

A man wearing a gold crown with green and red accents, a blue hoodie, and a thick gold chain is sitting in a red chair in a recording studio. He is holding a black phone to his ear. The background features a computer monitor, a desk lamp, and a speaker.

# THROUGH *the* WIRES

A FILM BY **UMI**

OFFICIAL SELECTION  
**urbanworld**  
2020



## LOGLINE

After receiving the best news of his life, a young music producer begins preparing himself for stardom, fearful that the industry might take advantage of him.

## SYNOPSIS

Set in 2005, *Through the Wire* is a film about a young music producer and college dropout who receives a call that could change his life forever. As the possibility sinks in, cautionary tales of the industry dampen his excitement, and family and friends' responses to the news send him on an emotional rollercoaster. Should he cherish the moment or wait until the ink dries?

USA | 2020 | 12' | COLOR | ENGLISH



# NOTES FROM THE WRITER/EP

**Kanye West, first gen, and “almost famous” stories are the biggest influences in Through the Wire.**

In the early 2000s, Kanye West represented the possibility of turning dreams into reality. Through the Wire reminds us of a time when the mention of his name was synonymous with unapologetic genius. The script was written in 2019, a year after [Chika's freestyle](#) admonishing Kanye's political antics over the “Jesus Walks” beat went viral and a year before Kanye's [presidential announcement tweet](#).

Beyond the coincidence of Ye actually running for office during this film's release, the world is coming to embrace an African aesthetic (Black is King, Black Panther, Afrobeat, #YearofReturn, etc). Compounding the main character's heartbreak over the Kanye letdown is the desire to prove himself to his family. Two dear friends - one has international acclaim, and the other uses music as a creative outlet - on separate occasions, shared their experiences trying to pursue their music dreams in the 90s and early 2000s. Their stories mirror the stories of Yvonne Orji (actress), Luvvie Ajayi (writer), Bozoma Saint John (marketing exec), and Tobe Nwigwe (rapper) who have openly discussed the challenges that come when raised in a West African home while pursuing a career in a creative industry.

In New York City, where our protagonist calls home, the stories of just missed stardom and almost-woulda-made-its are common. There are plenty never released albums, stored works of art, and highlight reels of the undrafted. Those stories are powerful, chock full of lessons for us all - be patient, be vigilant, be smart.



Multicultural viewers are looking to find diverse images. Audiences are increasingly more impressed to know that there is diversity behind the camera as well. The entire film takes place in one location, with production design led by multi-medium artist Ashley Mui. Through the Wire was beautifully shot by cinematographer Herman L. Jean-Noël, hailing from Haiti and directed by umi from Tuskegee, Alabama. With a cast and crew that represent the South, Ghana, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Guyana, Belize, Nigeria and Liberia, the filmmakers were intentional about maintaining a pan-African perspective.

In an industry headed up, presided over, and centering white men, my consumption habits are niche - all Black, all the time. There is assumed abundance in online distribution. But seek out childhood adventure films with Black leads, or a good sleuth series, or women-led action flicks and you'll be hard pressed for options. Want to see the Great Migration, the Maroons or the Harlem Renaissance and you are largely confined to PBS specials and Youtube talking heads. When Issa Rae, creator and star of HBO's "Insecure," candidly shared that she is "rooting for everybody black" on the 69th Emmy Awards' red carpet, she captured what I am fighting for in my art and in my life off-set. I want to see life-changing and awful films made by melanated people. Why should white guys have all the fun?

Just as our main character would have a very different experience of "making it" in 2020, the confluence of technology and growing majority-minority has created an environment primed for changing what and how films get made - and by whom. My production teams are predominately Black (i.e. Americans from throughout the African Diaspora) and women-led. Our stories highlight the most marginalized in Black communities, Black immigrants, and underrepresented Black heroes. My commitment and passion is simple - tell more Black stories. All of them.

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## DIRECTOR'S BIO

umi is an multi-faceted artist from Tuskegee, Alabama. umi has worked with Columbia Records and Sony Red, and artists such as Jay-Z, Dave Chappelle, and Nas. A member of POW/RBG FAM, umi has released 6 solo music projects, and directed a number of music videos and short films. He currently lives in Brooklyn, NY and is pursuing a Masters degree at NYU's Steinhardt in sociology of education and film. Black Allegories (2021) will be his first published book.



