and titles back into Scratch with relative ease. I owe a lot of this to the PDF Jade created for the graduate students and also to Trenton, who was always available to answer any questions I had. As a result, I was able to conform the film and have everything ready for color correction within a couple of days.

Color Correction

The last step was color correcting the film. I was not worried about this daunting task as Trenton had agreed to take on the job from day one. The color grading itself was a very enjoyable experience. Trenton and I worked to augment what was already there. He made the underground scenes a good deal warmer than we had shot. I truly felt that the visual idea I had at the beginning of pre-production had been realized after seeing the final grading done on those scenes. My favorite is definitely the last scene, I really enjoy how warm the atmosphere is between the sisters and in the visual look.

The above ground scenes are where our opinions differentiated. The problem area for Trenton had always been those scenes. He always insisted they were too dark and was eager to make a change. I did not want the scenes to be too bright. I wanted there to be a visual difference between the two locations in the film. It was not until I was doing revisions on my thesis paper that I remembered I had originally intended for those three scenes to have a 'blue' look to them. Trenton was immediately onboard with this idea and executed it very well. In the end, I believe

there is a vibrancy to both settings in the film that contrast nicely. I am very happy with what we were able to accomplish.

Score

I always had a particular person in mind for the score. Ernie Forzano composed my second year film and I really enjoyed his work. I knew I wanted him to score *Vela & Niyah* and he was very excited to take on the task. I had specific scenes that I wanted music for and what feelings the music should evoke. Ernie and I discussed the relationship between the sisters and the story world at length. He was very interested in the dystopian matriarchy of the script. I also shared with him artists I listened to at every stage of the film. Three specific artists were a constant inspiration from writing the script to editing the film. Janelle Monae is a pioneer artist in the Afrofuturist style. FKA Twigs has a more electronic style and uses a lot of synthesizers. Ibeyi are a twin sister duo and have a haunting style of music. Ernie was able to take all of our discussions about the script and my inspirations to create a score for the film. I really enjoy the music he produced and was very glad to work with him again.

Post Sound

I knew post sound would be a big hurdle for me to overcome. The above ground scenes had the generator noise throughout all of the production sound. I did not know where to begin to solve the problem. Thankfully, Emilie Nutter and Emily Poulliard were there to help me through the process. Emily Poulliard helped me to record ADR with both Kathleen and Kamille for each of those scenes. Emilie Nutter helped me with the sound design. We used some effects to cover up the 'ADR booth' feel to the audio and give the above ground scenes a certain atmosphere. Overall, it worked out for the best.

CHAPTER 12 FILM AND SELF-ANALYSIS

Although I am still in the midst of post-production, I think enough time has passed to adequately analyze the film and the process of making it. My initial goal was to make a film that would showcase Black women in a beautiful and complex way set against a futuristic background.

At the script level, I think the sisters' dynamic is clear and strong. Kamille and Kathleen succeed in bringing that dynamic to the screen. Those who have seen the movie seem to understand the tough position the sisters are in.

I believe that rehearsals with the actors went well. On set, I wish I had been faster in recognizing when Kathleen was struggling with her character. Vela is a hard character to nail down, the emotional rollercoaster she goes through in one scene can be a daunting task even for an experienced actor. Towards the end of production, I realized that Kathleen needed one or two takes to warm up. After going through the edit process and reviewing all the footage, I really wish I had realized that sooner. If I had, I think Kathleen would have been more comfortable in her role and I would have had more flexibility in post. Despite this, I still believe that Kathleen was more 'Vela' than Ariadne would have been. I only wish I had been more capable of directing her at the beginning. I also wish I had been able to pick up on the fact that Kamille was having a hard time on the first day. I know she waited until the end of the day and I think that speaks highly of her professionalism, but I would have rather she didn't go a whole day wondering if the camera operator was reacting to her performance or not. I do not think the film suffers because of this, but it is definitely something I will remember when I direct my next project.

The overall look of the film is something I am really happy with. Again, I wanted the women in my film to be photographed beautifully. I love the opening shots of Kathleen combing through her hair. I love how regal Summer looks when she scolds Kathleen. The scene in which Kamille braids Kathleen's hair is by far my favorite in the film. It is a scene that was written with my own sisters in mind and I'm very happy with how it turned out. I really enjoy the moments where there is no dialogue and we can be with Kathleen in her emotional turmoil. I am really happy with how beautiful each of the women looks. I do wish there was more coverage for certain scenes, specifically for the scene "above ground." I know that we were under a time crunch. We lost a lot of time waiting for the generator and spent the rest of the day making up for it. We were able to get the shots that we absolutely needed rather than what we wanted, but that is the reality of filmmaking. At the end of the day, I think we were able to capture enough to make the scene work.

The overall look of the art is something that amazes me each time I watch the film. Everyone on the art team and beyond worked with such dedication to make that set a reality. The costumes were amazing. The set dressing and props were very well thought out and executed. I only wish we had showcased more of the smaller details Kathleen and Amy added.

I had two public screenings of the film. The first was a small screening with my cast and their friends. The screening went well, and the audience responded well to the film. But most of the audience was comprised of people intimately connected to the film. At the second screening I was better able to experience the opinions of an unbiased audience. The audience was film students at UNO, but none of them had worked on the film or had any knowledge of it previously. I know that it is common to have a questionnaire at screenings in classes but I

decided not to do that. I wanted the students to feel comfortable talking about the film without the pressure of it being a class assignment.

The students were very intelligent in their response to the film. One thing that surprised me were the amount of questions about the story world of the film. Many wanted to know what happened to the Earth, or if they were even on Earth. Or they wanted to know why they lived underground. I enjoyed answering many of their questions but I was a little disappointed that there was so much focus on the setting rather than the actual story itself. I think that when I submit the film to festivals and showcase it to a wider audience than perhaps I will receive a different response. Overall, I think it was a valuable experience for me. The audience isn't always going to react as you intended and they won't always focus on the aspects you want them to.

CHAPTER 13 CONCLUSION

I set out to make a thesis film centered on Black women in the future. I believe I have achieved this goal. *Vela & Niyah* has not been submitted to any festivals yet. I have shown the film to crew members, close friends, and people associated with UNO, and they have enjoyed the film. It is not a perfect film but I think the intentions behind the film are clear. I do not know what happens to Vela or Niyah at the end of the film, but I don't think that is as important as how the audience feels after watching the film. I hope that seeing the two sisters come together at the end of the film gives them a sense of hope. I will have to wait until the film has been exposed to general audiences to see if this rings true.

I am so proud of what the cast and crew was able to accomplish. Every single member of the crew has my eternal gratitude and sometimes I feel as if I cannot thank them enough. In some ways, *Vela and Niyah* has been a dream of mine since I was a child who wanted to be a filmmaker. To see that dream realized is a truly humbling experience.

The making of *Vela & Niyah* was an amazing journey. There were clear challenges: building the set, casting the twins, the post process. I think we were able to meet these challenges and produce results that I am proud of. Of course, mistakes were made along the way but I believe valuable lessons were learned in return. I have really come to appreciate the collaboration aspect of filmmaking. I had a clear vision and my crew was a huge part of making that vision a reality. I had worked with many of the crew members prior to *Vela & Niyah*. But working with them on my thesis film allowed me to see and appreciate their skills in a new way. I learned so much about myself and filmmaking throughout the whole process. I still have a lot to learn, but I am very happy that *Vela & Niyah* is the final product of my time here at the University of New Orleans.

