



# SISTER CARRIE



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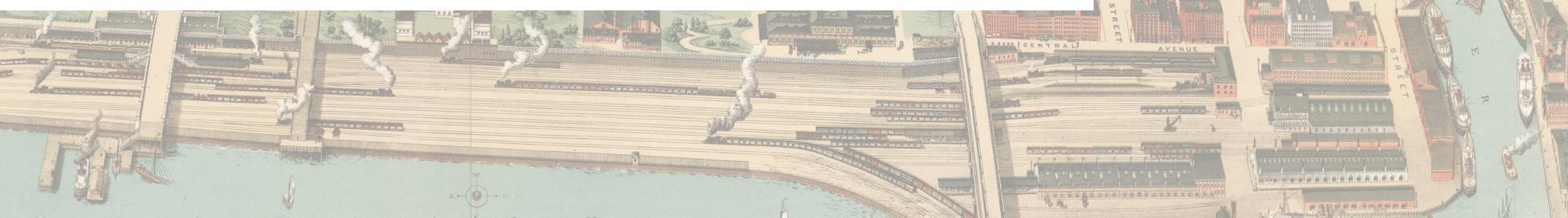
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*Steven A. Jones*



*Robert Teitel*

*Rich Moskal*



*Beckie Stocchetti*



## Advisory Board

As a director, KRIS SWANBERG is known for UNEXPECTED (2015) and EMPIRE BUILDER (2014). As an actress and writer, she is known for HANNAH TAKES THE STAIRS (2007) and KISSING ON THE MOUTH (2005).

As a producer and writer, ROBERT TEITEL is known for MEN OF HONOR (2000), BARBERSHOP: THE NEXT CUT (2016) and SOUL FOOD (1997).

PETER GILBERT has won national and international honors for his groundbreaking work as a producer, director and cinematographer. As a producer and cinematographer, he is known for HOOP DREAMS (1994), STEVIE (2002) and PREFONTAINE (1997).

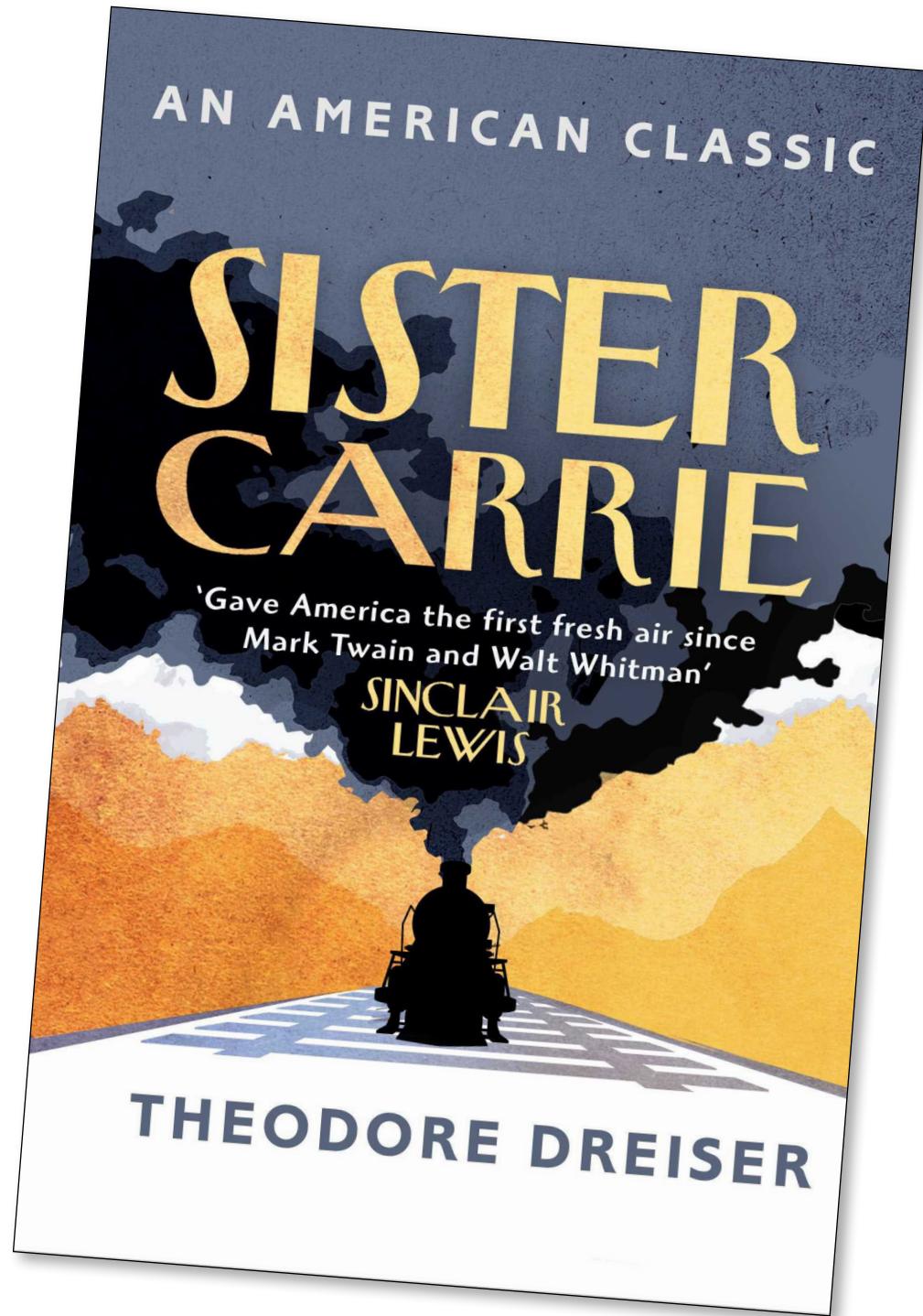
STEVEN A. JONES has been credited as producer or co-producer on eight feature films, including HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER, MAD DOG AND GLORY, and THE MERRY GENTLEMAN, Michael Keaton's directorial debut.

