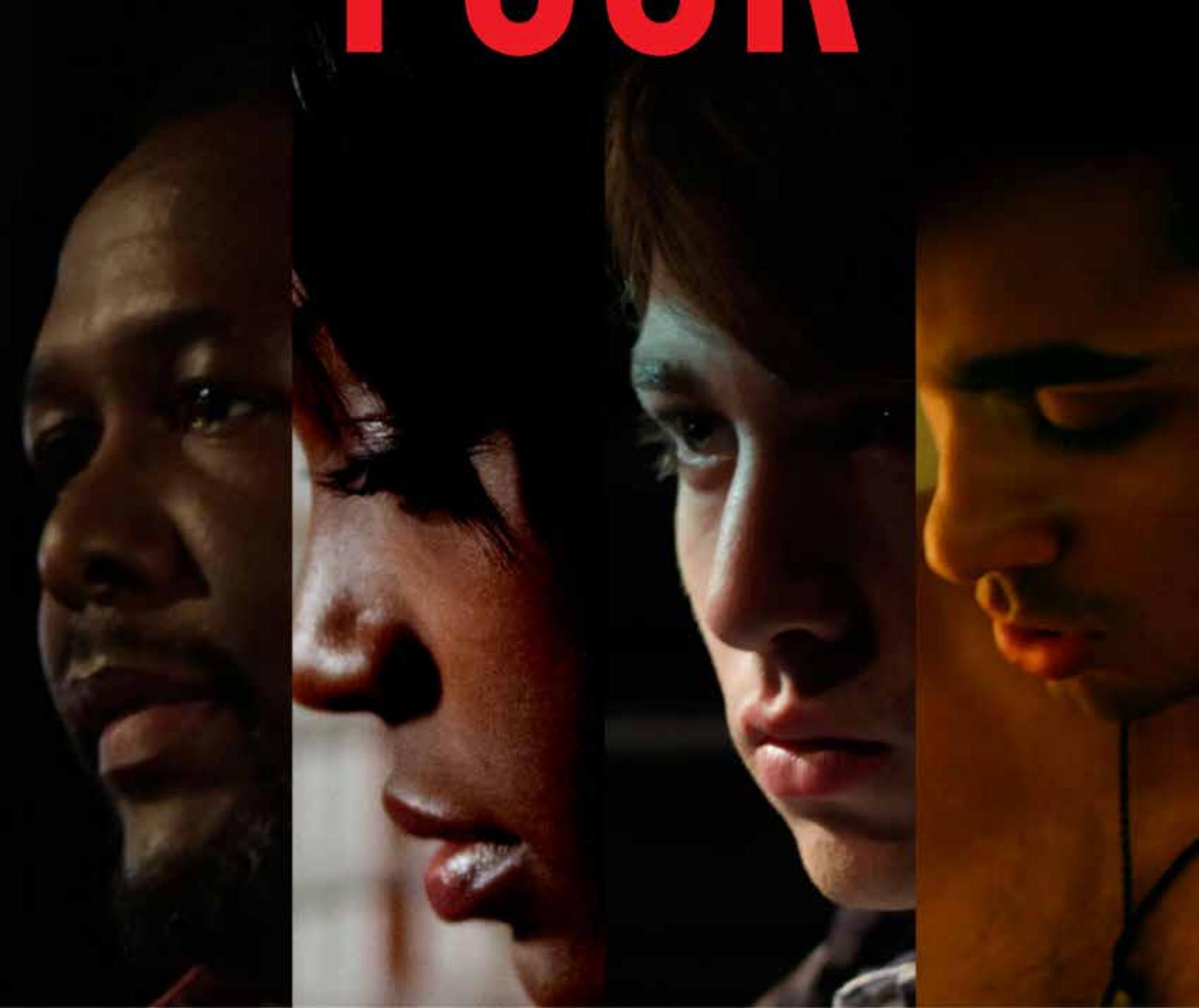




# FOUR



“...the intriguing part of ‘Four’ is that it moves beyond dirty secrets and illicit acts to uncover...questions of normalcy, sexuality, masculinity and race.”

Jasmin Tiggett, *IndieWire*

#### Table of Contents:

Logline & Synopses	4
Director’s Statement	9
Background of Production	10
Discovering ‘Four’	10
Connecting with Christopher Shinn	10
Optioning ‘Four’	11
Inspiration	11
Adaptation	12
Approaching Race	12
Approaching [Homo]sexuality	13
Approaching God & Religion	13
False Starts Before Take-Off	14
“Kickstarting” Investment with Neil LaBute	15
Locations	15
Camera	17
Production Design	17
Directing the Actors	17
Staying Truthful	18
Finishing Funds and Post	18
An American Film	18
Audience Takeaway	19
Casting Process	22
Cast	24
Crew	26
Actor Quotes	28
Crew Quotes	29
Press Quotes	30

# FOUR

**Running Time:** 76 Minutes

**Exhibition Format:** DCP, HDCam, Blu-Ray, DVD

**Aspect Ratio:** 16x9 (2:35)

**Shooting Format:** HD, Arri Alexa

**Language:** English

**Filmed In:** Brooklyn, NY and Long Island, NY

#### DISTRIBUTION & PUBLICITY

306 Releasing (Theatrical)

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New York, NY 10011

212-300-7914

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#### KEY PERSONNEL

**Writer/Director:** Joshua Sanchez

**Producers:** Christine Giorgio, Wendell Pierce

**Based on the play by:** Christopher Shinn

**Executive Producers:** Allen Frame, Neil LaBute

**Cast:** Wendell Pierce, Emory Cohen, Aja Naomi King, E.J. Bonilla

#### LINKS

[Official Website](#)

[Official Facebook Page](#)

[Official Pinterest Page](#)

[Director’s Twitter Page](#)

[Producer’s Twitter Page](#)

[Official Tumblr Page](#)

[Wikipedia Page](#)

[IMDb Page](#)



## LOGLINE

On a hot 4th of July night, sparks fly between four people as they test the limits and possibilities of their own freedom.

## SYNOPSIS

In a nameless, suburban American town, the smell of barbeque fills the air as Fourth of July celebrations move from a hot summer day into night. Joe, a man who works hard and travels a lot, leaves his family behind for the holiday, citing a business trip. Abigayle, his precocious daughter, is left to tend to her ill mother and manage the house on her own, yet again. Seeking just enough attention to get her through another night of her lonely responsibilities, she turns to Dexter, a former high school basketball star whose best days are behind him. And while Abigayle is out with Dexter, Joe is quietly spending time around town with June, a young man he met online who's struggling to accept himself. And for just this night, the small world that these four live in will become even smaller, though the freedom they experience has never been so dangerous, fleeting and honest.

