

A golden pineapple is the central focus, set against a dark, starry night sky. A bright meteor streaks across the upper left, and a prominent bright star is visible on the right. The pineapple's texture is highly detailed, showing the diamond-shaped scales of its skin and the layered structure of its crown. The overall mood is surreal and ethereal.

PINEAPPLE ASHES

A FILM BY MICAH PERTA

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**SOME OF THIS HAPPENED.
SOME OF IT DIDN'T.**

ALL OF IT IS TRUE, ISH.



After his gay father's partner of 30 years dies, Adam joins his family, including the semi-estranged twins he had when he was too young, on a reluctant trip to a small Catholic Sicilian town beneath volcanic Mount Etna to scatter the ashes... and try not to kill each other.



*Me and my twin sons circa '15

A COMEDIC STORY

ABOUT FAMILY





IN ALL ITS

MODERN FORMS

WITH
GAY FATHERS





QUEER ^A SISTER

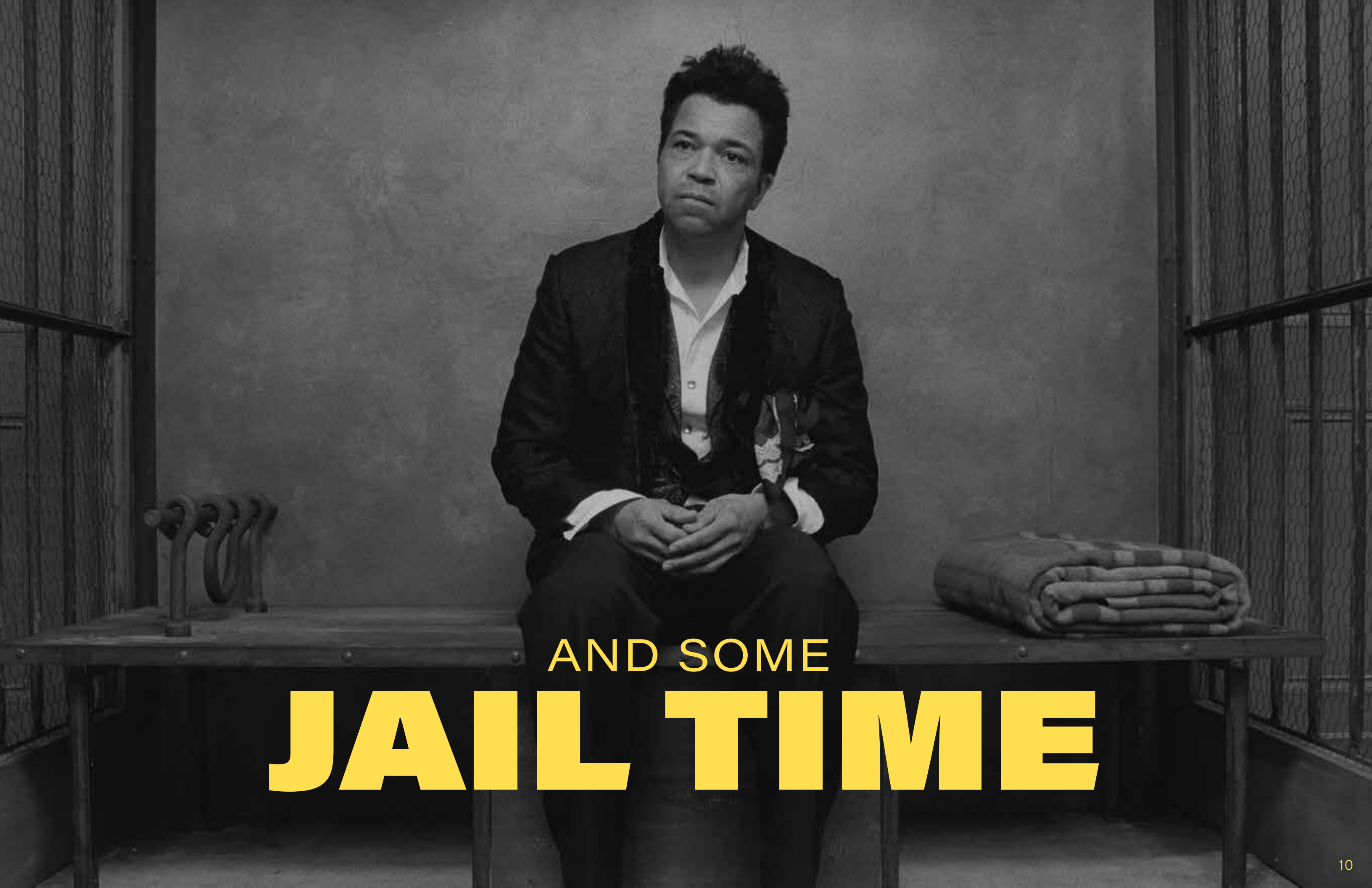
A man with dark, wavy hair and a beard, wearing a light-colored striped shirt, is leaning forward on a rooftop. The background shows a village with traditional buildings and a clear sky. The text 'A DONOR' is overlaid in yellow.

