

## **Writer, Producer & Director Tiffany Dang**

“I wrote “Deceitfully Funny” in 1999. I believe the general public will enjoy the story no matter what their background is because it is sad to see that prejudice still exists, therefore, I wrote the story in hopes that people will approach different cultures with an open mind in their attempts to understand each other.”

“After long hours of viewing reels submitted by cinematographers across the country, I chose Eric Adkins because he instinctively understood the importance of vibrancy in the interaction of characters, particularly as my movie is a romantic comedy. Eric is best known for both his live action and stop motion cinematography. His credits include the feature film “Inheritance” and “The World of Tomorrow” starring Jude Law and Gwyneth Paltrow, television series “House”, “The PJ’s”, Tim Burton’s “Mars Attacks!”; music videos of Ani DiFranco, Primal Scream, John Wesley Harding; and commercials for: Converse, SW Bell, Nintendo, Nabisco, to name a few.”

“I owe a big thanks to Rebecca Burt, a former child model and actress who initially acted in my first awarded short film “Stings Of Conscience”. With her support and commitment as the associate producer and actress in the project, I was able to accomplish my film. Additionally, my gratitude to my family, the rest of the talented actors and actresses, crewmembers and supporters who made my project possible.”

## **Associate Producer & Actress Rebecca Burt**

““Deceitfully Funny” was a learning experience and a personal journey of growth and exploration. I opened up my home, my in laws opened up theirs and so did my husband and his business. I invested all the time and energy for all, but for a few shoots. The longest days were the days with a little too much Mrs. Kim trying to get her lines right. But she was awesome, fun and always so ready to look and perform at her best. Another long day was shooting with my broken toe!”

”My character ‘**Anna**’ was just slightly a mirror of part of myself. She was a frank, ballsy, straight to the point, sort of ‘Samantha’ of “Sex and the City” kind of girl. Funny though, ‘**Anna**’ never got to hook up with anyone in the movie! I wonder why? Well, having the adventure was so much fun.”

“Working so closely with Tiffany to make every part the very best we could was great. I will never forget it and hope to be a part of something like it again. Thank you Tiffany, I love you!”

## **Actress Christina Maithy Ngo**

“There will be long days and there will be short days of shooting. Of course the most favorable are the shorter days, but the longer days of the shoot, from what I believe, are those testing times on how we collaborate as a team that really bring us together in the

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end. As an actress, I can't still fathom how the crew builds enough tolerance and patience for me with my retakes. I'm sure that I have contributed to gray hairs after the shoot, but in the end, we have developed our own memories and "our own story" filming during these longer days, which in turn makes it special as well."

"It's natural for viewers to want to know the personality behind the face on the screen, but if I can turn that camera around and point it at the crew, I can confidently say that the charismatic life behind that lens is far more interesting than mine. Everyone has their own quarks on set, everyone has a creative outlet to express, and everyone knows that we are all there for one common goal, so that combination is like a family funhouse. In a sense, the crew added depth to my character and allowed more music to be played with my notes."

"My character '**Hien**' is one that many can relate to. She has an internal battle of what she wants to do, and what she feels she has to do. It's a woman who can have everything she wants in the world but is depleted by the one thing she desires. She's the type of person who tries to smile to keep peace, but it becomes obvious that there are hidden layers of anxiety, frustration, and pain. You see dual energies fighting with each other as '**Hien**' practices filial piety in an effort to make her family happy, while trying to make her own choices in life that may be perceived as selfish. I think many of us may have experienced some sort of imbalance in our system that challenged our decision-making in life. What I admire about '**Hien**' is the fire that drives her persistence. She never gives up. She'll plot and plan in deceitful ways to fool her parents, but you see an endearing side of her that is very human. I can relate to my character and the complex kaleidoscope of feelings she endures. Sometimes I think the role of an Asian woman can be described as a negotiator, seeking to bring fulfillment to the other party while mutually satisfying her needs. I feel like in order to go in the creative direction with my career, I need to excel at it to satisfy my family needs, and bring them fulfillment through my success. This is the unspoken negotiation I speak of. As with love, I saw myself in the past becoming the best PR for whom I was dating (\*\*laughing\*\*). It was quite impressive. If my mom could see what I saw, magnified by 10, I hoped that would be convincing enough for her to trust my decisions. '**Hien**' and I are very much alike. We both are stubborn, empathetic, playful, and passionate. We both are someone that others can come to talk to, but yet we probably need more of the help (\*\*chuckle\*\*). More importantly, we are both paving our own pathway while trying to maintain balance along the way."