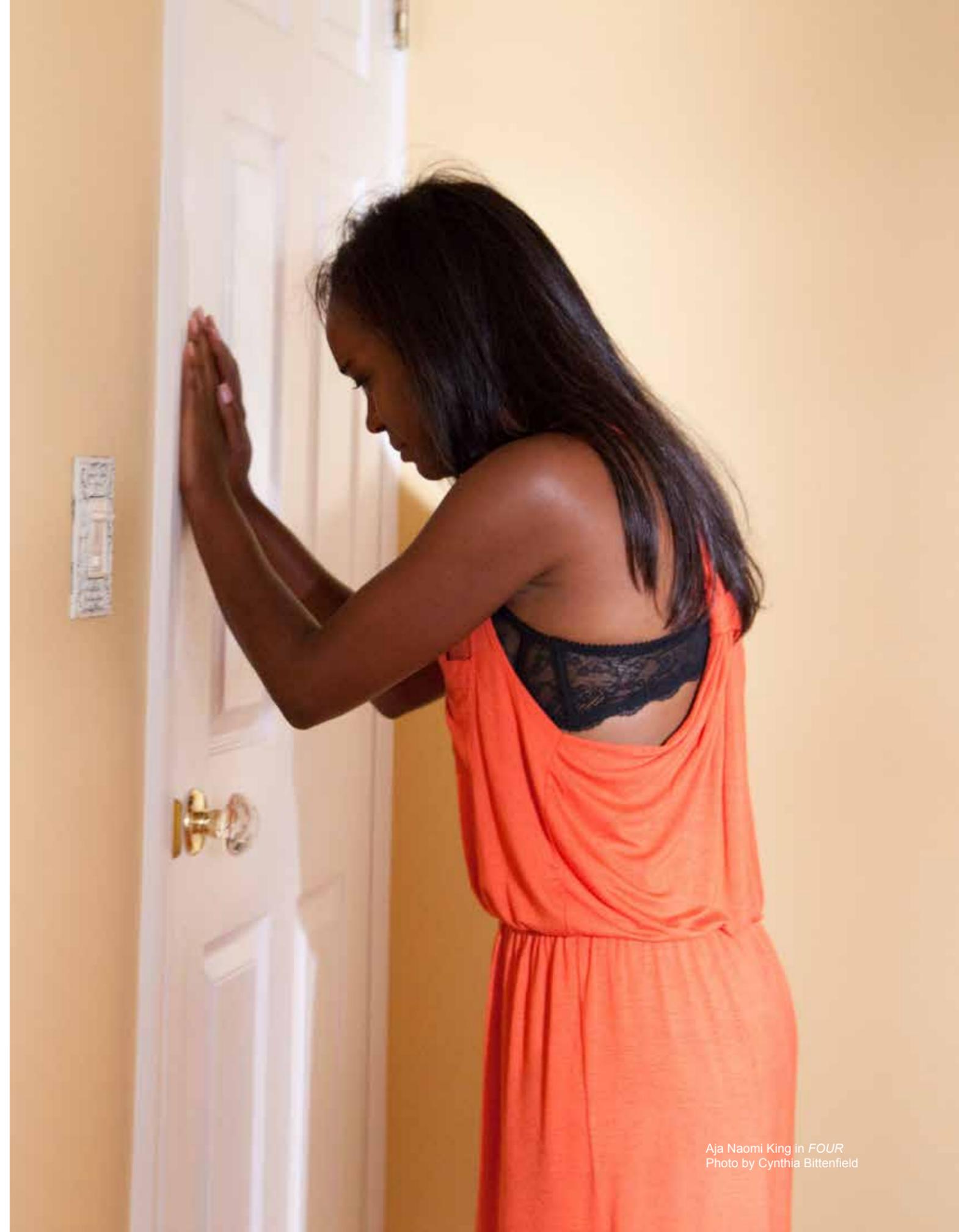
## LONG SYNOPSIS

In a nameless, suburban American town, the smell of barbeque fills the air as Fourth of July celebrations move from a hot summer day into night. Joe, a black man who works hard and travels a lot, is on the road again, leaving his wife and daughter behind for the holiday, citing another business trip.

At Joe's home, his precocious 16 year-old daughter, Abigayle, is left to tend to her ill mother and manage the house on her own. This is a routine night for Abigayle, and while other girls her age are out and about, she's at home with the blinds drawn, preparing to settle in for another dull night, accepting that the most excitement she might have is on a flirtatious phone call.

On the other end of this phone call is Dexter, a former high school basketball star whose best days are behind him. He likely met Abigayle at the mall at some point in the past, and she likely gave him her number when he smiled at her like a little boy, which amused her. Dexter smokes, snorts prescription pills, still lives at home, and though he is "half-white, half-spic," as Abigayle playfully calls him, he admittedly wishes that he was black.

Across the train tracks, in a very WASPY section of town, young June watches from inside his parents' home as friends and neighbors celebrate the holiday with food and swimming outside. He tells his mother he's going to go watch the fireworks for the evening with some friends. Concerned, but happy that her usually withdrawn son is actually going out, his mother wishes him a good night.



Aja Naomi King in *FOUR*  
Photo by Cynthia Bittenfield

When the sun sets, June is anxiously sitting near a payphone along the side of an abandoned strip mall. He nervously smokes, waiting. Soon, the payphone rings. June answers it – he’s been uneasily expecting this call. He describes himself to the caller, hangs up and quietly waits.

A bit later, a car pulls up to June...and Joe steps out, obviously overcome with anticipation, smitten by the beautiful young man he met online. June, on the other hand, is awkward...mostly seeming to reason with himself to continue on with his plans with Joe. The two leave in Joe’s car and hit the road.

While in the car, they engage in gawky conversation about authors, politics and the Fourth of July, which June says is, *“like apple pie.”* Joe basks in the presence of June, encouraging him to let loose, though June refuses. Undeterred, Joe is determined to give June “the most American Fourth of July” he’s ever had.

After Abigayle receives a call from Joe, checking up on her and her mother, she quickly reflects on the quiet sadness of the night ahead of her. Rather than succumb to it, she calls Dexter back and tells him to pick her up.

Dexter soon arrives and takes Abigayle to a local basketball court where he used to be “the man.” He reminisces about his glory days while Abigayle tolerates his tales. Their racial and class differences are obviously a spot of contention for them, so they playfully dance around them, their flirtation culminating with a kiss when Abigayle decides she’s done talking. She tells Dexter to take her back to his place.

Following a movie, Joe and June are now at a motel where Joe fancifully tries to convince June about the amazing possibilities of motels, *“You can reinvent yourself or you can become yourself.”* June quietly slips into the bathroom, pretending to take a shower, all the while smoking a joint to loosen himself up. June is rather caught up in preparing himself for what he is about to do and doesn’t hear a word of what Joe is saying outside the door.

While June’s in the bathroom, Joe confesses powerful truths about himself and observations he’s made being a gay man who is not free to “be gay.” Joe readies himself for what he’s been anticipating all night, and when June finally emerges from the bathroom and assures Joe that he wants the experience to proceed, he seduces Joe, allowing himself to be physically present to an experience in which he is emotionally void.

Over at Dexter’s house, Abigayle and Dexter hang out in his room, which both amuses and unsettles her with its small size and sparse decor. Yet, she focuses on Dexter to distract her from her discomfort. He tries to speak to her again about their differences, but Abigayle is beyond small talk. She aggressively shuts him up with her lips and uses his body to get a quick needed release. And as soon as it’s over, she’s ready to go home.

On the ride back to her house, Dexter tries, in vain, to connect with Abigayle. He’s at a loss when she either shoots him down or ignores him altogether. Her demeanor changes, though, when she spots something outside of his car window – Joe’s car parked at a nearby diner with June in the front seat. Yet, she withholds what she sees from Dexter and quietly succumbs to the ride back home.

After the diner, Joe goads June into going to Chez’s, a local gay bar. June has no desire to be at the bar, fearful of being associated with being “queer.” Yet, he agrees to go in just to prove to Joe that he’s not afraid to do so. Joe, on the other hand, couldn’t be more proud to walk in with June at his side, a young white Adonis. Joe’s all smiles until one of June’s classmates spots them and comes over to say hello. Mortified, June flees the bar.

Dexter finally arrives at Abigayle’s house, but refuses to leave. He uses several antics to force Abigayle to invite him inside, promising to leave shortly.

Once inside, they sit in her room...Dexter asking her questions, and Abigayle with nothing to say. Her annoyance is taken to a new level when his phone rings, angering Abigayle, afraid that the noise may wake her “weak” mother. She quietly demands that Dexter go, which he swears he will do if she will let him use the bathroom first. She reluctantly agrees.

Joe chases June out of the club, behind the building. June’s near tears. Joe tries his best to console him, advising the teen to go after what he wants in life or he’ll always be in pain, just like Joe. June allows Joe to console him for a moment, but is overwhelmed. For him, the night is now over.

Dexter comes from the bathroom, and standing in the darkened hall, notices a bright light glowing from underneath a door at the end of the hall. Drawn to the light, he quietly opens the door. He’s met by Abigayle’s haunting, invalid mother. Abigayle catches him and, furious, unleashes her anger at him for seeing what was behind the door...for seeing the truth of her life. She walks him out, and rids herself of him for good, before quietly going off to tend to her mother.

Joe drives June back to the payphone where he initially picked him up. Joe tries to connect with the young man, but June has already left the situation. Joe gives June a gift, a brown paper bag, before June exits his car and his life. Joe drives off, leaving June behind with his gift – condoms and sparklers. June lights a sparkler and calls his mother to tell her what a great night he’s had with friends.