WORKS CITED

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FILMS CITED

Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982)
Daughters of the Dusk (Julie Dash, 1991)
Eve's Bayou (Kasi Lemmons, 1917)
Hellboy II: The Golden Army (Guillermo del Toro, 2008)
Pan's Labyrinth (Guillermo del Toro, 2006)
Star Wars: A New Hope (George Lucas, 1977)
Stargate (Roland Emmerich, 1994)
The Abyss (James Cameron, 1989)
The Secret Life of Bees (Gina Price-Bythewood, 2008)
The Matrix (Lana Wachowski and Lily Wachowski, 1999)
The Hunger Games (Francis Lawrence, 2012)

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Actor Contact Information

VELA & NIYAH				
Cast Contact Information				
	Director: Rashada Fortier			
	Producer: Rebecca Llorella			
	Casting Director: Andrea Kuehnel			
#	NAME	CHARACTER	EMAIL	PHONE
1	1 Kathleen Moore	Velah	letfreedomring99@gmail.com	(504) 481-7398
1	2 Kamille McCuin	Niyah	kamille@kamillemcuin.com	(214) 793-1153
1	3 Summer Shelby	Amma	summer_selby@yahoo.com	(214) 718-2546
1	4 Rhonda Dents	Ta Simma	rdents1@my.uno.edu	(504) 701-8200

APPENDICES

Appendix B: Actor Releases

Print

	DEPARTMENT OF Film & Theatre Arts THE UNIVERSITY of NEW ORLEANS	2000 Lakeshore Drive, Performing Arts Center 307 New Orleans, LA 70148 (504) 280-6317 Fax (504) 280-6318 www.unofilm.com

Student: Rashada Fortier	Email: velanayah@gmail.com Phone: (832)647-5758
Course#: 6911	Professor: Danny Retz
Project Title: Vela & Niyah	Date: 10/16/2015

CAST RELEASE

I, the undersigned, hereby grant to UNO Student Rashada Fortier ("the Filmmaker") the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, poses, actions, plays and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the student project tentatively entitled Vela + Niyah (the "Picture").

I hereby grant to the Filmmaker, the University of New Orleans Department of Film & Theatre, and their successors, assigns, and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records which the Filmmaker may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting and/or publicizing of the picture. I further grant the right to reproduce in any manner whatsoever any recordings including all instrumental, musical, or other sound effects produced by me, in connection with the production and/or postproduction of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Filmmaker, University of New Orleans Department of Film & Theatre, or their successors, assigns and licensees, any claim, action, suit or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to, those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, or for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability, to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voice-overs and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand that the Filmmaker may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voice-overs and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I further acknowledge that any commitments beyond the scope and intent of this release are the sole responsibility of the above named Student and not the UNO Department of Film & Theatre.

I hereby certify and represent that I am over 18 years of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Actor Name: <u>Rhonda J Dents</u>	Email: <u>rhondadents@gmail.com</u> Phone: <u>(504) 701-8200</u>
Character: <u>Ta Sima</u>	Address: <u>5816 Mangny St., N.O., LA 70222</u>

Rhonda J Dents

 ACTOR SIGNATURE

10/23/15

 DATE

[Signature]

 STUDENT SIGNATURE

10/23/15

 DATE

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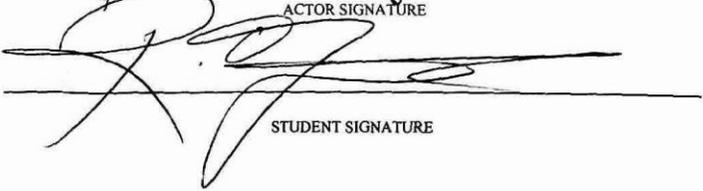
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I hereby certify and represent that I am over 18 years of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Actor Name: <u>SUMMER SELBY</u>	Email: <u>SUMMER_SELBY@AHO.COM</u>
Character: <u>Ammia</u>	Address: <u>1325 S. 8th St. Ocean Springs, MS 39564</u>



 ACTOR SIGNATURE



 STUDENT SIGNATURE

10-23-15

 DATE

10/23/15

 DATE

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Actor Name: <u>Kamille McLean</u>	Email: _____ Phone: <u>214.793.1153</u>
Character: <u>Niyah</u>	Address: <u>1810 Annunciation Street, New Orleans, LA 70130</u>

[Signature]

 ACTOR SIGNATURE

Oct. 16, 2015

 DATE

[Signature]

 STUDENT SIGNATURE

10/16/15

 DATE

APPENDICES

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	(Empty space)

Student: Rashada Fortier	Email: velaniyah@gmail.com Phone: (832)647-5758
Course#: 6911	Professor: Danny Retz
Project Title: Vela & Niyah	Date: 10/16/2015

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I hereby certify and represent that I am over 18 years of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Actor Name: Kathleen Moore	Email: letfreedomring99@gmail.com Phone: 504-481-7398
Character: Vela	Address: 4222 South Prien St NOLA 70125

Kathleen Moore

 ACTOR SIGNATURE

10-16-15

 DATE

[Signature]

 STUDENT SIGNATURE

10/16/15

 DATE

APPENDICES

Appendix C: Location Contact Information

VELA & NIYAH				
Location Information				
Director: Rashada Fortier				
Producer: Rebecca Llorell				
1st AD: Kyndra Periban				
LOCATION	CONTACT	EMAIL	PHONE	ADDRESS
Bayou Segnette	Stanford	bayousegnette@crt.la.gov	(504) 736-7140	7777 Westbank Expressway Westwego, LA 70094

APPENDICES

Appendix D: Location Contacts and Releases

Facility Use Agreement for Media Productions on Louisiana State Parks

1. **Introduction.** The following agreement is entered into by the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Office of State Parks, 1051 N. Third Street, Third Floor, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70802; phone (225) 342-8111; fax (225) 342-8107; represented by Dwight Landreneau and herein sometimes referred to as "State" and Rashada Fortier, a graduate student enrolled at the University of New Orleans, represented by Rebecca Llorella (phone: 504-906-8901), and herein sometimes referred to as "Producer" or "Production Company."
2. **Permission.** In accordance with the schedule and terms herein, the State grants permission to Producer to enter and remain upon Bayou Segnette State Park, herein sometimes referred to as "Property" for the purpose of filming, photographing, and otherwise recording specified scenes in a graduate thesis film presently entitled "Vela & Niyah," herein sometimes referred to as "Project". To the extent the State has the requisite authority, the State's permission shall include the following:
 - a. Producer may use its personnel, equipment, and materials (including props and temporary sets) around the exterior and inside the Property for use in connection with the production(s) described above. The Producer agrees to take appropriate measures to avoid damage to the property, including the grounds and facilities.
 - b. Producer may photograph, film or record any names or trademarks connected with the Property, and any logos or verbage contained on any signs, decorations, or fixtures on the Property. Producer may refer to the Property by any real or fictitious name and may attribute any real or fictitious events as having occurred on the Property.
 - c. Producer may alter the Property for use as a set, only as approved by site staff.
 - d. Producer may reproduce, exhibit, and advertise, publicly and privately, all of the photographs and recordings created in connection with this agreement (including use in trailers, advertising, promotions, publicity, commercial tie-ins and merchandising, in all languages, formats and media of any kind now known and hereafter devised, worldwide, in perpetuity and without limitation and without further payment) and may license others to do all of the above. However, the agreement itself may not be assigned to another company.
 - e. Producer shall be the sole, exclusive, and perpetual owner of all right, title, and interest in the Project, any recordings or photographs connected therewith and any copyright, including all renewals and extensions of the copyright interest in the Project.
3. **Schedule.** The following production schedule has been agreed to by the parties. Any changes must be requested in writing by the Producer and approved in writing by an authorized representative of the State.

Evening and nigh of Saturday, October 24
4. **Payment.** Due to the nature of the project; i.e., student film project associated with the University of New Orleans, the following discounted filming fee applies:

\$100/DAY FOR STATE PARKS
\$100 FEE FOR FILMING OUTSIDE NORMAL PARK HOURS

The total fee, as scheduled, is \$200.00. In the event that the actual production schedule exceeds or take less time than scheduled, the total fee shall reflect the agreed upon daily rates.

Upon completion of production and restoration, Producer shall make payment by check, payable to "Bayou Segnette State Park." If the Property becomes unavailable as a result of any natural disaster, war, fire, or similar circumstance beyond both parties' control, there will be no payment. In the case of a force

APPENDICES

Appendix D: Location Contacts and Releases

major event, the State shall make good faith efforts to make the property available for the Producer's use at a mutually agreeable time.