"Working with Tiffany was a valuable experience for me on many levels. She has left and right brain working in unison, making her equally adapt at finding that balance with logic and intuitiveness. Tiffany's role in executing the film with creative accuracy has influenced me on both a personal and professional level. On a personal level, witnessing that she is a female director coming from an Asian background is really mind boggling and fascinating. She is living her dream and sharing it with us. On a professional level, her work ethic and passion to put DF together, reminds me to jump a little higher when you face bigger bumps on the road."

## Actor Ron Tang

“I’ve been doing stage productions for the past ten years, but DF was my first real film experience. To do any film, and in this case an independent film where I was cast in a fairly principal role is an honor and privilege. In theatrical plays, the story starts in the beginning and continues uninterrupted to the end. Film is a cut and paste affair. Once "Action!", is called, I had to be focused to place the character ‘**Minh**’ in the right attitude and mindset to accurately reflect the circumstances of the story at that point. A film has a lot of down time awaiting the crew's preparation in sound, lighting, the set, props, etc. The director can change, adjust, re-stage and re-do a scene as often as they feel necessary to achieve the desired effect. To repeat a scene numerous times, investing the character with the same degree of intensity requires focus and stamina. Kudos to television and film actors.

I was ‘**Minh**’, Hien's father. In my experience as ‘**Minh**’, I was the laid back, all accepting father. Tiffany cast me correctly in that part, but I’m of the opinion that in Asian cultures, the father figure is more authoritarian and traditional, maintaining the "old" ways to preserve the customs, folkways and mores of the culture from which one came, thus would have been far less open to his daughter straying from traditional bounds. ‘**Minh**’ would have been more in accord with his wife Trang. More likely Hien would have faced a united front opposing her. DF is a universal story of change in conflict with tradition. Change isn't always easily made or accepted.”

## Actor Michael Gregory

“I definitely remember my longest day of shooting. We were doing re-shoots and had several locations to cover that day. I remember showing up on set at about 7 am. As the day went on each location seemed to take longer to get to, and each scene seemed to take longer and longer to shoot. By the time the sun went down we were filming the scene at the chapel, we rapped up there by about 10:00 pm and then it was on to a recording studio on the other side of town we had to film close ups of Michele (she was the singer at the night club). I remember driving home finally at 3:00 am that next morning. God I was so tired.

Remembering the longest day brings back memories. The day we filmed the grocery store scene was tough. I almost lost track of what I was supposed to be doing that day or who I even was. I really needed an assistant. We started off in the morning at the grocery store so we could have the light, standing just outside the doors and all, well the day started with me not being able to keep a straight face, it was a funny scene for us to try and get through I remember. Then when we were done I was able to head home for a short break (short). I had to get in to make up for the scene with me in drag as one of the gorgeous brides maids (the other of course being the fabulous Rebecca Burt). We got through that scene fairly easy, (we filmed it at a hotel in one of their back rooms) however I remember Rebecca and I waiting in the bar (imagine that) for our fantastic tech

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crew to get the set lit. Well a couple of cocktails and one scene later I was off to home to get out of drag and back into the clothes I wore for the grocery store. See we had to go back that night when they were closed to film the interior shots. I had four showers that day. I've never been so clean.

