

KINO LORBER

presents

CALLOUSED HANDS

A Film by Jesse Quinones

Official Selection Miami International Film Festival
Official Selection Flickers Rhode Island International Film Festival
Official Selection Film London LUFF Breakthrough Strand
Official Selection British Urban Film Festival

COUNTRY: US/UK
GENRE: Drama
DURATION: 97 Minutes
SHOOTING FORMAT: 4K
ASPECT RATIO: 1:85
SOUND: 5.1
LANGUAGE: English

A Kino Lorber Release
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KINO LORBER

CREW

WRITER/DIRECTOR

Jesse Quinones

PRODUCERS

Ann Marie Goodwin, Danny Mendoza, Jesse Quinones, Andre Royo, Paula Crickard

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Shivaun Woolfson

CO-PRODUCER

Eric Gaunaud

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Fabio Dominguez

COMPOSER

Rob Persaud

EDITOR

Lisa Forrest

CASTING DIRECTOR

Gemma Lloyd

CAST

BYRD

Andre Royo

DEBBIE

Daisy Haggard

SOLOMON

Hans Howes

JOSH

Luca Oriel

RABBI BROOKSTEIN

Sean McConaghy

KINO LORBER

Logline

Don't worry, just blisters. They'll callous tomorrow.

Short Synopsis

12-year-old Josh is a mixed race boy and a promising baseball player. He is abused by his mother's boyfriend Byrd, and neglected by his mother Debbie. He manages to forge his own path in life when his long-lost grandfather Solomon insists he study for his Bar Mitzvah.

Long Synopsis

Despite life's many disappointments Byrd (Andre Royo) still believes in the promise of the American Dream. Already 40, his time has come and gone. His one last chance of achieving it is through his stepson Josh's prodigious talent on the baseball field. But Byrd knows that talent isn't everything; discipline, hard work, and focus will all play their part and he is ready to guide Josh to achieve what he himself never could.

Reality Check - Debbie (Daisy Haggard) waits tables to cover the bills and put food on the table while Byrd pushes Josh day and night, through blistered feet and calloused hands, to be a baseball star. It's the only thing that matters and one day Josh will rise up and out of Opa Locka - Miami's roughest neighborhood - into the Major Leagues bringing the whole family with him, to the big house with a swimming pool out back and Lexus in the driveway.

Buoyed by Josh's potential Byrd spends his stepson's projected earnings on drugs and get-rich-quick schemes that take him nowhere fast. Josh just keeps his head down, trying to ignore the violence in his home, walking on eggshells with his baseball bat in hand.

On the brink of eviction - Broken by her drinking, the bad boys, and the constant shame, Debbie drags herself to her estranged father Solomon (Hans Howes). She brokers a deal: \$10,000 and in exchange Josh will discover his Jewish roots and have a Bar Mitzvah.

Josh swaps the bat for the tallit - Rabbi Brookstein (Sean McConaghy) comes along and Josh never knew that a Jew could be so cool. While Byrd sinks deeper into depravity, the Rabbi becomes a game changer, and unlocks in Josh the potential he never even knew he had. Will Byrd lose everything or keep flying high with no place to land?

KINO LORBER

Director's Statement

I like to tell people that *Calloused Hands* took me 10 years to write. This is a lie. The first draft of the script was written in about a month in February 2011. And the final draft completed in November of 2011. So technically it was written in just under a year. But 10 years sounds more dramatic. Also, there is some truth to this lie.

While the script itself was written in 2011, the story was conceived as far back as 1998. Back then I was a Junior at North Miami Senior High on the cusp of fulfilling my dream of playing baseball for the Miami Hurricanes at University of Miami. I had just been awarded a baseball scholarship on the back of breaking 10 batting records. I was getting scouted, had my name printed in the Miami Herald, and felt so close to my dream I could almost taste it: I'd do four years at UM, get drafted as a first round pick by the Marlins, rush through their farm system, and be in their lineup by the time I was 22. I would follow in the foot-steps of the Miami greats like Mike Lowell, Charles Johnson, and of course the man himself: Alex Rodriguez (A-Rod).

But things did not line up the way I had hoped. I got badly injured before my senior year and my play suffered. Interest from UM waned, I could barely hit my own weight, and worst of all I lost my confidence. Before I knew it I was a back-up first base man at a community college, struggling to even make the team. Not too long after that I gave up baseball for good, moved to London, and devoted the next 10 years of my life to being a writer. The experience crushed me. I couldn't even watch a ball game for four years. When I finally was able to the first question that entered my head was: why did I want to be a major leaguer so bad? It had lived with me so long I couldn't even remember not wanting to be a major leaguer. But why? Where did this burning desire come from? So I thought long and hard about it. And all answers pointed to one man: Byrd.

