

EPK

The only kid in border detention who *wants* to be deported!



LUCHA AND THE EKEKO

BASED ON THE FEATURE DRAMEDY *FITNESS TEST*



An upbeat, Latina-flavored, road movie.

BRIEF STORYLINE

MARISOL is a shy, recently orphaned, middle-schooler. Today, with the help of her adoptive mother, ELENA, she rummages for items to sell at her school's fundraiser. When Marisol stumbles upon a peculiar doll, Elena recognizes it as an Ekeko—the souvenir/gift from an undocumented migrant girl named LUCHA. This prompts Elena to recount the colorful story of how Lucha (and her Ekeko) opened her heart ... to eventually receive Marisol in adoption.



MARISOL DISCOVERS THE EKEKO

THE FILM

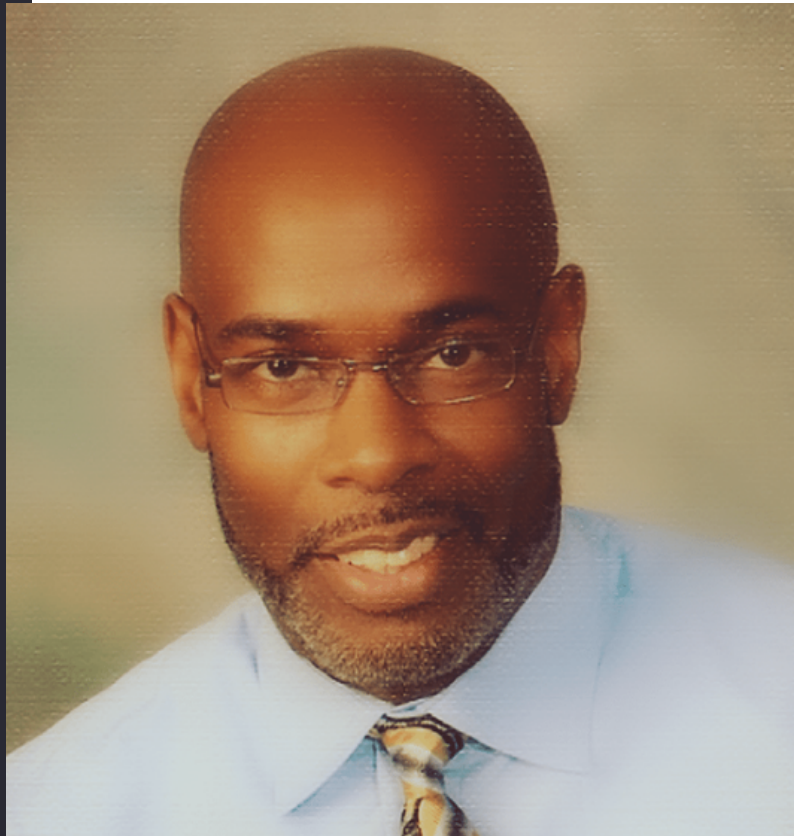
LUCHA and the EKEKO is an animated short that brings together an unlikely pair—a pop diva and the toughest kid in border detention—in what turns out to be foster-parenting hell. But that's just the beginning of their adventure-filled journey that involves an Andean trek, bounty hunters, dangerous obstacles, wild animals, and armed narco farmers.

BIOS

TEAM/CAST

Roger Edwards, Jr.

***Writer-Director,
Executive Producer***



Formally educated as an electrical engineer, Roger Edwards has worked as an engineer and technical writer for several Fortune 500 telecommunications companies after graduating from North Carolina State University. With aspirations (since high school) in the entertainment industry, Roger used his spare time to engage in a variety of creative writing efforts—including screenwriting. His producer preparation has been multifaceted and has included involvement in various phases of theatre and film production—such as assistant directing for community theatre, as well as working as PA, Grip and Sound Recordist on low-budget film/music video productions.

A series of successes followed: Roger's first teleplay was locally produced for a children's fantasy drama series ("SPARKS," WRAL-TV)—which led to a two-year staff writing position. His first short screenplay took the First Place prize in a screenwriting competition. His second short screenplay earned him a Finalist nod in the ABC Entertainment/Walt Disney Studios Talent Development Program. His first feature screenplay was quickly optioned. And his TV spec for the "2 BROKE GIRLS" sitcom nabbed Finalist in the Filmmatic Comedy Screenplay Awards.