Joe quietly enters his home the next morning, tip-toeing to his bedroom, careful not to wake Abigayle on the couch. He sits on the bed, removes his overshirt and takes a moment. He looks over at his sleeping wife and quietly crawls into bed with her, and back into the conflicted routine of his life.



Actor, Wendell Pierce, and director, Joshua Sanchez on the set of *FOUR*  
Photo by Seung Hun Lee

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Nearly 10 years ago, I read Christopher Shinn's play *Four*. The story was about the loneliness of being a gay teenager in Hartford, Connecticut. I spent my teen years a world away in Texas, so I know all too well what it is like to be a gay kid in a conservative, multi-racial American town. I know what it's like to have to hide your true self out of fear of rejection. This feeling of utter isolation and overwhelming longing for something "more" is what *Four* is all about.

The circumstances around *Four* make this story so rich in truth that it's sometimes hard for me to fathom that Shinn was only 23 years old when he wrote it. The complexities of race, class, gender, and sexuality are interwoven with such a strength that could only come from a person whose world was not black or white, gay or straight but everything in the middle, all at once.

I can still remember the chills I got the first time I read *Four*, which was nearly 10 years ago as I was finishing film school. It was a true moment of clarity. I could see the story so vividly and precisely. Even though I had not written it, I knew that it was somehow my story. I knew that if it was my story, then it must also be the story of countless other people.

Over the six years it took me to make this film, I fell in love with Joe, Abigayle, Dexter and June because they felt real to me. As they move through two separate dates on the night of the Fourth of July, we learn about their struggles. These are characters with contradictions and flaws — strengths and convictions. And just like real people, they are fallible and questionable.

It was my goal not to make a statement about the morality of the characters, but to present them, in all their humanness, for the audience to bear witness. It is my hope that *Four* will raise questions that allow the audience to reflect on their own lives and relationships.

- Joshua Sanchez

# BACKGROUND OF PRODUCTION

*Four* faced all manner of obstacles over the six years it took to make it, but the end result was well worth the wait.

## Discovering “Four”

In April of 2004, Sanchez quietly sat in the Off-Broadway, Vineyard Theatre, to watch a performance of Pulitzer Prize-nominated playwright, Christopher Shinn’s, *Where Do We Live*. Sanchez was captivated by Shinn’s voice. But, it was a chance interview for PS122 Gallery’s now-defunct art web ezine, “art-wurl.org,” that brought the two together some two months later.

Sanchez, then a recent film school grad, was on assignment for the magazine to interview a screenwriter/playwright of his choosing. He chose Shinn. It was while he was researching Shinn to prep for the interview that Sanchez first read Shinn’s 1998 play, *Four*. The story, which Margo Jefferson of the New York Times said delivered, “*small shocks and aches that end in the...pause between despair, resignation and a twinge of hope,*” struck Sanchez as one of the greatest tales of suburban loneliness that he’d ever read. He connected so passionately with it that he immediately wanted to adapt it for the screen.

While interviewing Shinn in his tiny Lower East Side apartment, the two, who are close in age, quickly became friends. Shinn shared with Sanchez the impetus of what led to his writing *Four*.

## Connecting with Christopher Shinn

Shinn graduated from an integrated high school in the mid-90s, at the height of multi-cultural awareness. He became acutely aware of how, not only racial differences, but also economic differences, shaped who people were and how they behaved. As a gay young man living in a typical American town, Shinn did not yet know what parts of himself were acceptable to others, and what was acceptable under what circumstances.

Amidst this multi-cultural shift, for the coming years, Shinn would constantly hear, in casual conversation, racist jokes and hidden messages about women and black people. He became fascinated with the way people were obsessed with the “otherness” of others, manifesting in fears and fantasies. Shinn was deeply hurt by this truth as he realized that prejudices, or limitations, based on one’s background, make relationships difficult. It is through this lens that Shinn ultimately wrote his play, *Four*.

This is a lens that Sanchez understood well as it spoke to the experience he had growing up as a gay Mexican-American kid living in a conservative, religious Houston suburb where he felt no one understood him and where he couldn’t relate to others because, inside, he felt like who he was would be unacceptable to them. He thought that, perhaps, a lot of people felt this way and didn’t have the necessary support around them. Watching movies became his escape, strength and inspiration during that time. He believed there was a chance that *Four* could provide the same for others.

## Optioning “Four”

Sanchez requested to option the rights to *Four* from Shinn in 2004, only to learn that another filmmaker had also fallen in love with the material and had already optioned it. And, this other filmmaker had the option rights for at least another year from that point. However, when that year passed, and the filmmaker decided not to renew the option, Shinn approached Sanchez, whose short films had really impressed the playwright. Shinn encouraged Sanchez to make it “his own.” Impassioned with the opportunity, Sanchez brought a producer on board and, together, they optioned the rights in a deal that took yet another year to complete.

## Inspiration

When Sanchez finally had the option to the play, he began researching material for inspiration. He wanted the film to have the Americana feel of *American Graffiti* with the emotional rawness of Cassavettes’ *Faces*. This led him to the writings of John Cheever, the paintings of Darrel Ellis, the Larry Clark film, *Kids*, the music of Deerhunter and the group art show, “American Standard: Para(Normality) and Everyday Life.”

Sanchez looked to Cheever, his favorite fiction writer, to connect with the character of Joe in *Four*, as Cheever was a closeted gay man who struggled with his desire to be sexually liberated and his fear that such liberation would cost him everything. Like Joe, Cheever led an imprisoned life, living in one world, but existing in another in secret, ultimately never coming to terms with himself. Both Cheever and Joe reminded Sanchez of men he observed as a young man in the suburbs...men he easily could have become.

Ellis, an African-American photographer who died young of AIDS, largely worked with appropriated photographs of his family in Harlem in the 1950s. Ellis would project and re-photograph these photos, distorting the compositions in the process. He would then use the photographs as a basis to create fragmented drawings and paintings of his family, and of African-American life, through the eyes of a gay man; thereby reinterpreting his life experience. Ellis’ work, which is the inspiration behind *Four*’s key art, had a powerful impact on Sanchez, who looked to Ellis for the depth, and potential, of symbolism.

Sanchez also looked to *Kids*, fascinated by how Larry Clark shot the film, with an ability to stay attached to the characters while keeping an eye on the world around them. Sanchez connected with, what he calls, Clark’s “close up two-shot,” which creates an uncomfortable closeness for the audience, forcing them to intimately experience situations with characters. Sanchez found this close shooting style to be effective for *Four* because he wanted the audience to feel like they had been dropped into these characters’ lives for a night.

Sanchez listened to Deerhunter’s *Microcastle* incessantly while adapting *Four*. He found this album to be a meditation on suburban loneliness, laced with tales of agoraphobia and abused, self-medicated kids who just can’t see beyond their desperate isolation. Deerhunter set the tone for *Four*.

In 2002, Gregory Crewdson curated a group art show at the Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York City called, “American Standard: Para(Normality) and Everyday Life.” The show, featuring work of photographers like Stephen Shore and Todd Haynes, depicted a hyper-real vision of the American social landscape, through the intersection of everyday life and theatricality. The work pointed to innocuous American locations, actions and traditions, such as driving around an American town at night, and exposing what makes them weird, freaky or hidden. The exhibition ultimately provided Sanchez with the thematic blueprint for *Four*, piquing his interest in using the nondescript highways and back alleys of a town to create anonymity for the characters, concealing them from their neighbors, their classmates, their co-workers...giving their lives a hidden and transgressive dimension, which Sanchez suspected is real for many Americans.

### Adaptation

With the rights in place and inspiration now guiding him, Sanchez set out the daunting task of adapting Shinn’s play. Sanchez wanted to preserve the essence of the play, building on the character dynamics and situations, which he aimed to use as a starting point for the script. Most important to Sanchez was not to lose the purity of Shinn’s youthful perspective or rich cadence of his language. The writing process took Sanchez about a year to complete.

### Approaching Race

Sanchez is Mexican-American, but being fair-skinned and not being able to speak Spanish (as it was looked down upon by his assimilated peers), he always felt somewhat out of place as a Latino. Therefore, Sanchez is acutely aware of the power and sensitivity of race, which is something that attracted him to *Four* given its frank and unconventional way of addressing it.