He was my mother's boyfriend, and came in to my life when I was seven, and left it when I was 12. He was an African American. Byrd practiced with me nearly every day, with the hope of molding me into a baseball star. He devoted nearly every spare minute he had taking me to batting cages, hitting me ground balls, making me run wind sprints. He instilled his dream into me, made me focus so hard on it that eventually it became my own.

But Byrd was a flawed man. He suffered from crack addiction and alcoholism, and possessed a violent and unpredictable temper that could turn on the drop of a dime. He beat my mother, and verbally and physically abused my brother and me. In short, he put us through hell. But he wasn't all bad. When he wasn't high or drunk he was the funniest damn guy you could ever meet. He was charismatic, playful, and had the best laugh I ever heard. The problem was you never knew which Byrd was going to show up. When he complimented you it made you feel as if you were sitting on top of the highest mountain. When he insulted you it made you feel as if you were sitting on the bottom of the ocean. Many years after he left I felt mostly hatred and anger toward him. But time heals any wound and now I see the whole man, the flawed man, and I feel compassion and even love for the man that instilled in me the dogged determination and self-belief he always wanted me to have. I didn't end up applying it to baseball, but still I think he'd be proud.

This film is a tribute to men like Byrd, men who are tortured by the dreams that slip through their fingers, men crushed by the immense weight of the American Dream.

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CAST BIOS

Andre Royo
BYRD

Andre has that rare ability to give the characters he plays depth and emotion without overshadowing his cast mates. As evidence, see Royo's amazing turn as Bubbles on HBO's critically acclaimed drama "The Wire", Henry Arliss Higgins on Fox's "Fringe" and Stephen Canfield in "Heroes". Royo has appeared on a diverse range of shows, including "How to Make it in America", "Memphis Beat", "Prime Suspect", "The Whole Truth", "Party Down", "CSI: Miami", "Numb3rs" and "Criminal Minds". The first time Andre appeared on the big screen was in John Singleton's "Shaft". Other features include "Red Tails", "Hellbenders", "Remnants", "The Collection", "August", and "Super". Royo's most recent part was in "The Spectacular Now", premiering in competition at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival. Beyond acting, Royo executive produced the independent feature "Would You Rather" and is attached to produce two additional feature films.

Daisy Haggard
DEBBIE

A British actress of both stage and screen, Daisy is most popular for playing Myra Licht on Showtime's hit show "Episodes" alongside Matt Leblanc. She has had regular appearances on "Parents", "Doctor Who", "Ashes to Ashes", "Midsomer Murders", and "Green Wing". Haggard has performed on the stages of the most prestigious theatres in the UK, including the National Theatre, Almeida, and The Tricycle. On stage, she is probably best known for her starring role in the hit play "Becky Shaw" at the Almeida.

Luca Oriol
JOSH

Luca has been performing as both an actor and an athlete since he was five years old. He competed in martial arts, winning eight Junior International World titles and three USA World titles. In football, Luca led his Pop Warner team to a championship and became an accomplished player. Luca has appeared in the films "2 Young to 2 Fight", "Quetzal", "Drain Baby", "Wake" and "Lower Learning". On stage, Luca played the lead role in the Los Angeles Theater Center's production of "Sick".

Sean McConaghy
RABBI BROOKSTEIN

Sean is originally from Rhode Island and enlisted in the US Navy at the age of 17. After serving four years, he attended the University of Rhode Island and subsequently won a place at the prestigious London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in 2005. Sean currently lives in North London. His prior film and TV credits include: "The Task", "Godard & Others", "Art Is..." and "Get Down, Stay Down".

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CREW BIOS

JESSE QUINONES - Writer/Director/Producer

Jesse Quinones is a writer/director from Miami, Fl. Since 2000 he has called London, England his home. He is equally drawn to telling stories on either side of the Atlantic. Jesse has his first drama serial currently under option with Shed Productions, and his second feature film El Cubanito is in development with producers Alexandra Stone (Kidulthood, Young Adam) and Carola Ash (Goodbye Bafana). Cubanito was a finalist on the B3 Media Talent Lab. Jesse is a recipient of the 2011 All Roads Seeds Grant from National Geographic for his upcoming documentary "Shoeshine Girls" of Bolivia. "Shoeshine Girls" was selected to the 2011 Berlinale Talent Campus and was also awarded grants from Channel 4 and the Commonwealth Broadcast Association, as was his award-winning documentary "The Cable", shot in Colombia.