These successes prompted Roger to take his passion to the next level and enroll in the Hollywood Film Institute's Film Producing Program and to later enroll in the USC School of Cinema-Television MBA program. Unfortunately, he had to give up his seat in the prestigious program to address an urgent family matter—requiring his personal involvement and financial assistance. Although, putting family first meant missing that "door of opportunity," he decided to form his own company (Cool Breeze Communications)—for prying those "doors of opportunity" back open again.

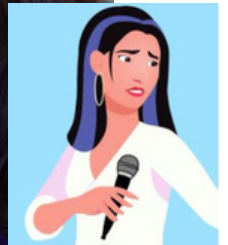
Camila Beatriz (as *Lucha*)

Born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Camila moved to Los Angeles at the age of 17 to study Theatre, Writing, and Journalism at the University of Southern California. She's worked on stage plays ever since she can remember, and began her career in voice over after graduating from USC. She loves doing anything from commercial work to animation. Camila also works in TV development at Paramount Television Studios. Outside of her work, Camila spends time decorating her beloved Los Angeles apartment, planning road trips around California, and hanging out with her stepdog, Rudy.



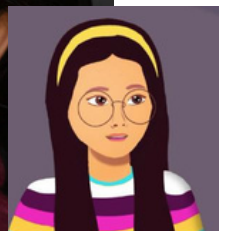
Marina Vidal (as *Elena*)

Marina is the last-born child of one of Cuba's most famous comedians and actors, Ido Vidal from the comedic duo Ido & Eddie. So since the age of 3, she fell in love with the entertainment world. As a young woman, she competed in more than 14 beauty pageants winning nine and placing 1st and 2nd runner up among the rest. She has been the only Hispanic woman to win the "Triple Crown:" Miss Hispanidad 1994, Miss Carnaval 1995, and Miss Florida USA 1996. Since winning the Miss Florida USA title, Marina has gone on to forge a remarkable career within the television, commercial, and voice-over industries. Her professional achievements include success as an Emmy® award-winning journalist, TV anchor, entertainment reporter, and actress for the nation's top Hispanic networks.



Allison Simeon (as *Marisol*)

Allison—from Durham, North Carolina—is a student at Duke University studying psychology. Being a strong supporter of immigrants' rights, she was drawn to this project for that reason. "It's so awesome that the creators are raising awareness on difficult transitions into this country, in addition to blended families!" She is super excited to be a part of it!



STILLS



Separated at the border



Lucha escapes detention



Machu Picchu



Reunited



Ekeko



Marisol's adoption



Trek through Andes

LINKS

[LUCHA and the EKEKO Website](#)

[Trailer - Version One](#)

[Trailer - Version Two](#)

[Facebook](#)

[IMDb](#)

TECHNICAL DETAILS

VIDEO FILE

Length	7:57
File size	4.6 GB
Created	Feb 18, 2022
Filename	Lucha and the Ekeko - Final MA 17 Feb 2022.mov

VIDEO

Codec	prores
File Type	mov
Bitrate	75 Kbps
Resolution	1920 x 1080
Aspect Ratio	16:9
FPS	23.976
Color	Color

AUDIO

Sound Mix	Stereo PCM 24-bit, 48 kHz
Codec	pcm_s24le
Sample Rate	48000
Bitrate	2 Kb/s
Channels	2

CREDITS

A COOL BREEZE COMMUNICATIONS Production

In association with AMAZING STUDIOS

Based on the feature dramedy *Fitness Test* by Roger L. Edwards, Jr.

Roger L. Edwards, Jr. / Mike Cole Executive Producer

George Turnipseed Associate Producer

Roger L. Edwards, Jr. Writer and Director

Janelle Hamo Casting Director

Claudio Iedwab, Roxanne Standefer and
Adam Hofmann Art Direction & Storyboarding

Carl Taylor Original Music Score

Carl Taylor Sound Design/Mastering

Fred Medlin Creative Consultant

Claudio Iedwab, Roxanne Standefer, Adam
Hofmann and Micaelah Scott Petersen Art Asset Creation

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In 2018, we all witnessed the disturbing images of children being separated from parents at the southern U.S. border—during the Zero-Tolerance immigration crackdown. In 2019, a DHS Inspector General report disclosed that many more families were separated than previously acknowledged. And now in 2022, a new Physicians for Human Rights report quantifies what we’ve, intuitively, known all along—that the family separation policy had psychological and emotional trauma among its devastating consequences. On top of that, thousands of families still have not been reunited. So, the family separation crisis is not over. There’s more work to be done.