## Chicago Film Office

RICH MOSKAL, Director

BECKIE STOCCHETTI, Local and Independent Initiatives

SISTER CARRIE is an epic love story with a vicious twist that takes place in Chicago, Montréal, and Paris in 1919.



# SISTER CARRIE

## Intended Audience and Festival Strategy

SISTER CARRIE is a ‘periodless’ drama and an interracial, bilingual love story centered on young lovers. It will appeal throughout the independent film world across virtually all territories and demographics, and will appeal to audiences who appreciate literary adaptations.

The film has dialogue in both English and French, so will appeal to markets for both languages throughout the world. We are intending to hire a well-known bilingual actor to provide the voice of Older Armand. He is heard throughout the film and guides the storyline. Prospective narrators include John Malkovich, Gerard Depardieu, and Oscar-winner Jean-Claude Carrière, who has already consulted on this project. The attachment of the narrator is expected to boost the film’s chances with securing lead actors, and in turn screenings at major film festivals and success on the open market.

Our target audience holds a special appreciation for literary and art house films. This is not a mainstream venture, but it has the potential to bring broad interest in niche markets, nationally and internationally. The primary novel we’re adapting is more than a century old, yet it still ranks highly (33rd) on the Modern Library’s list of the 100 finest novels ever written. It will receive significant attention on this basis from the start.



Festival de Cannes / Marché  
(May 2018)

Montréal World Film Festival / Market  
(August 2018)

Telluride Film Festival  
(August 2018)

Venice Biennale  
(September 2018)

Toronto International Film Festival  
(September 2018)

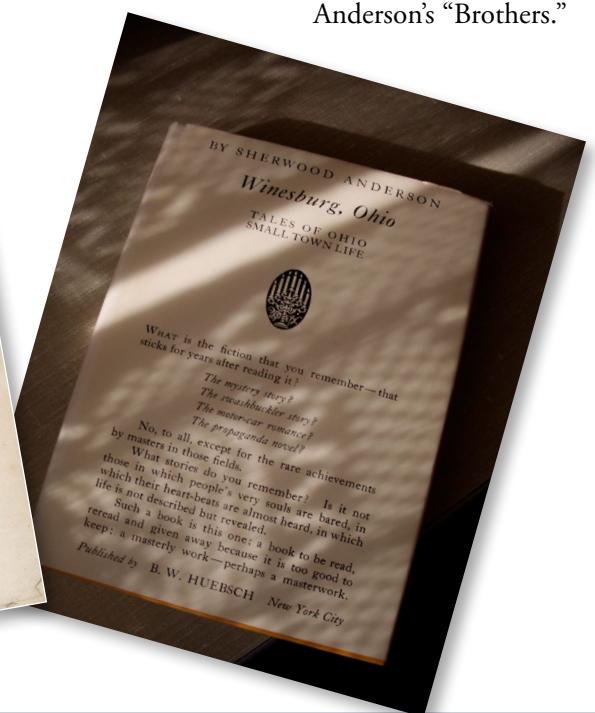
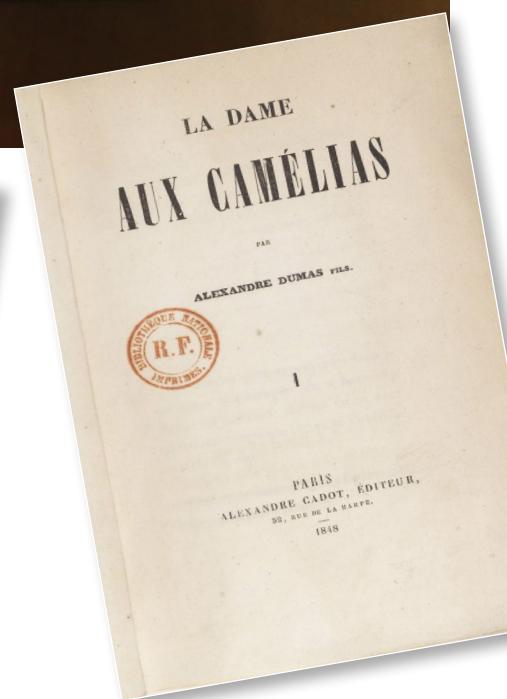
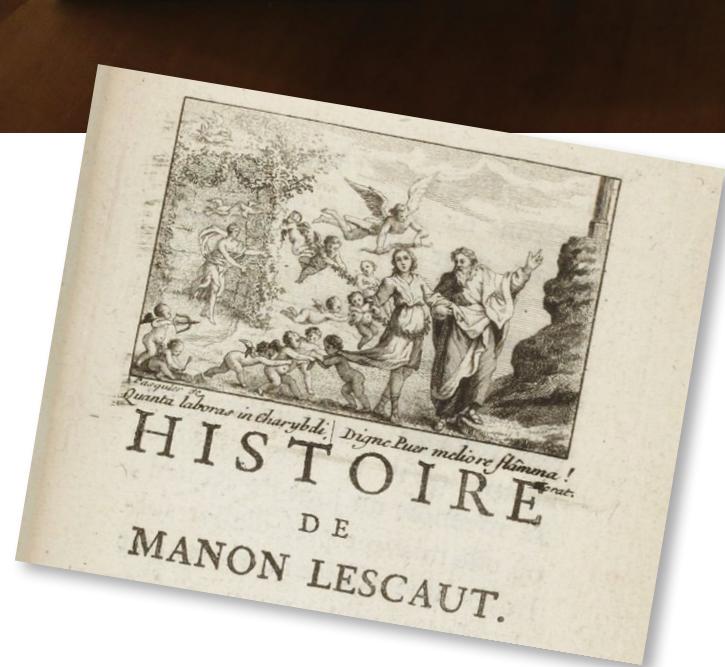
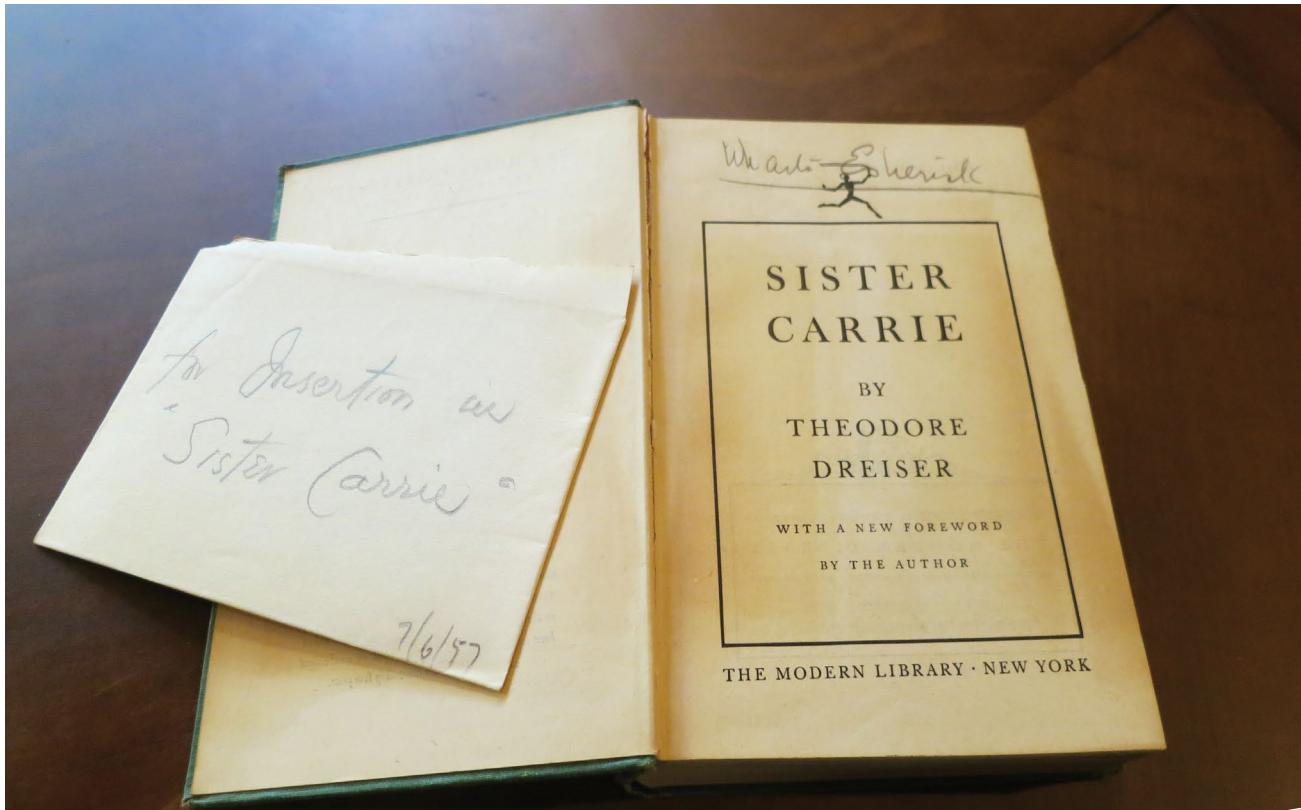
Chicago International Film Festival  
(October 2018)

