A SHORT FILM PROOF OF CONCEPT

NIGHTINGALE

Based on the memoir Running Towards the Guns

Chanty emigrates illegally to Thailand, leaving her hiding in a hole in the ground, where she relives the Killing Fields of Cambodia.

Directed by Lydia Martinelli

A Mbrella Films Production | 17 min | Drama / True Survival Story

LOGLINE

Cambodian girl outlives the Killing Fields, outruns her war-shattered country, and outlasts a decade of civil war on her journey to America.

17-minute short

Cambodia → Thailand

Proof of Concept

Limited Series / Feature Film

NIGHTINGALE: The Chanty Jong Story

Miracle Story Survives the Killing Fields

Between 1975 and 1979, Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge army forced Cambodia's city populations into the jungle to face forced labor, starvation, and execution. Nightingale is based on the first-person account of a girl for whom this was only the beginning of her miraculous story — setting her on a race to the third country (America).

Why now?

- First-person genocide memoirs rarely reach the screen.
- Nightingale presents the rare historical action heroine.
- Chanty's survival is the most incredible story never told.

CAMBODIA, 1975–1979

1.7M approximate

lives lost under the Khmer Rouge — from this historical darkness, a miraculous memoir survives.

12 YEARS

A Slave.
Absconder.
Refugee.
Fugitive.

SYNOPSIS

The 17-minute arc

01

Hiding in the Hole

Armed Thai soldiers search Khao I Dang for the illegal immigrants infiltrating the refugee camp, unaware that Chanty is livng right beneath their feet

02

The Killing Fields

Brutal child slavery will not stop Chanty from sneaking away from the camp to visit the family, just in time to watch her father dig his own grave.

03

Crossing the Border

To avoid fighting for the Cambodian army, Chanty is smuggled across the deadly landmines and machine guns lining the Thai/Cambodia border.

04

Escape to America

Chanty's hiding place is discovered, and she is thrown into the refugee camp holding cell, from where she plans and executes her greatest escape to the third country.

SIZZLE / TEASER

AI-Generated Teaser



Playback requires recent desktop PowerPoint with an internet connection.

Made with AI

This teaser trailer was assembled using AI tools to visualize tone, pacing, and mood ahead of production — it is not final footage, cast, or cinematography.

Can't see the embed?

Watch on YouTube →

MARKET CONTEXT

An audience already exists

COMPARABLE TITLES

First They Killed My Father

Angelina Jolie, Netflix, 2017 — adapted from Loung Ung's memoir of the same Khmer Rouge era proved that a Cambodian genocide survival story, told with care and authenticity, can find a global streaming audience.

Rabbit-Proof Fence

Philip Noyce, Miramax, 2002 — adapted from Doris Pilkington Garimara's memoir "Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence" about three Aboriginal girls kidnapped by the Australian government and chased across 1,500 miles of outback to get back home..

Nightingale **shares its emotional register and historical context (genocide), with a protagonist representing the same themes and voices of a "missing generation" and a "forgotten genocide."**



Global

Streaming appetite for international true-survival stories



Awards

Festival & awards traction for memoir-based dramas



Proven Pipeline

Published memoir → short → feature / limited series

THE STRATEGY

Why we're starting with a short

Nightingale is being produced first as a 17-minute short — a fully realized proof of concept designed to demonstrate tone, casting, and directorial vision before scaling to a feature film or limited series.



01

Proof of Concept

Produce the 17-min short on a lean, tightly-managed independent budget.



02

Festival Run

Submit to top-tier festivals to build buzz, reviews, and industry attention.



03

Packaging

Use the short to attract additional cast, financing partners, and distribution interest.



04

Feature / Series

Greenlight the full feature film or limited series with proof already in hand.

VISUAL STYLE & TONE

Epic, Intimate, Unflinching

Handheld intimacy

Close, observational camera work that stays with our protagonist's point of view rather than spectacle.

Natural light & earth tones

Sun-bleached rice paddies, muted greens and browns, giving way to warmer light as hope enters the story.

Restraint over melodrama

Violence and loss are felt, not exploited — in the tradition of grounded, character-first true-story filmmaking.

A journey, not a tragedy

The short ends on forward motion — framing survival, resilience, and the road to America, not despair.

THE TEAM

Attached talent



DIRECTOR

Lydia Martinelli

Selected work

- *Nose Candy*
- *Layla*
- *Slicing Time*

Brings a character-driven, visually restrained sensibility suited to Nightingale's intimate, survival-focused storytelling.



PRODUCTION COMPANY

Mbrella Films

Selected work

- *Blood on the Ice*
- *Cestus*

An independent production partner informally attached, ready to shepherd Nightingale from short to feature or series.

THE ASK

Funding the proof of concept



Budget available upon request

A detailed line-item budget for the 17-minute short is available for serious inquiries. Funds cover production, post-production, and a targeted festival submission campaign.



Production

Cast, crew, locations, equipment for principal photography.



Post-Production

Editing, sound design, color, and score.



Festival Campaign

Submission fees and strategy to maximize industry visibility.

Let's bring Nightingale to the screen.

A true survival story, ready for its proof of concept — and the feature or series beyond it.

billy.person97@gmail.com

818-795-0727

thewilliamperson.com