- 5. **Insurance.** The permission granted in Paragraph 2 is conditioned upon the Producer supplying the State with Proof of Insurance for standard university off-site events and project.
- 6. **Liability and Damage.** The Producer agrees to return the Property in the same or better condition as when received. The Producer agrees to be responsible for the repair and restoration of any damage to the Property and shall indemnify the State against any claims arising out of or based upon personal injuries, death, or property damage suffered as a direct result of the Producer's use or activities on the Property to the extent that such liability or loss is not otherwise covered by the Producer's insurance policies. All claims of damage or injury must be presented to the Producer within 30 days of the completion of the use of the site.

The State's sole remedy for a breach by Producer of any of Producer's obligations hereunder shall be an action at law for damages, it being agreed that in no event shall the State or its successors and assigns or any other party now known or hereafter having an interest in the Property seek or be entitled to injunctive or other equitable relief restricting Producer's ownership and/or use, exploitation, distribution, advertising and/or promotion of Producer's video, films, photography and sound recordings.

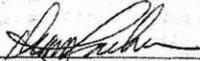
The State does hereby warrant and represent that the State has full right and authority to enter into this Agreement concerning the Property, and that the consent or permission of no other person or agency is necessary in order to enable the Producer to enjoy full rights granted herein and that the State does indemnify and agree to hold the Producer free and harmless from and against any all loss, costs, liabilities, damages or claims of any nature arising from, growing out of, or concerning a breach of the above warranty.

The State maintains the right to have a representative on site at all times. Subject to notice and reasonable opportunity to cure, the State shall discontinue and cancel all privileges granted to the Producer if the representative determines that the activities of the Producer, its employees, agents, or subcontractors, are resulting in, are likely to result in, or have already resulted in significant damage to the Property or violation of federal or state law, or the terms of this contract.

- 7. **Credits.** Producer shall use good faith efforts to include media credit in substantially the following form: "Bayou Segnette State Park, the Louisiana Office of State Parks, the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, and the State of Louisiana Office of the Lieutenant Governor." When practical, Producer will provide the State with a copy of the finished film as proof of credit provided for archival purposes only and not for distribution or exhibition.

- 8. **Entire Agreement.** This document, including the attached addenda, is the complete and binding Agreement of the parties, superceding all prior understandings and communications with respect to the subject matter hereof. All amendments must be in writing and duly executed by both parties.

Agreed to and accepted by the State:



By: Dwight Landreneau

Its: Assistant Secretary

Dated: 10/8/2015

Contact information
P.O. Box 44426
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4426
225-342-8111

Agreed to and accepted by the Producer:



By: Rashada Fortier

Its: Producer Director

Dated: 10/7/15

Contact information (Producer)
1620 Behrman Avenue,
New Orleans, LA 70114
832-647-5758

APPENDICES

Appendix E: UNO Insurance Documents

BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR



KRISTY H. NICHOLS
COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATION

State of Louisiana
Division of Administration
Office of Risk Management

September 30, 2015

Ms. Sherri Ganucheau
University of New Orleans
2000 Lakeshore Dr., Computer Center 210A
New Orleans, LA 70148

Dear Ms. Ganucheau:

RE: Request for Certificate of Insurance

The Office of Risk Management received your request for a certificate of insurance for use of the facilities at the Bayou Segnette State Park on October 17, 2015 and October 18, 2015.

Please be advised that the University of New Orleans and the Office of State Parks are both insured under the State of Louisiana's self-insured policies. Therefore, a certificate of insurance is not needed.

If you have any questions, please call me at (225) 342-8472.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark D. Joseph".

Mark D. Joseph, CLTC
State Risk Underwriter

APPENDICES

Appendix F: Music Licenses

Print

	DEPARTMENT OF Film & Theatre Arts THE UNIVERSITY of NEW ORLEANS	2000 Lakeshore Drive, Performing Arts Center 307 New Orleans, LA 70148 (504) 280-6317 Fax (504) 280-6318 www.uno.edu
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Student: Rashada Fortier	Email: rfortier@uno.edu Phone: 832-647-5758
Composer: Ernest Forzano	Email: eforzano@gmail.com Phone: 832-691-6939
Project Title: Vela & Niyah	Date: 4/3/16

COMPOSER LICENSE AGREEMENT FOR THESIS FILM

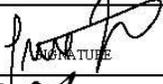
For good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, Composer grants to UNO MFA Graduate Student (Student) and Student's successors and assigns, a non-exclusive license in the master use, synchronization and performance rights to certain musical composition(s) composed by Composer for use in connection with the Thesis Project listed above, in all formats of the Project and in all media by which the Project is exhibited or distributed (whether now known or hereinafter devised) throughout the universe in perpetuity.

Student acknowledges and agrees that the Composer owns all rights, title and interest (throughout the universe and in perpetuity) in and to the musical composition(s) licensed to Student hereunder for use in the Project.

Student agrees to accord Composer credit in the film and, where possible, in marketing materials, advertising or notices for the Project. Composer's credit shall read as follows: "Music Composed by Ernest Forzano"

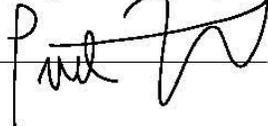
This agreement will not be valid without execution of the Certificate of Authorship below.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED TO:

Composer:	<small>Ernie Forzano</small> PRINT NAME	 SIGNATURE	4/3/16 DATE
Student:	<small>Rashada Fortier</small> PRINT NAME	 SIGNATURE	4/3/16 DATE

CERTIFICATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Ernie Forzano, certify that I have composed all musical compositions and/or musical material submitted by me to Rashada Fortier Student/ Student for use in the Thesis Project currently titled "Vela & Niyah" and that such compositions and/or materials are original creations by me and the Student's use of them will not infringe upon or violate any copyright or other rights of any person, firm or corporation.

Signature of Composer: 

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

Vela & Niyah

By

Rashada Fortier

Draft 5.1

10.2.15

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

1 INT. FAMILY ROOM 1

Vela pulls at her hair as she struggles to detangle it with a wooden comb. She is dressed in a simple blue frock. She sits cross legged in her family's forerroom.

She looks across the room towards her twin, Niyah. Niyah is dressed in the same style frock as Vela, but her's is a deep red. Vela watches as their Amma (Grandmother) braids Niyah's hair.

Amma gently pulls Niyah's hair back into a braid, swiftly finishing one side of her head. Niyah feels her stare and looks up. She smiles at her sister.

Vela pulls at a knot in her hair. She cannot bring herself to return her smile and instead nods back. The knot finally gone, Vela pauses a moment, setting the comb in her lap.

Niyah looks up at Vela. A question is in her eyes. Vela shrugs. Her eyes move to look up at their Amma.

Amma gently moves Niyah's head to lay against her knee, as she continues the braid on the other side of her head.

Vela sighs and reaches up to pull a small quartz necklace out of her frock. It is simple and rustic, just a smokey stone and a leather thong. Vela plays with it impatiently.

She looks around the room and is startled by her sister's face. Niyah eyes are wide as they dart between Vela, the necklace and their Amma.

Vela looks back in confusion.

NIYAH
(Mouths) Put it away.

Vela quickly puts the necklace back inside her dress. She looks at their Amma to see if she noticed the necklace. Amma continues to braid Niyah's hair without pause.

Vela sighs and pointedly avoids Niyah's stare. She picks up the comb and starts yanking at her hair.

The door to the forerroom opens.

Ta (Aunt) Simma (48) walks in carrying folded up blue fabric. Her hair is woven in the three braids of a married mother. She wears a hooded dress, similar in color to Vela's. Ta Simma notices Amma and immediately removes her hood and bows her head in greeting.

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

2.

TA SIMMA

Elder

Amma nods jerkily and continues braiding Niyah's hair.