American Film Market  
(November 2018)

Sundance Film Festival  
(January 2018)

Berlinale and European Film Market  
(February 2018)

*LOVE STORY (1970 - world box office of \$855,000,000 when corrected for inflation) and MOULIN ROUGE (2001 - \$244,000,000) are based on the same source material. SISTER CARRIE has been adapted once (as CARRIE, (1952 - \$16,000,000). LA LA LAND (2016 - \$300,000,000) is recent evidence that 'periodless' tragic love stories set in America and Paris have enduring commercial appeal.*

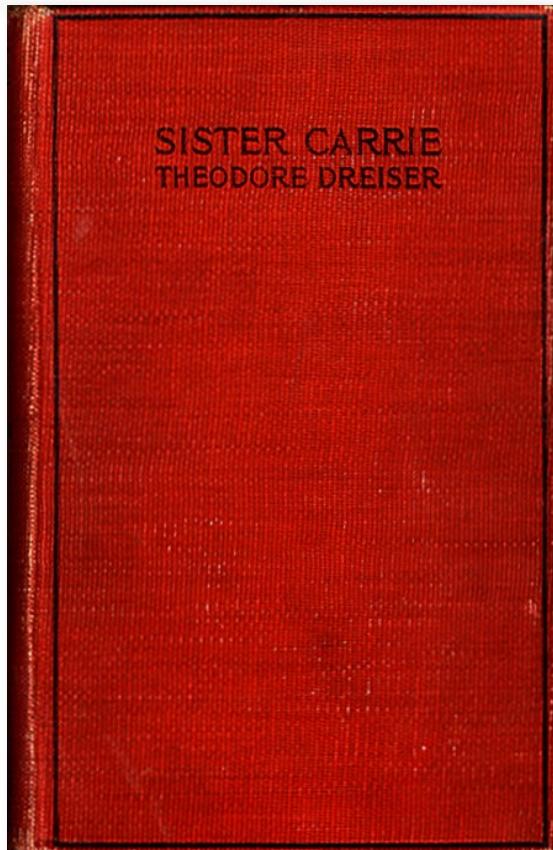


SISTER CARRIE is a hybrid adaptation of multiple sources, including three proto-feminist novels.

It takes its name from Theodore Dreiser's landmark Chicago novel (1900), but draws also from Alexander Dumas' "La Dame aux Camélias," Abbé Prévost's "Manon Lescaut," and Sherwood Anderson's "Brothers."