I was asked to explain my character. Hmm...Explain **'Jason'**. Well, **'Jason'** is deeply committed to Mark, friend to everyone, always willing to put himself out there to help in any situation, and an extrovert, defiantly an extrovert. He doesn't hold anything back, and he's definitely willing to think outside of the box to solve a problem. I am definitely like **'Jason'** in some ways. I am out going willing to try almost anything once, twice if it's fun. I am very friendly with most everyone I meet, and always try to help out my friends and family whenever I can. I wish I could be more like **'Jason'** though when it comes to thinking outside of the box. It seemed to come naturally for him. I am definitely not as spacey as he is. I must admit I am as silly as he is though. So playing that side of **'Jason'** came fairly easy. I had a hard time figuring out how to play that whole spacey yet smart and bumbling kind of a quality I think he had.

One of my most challenging days was being in the recording studio and recording "Shouldn't Have Said Goodbye" used during the break up scene towards the end. It was fun, frustrating and challenging for me. I have always been a singer. So that wasn't the difficult part it was the style that Robert (the songs producer) was wanting from me. I mean I've always been on stage singing big Broadway songs. So I guess the most challenging part was pulling back and trying to harness myself vocally and still have the song convey the same way you would a song live. It was definitely a great experience. I always wanted to be one of those singers that could go from stage to studio, after I got my footing it all fell into place and made perfect sense, and I can't wait to do it again.

Last, but certainly not least I need to say how great it was working with everyone. The crew was amazing they really knew what they were doing. Obviously some of the toughest work is lugging all the equipment around, setting it up, tearing it down, reloading the trailer and moving on the next set. I honestly don't know if I could do it with such grace, much less with a smile on my face and they honestly were a great group of people always in a good mood always wanting to get the best shot possible. My fellow cast members were so wonderful; I can't believe I got to work with such genuinely nice, talented people. Elias Castillo was great person to be partnered with. I can't imagine playing **'Jason'** without him as Mark, he is a talented guy. Rebecca Burt, well what can I say about her except she's beautiful, sassy, funny, sassy (yes I said it twice), quick witted, and the only person I know that looks better in a brides maids gown then I. And the rest of the cast I really feel like we formed a really nice bond, we may not see each other anymore but if we were to all get together, after about 10 minutes it be as if we no time has passed. Of course I saved the best for last and that would be Tiffany Dang our wonderful writer and director. Well all I can say is, it's all her fault, all of it. She's the reason why we made such a fun movie with silly and serious characters. She is talented writer and director. I'm proud to call her a colleague, and most importantly a friend. She

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always makes me laugh and she always challenges me to think, and isn't that what it's all about."

## **Actress O. Katie Elkin**

### My First Day on the Set – Test One

"This is a test. It must be a test! Why else would the director tell me to appear on the set at 10:00 AM Saturday, then call me at 7:20 on the morning of the shoot and ask if I could come now! I had allowed plenty of time for leisurely preparation for my first day on the set. I crawled from bed at 7:00 AM (I'm not a morning person.), prepared my favorite break-of-day beverage, and positioned myself at my computer to check the morning emails. My beverage cooling, suddenly, the phone rang. Now who would call at 7:20 in the morning? Anyone familiar to me knows never to call before noon for fear of waking my husband or me. We often stay up all night, especially on the weekends. Quickly reaching for the phone, I seized it on the first ring. My test had begun. How soon could I be in midtown Phoenix (from East Mesa)? "We've changed the schedule, and we want to shoot your scene first," I heard the director ask.

My two scheduled hours of preparation time vaporized. What about my hair, my fingernails, the drive of at least 45 minutes barring any traffic? I didn't even have time to sing the "I'm Late" song. What to do first? Is frantic anything like panic? Leaving my cooling drink to cool further, I sprinted to throw myself together, scooped up my waiting accessories, and accelerated toward Phoenix. They tell you in books about managing stress to allow plenty of time for your activities...so much for stress management. I finally arrived on the set. What a way to begin the first day of shooting."