Shinn approached race, class and gender in the play, *Four*, though not in a political way, but in a dramatic way. In his adaptation, Sanchez adhered to a similar approach, believing it to be more important to maintain authenticity, rather than to portray a politically correct ideal about what race, within the context of the story, means.

Sanchez has had numerous people in the film industry tell him that no one, here and abroad, wants to watch serious films about people of color. However, Sanchez believes many moviegoers, especially people of color, are starved to see their lives reflected back to them in cinema. Knowing this, Sanchez wanted to show the individuality of the characters and explore how that individuality was constrained, or liberated, given the context of race.

This approach is evident in the character of Abigayle. Not only is she trapped within the damaged dynamic of her family, but she is also isolated as a young African-American woman living in a middle class white suburb. The honesty of race, in this context, pertains to the conflict she faces in simply trying to fit in. It’s telling that she chooses to engage with Dexter, a hip-hop listening “has-been” who also has issues about fitting in the mixed-race neighborhood in which he lives.

Sanchez was mindful of the hyper-sexualization of African-American men in film and, given the political sensitivities around the subject of race, expected some people to feel uncomfortable about the character of Joe, viewing the character with pre-conceived notions or looking down upon him as an “emasculated” black man. Sanchez chose to address this head-on by showing Joe in the full conflict that he’s up against in his life -- that of a conflicted man who hasn’t come to grips with who he is--he tries his best to live a lie, but in the process, damages not only his own life, but also the lives of his family members.

Joe’s duplicity has taken its toll, and for a young black family living the “American Dream,” the depth of this toll goes further when considering the implications and dynamics around them. They’ve achieved a certain level of “success” as upwardly mobile blacks -- a nice suburban home, a nice car, nice clothes, a good school for Abigayle, and mostly, respect...which Joe prizes above all. If they were to acknowledge the brokenness of their home, it would shatter everything they have come to believe about their own lives...they could lose everything. Sanchez alludes to this brokenness through the character of Abigayle’s Mother, who is a physical manifestation of the damaged soul of the family. Her hidden existence suggests that, what passes on the surface as this black family as “living the dream,” is really a carefully concealed nightmare.

Ultimately, Sanchez chose to write about the *subtle implications* of race rather than the *obvious consequences* of it, which he found to be more unsettling, powerful, and profound.

### Approaching [Homo]sexuality

Each character in the story uses sex to experience a connection with, not only other people, but also with themselves. Their sexual explorations are raw expressions of the search for emotional fulfillment that they lack in their everyday lives.

Sanchez situated both Joe and June at a crossroads in their lives, where they can either come to terms with who they are or they can deny it. Sanchez wanted to show the challenge that many gay men face – the sense of feeling unsafe, the potential for rejection by loved ones and the fear of becoming a social outcast. Though Joe and June are in different stages in life, they are at the same place, on this night, in their lives.

Sanchez believes that past experiences help shape sexual identity, but for gays, the secrecy, fear and taboo around homosexuality can make forming a sexual identity quite painful and difficult.

Intergenerational experiences and relationships are prevalent in the gay community with an older man, who had no one to turn to when he was June’s age, now in a position to provide guidance, experience and support to a young person. Conversely, a young man of June’s age, full of inexperience and trepidation, seeks out an older man for a safe and secure place to be himself and explore his developing sexual identity. Sanchez wanted to portray the necessity of this experience, and its value, for both Joe and June.

Sanchez wanted to tell the story of how gay older men, even if they never come out of the closet, not only can mentor younger gay men, but also can live vicariously through them. These older men can seek to guide the younger men into loving, accepting and being themselves or show them the risk of succumbing to the loneliness and despair that the older men have accepted for themselves. While intergenerational relationships between heterosexual couples have been explored in films such as *The Reader*, *An Education*, *The Lover* (1992) and *Notes on a Scandal*, the truth of these relationships in the gay community is largely unrecognized in film.

### Approaching God & Religion

Sanchez grew up in the Southern Baptist church which heavily influenced his life at home and in his community. As a young gay kid who skateboarded and listened to punk music, he often felt alienated, and the church became a source of much suffering and pain. He was left to reconcile his own sense of morality and sexuality, amid a backdrop of rejection and judgment. So he kept God at arms length and looked at religion with incredibly suspicious eyes. This relationship/experience with God and religion, or lack thereof, is one Sanchez believes many people [in particular, Americans] have -- regardless to whether or not they are believers -- as do the characters in *Four*, who have questions about religion and faith, and are struggling to figure out how they feel about it. But, as Sanchez says, "...*there are no easy answers.*"

The experience of being empty, lonely, conflicted -- and surrounded by pressure to conform and "turn to God" -- was one that Sanchez wanted to remain truthful to in *Four*, where God is ever present in the story because He is largely absent in the characters lives...even when they acknowledge Him.

### False Starts Before Take-Off

Between the time Sanchez had optioned the play and the fall of 2009, small gains were made toward making the film, but ultimately, those gains fell short. In 2006, confident that he was going to make the film, Sanchez partnered with two producers, was able to hire a casting director and left his job, becoming a freelance web designer in order to focus on the film. When 2007 rolled around, the project was accepted into the Tribeca All Access program, allowing him the opportunity to pitch the film to financiers. A year later, he participated in IFP's international co-production market, No Borders, and began pre-emptively scouting Hartford locations. However, Sanchez kept coming up empty-handed.

By this time, he had parted ways with his two producers who opted to move onto other projects. It was in this lonely period of uncertainty, in 2008, that he met Christine Giorgio, whom he would likely not have met if he had not quit his job back in 2006.

Giorgio had hired Sanchez to design the website of the first feature film she produced, *The Big-Shot Caller*. It was a year later, in 2009, that Sanchez told her about *Four*, wondering if she would be interested in producing it. Giorgio was immediately drawn to the story and, after reading the script, she committed to the project. And with a new producer, and renewed commitment, Sanchez moved forward.

### "Kickstarting" Investment with Neil LaBute

In 2009, Sanchez and Giorgio read a blurb in the New York Times about a start-up that provided a platform for people to raise money for their creative endeavors using crowdfunding. The two were strategizing creative ways to raise capital for the film, so they sought out an invitation to put *Four* on "Kickstarter," though they were skeptical of their prospects, given that no real precedent had yet been set. However, after an aggressive campaign, the duo had successfully raised \$19,325 in development funds while growing the film's audience in the process. *Four* had become one of the first film projects on the now wildly popular site.

It was during their Kickstarter campaign that serendipity stepped in. At the time, Shinn, who was friends with fellow playwright and filmmaker, Neil LaBute, told LaBute about the project. LaBute was excited about the filmic version of the play and wanted to be involved right away. Along with a generous Kickstarter pledge, LaBute also provided advice, feedback and encouragement throughout the film's process. As a Kickstarter reward, he even presented a private staged reading of two one-act plays, which he wrote just for the occasion. The performance led to even more contributions.

Using their newfound momentum, Giorgio and Sanchez were able to raise the rest of their production budget through a few small benefit events they hosted and from a few private investors. And, after a year-and-a-half, they had finally raised enough money to make the film and shoot under the SAG Ultra Low Budget Agreement.

### Locations

Sanchez was determined to shoot the film in Shinn's native Hartford ever since he first envisioned *Four* as a film. Giorgio, supportive of his vision, had committed to shooting in the area. She even organized pre-production to begin in Hartford, but when challenged with the cost of a far-away location shoot, given the entire crew was NYC based, she and Sanchez had to scrap the Hartford plans.

Giorgio suggested shooting in her native Long Island, NY and also around Brooklyn, NY. Sanchez agreed with the locations believing that, by happy accident, they added a different dimension to the film. These new locations allowed Hartford to become any American town or suburb, which opened up the story for not only Sanchez personally, but also for a broader audience of people who could now see their own town represented in the story.