# SISTER CARRIE

## Synopsis



SISTER CARRIE is an epic love story with a dark, vicious secret. Its essential elements seem familiar: two people meet and fall in love, encounter many obstacles and are separated, then reunite in joy and despair. The romantic tragedy ostensibly takes place in Chicago, Montréal, and Paris in 1919, but its period, its locations, and even the story of the woman at its heart will prove to be elusive and illusory.

The film begins on a train taking Carrie Lescaut from Louisiana to a new life in Chicago. Carrie is biracial, and the color of her skin will affect her station in her world throughout the film's American sequences. She meets a handsome young French man named Armand Duval on the train. There's a strong mutual attraction, but the two fall immediately out of touch.

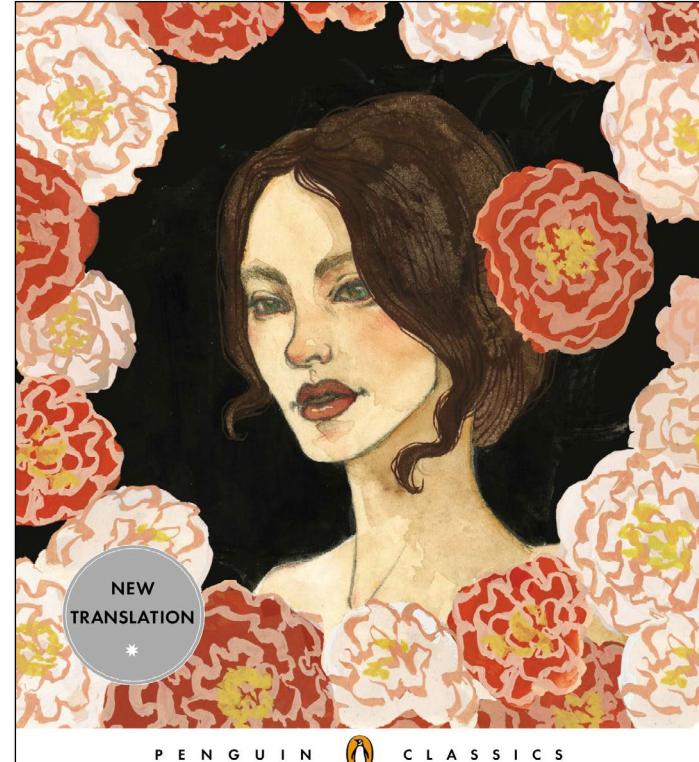
Carrie has a difficult time living with her sister's family in Chicago. She struggles at first to find a job and then suffers in a factory position that requires her to work 14 hours a day for wages that do not meet her rent. We learn along the way that life challenges preceded Carrie's trip north, and that she once worked as prostitute.

At the factory, Carrie works under a quiet-spoken Foreman who is unfulfilled by his work, spending much of his time wishing he had been a painter or musician or novelist. He fancies himself in love with Carrie. He obsesses over her, seeing her everywhere as a kind of phantom, walking the streets of Chicago and even in the apartment he shares with his two children and pregnant wife. One night, after seeing the silhouette of a man run through an alley, the foreman inexplicably murders his wife. He confesses to the murder and is sent to jail for life.

Carrie loses her factory position. She is forced to go back to the trade on occasional evenings to ensure she can make ends meet. Still, she can't afford to buy a coat to survive the Chicago winter. This is when she encounters Armand Duval again. He takes her in.

Carrie sees the prospect of being a kept woman as the lesser of two evils and accepts Armand's generosity. Over time she finds her attraction to him turning to love. He adores her. He helps her rebuild her self-esteem by securing a lead role for her in a Chicago lodge production of a period melodrama. It turns out she is a talented actress.

Armand works for his wealthy father as the manager of La Rotonde Chicago, a well-regarded restaurant and saloon. When his New York-based father learns that his son is "keeping a prostitute," he comes to Chicago and forecloses on the relationship, threatening to fire his son from his job and ordering him to move Carrie out by the next day. Armand responds by stealing from the restaurant safe. He runs away with Carrie on a train to Montréal.