A
DONOR

A close-up photograph of a decorative vase. The vase is shaped like a pineapple, with a textured, diamond-patterned surface that mimics the scales of a pineapple. It is filled with a dark liquid, and a small, spiky plant with long, thin leaves grows out of the top. The background is dark, making the vase stand out. The text 'A HEIST' is overlaid in yellow, with 'A' in a smaller font above 'HEIST'.

A HEIST

**In the shape of a pineapple*



AND SOME

JAIL TIME

**“IT DOESN’T MATTER HOW
YOU BECOME A PARENT,
ONLY HOW YOU PARENT
ONCE YOU BECOME ONE”**

**MAX, PINEAPPLE ASHES.*

THE STORY

Max wasn't Adam's father, but he was the man who helped raise him. For more than thirty years, Max was the steady center of a deeply unconventional family: the partner of Bruce, Adam's charming, theatrical father, and a quiet, constant presence alongside Nancy, Bruce's ex-wife, as they somehow managed to keep a family intact all while living separately. While their daughter Grace grew up faster than she should have, learning to hold things together, Adam never quite caught up. Now in his thirties, with two teenage sons who call him by his first name, he still believes he's showing up as a father, even as everything around him suggests otherwise.

When Max dies, that fragile balance finally gives way. At the funeral, Bruce, unraveling in grief but determined to get one thing right, reveals Max's final wish: that the family travel to Sicily and scatter his ashes on Mount Etna beneath the brief appearance of a once-in-a-lifetime comet. It's impractical, emotionally loaded, and happening immediately.

Bruce has already bought the tickets.

This mismatched American family reluctantly agrees and finds itself in Sicily: Bruce, clutching Max's pineapple-shaped urn like a relic; Nancy, who has spent

has spent years quietly holding this fractured family together; Grace, hyper-competent, exhausted, and newly away from her young son for the first time; and Adam, a commercial director whose charm, irresponsibility, and perpetual adolescence have left him estranged from the sons he had when he was barely more than a kid himself, sons who now see right through every half-formed attempt he makes to connect.

It doesn't stay a solemn pilgrimage for long.

Bruce has arranged for the family to be driven by Salvatore, a handsome young Sicilian who also happens to be the sperm donor Grace chose for her son, August. Grace finds the entire arrangement deeply unsettling. Bruce, lonely and still grieving, is quick to latch onto Salvatore and keeps pushing everyone forward, as if committing hard enough to the plan will hold the family together. Nancy, as ever, tries to smooth things over. Adam, meanwhile, keeps fumbling every chance to show his boys that he can be present for them, turning even a family outing into one more misguided attempt to prove he is fun, spontaneous, and worth loving.

Once the family reaches Randazzo, the medieval town beneath Mount Etna

where Max was raised, the trip collides head-on with the past Max rarely discussed. Bruce brings the family to meet Max's elderly parents, Carmela and Giuseppe, who cast a long shadow over the life Max built after leaving Sicily.