Shooting in New York turned out to be a great budgetary decision as well. They used Giorgio's parents' home for both June and Abigayle's home, for free. They used Giorgio's mother's car for Joe's car, also at no cost. And, they were able to get local businesses on board at reasonable rates. Overall, the crew shot in all real locations, with the exception of one day which shot on a sound stage [Dexter's room].



E.J. Bonilla in *FOUR*  
Photo by Max Dworkin

## **Camera**

Sanchez shot the film on the Arri Alexa camera. His director of photography, Gregg Conde, had an idea to shoot the film using vintage, Super Baltar lenses, which hadn't been used much since the 1970s. Giorgio was able to get a great deal on the lenses because the vendor was curious to know how they would perform with the Alexa. The end result was a very wet and milky look that lent warmth and atmosphere to the nighttime shots, which Sanchez loved.

Sanchez and Conde shot on "Log C" mode, which afforded Sanchez a lot of latitude in the coloring process. Another advantage to the Alexa was the easy transition into the post-production process because the footage didn't require any processing. However, they were unable to shoot in the full uncompressed format because it cost more than they could afford.

## **Production Design**

Sanchez gained access to Darrel Ellis' work, and was allowed to use some of it in the film, which he really wanted to bring to public light, because, Executive Producer, Allen Frame, advises Ellis' estate. Sanchez had a long-time working relationship with Production Designer, Liza Donatelli. He worked with her to deliberately place Ellis' work in Joe's house to echo the experience that his family was having in the home. Beyond Joe's house, Donatelli worked with her crew to design a simple and organized look to the other environments, creating an intentionally generic look. She strove to have these environments mirror the characters, who seek to fit in, rather than to make any aspect of their otherness visible to those around them.

## **Directing the Actors**

As far as working with the actors, Sanchez opted to steer away from the script for as long as possible. Rather, he sought to get to know the actors as well as possible, to get a sense of who they are, as people, and what they would bring to the role. The final thing he would do with them was run lines, preferring to just block scenes out.

Sanchez is drawn to the spontaneity and freshness from the actors' performances that comes from being on set. He encouraged the actors to do a lot of pre-production internal character work so that when they got on set, his job was simply to provide a safe space for them to fully explore their characters.

## Staying Truthful

Sanchez was tugged in many different directions on the script and on how he should shoot the film. Yet, whenever he went against his instincts and surrendered to something he didn't fully believe in, it turned out to be a mistake. This led him to believe that directors should always trust their gut with creative decisions. After all, it's their job to protect the vision of the film. Ultimately, he believed that, even if the director's vision makes people uncomfortable, the end result is always the thing that matters the most.

The area of the story where Sanchez was tugged the most was on the question of the morality of forty-something Joe following through on his sexual dalliance with the teenage June. Yet Sanchez stuck to the uncomfortable dynamics of their encounter, noting that June actually held the power in the situation because the young man *wanted* to be there because it was a way for him to explore his sexuality in the context of his surroundings.

Sanchez was careful not to glorify Joe and June's encounter (as well as Dexter and Abigayle's) with any glam or sex appeal. Given the sexual encounters had little to do with sex itself, in and of itself, Sanchez opted to show the encounter the way it would likely really happen – awkward, clumsy and rushed -- for an elusive climax that is ultimately fleeting and anti-climactic.

Sanchez was aware of the controversial dynamic of Joe and June's relationship and how it would challenge people's perceptions about male sexuality, gay male sexuality (in which many young gay men are often socialized to become themselves through such intergenerational experiences) and the sexuality of young people. These are all taboo, touchy subjects in the American ether. But given that these things *do happen*, Sanchez wanted to present it truthfully and without judgment.

## Finishing Funds and Post

After a 19-day shoot, Sanchez was ready to begin post. However, Sanchez and Giorgio realized that they would not be able to finish post-production without raising more money. They were in need of a grant in order to move forward, and as luck would have it, they got one when the film was awarded the prestigious Jerome Foundation Film and Video grant.

With the budget rounded out, Sanchez embarked on post. Editor, David Gutnik, created an assembly in which the audience was caught between the two couples, and when shifting between them, left to wonder what the other couple is doing when they are not on screen. Sound Designer, Michael McMenomy, repeatedly watched the film with Sanchez to form a certain atmosphere and space, slightly heightening the film's recorded sound, adding new elements to round out the feeling of the film.

A key aspect to tying the film together was music. Giorgio's girlfriend had introduced the team to a former classmate and frequent Rufus Wainwright collaborator, Bryan Senti. Senti created a score that added to the film's sweet melancholy and the thick feeling of the warm summer night. Senti's score has been called "sentimental," "sinister," and "wonderfully evocative."

Working symbiotically with Senti's composition was Music Supervisor, T. Cole Rachel. Rachel is a long-time music writer who was able to bring the film to the attention of some notable bands. The song "Town Business" by Das Racist appears in the film along with "Altos Lugares" by High Places, "Inspiration" by Dri, "Badlands" by Say My Name and the title track, "My Room" by Caveman.

Throughout the edit, Giorgio organized several test screenings with different audiences, gauging it with different people to see how they reacted to it, where they laughed and where they were uncomfortable. The process served to help Sanchez, who wanted to find the core rhythm of Shinn's work while maintaining as much of the material's new cinematic structure as possible.

## An American Film

Sanchez laced *Four* with conflicted American values. On the night when Americans are celebrating independence and individual freedom, Sanchez wanted to show his characters as being anything but free -- a direct contradiction of living in the "land of the free. The film suggests that while conformity may lead to social acceptance, the price of that acceptance can be internal torment.

As Americans, Sanchez believes we are taught to seek out fulfillment in material ways, bombarded to think that what's on the surface is enough to make us happy whether it be a great body, expensive car, gorgeous girlfriend, etc. Sanchez's characters reject this kind of thinking, but would rather live by it that be excluded from it. Sanchez suspects many Americans do the same.

For Sanchez, who thinks of himself as an "American artist," *Four* speaks to a dying American vitality experienced by his friends and neighbors who were too lost in their own longing and desire to transcend unhealthy life situations. And through its exploration of the relationships of people to their environment, the film also tells the tale of how an endless summertime suburban existence can propel that longing and desire. "*This is the America I grew up in.*"

## Audience Takeaway

Ultimately, Sanchez wanted the audience to leave the film questioning why these characters are who they are, and to embark on an internal analysis of "*why we really do the things we do.*" He wants to challenge the audience to think about their own lives in unexpected ways. He also wanted the audience to feel like the film spoke, and related, to an aspect of their own inner lives by addressing to the fact that we all carry secrets, but noting that it's how we deal/don't deal with those hidden parts of ourselves that sets us apart.

Sanchez knows that, often, people have a hard time articulating what their soul is feeling, but through movies, people see something that reflects themselves -- something they may have a hard time articulating about themselves. Sanchez wants *Four* to be a movie that does that, just as his favorite films are the ones that left him feeling like he had just watched his own story on screen. And when someone connects with a movie in this way, Sanchez believes that the film can affect change in a person's life. "*[Four is] a very important, provocative story that has a universal quality to it.*"



Wendell Pierce and Yolonda Ross in *FOUR*  
Photo by Cynthia Bittenfield

# CASTING PROCESS

Sanchez's process in making films starts always, and first and foremost, in the casting process. "Casting is everything." He believes that it not only sets the precedent for his directing capabilities, but also that if the right actors inhabit the roles, then a lot of his work would be just steering the ship. However, the characters are not easily defined in *Four*, which made casting quite challenging because Sanchez knew that he had to find actors with the depth, talent and commitment to really live within the characters.

While he was open to casting non-actors, ultimately Sanchez and Giorgio decided to cast the film more traditionally. They decided to work with casting director, Mary Clay Boland, who orchestrated a number of wide casting calls in New York City and Hartford in a process that lasted almost a year.

## "Joe"

The most challenging role to cast was that of Joe because he was a very complex character, which could be seen as controversial and divisive. He had to be confident, charismatic, seductive, repulsive, buried, projective and empathetic, but never stray away from being human. So, the team wanted to anchor that role in someone who was well-known and looking for a challenge.