ALEXANDRE DUMAS FILS

*The Lady of the Camellias*

Translated by LIESL SCHILLINGER  
Introduction by JULIE KAVANAGH



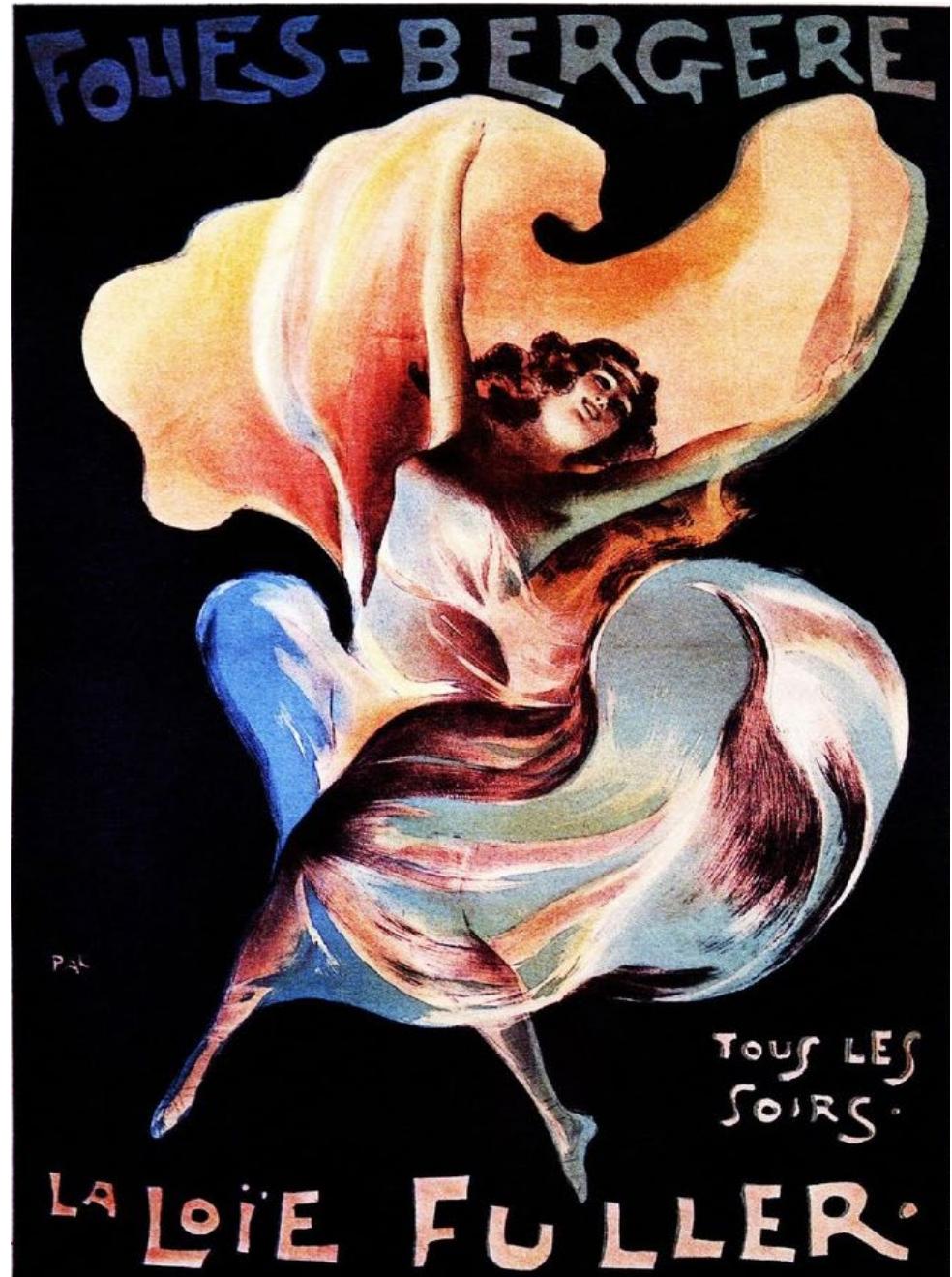
Carrie is deeply upset at what he's done but adjusts to their situation. It's not long before they are hunted down by a private investigator sent by Armand's father. He assaults Armand and gets the money back, but not before Armand purchases passage by ocean liner and train to Paris.

The lovers have no money and no options. They travel to Paris and try to start a new life, but Armand's job quest is stunted by his inability to provide references. Carrie finds humble work as a flower girl in the Bois de Boulogne, a large Paris park that has been known historically as a place of prostitution. It looks for a time that she is going back to her old work, and when Armand guesses this he takes her money and gambles it away in an attempt to keep her from selling herself.

One evening he comes home and finds that Carrie is gone. She's left him a note that tells him she no longer wishes to see him. Armand abandons their apartment and slides into a spiral of poverty and despair. He attempts to kill himself in a Paris rooming house, but is discovered and returned to his family.

Carrie, meanwhile, auditions at local theatres. She faces rejection at every turn until someone recommends she try vaudeville. She is hired at Folies Bèrgere, an erotic revue frequented by higher class men and women. In a short time she rises to become the star of the company, brought out on the stage in a wedding dress that she tears away in mid-sketch.

Armand finds out about the show and comes to see it. The sight of Carrie deepens his romantic wounds. He comes back to Folies Bèrgere repeatedly, attempting to make Carrie jealous by bringing another woman and kissing the girl in front of her. This clearly affects Carrie and within days she is gone.





A year passes and Armand receives a letter. We follow him as he takes a train to Auvers-sur-Oise, a town in the French countryside. He finds Carrie there, emaciated and dying from consumption, the great illness of their era. He makes gentle love to her at her request and she asks him afterward to walk with her into the fields above Auvers.

In the fields, she lays down to rest, Armand by her side, and they talk. Carrie reveals that Armand's father visited her privately in Paris and convinced her that it was in her son's best interest that she leave him, or he would be hobbled professionally and socially for life for having married a prostitute. Armand is devastated at learning of her sacrifice. The sun sets. It takes Armand some time to realize that his trembling lover is not just fatally ill but that she is in fact dying right now, at his side in a wheat field. He's with her in her final moments.

When she ceases breathing, Armand abandons his will to live. He decides that he will stay with her until he himself dies of exhaustion or starvation. He has no will to live. In mid-reverie, after long hours with his arms around her dead body, kissing her cold but still lovely face, he realizes that if he does not bury her, wild animals will come and devour her. He summons all his effort to dig a hole, then gently covers her over, as though he were tucking her into bed. He lies across her grave, as intimate as he can now be with her, and awaits his own death.

Armand survives, but the ending of *SISTER CARRIE* reveals a dark truth about this tale of the noble love of a young man and the tragic death of a woman who rose from Louisiana poverty to stardom on the grandest stages of Paris.

SISTER CARRIE is the declaration of one man's unending love for a woman. It is dedicated to her memory and to the dream that she might live on through his words. It is also, however, a story that envelops and obscures her at the same time as it betrays him.



# SISTER CARRIE

## Casting

### THE LEADS

**Carrie Lescaut** is a biracial woman in her 20s or 30s. Think of her character as Ingrid Bergman in *GASLIGHT* — a woman up against forces over which she has no control, marked by her vulnerability and dawning self-awareness. The Carrie of our film is sensuous, a gifted dancer, and speaks both English and French. Bilingual performance (English and French) and tasteful depictions of nudity and sexuality will be required.

**Armand Duval** is a Caucasian Frenchman in his 20s or 30s. He is a man who is blindly in love and he suffers some insecurity as a consequence, though he maintains a kind of elegance in his deportment. Armand's English will have a slight French inflection. Bilingual performance (English and French) and tasteful depictions of nudity and sexuality will be required.