Their reunion is tense, laced with old shame, competing loyalties, and sharply opposed beliefs about love, family, and what the dead are owed. Max's parents have no idea who this American family is, or who Max became after he left. While Bruce wants to honor Max's explicit wishes, Carmela believes her son belongs with his blood family and in the old traditions he left behind.

For a brief moment, it seems like the visit has ended in uneasy peace.

Then, the family discovers that the ashes in the urn have been replaced with dirt and chicken shit.

With only hours left before the comet appears over Etna, grief gives way to chaos. Bruce is devastated. Grace is furious. Adam, sensing one more chance to redeem himself in front of his sons, throws himself into a ridiculous recovery mission. What follows is a comic, increasingly desperate attempt to retrieve Max's remains before the night is lost: a covert return to Carmela and

Giuseppe's home, a half-baked break-in, a chicken-coop distraction, a forgotten mother, and a plan that goes disastrously off the rails.

In the process, every unresolved tension in the family rises to the surface. Grace finally says out loud what Adam has long feared: that his sons cannot count on him. Nancy, overlooked once again as the rest of the family spirals into its own drama, steps out of the family's orbit and for the first time in years, toward a life of her own... one that may matter more to this story than anyone realizes. Bruce, forced to reckon with the difference between loving Max and truly letting him go, finds himself facing the one person whose grief may be as stubborn and complicated as his own.

When they finally reach the top of Mount Etna, the original plan is gone. The comet been missed. Max's wishes have not been fulfilled in the way Bruce imagined. But something else, more unexpected and more honest, begins to take shape, the group itself quietly expanded. After everything falls apart, the family is forced to confront what Max actually left behind: not a perfect plan, but a living, messy, improvised family held together by love, resentment, history, and choice. Adam begins, tentatively, to understand that parenthood is not about grand gestures or future intentions, but about showing up now.

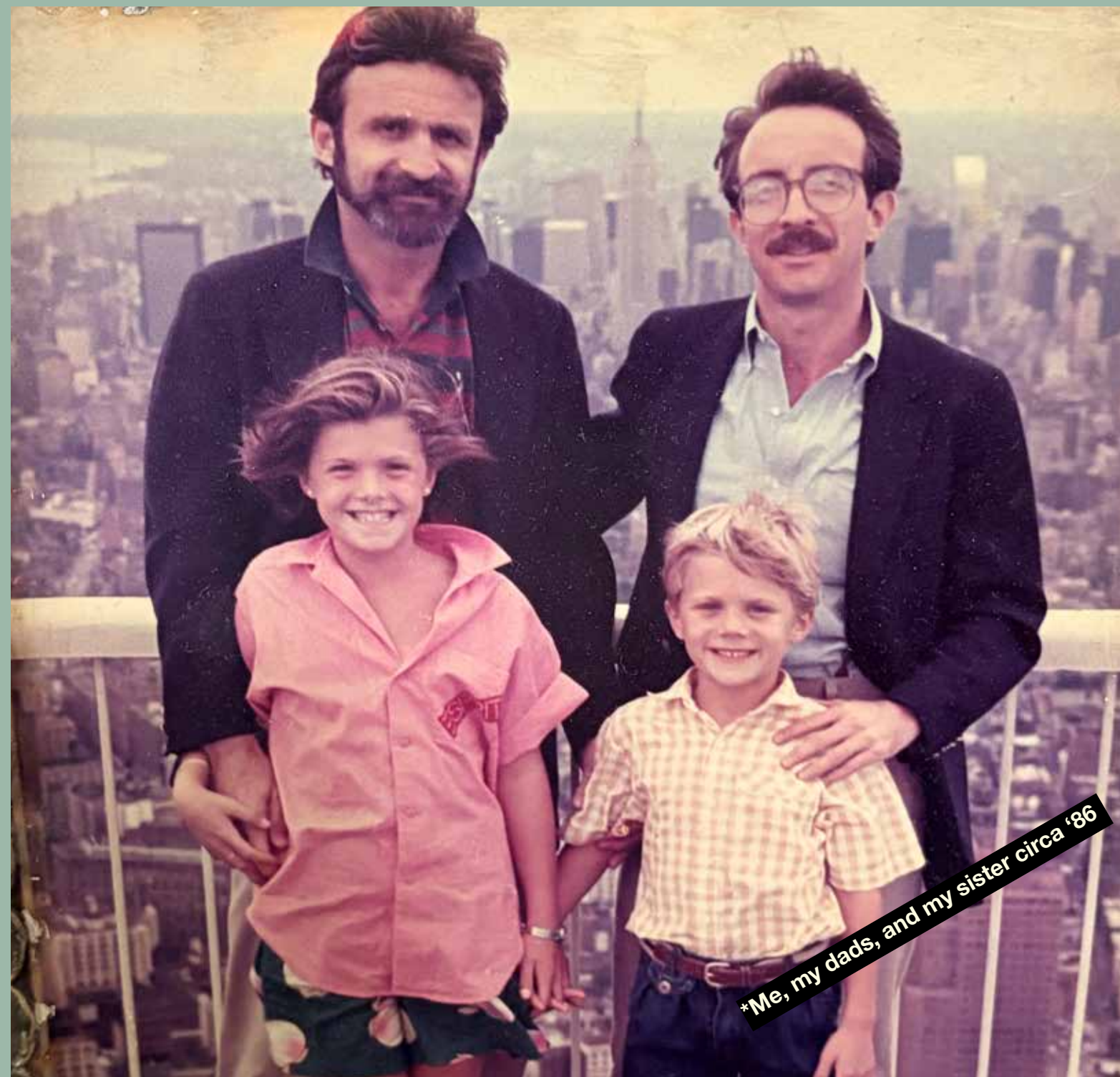
Grace loosens her grip on the idea that she alone must hold everything together. Nancy steps, however briefly, into the possibility of a life that belongs to her. And Bruce, in grieving the man who changed his life, begins to see that honoring Max may not look the way he imagined.