Apart from its entertainment value, we hope *LUCHA and the EKEKO* can also serve as an advocacy tool. In solidarity with advocates for immigrant justice, this film can serve as a tool—supporting their work to raise awareness and fight against the lingering and devastating consequences that the Zero-Tolerance “family separation” policy has caused mothers, children and families.

In addition, given the interwoven themes of motherhood and redemption, we hope that *LUCHA and the EKEKO* helps strengthen positive narratives around foster care and adoption—thereby helping build public support.

ACCOLADES

REVIEWS & AUDIENCE FEEDBACK



UK FILM REVIEW

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

AWARDS



ABOUT

COOL BREEZE COMMUNICATIONS

Founded in 1995, Cool Breeze Communications is an independent, North Carolina-based media company that creates original, high-quality entertainment for diverse audiences worldwide.

MISSION

To create fresh, original, quality media that promotes diversity and reinforces positive messages about life, love and the human spirit.

WHAT WE DO

Our Outreach Media business is one of the ways we give back to the community. In collaboration with other organizations, Cool Breeze produces short films that can be packaged with discussion guides and other support materials for the benefit of educators, non-profits, and families.

These original programs and media tools are designed to cleverly weave entertainment, storytelling and community outreach.

LOGOS



CONTACT

Cool Breeze Communications

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Knightdale, North Carolina 27545

Phone: 919-217-4115

E-mail: coolbreezecomm-1@yahoo.com

FAQ

Where did you get the idea for the film, and what inspired you to make it?

Because of my interests in Spanish language and Latino culture, music, etc., I'd wanted to write a Latino-themed story for a while. I'd been thinking about a broader dramatic work, partially set in Bolivia. Then 2018 happened. The Zero-Tolerance immigration crackdown. I watched—along with the rest of world—the disturbing images of children being separated from parents at the southern U.S. border. Deeply moving. This story is a personal reaction to that.

How did you learn about the obscure doll - the Ekeko?

I decided to kick my language study up a notch by attending a Spanish immersion program. I selected a school in Bolivia where I could make it a threefer: study the language, volunteer at an orphanage, and do story research. I arranged to meet with a historian and experts in indigenous culture and folk traditions. While traveling around, I attended a few festivals and saw an Ekeko for the first time.

How long did it take to make "LUCHA and the EKEKO?"

In 2019, I got busy developing the story and writing the script. It took maybe 3-4 months to write and polish it. In 2020, I entered it into various screenwriting competitions to see how it would do. After winning a few contests and getting favorable feedback from judges, I decided it was time to make a film. Once I found the animation team and got them on board (February 2021), it took about 1 year to complete - due to the pandemic and their current slate of projects.

What was most fun about working on the project?

The most enjoyable aspect of this project was working with the animation team. After reading the script, they jumped right in. The story and issues resonated with them. I remember being on a call with the lead animator, and he said he was already visualizing scenes and transitions. His excitement was contagious.

FAQ (Cont'd)

What was biggest obstacle you encountered on this production?

The pandemic. The initial plan for the film was live-action. But the pandemic shut that down in its tracks. While I was discouraged and sidetracked, a good friend suggested I try the animation route. He'd just finished binge-watching some very impactful StoryCorps animations. That started me on my path to animate, and here we are. The pandemic and animation choice had the added benefit of saving on production costs as well.

What were some of the biggest challenges while working on project?

- My biggest concern was how project would be received by the LatinX community. I didn't want to offend or come across as trivializing or being insensitive to the issues of immigration and family separation by using humor. Balancing comedy with raising awareness about such a serious issue is tricky.
- The other challenge was trying to raise awareness without sounding preachy or hitting people over the head.
- Even trickier was getting the voice-over performance right for Elena. It had to be nuanced. Part of her growth arc has to do with her immigration views. The actress had to pull off her feisty, joking sarcasm and her off-color remarks about undocumented migrants without coming across as hateful. Elena still had to be sympathetic and likeable. Talk about threading a needle! It was sort of like the Archie Bunker phenomenon -- the whole "innocent bigot" thing.

What are your plans for the film going forward?

I've been blessed with such positive audience feedback and reviews. So I'll be working to expand this into a larger work -- from a short to a feature. The short, given its themes of adoption and immigration, naturally lends itself to outreach and can hopefully be leveraged as a tool for advocacy.