### THE SUPPORTING ROLES

**The Foreman** is a large, brooding, soft-spoken man, aged 20s-40s. He may be of any race. He has a tedious blue-collar job but longs to be a poet, a painter, a novelist — an artist. He is a dominant character in the first act of the film. The story turns on his influence.

**Older Armand** appears primarily in voiceover and is a sensitive, world-wise guiding presence throughout *SISTER CARRIE*, aged 60–80. He speaks with a French accent. Younger Armand will need to resemble this actor because he will appear on-screen in the concluding scene of the film, which functions as a post-climactic reversal.

**Armand's Father** is in his 40s to 60s — an elegant French man with a demeanor that ranges from gentle and affectionate to authoritative, cold and dismissive. His attempts to look out for the best interests of his son result in tragic consequences. Bilingual performance (English and French) will be required.



# About the Writer-Director

## DANIEL NEARING

Daniel Nearing is the inaugural Filmmaker in Residence for the City of Chicago (2016–17), and has been named Chicagoan of the Year for film (2016–17) by the *Chicago Tribune*.

In 2015, he completed HOGTOWN, the second film in a trilogy of multiethnic, ensemble period features shot in black and white and ‘ecstatic color.’ The film looks at the emergence of a multicultural America through the prism of Chicago. The *Chicago Sun-Times* calls it “the most original film made in Chicago about Chicago to date.” Ben Kenigsberg of *The New York Times* named HOGTOWN to his list of the 10 Best Films of 2016: “Daniel Nearing has carved out an original and boldly unfashionable niche. HOGTOWN feels like a find from a forgotten archive.” The *Chicago Reader* named HOGTOWN the best film set in Chicago, and the best film made in Chicago, “period,” for the year. HOGTOWN was named Best Feature Film at the 2015 International Black Film Festival (Nashville), Best Film in a Fine Arts Discipline at the 30th Black International Cinema Berlin, and Best Picture at the 2015 Los Angeles Black Film Festival.

The first film in his trilogy, CHICAGO HEIGHTS, is an adaptation of Sherwood Anderson’s “Winesburg, Ohio.” The “period-less” observation on exurban and small town life played at festivals around the world, and Roger Ebert called it “brilliant and beautiful” and named it to his last list of Best Art Films (2010).

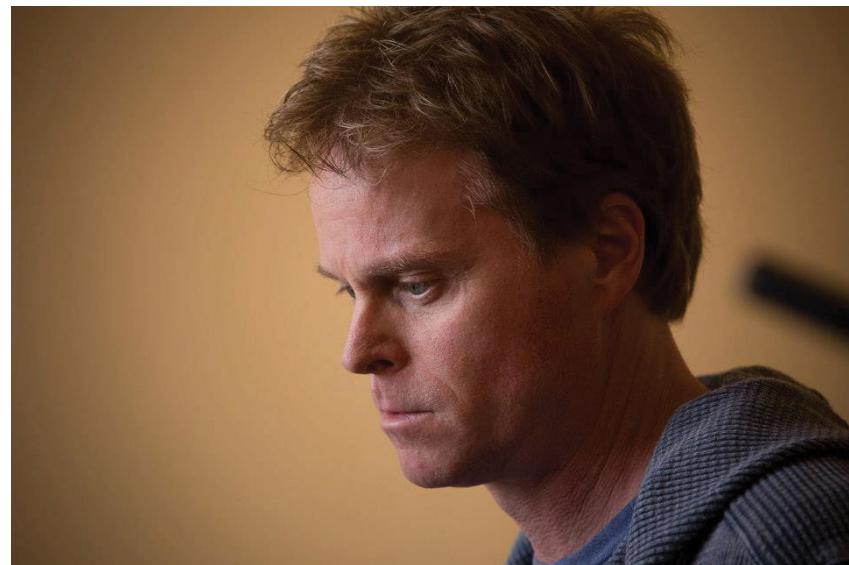


Photo: Dirk Fletcher

Nearing has worked as producer, director, writer and editor for numerous films on several international networks. His documentary subjects have ranged from juvenile homicide (CBC) to the longest bridge in the world over ice-forming waters (Discovery) to Russians playing in the National Hockey League (The Sports Network).

Nearing is currently in development on SISTER CARRIE, the final film in his Chicago trilogy. The film is an epic love story that takes place in 1909 Chicago, Montréal and Paris.

Nearing is a 2015–16 Fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and a 2016 Fellow of the MacDowell Colony.

# PRESS TO DATE

*“Daniel Nearing has carved out an original and boldly unfashionable niche. HOGTOWN plays like a find from a forgotten archive.”*  
— Ben Kenigsberg,  
*The New York Times – Critics’ Pick*  
**ONE OF THE 10 BEST FILMS OF 2016**



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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2016

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

## **CHICAGOANS OF THE YEAR FILM**

Daniel

**BY MICHAEL PHILLIPS**  
Chicago Tribune

The city of Chicago has its first official filmmaker in residence: the 55-year-old writer, director and educator Daniel Neuringer, a native of Medicine Hat, Alberta, and a longtime local resident and curiosity seeker.

HOGGROW

Last year we created the category Best Chicago Story in hope that it would become a perennial, and that every year we could single out the locally produced short or feature that best captured the life of the city. This year we didn't even need that category, because the best Chicago story was also the best locally produced drama, period. Daniel Nearing's *Hogtown* takes place in 1919, as the city and the nation are trying to absorb the domestic aftershocks of World War I, and culminates in the eight-day race riot that erupted on the south side that July, leaving 38 people dead. The movie's central character is taken black cop (Herman Wilkins) who's trying to bring down a...  
\* *Waking the Moon*



*"A reminder of how brutally one can be punished, then and now, for crossing an invisible line."*  
*The best drama made in Chicago, "period," this year.*  
—J.R. Jones, *The Chicago Reader*



# Director's Notes

At one point late in HOGTOWN, the second film in my current Chicago trilogy, our protagonist looks at us directly, mournfully, and says “when we look back... when we remember... the moments in between are lost.”