Pineapple Ashes is a comic family odyssey about grief, parenthood, chosen family, and the beautiful disaster of trying to do right by the people we love. It is a story about failed plans, inherited damage, and the strange ways a family can still come together, even when nothing goes as intended. By the end, the family has grown in ways none of them expected, but they do not give Max the sendoff they set out to give him. Instead they arrive at something deeper: a shared recognition that family is not defined by order, biology, or even getting it right. It's defined by the decision to keep showing up for each other, and by the willingness to keep reaching for one another on the way down.

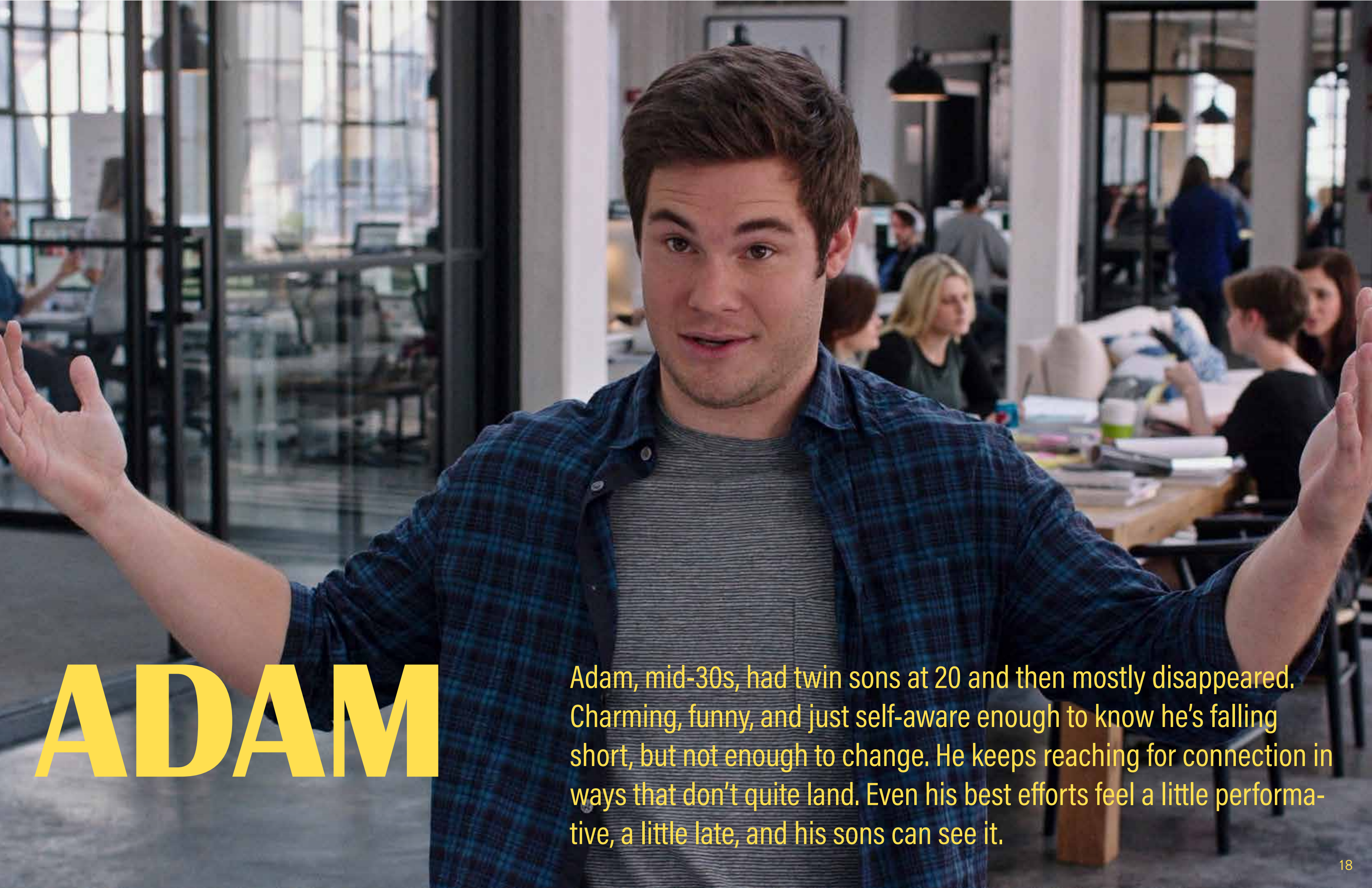
DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I grew up in a family unlike any that surrounded me, with a gay father and a stepfather who became a true parent to me at a time when that wasn't happening elsewhere. That experience shaped the way I understand family, not as something defined by structure, but by how people choose to show up for one another. I remember sitting at dinner with my father, my sister, and her girlfriend at the time after a hospital visit when Max was sick, and realizing I was the only straight person at the table. It was a small moment, but it stayed with me, a reminder that in any family, the sense of being on the outside can shift depending on where you're sitting.

Pineapple Ashes comes directly from that perspective. I'm not trying to tell a definitive version of anyone else's story, but rather a personal one about the messy, imperfect ways people try to earn their place in each other's lives. In the film, that idea comes through most clearly in Max's final letter to the family, and in the belief that what matters isn't how you become a parent, whether by accident, expectation, or choice, but how you care for one another once you're in that role. I'm drawn to the humor, contradiction, and tenderness that come with that, and I want the film to hold all of it at once, funny and chaotic, but grounded in something honest.



THE CHARACTERS



ADAM

Adam, mid-30s, had twin sons at 20 and then mostly disappeared. Charming, funny, and just self-aware enough to know he's falling short, but not enough to change. He keeps reaching for connection in ways that don't quite land. Even his best efforts feel a little performative, a little late, and his sons can see it.



GRACE

Grace, Adam's older sister, is sharp, capable, and used to being the one who holds everything together. With a young son and a carefully constructed life back home, she's not used to things slipping. Now, stuck managing the chaos of this trip and the brother who never quite grew up, she's running out of patience.