Ta Simma walks stiffly over to Vela. She shakes out the blue fabric, a sort of shift dress, and holds it up.

TA SIMMA (CONT'D)

Stand up girl.

VELA

What's that for?

Ta Simma avoids looking at Vela.

TA SIMMA

Your ceremonial robe.

VELA

Oh.

Vela glances over at an intricate robe that is spread out on a stool. It is deep red, the family design of their Ma (Mother) embroidered on the collar. She turns back to her Ta.

VELA (CONT'D)

It's the wrong color.

Ta Simma blushes slightly. She does not look at Vela but instead walks over and lays the blue robe next to the red. The blue one looks very simple. Vela recognizes the embroidery on the collar as that of their Pa's family.

TA SIMMA

It's the color it is supposed to be.

Ta Simma walks back over to Vela. She begins to run her fingers through her hair.

TA SIMMA (CONT'D)

You're not done yet?

Vela frees her hair from Ta Simma's hands.

VELA

Blue is Pa's family color. It should be red.

Ta Simma ignores Vela's statement. Instead, she pulls up a stool behind her, and parts her hair. She begins to braid, her deft fingers moving quickly.

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

3.

Niyah has also noticed the blue fabric and watches her sister carefully. Vela looks at Niyah and watches Amma braid her hair. She winces as Ta Simma yanks back on her hair. Vela jerks forward away from the fingers.

VELA (CONT'D)

Ta Simma.

TA SIMMA

What girl?

Vela turns and looks up at her Ta, face determined.

VELA

It should be red.

TA SIMMA

Did your Pa not tell you?

VELA

No. Not about this.

TA SIMMA

Then you will wait and hear it from him. Sit back and let me finish your braid. Your sister is almost done.

Vela clenches her hands into fists, but does not move. Ta Simma reaches again, and Vela jerks away.

VELA

No. Tell me now.

Ta Simma's face hardens in anger and embarrassment.

AMMA

What is all this fuss for?

Ta Simma stiffens and glares at Vela. Then, she relaxes her face and turns toward Amma.

TA SIMMA

It is nothing, Elder.

Ta Simma reaches out to pull Vela back. Vela moves away. She ignores the pleading face of her sister.

VELA

Amma, why can't I have robes in the family color?

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

4.

Ta Simma's face goes slack. She reaches for Vela again. Vela jerks forward closer to Niyah and Amma. Niyah worries her lip.

The room waits for the elder's response.

Amma sighs as she continues to braid.

AMMA

Vela, I feel that I have always been honest with you.

NIYAH

Amma--

Their Amma tugs gently on Niyah's hair, which silences her protest immediately. Then, she looks at Vela, waiting for a response.

VELA

Yes, Amma you have.

AMMA

Are you not second born? An unwanted?

Vela frowns at the word 'unwanted,' forcing herself to answer.

VELA

Yes, Amma.

AMMA

Is it also true that my daughter, Niyah's Ma, died bringing you into this world?

Vela struggles to respond. She refuses to look at her sister.

VELA

Amma--

AMMA

Is it true or not?

VELA

It's true.

AMMA

Are you not wearing her necklace? A necklace that should belong to your sister?

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

5.

TA SIMMA
Elder please.

Amma pauses in her braiding and shoots a dirty look towards Ta Simma. Ta Simma jerks back and hangs her head.

Vela clenches her jaw in anger. Tears of frustration fall. Vela quickly brushes them away. Amma turns to look at her once more.

AMMA
You are an unwanted.

Amma deftly finishes Niyah's braid.

AMMA (CONT'D)
Niyah is trueborn. She will bear my family name. That is her birthright. It is not yours.

Tears steam down Vela's face. Vela looks up at her sister. Then yanks on the necklace cord and throws it at Niyah.

NIYAH
Vela!

Vela does not answer and instead runs to their room.

2 INT. VELA AND NIYAH'S BEDROOM

2

Vela storms into their room. Niyah follows soon after.

NIYAH
You should go apologize to Amma at once. And to Ta Simma for shaming her. They are only trying to help you.

VELA
No. I won't apologize. All she does, all anyone in this family ever does is remind me how Ma is dead because of me.

NIYAH
That isn't true and you know it. I love you. Pa loves you. Ta Simma loves you. Amma cares for you, in her own way.

Vela lets out a raucous laugh.

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

6.

VELA

Amma only tolerates me because she loves you.

NIYAH

Vela, you have to understand that it is hard for her.

VELA

Hard for her?

Vela walks to her sister until they are almost nose to nose.

VELA (CONT'D)

If it is so hard for her, then perhaps I should not have a ceremony at all. Then there will be nothing to be ashamed about. Nothing to remind her that I'm the reason her daughter is dead. And Ta Simma won't have to force this stupid braid in my hair.

Vela begins to violently undo her hair. Niyah moves to stop her but Vela pushes her away.

VELA (CONT'D)

No. Do not touch me.

Niyah draws back and watches her sister for a moment.

NIYAH

Why is everything a battle with you? Does the color of the robe really matter that much? Unwanted's almost never make it to their coming of age ceremony.

Vela yanks out the last section of her braid. Her hair stands on end like angry clouds as she glares at Niyah.

VELA

I wonder how you would act if you were the one born 15 minutes later.

NIYAH

You'll never let yourself be happy. Will you? Ma loved you. She wanted you. Isn't that enough?

VELA

No. It isn't.

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

7.

NIYAH

Fine. Be that way.

Niyah clenches her fist around their Ma's necklace and walks towards the door. She lingers at the door and looks back towards Vela.

NIYAH (CONT'D)

I will tell Amma and Ta Simma that you are sorry and need to rest.

Vela turns away from her sister, walks to her sleeper and sits.

VELA

I don't care what you tell them.

Niyah glares then leaves the room.

Vela lets her tears fall, as she curls against herself.

3 INT. FAMILY ROOM

3

Vela walks slowly into the family room. She gently lets the burlap curtain close behind her. She takes hesitant steps into the room and relaxes once she realizes it is empty.

She walks over and picks up her comb. She runs it through her hair, trying to smooth it back. She turns and sees the robes laid out next to each other. She drops her hand as she stares at them.

She moves toward them, reaching out a hand. She runs her hand over the embroidery, a look of longing on her face. Her gaze slides to the simpler blue robe. She holds it up against her. The lack of intricate detail is painfully obvious. The unfairness of it, overwhelms Vela as she struggles not to cry.

She balls up the dress and throws it across the room. She takes a moment to calm her heavy breathing. She looks back to the red robe. She picks it up and holds it against her. She runs her hands down the embroidery reverently. It seems to fit perfectly against her.

Her eyes catch the air filters near the main door of the room. She freezes in place as she continues to stare at them. Then, she carefully lays the robe back down.

She walks over to the filters and looks at the gauge. It reads one hour. Vela looks back towards the robe. Then back down at the gauge.

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8.

Her breath catches as she formalizes a plan. She sets the gauge back down and hurries from the room.

4 INT. VELA AND NIYAH'S BEDROOM 4

Niyah sits on her sleeper. She looks carefully into a broken mirror as she smooths down flyaway hairs.

Vela pushes back the burlap harshly. She stops to stare at her sister. Her eyes dart down to their Ma's necklace next to Niyah on her sleeper.

Niyah pauses and looks back up at Vela.

NIYAH
Still angry, I see.

Vela's face hardens as she enters the room and walks to her bed. She pulls a hooded cloak hanging off the wall. She quickly puts it on. Her eyes catch her drawings hanging on the wall above her bed.

All constellations. Of all colors. Some blue, orange. Others purple. Silver even. Each drawing different. Vela touches one of them, then lets her hand brush along the moss on the wall. She turns away from the drawings to her sister.

NIYAH (CONT'D)
Vela?

Vela stares for a moment and doesn't answer. She looks again at the necklace and Niyah follows her gaze. She realizes Vela is staring at the necklace. Niyah sighs and drops the mirror.

