

A FILM BY
RICHARD KARPALA, GABRIEL BIENCZYCKI



FALLING STARS

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Year of Production: 2023

Runtime: 80 min

Aspect Ratio: 2.35:1

Genre: Drama, Horror, Thriller

Trailer: [https://vimeo.com/840499585/45365214b6?
share=copy](https://vimeo.com/840499585/45365214b6?share=copy)



FALLING STARS



FILM SUMMARY

It's the night of the first harvest which means sacrifices are performed to placate witches in the night sky. These are usually offerings in the form of fruits and herbs. For three brothers living in the American West, this year's harvest will be different. When they discover a friend of theirs has buried a witch he killed, they endeavour out to the desert to see it for themselves. During their visit, they accidentally desecrate the body setting into motion a sequence of perilous events for the brothers. The only way they can put a stop to a curse set upon their family is to burn the witch's body before sunrise.

DIRECTORS NOTES

It started with a dream of a star falling from the sky. From that dream, a world emerged, similar to ours: a puritanical, fervently religious American West dominated by ritual and old sins passed down across generations. We set our story in the California desert — a wind-blasted badland alive with magic where the brush and the sands bristle under a cosmic night sky. The desert lures three brothers who are in search of magic in their lives. They're desperate for a piece of the world that's closed to them. This story is in many ways dealing with the costs of coming-of-age. To leave the shelter of home and venture off into the unknown under the burden of youthful free will without a grasp of the consequences. It's a story of two halves: the first is making a mistake and the second is owning up to it. We made a strange and unfamiliar world where the stars in the sky are fraught with danger. But they also represent hope and change. And they are within reach if you only look up. What started as a dream became a family horror drama set under a canopy of stars.

VISUAL REFERENCE



KEY CHARACTERS



Rene Leech

Rene Leech is a Los Angeles based performing artist working on stage and screen. Rene's technique is rooted in an innate desire to connect - with others, themselves, and the environments surrounding. Rene leans into human frailty, embarrassing each characters' strengths and weakness and authentically displays them. Rene acts to offer audiences [and themselves] a mirror to feel seen, affected, and loved by the stories they tell. Rene shines in narratives that showcase womxn, the LGBTQ+ community, and art striving to make a difference by challenging societal norms.



Shaun Duke, Jr.

Shaun Duke Jr., a native Angeleno, is an esteemed actor known for his multifaceted roles in both independent films and the world of urban cinema. Shaun began his career in theatre until making his big screen debut in 2018 with his self-penned and produced short film 'Baby Elephants'. Shaun's recent contributions in various independent films as well as a recurring guest star on the show 'Cocaine Sisters,' (2023) currently streaming on Urbanflix, have further showcased his range and prowess in acting. Shaun has also received recognition for his performance as the lead character in the popular music video 'Dead Man Walking' by southern rap superstar Jelly Roll.

Andrew Gabriel

Andrew Gabriel is an American actor born in Charlotte, North Carolina. His recent projects include Falling Stars (2023), Space Waves (2022), Evan Wood (2021), and FIVE (2020). Andrew now resides in Los Angeles, California and studies at Joe Anthony Studios.



Greg Poppa

Greg Poppa is a Philadelphia based actor and filmmaker. He began his creative career writing short stories as a child before moving into acting in his early 20s. In addition to playing Rob in Falling Stars, he has acted in M. Night Shyamalan's Apple+ show "Servant", HBO's "Mind Over Murder" as well as numerous indie features and shorts including 2023 Sundance selection "Weapons and Their Names" which was nominated for best short. Greg made his directorial debut in 2021 with the short film "Foxes".



KEY CHARACTERS

DIRECTORS



Richard Karpala (writer, co-director, producer)

RICHARD KARPALA is the writer, co-director, editor and producer of FALLING STARS. His screenwriting feature debut, AMOK (2017, dir Kasia Adamik) premiered at the Edinburgh Intl Film Festival, and was distributed in Poland by Kino Świat and Netflix Polska. His shorts include the sci-fi thriller IRIS (2015), which premiered at the Fantasia Film Festival and was acquired for the horror anthology, GALAXY OF HORRORS (2017) available on major SVOD everywhere. More recent shorts include MURDERABILIAIC (2019) which premiered at Beyond Fest, and PSYCHOS (2021) which premiered at Fantastic Fest.



Gabriel Biencyzki (co-director, producer)

Born in Poland, Gabriel studied music, fine arts and modern dance. FALLING STARS is his feature-length directorial debut. Recent projects include feature narrative and documentary films, commercial campaigns, music video and humanitarian assignments. Recent work includes a Tribeca selection feature FREEDIA GOT A GUN (Dir. Chris McKim), Emmy winning feature OUT OF IRAQ (Dir. Chris McKim) Feature length gangster comedy MAYDAY (Dir. Sam Akina) and Tribeca and Berlinale official selection ALL ON A MARDI GRAS DAY (Dir. Michal Pietrzyk) now streaming at The New Yorker. Gabriel is also a co-creator of True Naked Yoga franchise.

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