Wendell Pierce was high on Sanchez's list of actors whom he wanted to work with because he felt Pierce was a real untapped talent for dramatic, leading characters such as Joe. Serendipity would strike again when Sanchez learned that Pierce had previously seen a production of Shinn's play, *Four*, and that he [Pierce] 'got' it." The role also offered Pierce an opportunity to push his capabilities as an actor. And, as an actor, he was willing to push Sanchez to bring more out of Joe and more out of the story. The team lucked out that Pierce was available, that he wanted to do it and that he was willing to do it for very little money.

## "June"

The character of June needed to be played with a sort of hungry reciprocity to Joe's big brother/sexual menace. June is brooding, petulant, indecisive and anxious, all at once. The actor who played him would have to seamlessly transition from reticent indecision to seductive certainty over the course of the film. It was a role that demanded a lot.

Sanchez knew right away, when Emory Cohen auditioned, that the young Cohen met that demand. Cohen was able to temper longing with self-loathing and portray June's youthful sexuality with accuracy, conveying both June's internal desire to have this experience with Joe, along with his internal disgust and discomfort as he allows himself to go through with it.

## "Abigayle"

The character of Abigayle was the embodiment of the idea, in Shinn's play, that family relationships can hide and shame difficult truths into all out habitual denial because family situations are often predicated upon a certain secrecy. In spite of Abigayle's awakening to the truth in the course of the story, she nevertheless chooses to maintain the denial. She also feels tremendous pain and conflict, as do most people who don't want to cause pain to a family member or disrupt the sanctity of the family dynamic when a family member is struggling with something that may lead to this result. Therefore, the actress who played her had to be strong, had to carry the enormous weight that Abigayle bears and had to connect with Abigayle on multiple levels.

Aja Naomi King embodied all that Abigayle was and more. She was fresh out of drama school when she auditioned for the role in Hartford, CT, nearly a full year before Sanchez had the money he needed to make the film. Yet, even after a year had passed, King's audition stuck in his mind. In fact, since the day she auditioned, she had always been his first choice to play Abigayle due to the intelligence and restraint she brought to the character. She had a "wise beyond her years" quality to which Sanchez was really drawn. So, Sanchez brought King back to read with Bonilla and, after witnessing the chemistry between them, he knew he had found Abigayle.

## "Dexter"

The character of Dexter provided charismatic comedic relief in *Four*. The character was very funny in Shinn's play and Sanchez wanted to stay true to that humor. In order to pull this off, Sanchez knew he needed an actor who was both lively and lighthearted in personality. He found that person when E.J. Bonilla auditioned.

Bonilla was an amazing surprise as Sanchez and Giorgio were unsure as to how Dexter would ultimately come together. But Bonilla had a formed vision for who Dexter was and brought him to life with a mix of silliness and seduction. He also brought a hint of empathy and poignance to Dexter, capturing the uncertainty and vulnerability of a young man whose identity is tied to days which are now long behind him.

## "Abigayle's Mother"

The character of Abigayle's Mother required an actress whose presence could be so strong that it would trump any dialogue that the character could possibly say. Robert De Niro conveyed such presence in films like *Jackie Brown* and *Godfather II* in which his characters simply captivate the audience through the quiet power of just "being."

Giorgio met Yolonda Ross through her girlfriend, as they had been friends for nearly 10 years. Ross' body of work was a testament to the presence she brings to the screen. Giorgio approached Sanchez about Ross and Sanchez was immediately impressed by her work, her understanding of the gravity of the character and her enthusiasm about working with fellow Treme actor, Wendell Pierce.

# CAST

## WENDELL PIERCE (JOE)

Wendell Pierce is highly respected in the film community, evidenced by the extensive list of talented directors who've sought to work with him, including Woody Allen, Spike Lee, Brian De Palma, Barry Levinson, Sidney Lumet and Taylor Hackford. Hailed for his portrayal of Detective Bunk Moreland on five critically acclaimed seasons of *The Wire*, Pierce currently plays hustling trombonist, Antoine Bataste, on *Treme*, which will complete its four-year series run this year.

Pierce recently starred in Sony's hit summer comedy, *Horrible Bosses*, the Jason Statham action pic, *Parker*, and was featured in *Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn*. This year will also see the release of *Else & Fred*, in which he was part of an ensemble cast led by Christopher Plummer and Shirley MaLaine.

Pierce's large body of work also includes films such as *Ray*, *Brown Sugar*, *Sleepers*, *Waiting to Exhale*, *It Could Happen To You*, *Malcolm X*, *Husbands and Wives*, *Casualties of War*, *Family Business* and *The Money Pit*. He is a 2008 NAACP Image Award winner, a Women's Image Network "WIN" Award winner, an Obie Award winner and a five-time Los Angeles Emmy Award winner.

A native of New Orleans, Pierce has been very active in rebuilding the community post-Hurricane Katrina, a storm which greatly impacted his family. He formed the non-profit, Pontchartrain Park Community Development Corp, to rebuild 500 affordable, environmentally friendly homes that preserved the community character and enabled longtime residents return home. This effort was featured on CNN in the documentary, *New Orleans Rising*, with Soledad O'Brien.

Pierce recently invested in a neighborhood community grocery store, Sterling Farms, bringing fresh food and transportation to people, who lack access to these necessities, in New Orleans. He is currently filming *The Michael J. Fox Show* for NBC.

## EMORY COHEN (JUNE)

Emory Cohen was born and raised in New York City. After graduating from high school, and the completion of three feature films, he was given a full scholarship to the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Cohen's first notable role was in Antonio Campos' *Afterschool*, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. He followed this work with Michael Imperolii's *The Hungry Ghosts*, Andrew Brotzman's *Nor'Easter* and Derek Cianfrance's *The Place Beyond the Pines*, for which Cohen has received much critical acclaim for his portrayal of Academy Award Nominee, Bradley Cooper's, son.

Cohen played Deborah Messing's son for two seasons on NBC's *Smash*. He recently wrapped production on Aron Gaudet's *Beneath the Harvest Sky*. He still studies his craft with longtime coaches Maggie Flanigan and Victor Villar-Hauser.

## AJA NAOMI KING (ABIGAYLE)

Aja Naomi King has an extensive theatre background, having appeared in nearly 20 productions. She earned her BFA in acting at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Shortly thereafter, King was accepted into, and graduated from, the prestigious Yale School of Drama, which also produced talents such as Sigourney Weaver, Meryl Streep, Angela Bassett and Paul Giamatti.

After getting her start in film through several short films, she appeared on the small screen in CBS's *Blue Bloods* and *Persons of Interest* before landing a plum role in Sony Pictures Classics' *Damsels in Distress*. This led to her being cast in one of the lead roles, alongside Mamie Gummer, as a surgical intern, on the CW's drama *Emily Owens, M.D.* King can next be seen in the Eddy Duran thriller, *36 Saints*, and the Amazon original series *Onion News Network*.

## E.J. BONILLA (DEXTER)

Bonilla got his first big break playing Rafe Rivera on *Guiding Light*, for which he earned a 2009 Daytime Emmy Award Nomination. 2009 also saw Bonilla starring in his first feature film, *Don't Let Me Drown*, which was nominated for the Grand Jury Award at the Sundance Film Festival. In 2010, Bonilla starred in *The Mortician*, co-starring Method Man, and Nick Ozeki's *Mamitas*, which won Best Narrative Feature at the Urbanworld Film Festival. Bonilla was then featured in Victoria Mahoney's *Yelling to the Sky* starring Zoë Kravitz and Tim Blake Nelson, and went on to star in the indie romantic drama, *Musical Chairs*, directed by Susan Seidelman.

His television credits include *Bored to Death*, *Cold Case*, *Blue Bloods*, *Law & Order*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, ABC's *Revenge*, and the Showtime hit show, *Shameless*, with William H. Macy.

Bonilla, who was nominated for a Imagen Award for his work in *Four*, has participated, as an actor, at the Sundance Filmmakers Lab on three occasions, workshopping scenes with promising young directors. He can next be seen in Henry Barrial's *The House the Jack Built*, which premiered at the 2013 Los Angeles Film Festival.