NIYAH (CONT'D)
What can I do? I only want to help.

Vela snaps to look up at her sister and looks down as she takes in Niyah's words. She looks back up Niyah.

VELA
I want to go topside. With you.

NIYAH
What?

Vela walks over to Niyah's side of the room. She grabs a red cloak similar to hers in style and holds it out to Niyah.

VELA
Tonight. Before the ceremony.

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

9.

NIYAH
We can't just go topside! What if
Pa-

Vela sits next to her sister on the sleeper.

VELA
He won't find out if you don't say
anything. We can just borrow the
masks. Please.

Niyah opens and closes her mouth, searching for a reason to
refuse. Vela leans closer

VELA
Please Niyah. I'll do the ceremony.
I'll even apologize. Please just do
this one thing with me.

Niyah's gaze softens as she looks at her sister.

NIYAH
Alright. Let's go.

5 INT. PIPE

5

The drainage pipe is dark as the twins climb up it. Vela is
careful, putting one hand over the other as she climbs up.

Niyah struggles with the lantern, several rungs below Vela.

NIYAH
Vela, take the light.

Vela stops her climb and looks down to see Niyah struggling.
She reaches down for the light and takes it from her sister.
Niyah climbs faster to catch up.

Vela turns and starts to climb again as well.

6 EXT. FOREST NIGHT

6

Vela opens the lid to the drainage pipe. She climbs out
first, placing the lantern down at her feet. Then helps
Niyah out.

Vela and Niyah both pause. They look around at the desolate
forest. Their breathing reverberates loudly within the
masks.

Vela picks up the lantern and starts to walk off. Niyah
grabs her. Vela looks back at Niyah.

APPENDICES

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10.

NIYAH

Wait.

Vela watches as Niyah hooks a cable between the two of them. Securely tying them together.

Vela tries to unhook it.

VELA

No. We don't need it.

NIYAH

Vela, you may know where we are going, but I do not. We keep the cable.

Niyah reattaches the cable while Vela glares.

VELA

Fine.

Vela doesn't wait for Niyah to finish and walks forward. She holds the lantern out in front of her. Niyah struggles to keep up.

NIYAH

Do you see the gauge? We only have an hour.

Vela nods but doesn't look back.

VELA

I know.

She walks forward into the darkness. Niyah sighs and follows.

7 EXT. FOREST NIGHT-CLEARING

7

The sisters walk into a clearing. Niyah in front, Vela behind her.

NIYAH

What is it you want me to see?

VELA

Look up.

Niyah looks back at Vela, then slowly, looks up. Niyah's eyes go impossibly wide. She gasps and walks further into the clearing.

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

11.

Vela stays back at the edge of the trees. She watches her sister with a strange look of determination. Her hand fingers the cable that ties them together.

NIYAH
Stars! Real stars!

Vela doesn't look at her sister. She looks down at the cable in her hand. Quietly, she sets the lantern down on the ground.

NIYAH
They--they are... so beautiful.

Vela's brings her other hand up to the clasp. Her hands shake as she fumbles with it. She releases it, then closes it again. Her grip tightens on the cable. She closes her eyes in frustration.

She releases the clasp, unhooks the cable.

NIYAH (CONT'D)
They look nothing like your drawings.

Niyah turns to look at her sister and notices her grip on the cable. She looks back up at Vela's face. She realizes what Vela had planned.

Niyah takes a step back in shock. The cable stretching taut between them.

Silence fills the clearing as the sisters stare at each other. Neither knowing what to do. Niyah looks down at the cable.

NIYAH
It would be so easy. Wouldn't it?

Vela drops the cable as if it burned her. It falls, lifeless between the sisters.

VELA
Niyah...I

NIYAH
Go then. Just leave me up here.
Isn't that your plan?

Vela doesn't answer. She glares at the cable, trailing on the ground.

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

12.

NIYAH (CONT'D)

Vela did you even look up at the stars?

Vela looks up at Niyah, then away again.

NIYAH (CONT'D)

Look up.

Vela struggles for a moment, then meets her sister's eyes. Niyah's face is expressionless. Her gaze does not leave Vela's face. Vela slowly walks into the clearing.

She looks up. At first, there seems to be just darkness. Then the darkness brightens as tiny pockets of light break through.

NIYAH

Can you tell which one is yours?

VELA

Wha--What are you talking about?

Niyah walks toward her sister. Vela jerks back. Niyah grabs her firmly and turns Vela to face further right and points over her shoulder.

NIYAH

There. It has five stars. The Vela constellation.

Vela face goes slack as she finds the cluster of stars.

NIYAH (CONT'D)

Ma loved you enough to name you after stars. Vela. You weren't planned, but she wanted you.

Niyah places something in Vela's hand and closes her fist around it. Vela looks down and slowly opens it to see her Ma's necklace.

NIYAH

Ma wanted you to have it. You need it more than I ever would.

Vela lifts the necklace and looks at it in the starlight. She looks to the side at her sister.

VELA

Niyah...I, I'm so--

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

13.

NIYAH

Stop. I kno-I know it's hard. But,
you weren't unwanted. Not to Ma.
Not to me.

Vela lowers the necklace and grips it tight as she fights
back tears. She reaches down and picks up the cable and
hooks it back.

VELA

I'm glad I didn't leave you.

NIYAH

Me too. After all, I don't know the
way back.

Vela releases a single stark laugh, and wipes at her tears.
Niyah wraps Vela in a hug. Vela struggles, but her sister
just grips her tighter. The sisters stand underneath the
starlight for a moment.

Niyah looks down at the oxygen gauge.

NIYAH (CONT'D)

Come on. We have to go.

One last look and Vela tears herself away, following her
sister out of the clearing.

8 INT. VELA AND NIYAH'S BEDROOM

8

Niyah shakes out the blue robe in the air. She lays it on
her sleeper. She smooths out the wrinkles with care.

Vela watches from her sleeper. She bites her lip nervously.

Niyah's hand runs down the embroidery on the collar. Vela
watches her sister do this for a moment. Then she takes a
breath.

VELA

Niyah?

Niyah doesn't look at her sister but continues to smooth out
the blue robe.

NIYAH

You should do the ceremony.

VELA

I am. I will.

Niyah continues, not hearing her sister.

APPENDICES

Appendix G: Shooting Script

14.

NIYAH

If not for yourself, then at least
for Ma. And Pa.

VELA

Niyah!

Niyah jerks and looks up to meet Vela's eyes.

VELA (CONT'D)

Will you--will you braid my hair?

Vela tries to smooth down the flyways that surround her
head. Niyah gives a small smile and then nods.

NIYAH

Of course. Come here.

Vela sits in front of her sister as Niyah sits on the
sleeper, and hands her a comb. Gently, Niyah undoes her
sister's maiden hairstyle.

She slowly detangles Vela's hair. Separates her hair into
sections. Rubs a mixture of tea tree oil and water into
Vela's hair.

Then slowly combs through each section. Vela remains stiff
in front of her sister. Knees pressed to her chest. Chin
tucked in.

Niyah looks down at her sister. She sees the cord of the
necklace and stiffens.

VELA

Niyah?

NIYAH

You're wearing it.

VELA

Yeah, I...I want to.

Niyah touches the cord for a moment, then she gently moves
Vela's head to rest against her knee. She begins to braid
her hair to her scalp. Vela sighs and relaxes into her
sister further.