More than anything my current work — and my work of the last decade — is meant to be a dispassionate view of the fragmentary nature of memory and the way that feelings of isolation, loneliness and longing manifest themselves as dark epiphanies in our days. In CHICAGO HEIGHTS, we see these emotions drift through an exurban / rural community. In HOGTOWN, they’re everywhere in a representative American city. In SISTER CARRIE, they undermine and ultimately bring down an otherwise epic, timeless, global love story.

My films employ text as narration, allowing the underlying sound and music to assert its presence. Narration is often delivered by characters in direct address — looking right or through us as they speak, as though confiding in us. Some of the narration is spoken under the breath or in plainly articulated thought. Some is in the first person; some is in the third person: the characters are simultaneously inside the moment and observing themselves from the distance of memory.

My films lack the fabric of exposition we tend to expect. They lack the details we need to be fully engaged with a plot. They will consequently disappoint expectations on that level. I admire T. S. Eliot’s admonition that “plot is the bone you throw the dog while you go in and rob the house.” We want to keep an audience engaged at the same time as we betray the meaninglessness of a plot orientation — reminding us not to look for superficial meaning in life — drawing us back to that focus on longing and reminding us that hard forces of emotion loom and often rule over everything we experience from cradle to grave.

My shot compositions are always ruled by mood, dominated by black tones enriched through Cinegamma filtering, perspectives influenced by careful and limited approaches to lighting, altered emotionally through canted and otherwise unusual angles. The people of CHICAGO HEIGHTS, HOGTOWN, and SISTER CARRIE dwell in a perpetually dark place. There are fleeting moments, though, that seem to call for what we will call ‘ecstatic color.’ These moments of color draw us insistently, albeit briefly, into a rare, elusive, sometimes inexplicable experience of beauty or joy.



My films don't take time or history all that seriously. CHICAGO HEIGHTS tests the universality of a lily-white period narrative by transposing its antique dialogue to contemporary, exurban black Chicago. HOGTOWN is set 'circa 1919' but it makes no attempt to hide contemporary buildings and is overt in its deployment of contemporary objects. It is a 'period-less piece' that tries to encapsulate its own era, but also the century since. The intent here is to quietly acknowledge that most of the issues and human suffering engendered by racism and sexism in America in 1919 persist today. We've evolved less this past century than we'd like to think.

SISTER CARRIE traverses three centuries of proto-feminist romantic literature only to fall on the sword of the identity politics of the 21st. The film is both a celebration and an indictment of the male gaze. Like the two films that precede it, it confronts manifestations of misogyny in its most lethal of forms.

All of my films overtly contend that period pieces say as much about the time in which they are composed as the time in which they are set. They also say 'plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.'



*Sanghoon Lee and Daniel Nearing on the set of HOGTOWN*



*Don Winter*



*Sanghoon Lee*

*Dirk Fletcher*

## Cinematography

Borh CHICAGO HEIGHTS and HOGTOWN were noted for their cinematography, exemplified on these two pages. The look of these films will continue in SISTER CARRIE.

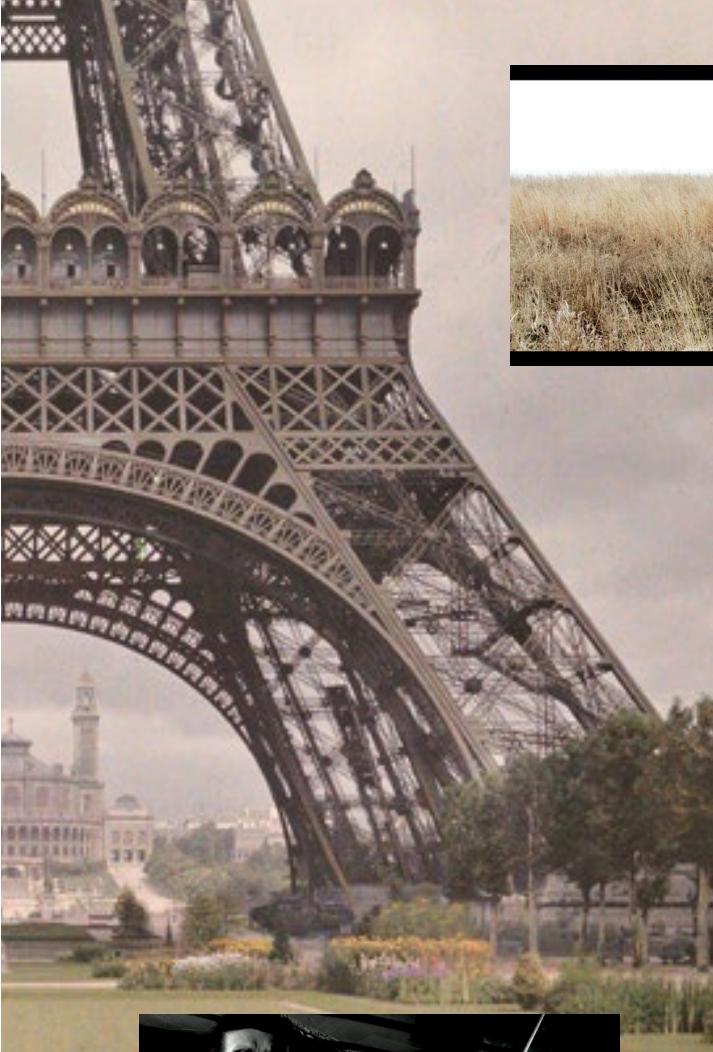
In SISTER CARRIE, two of the world's great sister cities are de facto characters and their remarkable architecture will be celebrated visually with a revolutionary new cameras designed to yield beautiful results in low light.