### Test Two -

"Remain calm and focused when the camera crew, sound men, lighting technicians, set coordinator, gaffer, makeup artist, cast, and director stand positioned in place... waiting for you as you walk into the set. Then the Director's, "Action!" arrived much too soon for my ears. As soon as makeup lady daubed the finishing touches on my face, we began. The four of us in the scene rehearsed our lines time and again to garner the rhythm of the scene. At last, we performed a high-speed run through saying only the essential words of each line as fast as we could. All the while, the crew set up the shots: Move the coffee cup a little to the left. That plant on the table is obscuring her face. Take away the scrawny plant and bring in a thicker, fuller one. Your reflection shows in the table; I'm moving your chair back. I can see that receptacle on the wall. Place something on the shelf in front of it. No, that's too big. Place something that looks lighter there. 'Betty's' red jacket is too bright. Move the reflectors, diffusers, (and whatever else those gadgets are called). These preparations drug on endlessly.

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When all was perfect, the director shouted, “Lock down!” and no one moved. In two beats, she shouted, “Action!” and the camera rolled. The clapper lady (She must have a better title than that. “I must find out tomorrow,” I thought.), stepped in front of the camera holding the clapper and shouted, “Scene 11, Take 1!” With that, my movie scenes began. (In the two days of shooting, I usually heard, “Action!” Once the director said, “Camera!” but I never did hear “Lights!”) I know we shot at least five “takes,” but I’m sure it must have been more. Remembering “takes” wasn’t on my mind. Often minuscule changes in lighting or positioning occurred between takes. Finally the director called for a wrap, and we had finished the long shots. It was then we began again with close-ups. Repeating the scene time after time, each of the four of us were filmed separately, as the camera captured only our faces, close up. For these shots the cameraman moved to a new location for each person. More pivoting the reflectors, diffusers, and other gadgets I can’t describe or name. The scenes “wrapped,” and I could finally relax. I think I passed the tests.”

### Memorable Moment –

“In the scene where I (as **Betty**) welcome Hien’s parents into my home and offer them refreshments, I reach over to pick up the plate of hors d’oeuvre, but the plate is so heavy I can’t pick it up. Retake. Now I’m aware of the weight of the plate and pick it up without a problem. I offer the plate to the mother. Just as she picks up the tooth pick with the olive on it.....the olive falls off. Retake. Now laughter on the set. OK. Next take. This time I pick up the plate; offer the hors d’oeuvres; the mother picks up the tooth pick with the olive. She pops the olive in her mouth, but.....she has the next line. Now we are really laughing, for she can’t speak with olive in her mouth. Retake. On the fourth take, we nail it.....even without laughing.”

### Glitches, Malfunctions, Snags –

“The glitches add interest to the process of movie making, but they interrupt the flow. For example, on one take Hien’s swivel chair and mine, too close together, locked so that when she sat in it, her chair wouldn’t swivel and we ended up saying our lines off in space, not to each other’s face. Once, Mark raised his coffee cup, so that it obstructed my face from the camera. Retake. The plant on the lunch table blocked a view. We sometimes unconsciously swiveled too much in our chairs. .

While the business of movie making is serious, it’s not without the lighter moments. During one shoot, Anna, whose foot was propped on a box under the table because she broke her toe the week before week, nervously shook her foot causing the box to repeatedly tap the table’s pedestal. Only the soundman heard the noise, as we were all so focused. Retake. Hien during one take rattled her lunch sack too much and set her apple on the table with such a thud that it made an undesirable noise....again a retake.