FADE TO BLACK

APPENDICES

Appendix H: Crew List

FORTIER THESIS

Cast Contact Information	
Director: Rashada Fortier	
Producer: Rebecca Llorella	

CREW

1	Director	Rashada Fortier
2	Producer	Rebecca Llorella
3	1st AD	Kyndra Periban
4	2nd AD	Emily Poulliard
5	Script Supervisor	Daniel Kleinpeter
6	Casting Director	Andrea Kuehnel
7	Set P.A.	Chase Lubag
8	Set P.A.	Kye Ruddy

Camera

9	Director of Photography	Trenton Mynatt
10	Camera Operator	Alaina Boyett
11	1st AC	Marcy McDade-Casteel
12	2nd AC	Sydney Viard
13	Camera P.A.	Lorien Molinario
-	DIT	Barry Cunningham

Sound

14	Sound Mixer	Emilie Nutter
15	Sound Mixer	Jon Kieran
16	Boom Operator	Aidan Dykes
17	Sound P.A.	Austin Clements

Grip and Electric

18	Gaffer	Barry Cunningham
19	Key Grip	Christian Chestnut
20	Grip	Chloe Gagnon
21	Grip	Paul Punzo
22	Grip	Bryan Paul Patrick

Art

23	Production Designer	Kathleen Vieira
24	Set Dresser	Amy Laws

25	Set Dresser Assistant	Florence Young
26	Property Master	Lauren Erwin
27	Property Master Assistant	Hope Terrance
28	Art P.A.	Kellie O'Sullivan
29	Art P.A.	Bruce Lemmert
30	Set Construction	Jake Hoyson
--	Set Construction	Christian Chestnut

Costumes & Vanities

--	Costume Designer	Kellie O'Sullivan
--	Costume Assistant	Bruce Lemmert
31	Make-Up Artist	Rolexis Schinsing
32	Hair Stylist	Amber Ward

Craft Service & Other

33	Crafty (1)	Dustin Foret
34	Crafty (2)	Hayden Guthrie
35	Catering	Crystal Lirette
--	Still Photographer	
36	Still Photographer	Alfred Fortier
--	Composer	

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Call Sheets

Day 1 of 4

Director	Rashada Fortier
Producer	Rebecca Illorella
1st AD	Kyndra Periban
2nd AD	Emily Poulliard



LUNCH	6:00PM	CRAFT SERVICES	
		Dustin Foret	
SUNRISE		SUNSET	
7:03 AM		6:30 PM	
WEATHER	88° AM	88° NOO	86° PM
Humidity	47%	Pressure	0%

Note 1: Individual call times may vary.
 Note 2: Questions? Call Kyndra Periban (318) 655-8923 or Emily Poulliard (985) 237-8431

CREW CALL	12:00PM
SHOOTING CALL	1:00PM

Nearest Hospital
East Jefferson General Hospital 4200 Houma Blvd, Metairie, LA 70006 (504) 454-4000

SCENES	SET AND DESCRIPTION	D/N	PAGES	CAST	LOCATION
4	INT. BEDROOM Vela and Niyah decide to go topside	D	1 3/8	1,2	UNO Sound Stage
5	INT. PIPE Vela and Niyah travel topside	N	2/8	1,2	UNO Sound Stage
8	INT. BEDROOM Vela agrees to do ceremony	N	1 3/8	1,2	UNO Sound Stage
					TOTAL PAGES
					3

#	NAME	CHARACTER	STATUS	CALL	MU/WD	SET	SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS
1	Kathleen Moore	Vela	SW	12:15 PM	12:30 PM	12:45 PM	
2	Kamille McCuin	Niyah	SW	12:15 PM	12:30 PM	12:45 PM	

STAND-INS			BACKGROUND		
#	DESCRIPTION	CALL	#	NAME	CALL

PRODUCTION NOTES/REQUIREMENTS	
PROPS:	Cable, masks, clasp, necklace, blue robe, comb, tea tree oil/water, lantern
SFX:	
HAIR/MU:	Vela & Niyah hair braids
GRIP/ELECT	
STC:	
SPECIAL EQUIP:	
SET DRESSING:	Oxygen Gauge
STUNTS:	
WARDROBE:	Niyah- Deep Red Frock, Vela- Blue Frock
"The destiny of Earthseed is to take root among the stars."	

ADVANCE SCHEDULE						
DATE	SCENE	SET AND DESCRIPTION	D/N	PAGES	CAST	LOCATION
Day 2-8/17	6	Ext. Night Forest Vela and Niyah explore	N	1	1,2	Bayou Segnette Park-7777 Westbank Expy, Westwego, LA 70094
Day 2-8/17	7	Ext. Night Forest-Clearing Vela and Niyah	N	2 6/8	1,2	Bayou Segnette Park-7777 Westbank Expy, Westwego, LA 70095

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Call Sheets

Day 2 of 4

Director:	Rashada Fortier
Producer:	Rebecca Llorella
1st AD:	Kyndra Periban
2nd AD:	Emily Poulliard

Vela & Niyah

LUNCH	12:30A	CRAFT SERVICES
		Dustin Foret
SUNRISE		SUNSET 
7:04 AM		6:29 PM
WEATHER	75° AM 70° NOON	71° PM
Humidity	35%	Precipitation 0%

Note 1: Individual call times may vary.
 Note 2: Questions? Call Kyndra Periban (318) 655-8923 or Emily Poulliard (985) 237-8431

CARPOOL	5:45PM
CREW CALL	6:30PM
SHOOTING CALL	8:30PM

Nearest Hospital
West Jefferson Medical Center 1101 Medical Center Blvd, Marrero, LA 70072 (504) 347-5511

SCENES	SET AND DESCRIPTION	D/N	PAGES	CAST	LOCATION
6	EXT. FOREST <i>Vela and Niyah explore topside</i>	N	1	1,2	Bayou Segnette Park: 7777 Westbank Expy, Westwego, LA 70094
7	EXT. FOREST CLEARING <i>Vela and Niyah look at the stars</i>	N	2 6/8	1,2	Bayou Segnette Park: 7777 Westbank Expy, Westwego, LA 70094
					NOTES: Tell guard you are with UNO. Parking is by pavilion. Park grip truck on street and mark off with cones. Power available at the pavilion.
					TOTAL PAGES 3 6/8

#	NAME	CHARACTER	STATUS	CALL	MU/WD	SET	SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS
1	Kathleen Moore	Vela	W	7:30 PM	7:30 PM	8:15 PM	
2	Kamille McCuin	Niyah	W	7:30 PM	7:30 PM	8:15 PM	

STAND-INS			BACKGROUND		
#	DESCRIPTION	CALL	#	NAME	CALL

PRODUCTION NOTES/REQUIREMENTS	
PROPS:	Cable, masks, clasp, necklace, lantern
SEX:	
HAIR/MU:	Vela & Niyah hair braids
GRIP/ELECT RIG:	
SPECIAL EQUIP:	
SET DRESSING:	Oxygen Gauge, Pipe
STUNTS:	
WARDROBE:	Niyah- Deep Red Frock, Vela- Blue Frock
"There is no end to what a living world will demand of you."	

ADVANCE SCHEDULE						
DATE	SCENE	SET AND DESCRIPTION	D/N	PAGES	CAST	LOCATION
Day 3-8/17		PICK UP DAY			1,2	UNO Sound Stage: 2000 Lakeshore Dr. New Orleans, LA 70122