## YOLONDA ROSS (ABIGAYLE'S MOTHER)

Yolonda Ross moved from Omaha, Nebraska to New York in the early 1990's, forming a jazz trio off her roommate's encouragement. Finding that music helped her tap into emotions she hadn't been able to access before, she discovered her affinity for acting. Ross made her feature film debut as the lead in the critically acclaimed HBO feature *Stranger Inside*, directed by Cheryl Dunye. The film premiered at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival and won the Audience Award at Outfest, the San Francisco Film Festival and the Philadelphia Film Festival. Ross' performance earned her an IFP Gotham Award, an Independent Spirit Award Nomination and an Outfest Screen Idol Nomination. Her portfolio of work includes films like *Shortbus*, *I'm Not There*, *Yelling to the Sky*, *Choke*, and HBO's *Phil Spector*. After recently wrapping a season on *Treme*, Ross can be seen in the upcoming John Sayles film, *Go for Sisters*.

## CREW

### JOSHUA SANCHEZ (Writer/Director)

A native of suburban Houston, Texas, Joshua Sanchez earned his B.F.A. from the University of Texas in Austin. In 2004, he obtained his M.F.A. from Columbia University, earning the HBO Films Young Producer's Development Award in the process. Sanchez's first foray into filmmaking was inspired by the Dogma films of the 90's and the loose structure and camera work of John Cassavettes, though he credits Rainer Werner Fassbinder as his favorite director given the heart, soul and truth represented in his characters' lives. Sanchez taught himself to play the guitar listening to Elliot Smith albums and believes most filmmakers are failed musicians. He was selected to participate in the IFP No Borders Co-Production Market and the Tribeca Institute's All Access Program. Sanchez lives in Brooklyn, NY. His films have screened at festivals all over the world.

### CHRISTINE GIORGIO (Producer)

Christine Giorgio has produced six short films including Teddy Award winner Daniel Stedman's, *Mother*, and Tomer Gendler's, *Underwear*, which received the Panavision Filmmaker Grant and won Best Short at the Savannah Film and Video Festival. In 2009, Giorgio produced the feature film, *The Big-Shot Caller*, which was an official selection of the Sedona, Bermuda and New York Latino Film Festivals. Giorgio most recently produced the documentary *The Origin of Sound* for director Tomer Gendler and famed Austin, Texas musician, Bill Baird. She earned her B.A. from Boston University.

### CHRISTOPHER SHINN (Playwright)

Christopher Shinn's plays have been produced all over the world, including at the Royal Court Theatre, the Lincoln Center Theater, Playwrights Horizons, the Vineyard Theatre, South Coast Rep, the American Airline Theatre Soho Theatre. He is the winner of an OBIE in Playwriting, a Guggenheim Fellowship in Playwriting, a TMA Award for Best New Play, a Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Play and a South Bank Show Award for Theatre. Shinn is also a Pulitzer Prize finalist and an Olivier Award nominee who has received grants from the NEA/TCG Residency Program, the Peter S. Reed Foundation and the Robert S. Chesley Award. Shinn teaches playwriting at the New School for Drama.

### ALLEN FRAME (Executive Producer)

Allen Frame is a renowned photographer, filmmaker and educator. Co-founder of contemporary art center, Delta Axis, co-creator of the epic AIDS slide show, Electric Blanket, which toured internationally, and curator of exhibitions for artists such as Darrel Ellis and Luigi Di Sarro, Frame has received grants from organizations such as the Penny McCall Foundation, the Peter Reed Foundation and CEC Artslink. A Mississippi native and Harvard graduate, Frame's work has been in exhibitions all over the world and published in the book, *Detour*. Frame lives and teaches photography in NYC, at institutions such as the International Center of Photography. He is represented by Gitterman Gallery.

### NEIL LABUTE (Executive Producer)

Prolific film director and playwright, Neil LaBute, has long been praised for his work, driven by characters who expose the rarely spoken-of side of human nature, noted in films like *In the Company of Men*, *Your Friends and Neighbors* and *Lakeview Terrace*, and in plays like "Fat Pig," "Reasons to Be Pretty" and "Some Girl(s)." LaBute's work has been awarded by the New York Critics Circle and the Sundance Film Festival, and has been published by New Yorker, The New York Times, Harper's Bazaar and Grove/Atlantic. He will be helming his first television show this fall titled, *Full Circle*.

### GREG CONDE (Director of Photography)

Gregg Conde is an image-maker and visual storyteller who has lensed dozens of shorts and four features. Prior to earning his M.F.A. in Film Directing from Columbia University, he co-founded the multi-disciplinary creative collective, *think/feel*.

### LIZA DONATELLI (Production Designer)

A graduate of the University of Texas Journalism program, Liza Donatelli's education in independent film began at the Dobie Theater in Austin. Her art department credits range from *The Departed*, *Mildred Pierce* to *The Place Beyond the Pines*. *Four* is her first Production Designer credit.

### DAVID GUTNIK (Editor)

David Gutnik's film work has been featured at international film festivals and on outlets such as MTV, CNN, VanityFair.com, Huffington Post and The Sundance Channel. He earned his M.F.A. in film at Columbia University and received his B.S. at Georgetown. He is currently developing his first feature film.

### BRYAN SENTI (Composer)

Bryan Senti is a composer, conductor and producer. Senti has frequently collaborated with Rufus Wainwright on works including the opera, "Prima Donna," the Robert Wilson joint effort, "Sonnets," and the album "Out of the Game." Today, the Yale School of Music graduate scores films, produces artists and co-owns music production company, Found Objects.

### MARY CLAY BOLAND (Casting Director)

Getting her start on *The Sopranos*, Mary Clay Boland went on to win two Emmy Awards for her work on *As the World Turns*, where she served as casting director for eight years. She most recently worked on the project *Life Coach* for AMC television, starring Cheri Oteri, the feature comedy, *Your Pretty Little Face Is Going to Hell*, for Adult Swim and the indie feature, *Reservoir*.

### T. COLE RACHEL (Music Supervisor)

T. Cole Rachel is a music writer and a contributing editor for Stereogum whose work has appeared in outlets such as Interview, The New York Times Magazine and The Fader. His books include "Surviving the Moment of Impact" and "Bend Don't Shatter." Though originally from Oklahoma, Rachel is a long time New Yorker who lives in Brooklyn and collects ceramic cats.

# ACTOR QUOTES

## Wendell Pierce

“...people would never expect me to do that type of role....the man [Joe] is troubled. All of his awful choices come from the place of a man who’s damaged. Drama is always about conflict and the personal conflict within [Joe] is something that I thought would be a challenge for me [as an actor]...to show that part of human nature and point it out. That’s the role of art.”

“It’s about truth and authenticity and...the cost that you have to pay to maintain secrets and live an un-authentic life. Society has socialized him [Joe] to believe that he should be ashamed of who he is...”

“I expect people to say, ‘Why did Wendell participate in the emasculating of a black man?’ The real question is, ‘Why do you feel as though that’s emasculating?’...We always see abhorrent behavior and say, ‘Why?’ but then we get mad when somebody tries to answer. ‘[Answering] why?’ does not say I’m validating behavior.”

“...for me, it was always a study of human behavior because if we just demonize it, it becomes unreal. ‘He’s just evil. He’s evil incarnate.’ No, actually he’s human, and human beings actually think this way, behave this way, and do these things.”

“People should be a little upset, a little uncomfortable, in this movie. You shouldn’t be comfortable with all the choices...people make.”

## E.J. Bonilla

“What better day than independence day to claim your independence, your individuality...every one of these characters, for that night, is there to either venture out and become either what they really are, what they would like to be or what they would rather be.”

“He [Dexter] doesn’t have a very high opinion of himself, and when people don’t know their own self-worth, they don’t strive for what they could have.”

“He [Dexter] doesn’t have a lot of words to say. He’s not intriguing her [Abigayle] with his conversation...with his knowledge of anything...he thinks she’s beautiful in more ways that he can say...she thinks he’s funny. And, when someone makes you laugh that’s all that matters sometimes.”

## Emory Cohen

“[What drew me to June was] the line in the movie theater, when Wendell’s character [Joe] asks me, ‘Why aren’t you out?’ And I say...‘Cause I’m...an only son and that I know my mom wants grandkids.’ And I thought it was just a simple, painful and...beautiful way of saying, ‘This is why I hate myself.’”