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With all the equipment, props, actors, and crew in the confines of the space, there is little extra room to stand. The set coordinator ducked under the table at our feet to be out of camera range during the filming, so her reflection wouldn't show in the large glass windows. On the second day, a crew member hid behind a chair as the camera rolled. Reflections seem to be a constant problem...reflections in the table, in the windows, on the wall. What the audience doesn't see!! At one point, fire trucks roared down the street below, practically drowning out the dialogue, so once again the scene was redone. In another scene, an airplane zoomed overhead causing an objectionable noise. No wonder movies often take months to film."

## The Cast and Crew -

"On of the interesting aspects of filming is the time between scenes can be used to talk with the crew or other cast members. What an interesting group! Everyone had a fascinating story about their involvement with commercial making, previous films or videos, performing in clubs, directing productions or other activities unrelated to show business. I enjoyed hearing the stories and getting to know the people who worked on the film.

Although I am somewhat aware of how movies are made, I found the actual process engaging and intricate. For example, during filming, the cast members and the crew members didn't talk or make eye contact. Each group is in a separate world. It's like the actors operate in a cocoon and the busy beaver crew members live outside the cocoon. The soundman hangs the boom over your head, the camera crew arranges and positions, and the assistants constantly assist...drinks for the cast, boxes to raise plants higher, props moved to a new position, makeup dabbed on the nose and cheeks, spot lights swiveled, yet the actors interact only with each other. It was difficult not to watch all this operation.

While my role as '**Betty**' in the film is quite small, it is great fun to participate in the project, observe the process, and be part of a real film."

## Actor Alton Jones

"Most of the shooting days were long, tedious, but very effective. The longest day I recall was working on the shoot at the bar, Winks. It seemed as if Tiffany had to get as much footage as possible before the bar kicked the crew out. Tiffany got the necessary shots for the film."

"Tiffany knew that I did stage work and did pantomime cast me initially in a non-speaking role of the 'Bartender'. It involved sitting behind a bar, serving drinks and chatting with patrons. I am a non-drinker and rarely visited bars, but was willing to try acting as if I was comfortable in that type of setting. The second role was '**Fierce Cherry**'. This was a speaking role for the emcee for the female impersonator contest at

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Winks. Tiffany knew I was the producer and host of local call-in arts and entertainment radio show, "Phoenix Arts & Entertainment Radio" and thought I would be good fit for this part. She gave me the opportunity to name the character. One of my favorite drinks is Gatorade's Fierce Grape. The name Fierce Grape didn't quite right for an emcee in a female impersonator contest. So, I opted to change it to **'Fierce Cherry'**. I wore my own tuxedo, red tie, sunglasses with red lenses, a red felt crown and a blonde Page Boy style wig purchased at an Easley's costume shop in Phoenix. In addition, I used a remote microphone used with my radio show and purchased a red colored foam microphone cover. The character was fun. The wig, crown, sunglasses enabled me to become someone else if only for a few minutes. The personality was a combination of Milton Berle, Flip Wilson in their female impersonations along with David Allen Grier and Damon Wayans in their "Men On..." characters in the sketch TV comedy "In Living Color". I am animated and use body and voice for expression. Portraying a villain or superhero hidden by costume and make-up would be fun. A 'Darth Vader' type of character. Cuba Gooding Jr.'s character of 'Mikey', a hired assassin in the movie "Shadow boxer" and John Travolta's character of 'Gabriel Shear' in the movie "Swordfish" would be the type of roles I would also enjoy. Give me an opportunity to portray a character with limited dialog and lots of calm, eerie and intense body language any day."

"I enjoy working with Tiffany...or "Baby" as I like to affectionately call her. She is focused, task oriented, knows what she wants and those working for feel confident in her management abilities. She is one who screams during production, but will slightly raise her voice to casually cast and crew that she is starting to get irritated. The two memorable moments were filming at Winks and the house scene. I believe it was at Rebecca's house. This gave me the opportunity to watch Tiffany get the cast and crew to perform to her specifications. It was like watching an orchestra conductor. I often wonder if she is really human. But it's always a good experience working with Tiffany."