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Call Sheets

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2015					
PRODUCTION		CALL	ART DEPARTMENT		CALL
Director	Rashada Fortier	6:30 PM	Production Designer	Kathleen Viera	6:30 PM
Producer	Rebecca Llorella	6:30 PM	Set Dresser	Amy Laws	6:30 PM
1st AD	Kyndra Periban	6:30 PM	Set Dresser Assistant	Florence Young	---
2nd AD	Emily Poulliard	6:30 PM	Prop Master	Lauren Erwin	6:30 PM
Script Supervisor	Daniel Kleinpeter	6:30 PM	Prop Master Assistant	Hope Terrance	6:30 PM
Set PA	Will Vanhoof	6:30 PM	Art PA/Costume	Kellie O' Sullivan	6:30 PM
			Art PA/Costume	Bruce Lemmert	6:30 PM
			Costumes & Vanities		CALL
			Make-Up	Rolexis Schinsing	6:30 PM
			Hair Stylist	Amber Ward	6:30 PM
			CRAFT SERVICES		CALL
			Craft Services	Dustin Foret	6:30 PM
			Catering	Crystal Lirette	---
CAMERA		CALL			
Cinematographer	Trenton Mynatt	6:30 PM			
Camera Operator	Alaina Boyett	6:30 PM			
1st AC	Mary McDade-Casteel	6:30 PM			
2nd AC	Lorien Molinario	6:30 PM			
Camera PA					
DIT	Barry Cunningham	6:30 PM			
Still Photographer	Alfred Fortier	6:30 PM			
SOUND		CALL			
Sound Mixer	Emilie Nutter	6:30 PM			
Boom Operator	Aidan Dykes	6:30 PM			
Sound PA	Austin Clements	---			
GRIP AND ELECTRIC		CALL			
Gaffer	Barry Cunningham	6:30 PM			
Key Grip	Christian Chesnut	6:30 PM			
Grip	Paul Punzo	6:30 PM			
Grip	Chloe Gagnon	6:30 PM			
Grip	Bryan Paul Patrick	6:30 PM			
Grip	Kye Ruddy	6:30 PM			
TRANSPORTATION NOTES					
Carpool at 5:45PM in UNO PAC Parking lot: 2000 Lakeshore Dr. New Orleans, LA 70122					

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Call Sheets

Day 3 of 4

Director	Rashada Fortier
Producer	Rebecca Llorella
1st AD	Kyndra Periban
2nd AD	Emily Poulliard



LUNCH	3:00 PM	CRAFT SERVICES
		Hayden Guthrie
SUNRISE	7:08 AM	SUNSET
		6:23 PM
WEATHER	76° AM 78° NOON 77° PM	
Humidity	88%	Precipitation 10%

Note 1: Individual call times may vary.
 Note 2: Questions? Call Kyndra Periban (318) 655-8923 or Emily Poulliard (985) 237-8431

CREW CALL	9:00 AM
SHOOTING CALL	10:00 AM

Nearest Hospital
East Jefferson General Hospital 4200 Houma Blvd, Metairie, LA 70006 (504) 454-4000

SCENES	SET AND DESCRIPTION	D/N	PAGES	CAST	LOCATION
1	INT.FAMILY ROOM <i>Family prepares for ceremony</i>	D	4 6/8	1,2,3,4	UNO Sound Stage: 2000 Lakeshore Dr. New Orleans, LA 70122
TOTAL PAGES					4 6/8

#	NAME	CHARACTER	STATUS	CALL	MU/WD	SET	SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS
1	Kathleen Moore	Vela	W	8:45 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	
2	Kamille McQuin	Niyah	W	8:45 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	
3	Summer Selby	Amma	SW	8:20 AM	8:30 AM	10:00 AM	
4	Rhonda Dents	Ta Simma	SW	8:45 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	

STAND-INS			BACKGROUND		
#	DESCRIPTION	CALL	#	NAME	CALL

PRODUCTION NOTES/REQUIREMENTS	
PROPS:	Blue fabric, red robe, necklace, wooden comb
SFX:	
HAIR/MU:	Amma braids Niyah's hair, Ta Simma braids Vela's hair, Ta Simma has 3 braids
GRIP/ELECTRIC:	
SPECIAL EQUIP:	
SET DRESSING:	Chair
STUNTS:	Ta Simma yanks Vela's hair, Vela throws necklace at Niyah
WARDROBE:	Niyah- Deep Red Frock, Vela- Blue Frock, Ta Simma- Blue Hooded Dress

"In order to rise from its own ashes, a phoenix first must burn."

ADVANCE SCHEDULE						
DATE	SCENE	SET AND DESCRIPTION	D/N	PAGES	CAST	LOCATION
Day 5-8/24	1	Int. Day Family Room Family prepares for the ceremony	D	4 6/8	1,2,3,4	UNO Sound Stage: 2000 Lakeshore Dr. New Orleans, LA 70122

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Call Sheets

PRODUCTION		CALL	ART DEPARTMENT		CALL
Director	Rashada Fortier	9:00 AM	Production Designer	Kathleen Viera	9:00 AM
Producer	Rebecca Llorella	9:00 AM	Set Dresser	Amy Laws	9:00 AM
1st AD	Kyndra Periban	9:00 AM	Set Dresser Assistant	Florence Young	---
2nd AD	Emily Poulliard	9:00 AM	Prop Master	Lauren Erwin	9:00 AM
Script Supervisor	Daniel Kleinpeter	9:00 AM	Prop Master Assistant	Hope Terrance	9:00 AM
Set PA	Kye Ruddy	9:00 AM	Art PA/Costume	Kellie O' Sullivan	9:00 AM
Set PA	Chase Lubag	9:00 AM	Art PA/Costume	Bruce Lemmert	9:00 AM
			Costumes & Vanities		CALL
			Make-Up	Rolexis Schinsing	9:00 AM
			Hair Stylist	Amber Ward	9:00 AM
			CRAFT SERVICES		CALL
CAMERA		CALL	Craft Services	Hayden Guthrie	9:00 AM
Cinematographer	Trenton Mynatt	9:00 AM	Catering	Crystal Lirette	---
Camera Operator	Alaina Boyett	9:00 AM			
1st AC	Mary McDade-Casteel	9:00 AM			
2nd AC	Sydney Viard	9:00 AM			
Camera PA	Lorien Molinario	9:00 AM			
DIT	Barry Cunningham	9:00 AM			
Still Photographer	Alfred Fortier	9:00 AM			
SOUND		CALL			
Sound Mixer	Jon Kieran	9:00 AM			
Boom Operator	Aidan Dykes	9:00 AM			
Sound PA	Austin Clements	---			
GRIP AND ELECTRIC		CALL			
Gaffer	Barry Cunningham	9:00 AM			
Key Grip	Christian Chesnut	9:00 AM			
Grip	Chloe Gagnon	9:00 AM			
Grip	Bryan Paul Patrick	9:00 AM			
TRANSPORTATION NOTES					
PICKUPS/TRAVEL					



APPENDICES

Appendix I: Call Sheets

Day 4 of 4

<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Director</td> <td>Rashada Fortier</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Producer</td> <td>Rebecca Llorella</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1st AD</td> <td>Kyndra Periban</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2nd AD</td> <td>Emily Poulliard</td> </tr> </table>	Director	Rashada Fortier	Producer	Rebecca Llorella	1st AD	Kyndra Periban	2nd AD	Emily Poulliard	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 20px; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Vela & Niyah</div>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">LUNCH</td> <td style="width: 15%;">4:30PM</td> <td style="width: 15%;">CRAFT SERVICES</td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Hayden Guthrie</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>SUNRISE</td> <td> 7:09 AM</td> <td>SUNSET</td> <td> 6:21 PM</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WEATHER</td> <td>72° AM 74° NOON</td> <td>74° PM</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Humidity</td> <td>86%</td> <td>Precipitation</td> <td>80%</td> </tr> </table>	LUNCH	4:30PM	CRAFT SERVICES				Hayden Guthrie		SUNRISE	7:09 AM	SUNSET	6:21 PM	WEATHER	72° AM 74° NOON	74° PM		Humidity	86%	Precipitation	80%
Director	Rashada Fortier																													
Producer	Rebecca Llorella																													
1st AD	Kyndra Periban																													
2nd AD	Emily Poulliard																													
LUNCH	4:30PM	CRAFT SERVICES																												
		Hayden Guthrie																												
SUNRISE	7:09 AM	SUNSET	6:21 PM																											
WEATHER	72° AM 74° NOON	74° PM																												
Humidity	86%	Precipitation	80%																											

Note 1: Individual call times may vary. Note 2: Questions? Call Kyndra Periban (318) 655-8923 or Emily Poulliard (985) 237-8431	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">CREW CALL</td> <td style="width: 15%; color: red;">10:30AM</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SHOOTING CALL</td> <td style="color: red;">11:30AM</td> </tr> </table>	CREW CALL	10:30AM	SHOOTING CALL	11:30AM	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #cccccc; font-weight: bold;">Nearest Hospital</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Jefferson General Hospital 4200 Houma Blvd, Metairie, LA 70006 (504) 454-4000</td> </tr> </table>	Nearest Hospital	East Jefferson General Hospital 4200 Houma Blvd, Metairie, LA 70006 (504) 454-4000
CREW CALL	10:30AM							
SHOOTING CALL	11:30AM							
Nearest Hospital								
East Jefferson General Hospital 4200 Houma Blvd, Metairie, LA 70006 (504) 454-4000								