“[June] has an intense depth of feeling, but doesn’t want anyone to know that he’s feeling anything.”

“We’re a unit making a film. Our sound guy just hopped in the trunk of a moving car to try to get some audio. You know that’s commitment...This film is what independent filmmaking really is about.”

## Aja Naomi King

“...I think at one point in time they [Abigayle and Joe] were extremely close...when she was growing up her father was trying to help her cope with that and he started getting further and further away, as he’s pursuing his own demons, and they can’t reach each other.”

“She’s [Abigayle] a good girl, but she does create an outlet for herself. She seeks him [Dexter] out in order to find a distraction to the glass house that she lives inside of.”

# CREW QUOTES

## Joshua Sanchez

“It’s dealing with...a very common gay male experience that hasn’t been very widely seen or explored, especially in movies.”

## Christine Giorgio

“Every character in this film is a minority. I think it’s important to bring minority characters written with such complexity and humanity to the screen.”

## Christopher Shinn

“[June is someone] who wants to fit in and...feels he doesn’t, not just because he’s gay, but...in general...which is how I think a lot of people feel...What he seeks out is also someone who doesn’t fit in.”

“Joe’s enthusiasm for America probably [is him]...wanting to be a part of something that’s big and powerful and successful rather than being part of something that’s oppressed and weak and suffering.”

# PRESS QUOTES

*“The film’s unblinking, nonjudgmental focus...and its extremely articulate and pointed dialogue, put it squarely in the post-New Queer Cinema tradition.”*

Stephen Holden, *The New York Times* 7/26/12

*“Sanchez’s script displays a veneer of compassion for the characters’ various emotional dilemmas... that’s undercut by a barely concealed mix of erotic yearning and peril.”*

Justin Lowe, *Hollywood Reporter* 7/31/12

*“This is a far cry from anything we’ve seen from [Wendell] Pierce in the past, which could be unsettling to some.”*

Jasmin Tiggett, *IndieWire* 6/13/12

*“Sanchez [brushes] up against his characters’ racial assumptions, implicit class prejudices, and poignant emotional blind spots.”*

*“Pierce [plays] a particularly memorable portrait of a man whose only escape from guilt and shame lies in trying to save another drowning soul.”*

Matthew Connolly, *Film Comment* 8/14/12

*“‘Four’ is a clever film in which desire and disinterest court each other...powerfully shot, it’s a film that sticks in the mind for days afterwards.”*

*“...highlights the pain and neglect that closeted gay men inflict upon their sham families. Four is controversial in its suggestion that gay relationships and family life struggle to interplay successfully.”*

Jack Cullen, *So So Gay* 3/27/13

*“‘Four’ boasts a quartet of brilliant performances—with Pierce in particular a standout—and a seductive rhythm that will rivet viewers as the characters come to terms with themselves and each other.”*

Gary Kramer, *Bay Times* 5/31/12

*“[Sanchez] captured the pain of youthful insecurity and the nature of socially imposed self-hatred....”*

*“Sanchez has crafted a thoughtful and timely work, tackling topics that most people are uncomfortable even acknowledging.”*

Robert Bell, *Exclaim* 5/21/13

*“Hazily composed, even dreamlike...‘Four’ glides past truck stops, bars, and basketball courts; it shimmers somewhere in the space between who we are and who we pretend to be.”*

*“[Wendell Pierce] bravely finds the poignant self-deception in an otherwise villainous character...tonguing the word ‘faggot’ with evident selfloathing...no film I’ve seen has so closely approximated the sting one feels on being the word’s target, the receiving end of the dagger.”*

Matt Brennan, *IndieWire* 10/23/12

*“‘Four’ is...about being disconnected from the world and dealing with your own identity...”*

*“...the film stands firmly on Wendell Pierce’s broad shoulders. He anchors the film with a maturity and sensitivity that audiences aren’t used to seeing from him...many in the African-American community will be uncomfortable with [his] depiction...”*

Curtis Caesar John, *Limité Magazine* 7/27/12

*“Gregg Conde’s camera work, with its subtle movement and surfeit of close-ups,...creates an atmosphere that both protects the ensemble of characters and discloses their inner feelings and conflicts.”*

*“After this impressive directorial debut, there’s little doubt that Joshua Sanchez has a promising career ahead of him.”*

Beatriz Leal Riesco, *OkayAfrica* 2/20/13

*“The tight writing and efficient direction showcase a superb cast.”*

*“[Wendell] Pierce and [Emory] Cohen bring to a life a relationship not seen before on film....[Aja Naomi] King...is whip-smart and sure to have quite a career for herself.”*

Vincent Smetana, *Cinesnatch* 6/20/12

*“Mr. Sanchez powerfully portrays intimacy, and extracts magnificent performances from his actors... one of the must see films of the year.”*

Taiyo Okamoto, *COOL Magazine* 7/26/12



Emory Cohen in *FOUR*  
Photo by Max Dworkin

# CREDITS

## CAST

Dexter  
June  
Abigayle  
Joe  
Todd  
Abigayle's Mother  
June's Mother  
Bartender

## CREW

Writer/Director  
Producers  
  
Executive Producers  
  
Associate Producers  
  
Director of Photography  
Production Designer  
Editor  
Composer  
Casting Director  
Supervising Sound Editor/Recording Mixer  
Music Supervisor

Music by

Artwork Provided by

First Assistant Director  
Second Assistant Director  
Unit Production Manager  
First Assistant Camera  
Second Assistant Camera  
Camera Assistant  
Camera Production Assistant  
D.I.T.

E.J. Bonilla  
Emory Cohen  
Aja Naomi King  
Wendell Pierce  
Liam Benzvi  
Yolonda Ross  
Kathryn Meisel  
T. Cole Rachel

Joshua Sanchez  
Christine Giorgio  
Wendell Pierce  
Allen Frame  
Neil LaBute  
Andrew J.D. Hauser  
Kishori Rajan  
Gregg Conde  
Liza Donatelli  
David Gutnik  
Bryan Senti  
Mary Clay Boland  
Michael McMenemy  
T. Cole Rachel

Caveman  
Das Racist  
High Places  
Dri  
Say My Name

Eva T. Massarani  
Cordelia Allen Jensen  
Walter Naegle and the  
Estate of Darrel Ellis  
Derrick Kardos  
Erik Knight  
Amy Dolahkia  
Juan Mazara  
Sofia Voltin  
Ronald Jarrett  
Jason Chua  
Nora Schaffer  
Jo Barker  
Philippa White  
David Figueroa

Gaffer  
Best Boy Electric  
Key Grip  
Best Boy Grip  
Grip/Electric

Script Supervisor  
Sound Recordist  
Editing Supervision  
DI Facility  
Colorist

Wardrobe Supervisor  
Make-Up Artist  
Additional Make-Up Artist  
Assistant Hair / Make-Up

Art Director  
Property Master  
Art Production Assistants

Key Production Assistant  
Production Assistants

2nd Unit Photography

Production Stills

Process Trailer

Catering  
Craft Services

Joseph Alvarado  
Eric Fahy  
Brian Yankou  
Kevin Yankou  
Abbott Segal  
Salvatore Gandolfo  
Daniel April  
Julian Wellbery  
Rachel Gillson  
Dan Bricker  
Marnee Meyer  
Nice Dissolve  
Alex Craig

Hannah Kittell  
Jessica Jade Jacob  
Emily Gee  
Amanda Hickey  
Oz Rodriguez  
Melissa Vento

Tara Pavoni  
Jeni Harden  
Tynan Costin  
Ruta George  
Caryn Cueto  
Sara Monahan  
David Papiasvili  
Alisa Mackay  
Nola Dennett

Devin Conroy  
Tanya Sandler  
Peter Forester  
Virginia Green  
Courtney Fitzgerald  
Tyler Feinerman  
Katherine LeSar  
Chris D'Olimpio  
Joey Azoulai  
Rosanna Mallinson

Joseph Alvarado  
Jason Knobloch  
Cynthia Bittenfield  
Max Dworkin  
Seung Hun Lee  
Gil Richardson  
Steven Richardson  
Victoria Bevilacqua  
Jessica Bonafine

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