BRUCE

Bruce, mid-60s, is charming, theatrical, and newly unmoored after the loss of his partner of 30 years. Grieving but determined, he's set this trip in motion with absolute conviction. If he can just keep everyone moving forward, he believes he can hold the family together, even as his own impulses threaten to get in the way.



NANCY

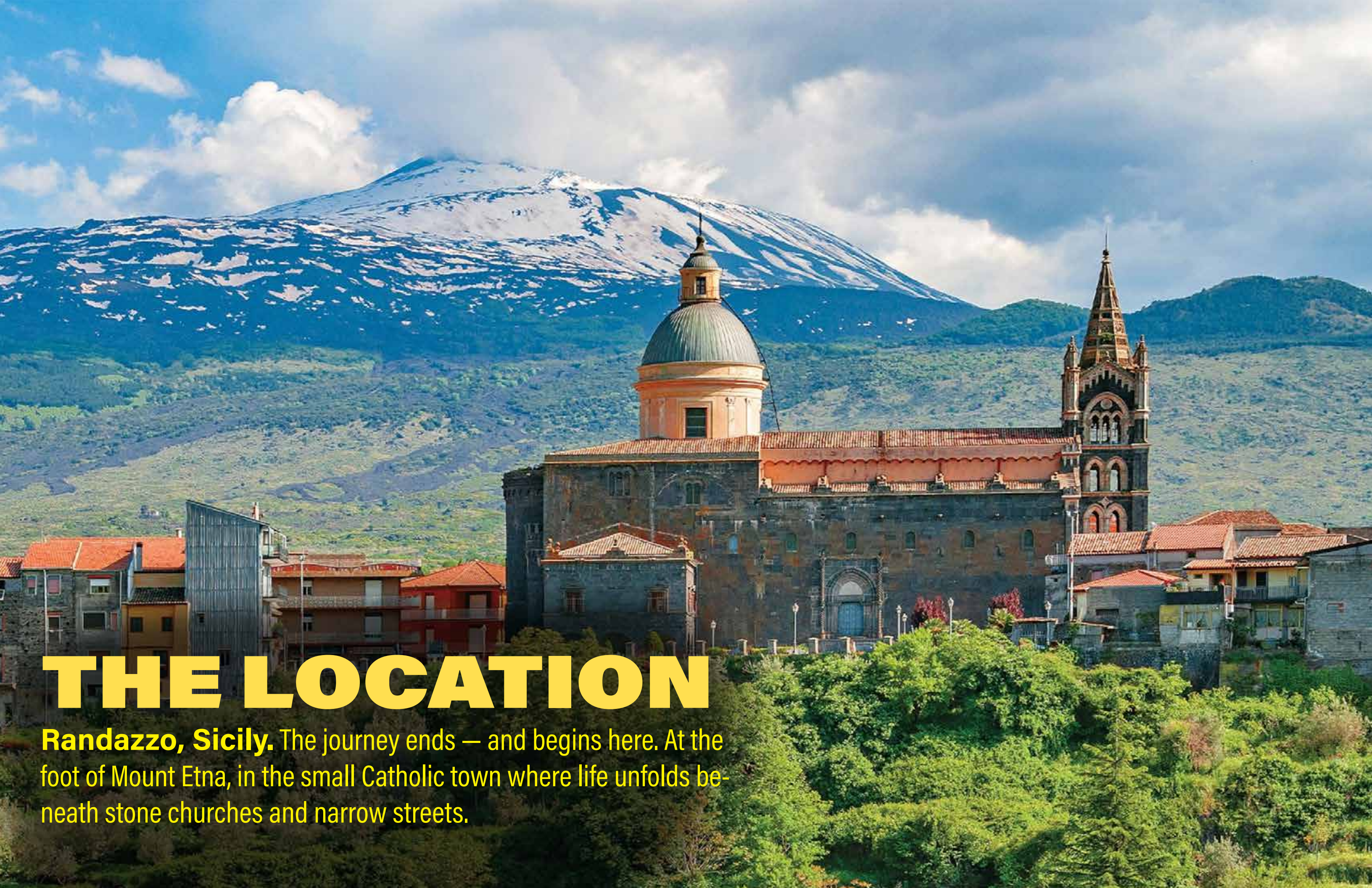
Nancy, mid-60s, has spent years quietly holding this family together. Practical, composed, and often overlooked, she's learned how to smooth things over and keep everyone else moving. But on this trip, as the rest of the family spins out, Nancy begins to step out of that role. For the first time in a long time, she starts to imagine a life that belongs to her.