SCENES	SET AND DESCRIPTION	D/N	PAGES	CAST	LOCATION
2	INT. BEDROOM <i>Vela and Niyah argue</i>	D	1 6/8	1,2	UNO Sound Stage: 2000 Lakeshore Dr. New Orleans, LA 70122
3	INT. FAMILY ROOM <i>Vela comes up with a plan</i>	D	6/8	1	
TOTAL PAGES					

#	NAME	CHARACTER	STATUS	CALL	MU/WD	SET	SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS
1	Kathleen Moore	Vela	W	10:45 AM	10:50 AM	11:30 AM	
2	Kamille McQuin	Niyah	W	1:30 PM	1:40 PM	2:20 PM	
5	Kathleen's Hair	Miss Ross	W	10:45 AM	10:50 AM	11:30 AM	

STAND-INS			BACKGROUND		
#	DESCRIPTION	CALL	#	NAME	CALL
PRODUCTION NOTES/REQUIREMENTS					
PROPS:	necklace, comb, robes				
SFX:					
HAIR/MU:	Vela combs and smoothes hair, Vela undoes her hair				
GRIP/ELECTRIC:					
SPECIAL EQUIP:					
SET DRESSING:	Air filters, gauge, curtains				
STUNTS:	Vela pushes Niyah away				
WARDROBE:	Niyah- Deep Red Frock, Vela- Blue Frock				
<p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;">"All that you touch is change. All that you change, changes you. The only lasting truth is change."</p>					

ADVANCE SCHEDULE						
DATE	SCENE	SET AND DESCRIPTION	D/N	PAGES	CAST	LOCATION

Appendix L: Call Sheets

APPENDICES

Appendix J: Shooting Stripboard

Vela & Niyah

Stripboard

Date: 10/11/15

-
1. Vela
 2. Niyah
 3. Amma
 4. Ta Simma

APPENDICES

Appendix J: Shooting Stripboard

VELA & NIYAH STRIPBOARD 10.11.15					
DAY 1 - FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2015					
1 3/8 PG	Scenes: 4	INT DAY	VELA AND NIYAH'S BEDROOM VELA AND NIYAH DECIDE TO GO TOPSIDE	1, 2	
2/8 PG	Scenes: 5	INT NIGHT	PIPE VELA AND NIYAH TRAVEL TOPSIDE	1, 2	
1 3/8 PG	Scenes: 8	INT NIGHT	VELA AND NIYAH'S BEDROOM VELA AGREES TO DO CEREMONY	1, 2	
END OF SHOOTING DAY 1 -- FRIDAY OCTOBER 16, 2015 -- 3 PG					
DAY 2 - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2015					
1 PG	Scenes: 6	EXT NIGHT	FOREST VELA AND NIYAH EXPLORE TOPSIDE	1, 2	
2 6/8 PGS	Scenes: 7	EXT NIGHT	FOREST-CLEARING VELA AND NIYAH LOOK AT THE STARS	1, 2	
END OF SHOOTING DAY 2 -- SATURDAY OCTOBER 17, 2015 -- 2 7/8 PG					
DAY 3 - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2015					
PICK UP DAY					
DAY 4 - FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2015					
4 6/8 PG	Scenes: 1	INT DAY	FAMILY ROOM FAMILY PREPARES FOR CEREMONY	1,2,3,4	
END OF SHOOTING DAY 3 -- FRIDAY OCTOBER 23, 2015 -- 4 6/8 PG					
DAY 5 - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2015					
4 6/8 PG	Scenes: 1	INT DAY	FAMILY ROOM FAMILY PREPARES FOR CEREMONY	1,2,3,4	
END OF SHOOTING DAY 4 -- SATURDAY OCTOBER 24, 2015 -- 4 6/8 PG					
DAY 6 - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2015					
1 6/8 PG	Scenes: 2	INT DAY	VELA AND NIYAH'S BEDROOM VELA AND NIYAH ARGUE	1, 2	
6/8 PG	Scenes: 3	INT DAY	FAMILY ROOM VELA COMES UP WITH A PLAN	1	
END OF SHOOTING DAY 5 -- SUNDAY OCTOBER 25, 2015 -- 2 4/8 PG					

APPENDICES

Appendix K: Final Cost Analysis

FINAL COST ANALYSIS

VELA & NIYAH

Producer: Rebecca Llorella
 Director: Rashada Fortier

Budget: \$11,000.00

Prepared by: Rashada Fortier

Description	Estimated Cos	Actual Cost	Difference
Story/Rights Writing	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Writer	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Script Research	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Copying and Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Producer and Staff			
Misc. Director Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Cast and Crew			
Cast	\$1,600.00	\$1,200.00	\$400.00
Casting Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Rehearsal Expenses	\$20.00	\$0.00	\$20.00
Misc. Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Cast and Crew T-Shirts	\$500.00	\$436.64	\$63.63
TOTAL	\$2,120.00	\$1,636.64	\$483.63
TOTAL ABOVE THE LINE	\$2,120.00	\$1,636.64	\$483.63
Production Staff	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Production Design			
Set Construction/Design	\$2,000.00	\$2,736.42	\$736.42
Props			
Set Construction/Design	\$400.00	\$325.94	\$74.06
Costume Design			
Wardrobe	\$700.00	\$651.69	\$48.31
Makeup and Hair			
Makeup Artist	\$600.00	\$450.00	\$150.00
Hair Stylist	\$600.00	\$525.00	\$75.00
Transportation and Gas			
Grip Truck Gas	\$150.00	\$25.00	\$125.00
Gas Reimbursement	\$150.00	\$20.00	\$130.00

APPENDICES

Appendix K: Final Cost Analysis

Locations and Facilities			
Location Rental	\$150.00	\$200.00	\$50.00
Catering	\$900.00	\$671.03	\$228.97
Craft Services	\$600.00	\$417.10	\$182.90
Gas Reimbursement	\$150.00	\$20.00	\$130.00
Camera and Equipment			
Equipment Rental	\$0.00	\$133.98	\$133.98
Camera Expendables	\$20.00	\$71.49	\$51.49
Production Sound			
Sound Expendables (Batteries)	\$50.00	\$32.61	\$17.39
TOTAL PRODUCTION	\$4,470.00	\$5,178.57	\$708.57
Editorial			
Hard Drives (2)	\$360.00	\$0.00	\$360.00
LTO Tapes	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
<i>Purchased by Bobbie Fortier (Mother)</i>			
Music and Post Production Sound			
Music Rights	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
Sound Designer	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00
TOTAL POST PRODUCTION	\$1,110.00	\$500.00	\$610.00
General Expenses			
DVD Creating	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$0.00
Film Festival Espenses	\$800.00	\$800.00	\$0.00
TOTAL GENERAL EXPENSES	\$900.00	\$900.00	\$0.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$8,600.00	\$8,215.21	\$384.79

Total left from \$11,000.00 = \$2,784.79

COLOR CODE

Over the budget/Loss
 Under the budget/Saved
 To be decide/Not spent yet

APPENDICES

Appendix L: Film Reference

The DVD copy of the thesis *Vela & Niyah* is located in the Earl K. Long Library.

Vita

Rashada Nandi Fortier was born in Aurora, Colorado on June 5th, 1988. She was raised in Houston, Texas, and graduated from Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart in 2006. She attended Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, and graduated in 2010 with a BA in Broadcast and Visual Media. She enrolled at the University of New Orleans in the fall of 2013 to pursue a Master of Fine Arts in Film Production. She graduates in May of 2016.