SANGHOON LEE, cinematography advisor, served as Director of Photography on HOGTOWN and CHICAGO HEIGHTS.

DIRK FLETCHER, cinematography advisor, works with Canon USA.

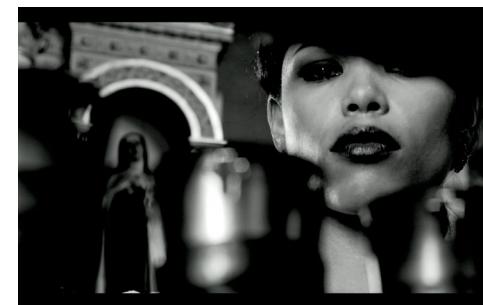
DON WINTER, lighting consultant, worked as a gaffer and second unit cinematographer on CHICAGO HEIGHTS and HOGTOWN.





## Chicago and Paris as they've rarely been seen

We'll be shooting SISTER CARRIE's day and night exteriors entirely in available or minimally augmented light, using a new-to-market camera with an exceptionally high ISO rating. We are also considering a variable aspect ratio, in places resembling the look of Paweł Pawlikowski's IDA, and anamorphic lenses, producing a look comparable to the compositions in Ana Lily Amirpour's A GIRL WALKS HOME ALONE AT NIGHT.



# Portrait Frames

Several of our principals and peripheral characters stop in mid-scene to pose for their portraits. There is one portrait per person, dressed and set for posterity. Elements in the portrait may differ from elements of a set. The film will be threaded with haunting portraits of Carrie in particular, paintings of idealized women conceived by male artists over centuries.

*Redemption* — Julius Stewart



*Song of the Lark* — Jules Breton



*Joan of Arc* — Jules Bastien-Lepage



*New York Movie* — Edward Hopper



*"HOGTOWN (has) a true artist's eye.*

*There's a brief montage of gorgeously photogenic fire escapes, seen in all weather, scored beautifully by composer Paul Bhasin, that's better than the entirety of the last few features I've seen, period."*

— Michael Phillips, *Chicago Tribune*

## Composer

PAUL K. BHASIN

Paul K. Bhasin, Composer, oversaw the writing, conducting, and recording of the moving symphony score for HOGTOWN. As a trumpeter, Paul has performed nationally and internationally with a variety of organizations including the Columbus Symphony, New World Symphony, Illinois Symphony, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Chicago Chamber Opera, the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, and at the music festivals of Aspen, Tanglewood, and Ravinia. He has worked to advance diversity in performing arts education by working with at-risk Chicago youth through the Music Institute of Chicago's Music Integration Project and Chicago Symphony's Musicorps initiative. He has also recorded for both the Centaur and Interscope record labels. As a guest conductor, he has led the US Marine Band, Virginia Symphony, and members of the Richmond Symphony. His adaptations have been commissioned and performed by the St. Louis Opera, US Marine Band, and Grant Teton Festival Orchestra.

Paul is composing an original theme for SISTER CARRIE that aligns with the intent of the screenplay — honoring the emotion of Dreiser's novel while tipping its hat to operatic antecedents by Puccini and Verdi.

# Costumes

The costume designs of MELANIE PARKS have been seen in HOGTOWN, at Lifeline Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Co., and the Moscow Art Theatre School.

ANGELA LATHAM, costuming and feminist consultant, wrote *Posing a Threat: Flappers, Chorus Girls, and Other Brazen Performers of the American 1920s*.

*Designs on this page - Jean-Charles de Castelbajac / Vadim Stein / Melanie Parks*



Melanie Parks



Angela Latham



# Consultants

**JAY DISNEY**, Co-Producer, is based in Los Angeles, and worked previously on HOGTOWN.

**HERMAN WILKINS**, script consultant, starred in HOGTOWN and has worked for NBC Universal's Creative Partnerships.

**NICOLE BERNARDI-REIS**, concept consultant, is the Executive Director of IFP Chicago.

**RACHEL ROZYCKI**, concept consultant, served as a producer in the making of HOGTOWN.

**RUDY THAUBERGER**, screenplay consultant, co-wrote CHICAGO HEIGHTS.

**KEISHA DYSON**, co-producer, played the role of Elizabeth Walker in CHICAGO HEIGHTS and co-produced HOGTOWN.

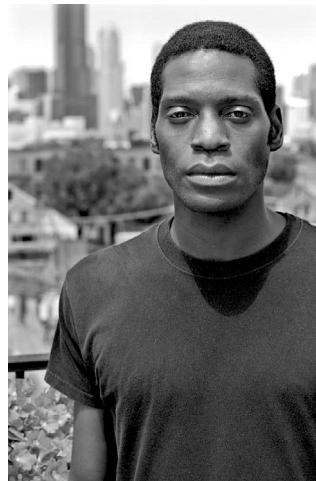
**SETH McCLELLAN**, concept consultant, served as a producer in the making of CHICAGO HEIGHTS.

**JASON KNADE**, concept consultant, served as a co-producer in the making of HOGTOWN.

**McKENZIE CHINN**, story consultant, played Aaliyah Carter in HOGTOWN, and recently wrote and starred in *Olympia: An Instruction Manual for How Things Work*.

**SELCEN PHELPS**, screenplay consultant, is a novelist, screenwriter and lyricist. She also serves as a Professor at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri.

**LISA KLEIN**, graphic designer, has provided lookbooks, promotional, and poster design for 9/23 Films and Film Arts.



Herman Wilkins



Keisha Dyson



Jay Disney



Rudy Thauberger



Nicole Bernardi-Reis



McKenzie Chinn



Seth McClellan



Lisa Klein



Selcen Phelps



Jason Knade



Rachel Rozycki

# SISTER CARRIE



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## Contact Information

For more information about SISTER CARRIE or to discuss ways to get involved, contact:

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