LUKE & CAM

Luke and Cam, mid-teens, are identical twins who've grown up without much of a father. Sharp, observant, and a step ahead of the adults around them, they see right through Adam's attempts to connect. They're open to letting him in. He just hasn't given them much reason to.

THE WORLD



THE LOCATION

Randazzo, Sicily. The journey ends — and begins here. At the foot of Mount Etna, in the small Catholic town where life unfolds beneath stone churches and narrow streets.



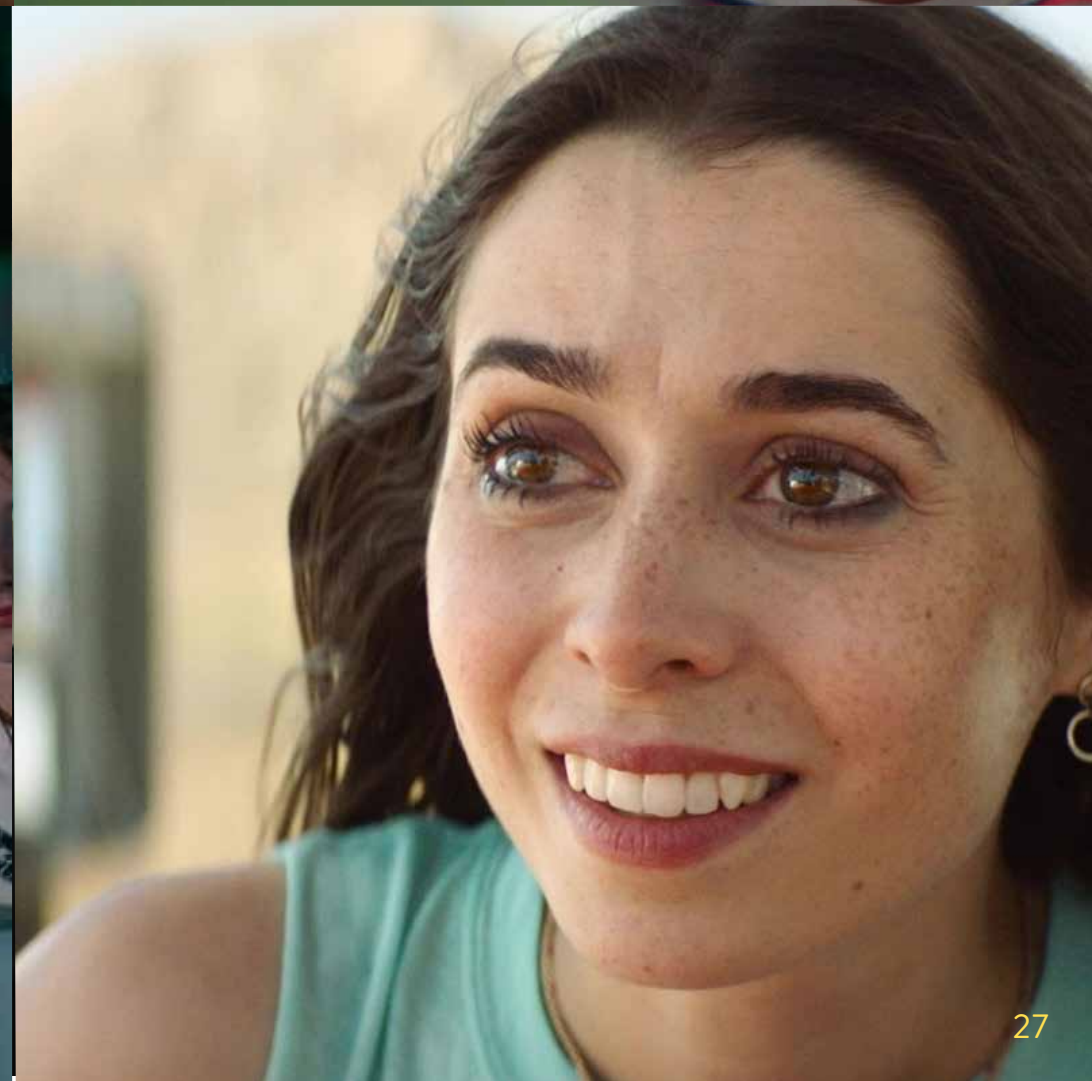
TONE

I want the tone of the film to come across as comedic, but at the same time heartfelt and meaningful. Something like the road trip ensemble of *Little Miss Sunshine*, mixed with *Transparent*. And the themes and style of *Beginners* crossed with *While We're Young*.



LOOK & FEEL

The film will have a cinematic tone that's authentic, real, and a little rough around the edges, like the characters themselves. I want to shoot mostly handheld, with long lenses for a shallow depth of field and an intimate, lived-in feel. The visual language will carry the vibrancy and emotional immediacy of films like *Lady Bird* (Greta Gerwig), *Anora* (Sean Baker), and *Aftersun* (Charlotte Wells).



CREATIVE TEAM

WRITER/DIRECTOR

MICAH PERTA

Micah Perta's most recent narrative short film, *Daytime Noon*, starring Olivia Wilde and Dolly Wells, premiered at the Nantucket Film Festival and won the Best Actress award at the Los Angeles Short Film Festival and the Audience Award at the Nitehawk Shorts Festival. His short documentary, *Bump Tick Scratch*, screened at SXSW, Slamdance, AFI's Silverdocs, and Edinburgh, among others. Before that, his student film, *Gogol Bordello*, a short documentary about the gypsy, Ukrainian, punk, surrealist cabaret band was a regional finalist at the Student Academy Awards.