# CREW BIOS

## DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Hailing from Anse-A-Foleur, Haiti, HERMAN L. JEAN-NOËL is a visual philosopher, cinematographer, artist, father, husband, cyclist, tech nerd, and a lover of everything tropical. He looks to consistently expand his knowledge and creativity in the world of community building, art, documentary and feature filmmaking, digital video, food, spirituality and technology. Herman has shot for film, television, and streaming platforms.

## WRITER

SALLOMÉ HRALIMA is a transmedia storyteller. She has produced and directed two documentary shorts - "L-O-V-E" a retrospective for the 20th Anniversary of The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill and "Young Schomburg" about a young archivist's journey to document hip hop culture. Sallomé is writer for the documentary series "Shaping the Culture."

## PRODUCTION DESIGNER

ASHLEY MUI is a multi-medium artist and the founder of Gratuity Included, a company with a mission to create a more grateful world. She blends media, tech, art, and culture to champion impactful community-industry initiatives. As a Producer, Ashley has credits working alongside Nelson D. George, on documentary films such as Brooklyn Boheme (Netflix); Finding The Funk (vh1); and A Ballerina's Tale (IFC). With over 10 years of experience in film production, Ashley leads Content Development for The Gates Preserve, a multimedia experience company committed to archiving and preserving culture such that it lasts forever.

## PRODUCER

SYREETA GATES is an archivist, art collector, and founder of The Gates Preserve, a multimedia experience company that preserves and archives hip-hop. Syreeta has provided archival research for Nelson George's feature documentary, "A Ballerina's Tale" and "Finding the Funk." She directed and produced "Shaping The Culture," a documentary series featuring the never before told story about the writers and journalists that created and shaped the language for hip-hop culture, and "Yo Stay Hungry," a hip-hop culinary competition show that bridges hip-hop and food. Syreeta recently served as co-EP on the 2020 Black National Convention.



**THE GATES PRESERVE PRESENTS**  
**A NEGLAKAY PRODUCTION**  
**IN ASSOCIATION WITH OUR VISION MEDIA**

Director	UMI	Chief	TOKUNBO JOSHUA OLUMIDE
Writers	SALLOMÉ HRALIMA, UMI	Ava	ALIA G. TEJEDA
Story	ALFRED OBIESIE, SALLOMÉ HRALIMA	Conway	EDWIN J. GIL
Producers	ASHLEY MUI, HERMAN L. JEAN-NOËL, SYREETA GATES	Ejo/Mom	JOSEPHINE A. QUAYE
Executive Producers	LUCILLE HRALIMA, SALLOMÉ HRALIMA	Kwame	IBRAHIM.
Director of Photography	HERMAN L. JEAN-NOËL	Tempa	DIVINE BRADLEY
Editor	HERMAN L. JEAN-NOËL	Set Decorator	DANA BUNNS
Composer	TROY "BACHTROY" MITCHELL	Wardrobe Stylist	JUSTICE HATTERSON (ICENATION)
Production Designer	ASHLEY MUI	Hair & Makeup	NYREE MURRAY
Unit Production Manager	ALFRED OBIESIE	Production Assistants	EDWIN J. GIL, JEFE
1st Assistant Director	SHAWN MCLAUGHLIN	Craft Services	KRYSTEN HAYES
1st Assistant Camera	ALVIN DOLLOW	Transportation	IBRAHIM.
Gaffer	LEVI WILKINSON	Sound Mixer	JORDAN COHEN
Key Grip	DAVID ANTHONY	Archival Props	BRENT ROLLINS, EGO TRIP NYC, JEFF MAO, THE GATES PRESERVE ARCHIVE
Audio Recording Engineer	ALEX DWEH	"Skid Row" Performed by	DANTE HAWKINS
Unit Still Photographer	GABRIEL EUGENE	Produced by	ALFRED OBIESIE





ALIA G. TEJEDA AS AVA AND TOKUNBO JOSHUA OLUMIDE AS CHIEF



# CONTACTS

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## **PRODUCTION**

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# ASSETS

## **HI-RES PHOTOS**

<https://tinyurl.com/ttwhires>

## **TRAILER**

<https://tinyurl.com/ttwtrailer>