In 2010, Jesse was commissioned by Current TV to make the hard-hitting investigative documentary "Vigilante Britain", exploring the rise of vigilantism in Britain. In 2009, he made "Surviving History", telling the story of seven Lithuanian Holocaust survivors. This won several awards, including 2nd Runner Up for Best Documentary at the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival, the Audience Poll at the Imperial War Museum Film Festival, and a prize at the Winton Train Film Contest. It also screened at Leeds International Film Festival, Cannes Short Film Corner, Filmstock Film Festival, and Portobello Film Festival. His comedy short "Cold Calling", made while still at university, screened at over 20 film festivals including Born Shorts International Film Festival, Canary Wharf Film Festival, and Sefton Short Film Festival. It was winner of Best Comedy at the Indie Short Film Competition and was nominated for best comedy at the Belfast Film Festival, Limelight Film Festival, and End of the Pier International Film Festival.

Jesse is an alumni of many labs and fellowships, including the Berlinale Talent Campus, HBO sponsored NALIP Latino Writers Lab, NALIP Latino Producers Academy, BBC Writers Room, Royal Court Young Writers Programme, and the Soho Theatre Writers Attachment Programme. Jesse is represented by Jane Villiers at Sayle Screen.

ANN MARIE GOODWIN - PRODUCER

Ann Marie is an award-winning BBC-trained Producer/Director who has worked with all of the leading UK terrestrial channels, namely BBC, Channel 4, ITV, and Channel 5. She has also collaborated with several cable and satellite channels, such as National Geographic, Discovery, Living and Sky One.

With over 20 years experience in the industry, she has carved out a reputation as a tenacious producer who is able to develop ideas for commission as well as source funding for independent media projects and short films. She has served as Executive Producer on numerous documentary programs, such as "Caribbean Cops", the award-winning short film "The Cable", and Woolfcub's upcoming documentary "Shoeshine Girls", which was recently awarded a grant from National Geographic.

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DANNY MENDOZA - PRODUCER

Born and raised in Miami, FL, Danny produced his first feature-length film while still an undergraduate at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. The award-winning documentary, titled "Familiar Voices: A Reaction to the Crisis in Darfur" had its New York premiere at the Urbanworld Film Festival. It screened in 34 film festivals in seven countries -- receiving 16 accolades, including the Jury Award, Best Documentary at the Sacramento Film and Music Festival. "Familiar Voices" is currently distributed by Gravitas Ventures.

PAULA CRICKARD - PRODUCER

Paula began her career in the film industry in 1992 as a documentary director with Northern Visions in Belfast, making films for Channel 4 and WNET 13 in NY. Since then she has worked in nearly every department from script to screen, in a variety of roles from production to art department. Paula's film credits are for companies such as Killer Films in New York and Palomar Pictures in LA. She has produced several short films, post produced features and produced a three week run of her play "Devil in Disguise" in London's Whitecross gallery in 2008. Paula describes her time with Wild Bunch and Elle Driver sales agents handling the service acquisitions for over 40 films including "Ponyo", "Don't Look Back", "Oceans 3D" and "September Issue" as her film industry "finishing school". With an extensive knowledge of production and a firm handle on international distribution, Paula is creating a signature of quality and commercial value.

FABIO DOMINGUEZ - CINEMATOGRAPHER

Fabio Dominguez is a cinematographer from Colombia. He worked in his country as cinematographer / director in several documentary TV series including the award - winning science TV series New Mind. He moved to London in 2004 to work as cinematographer for several short fiction films, documentaries and music videos. In 2008 he gained an MA in Digital Film from London Metropolitan University. Since 2009 he has collaborated on various projects for the award - winning company Woolfcub Productions. He was cinematographer on the documentary The Shoeshine Girls shot in Colombia and winner of grants from National Geographic and Channel 4. Cinematographer/Co-producer on the documentary The Cable a Colombian story supported by the Commonwealth Broadcast Association. Cinematographer / director of Arthur Cant short film nominated for best comedy at the Limelight Film Awards 2012 and selected for the British Urban Film Festival 2012.

LISA FORREST - EDITOR

Lisa is currently working on her first feature as editor, a comedy/drama set in London. She spent several years as an assistant and assembly editor on dramas, documentaries, music videos, commercials and more. Projects on which she learned the ropes include documentary The Boys of Baraka and dramas Harry Brown and Shame. Lisa particularly enjoys the challenges of unscripted projects, and was one of the editors of documentary film Life in a Day (a.k.a The Youtube Film). She has also made her own short documentaries, one of the while undertaking the National Film & Television School's Summerdocs programme. Lisa occasionally leads workshops for people with no previous editing experience, and loves getting people excited about editing.