Alongside his narrative/documentary work, Micah has directed comedic commercials for over fifteen years and had the pleasure of collaborating with everyone from Don Cheadle, Drew Barrymore, Conan O'Brien, Tracy Morgan, Kate McKinnon, Stephen Curry, Dwayne Johnson, Martha Stewart and Snoop Dogg, among others.



*Micah pouring his heart and soul into directing a can of mayonnaise for Heinz.



DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

SAM LEVY

Sam Levy has lensed some of the most iconic films of the last decade, including *Frances Ha*, *While We're Young*, and *Mistress America* (Noah Baumbach), *Lady Bird* (Greta Gerwig), *Wendy and Lucy* (Kelly Reichardt), and *His Three Daughters* (Azazel Jacobs). Known for his lyrical handheld style and emotional precision, Sam has also collaborated with directors such as Spike Jonze and Jonah Hill on commercials and music videos.

Sam and Micah met on a commercial set and went on to shoot numerous campaigns together, building a visual shorthand rooted in naturalism and humor, one that makes Sam the perfect eye for *Pineapple Ashes*.



*Micah and Sam together as babies.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

ANTHONY GASPARRO

Anthony Gasparro has designed some of the most visually grounded indie films in recent memory, including *Materialists* (Celine Song), *The Mastermind* (Kelly Reichardt), and *Kinds of Kindness* (Yorgos Lanthimos). His work combines naturalism with evocative detail, crafting spaces that feel lived-in, layered, and psychologically rich.

Micah and Anthony, like Sam and Micah, first met on a commercial set and went on to collaborate across many campaigns, including the now-iconic Martha Stewart x Snoop Dogg spots. With a deep understanding of family dynamics and the emotional potential of design, Anthony brings the perfect touch to a project like *Pineapple Ashes*.



*Micah looking unhinged on set with Tony (per usual).



**THANKS FOR
READING**