



a film by ANTHONY CATALANO

# VOLITION

The true story of Ricky Rodriguez.  
Told in his own words.



OFFICIAL SELECTION  
**Bare Bones  
International Film  
& Music Festival**  
2021



# DETAILS

**Runtime:** 92 minutes

**Sound Mix:** Stereo

**Aspect Ratio:** 2.35:1

**Language:** English

**Production Budget:** \$10,000

**Filming Location:** Northeast Wisconsin

**Release Year:** 2021

**Year Of Production:** 2020

**Length Of Production:** 11 Days

**Camera:** Panasonic AF-100

# LOGLINE

Following years of abuse while being raised in a cult, Ricky Rodriguez's past, present, and future will collide as he seeks retribution against the cult's leadership - including his own mother.

# SYNOPSIS

Ricky Rodriguez was born into the infamous Children Of God cult. His adoptive father led the cult, and Ricky was raised as their messiah. Ricky endured a lifetime of sexual abuse before escaping. His past haunts him. In 2005, Ricky is compelled to seek retribution against the cult by any means necessary. He tracks the cult's current leader - his mother. Ricky sees a window of opportunity to strike, so he makes his final preparations and records a manifesto to explain the actions he's about to take.





# FILMMAKER SPOTLIGHT

Anthony Catalano was born and raised in Green Bay, WI. He fell in love with movies as a young child and developed a passion for filmmaking. He studied Film & Video at Columbia College Chicago, where he graduated magna cum laude. After college, Anthony returned to Northeast Wisconsin and spent the following decade building a media production company from the ground up. Acting as a one-man crew gave Anthony the real world experience and confidence to finally fulfill his dream of making a feature length film. On *VOLITION*, Anthony performed the duties of director, producer, writer, editor, cinematographer, casting director, production designer, hair and makeup artist, and music producer.

# CAST

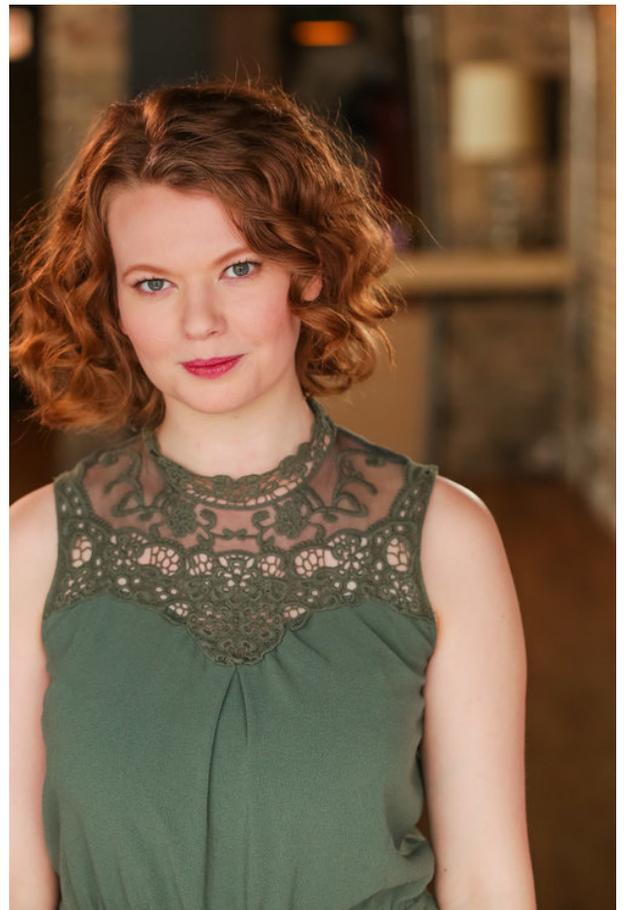


## **Dominick Alesia as Ricky Rodriguez**

Dominick Alesia is an Actor, Playwright, Composer, and Lyricist in Chicago. During his time at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, he became the first student to perform a completely original musical, which was then taken for a performance in Indiana, as well as two performances at Theater Wit in Chicago. Since then, he has written music for plays produced by The Imposters Theatre Co., of which he is an ensemble member. He is currently writing a musical set to be produced in 2023.

## **Anna Roemer as Elixcia Munumel**

Currently based in Chicago, Anna Roemer has worked on film and series projects such as "The Promise of the Butterfly", "Morium" and most recently, "Volition"! Her theatrical credits include "Mamma Mia" (Drury Lane Oakbrook) and "The Polar Express (Rail Events Productions). Anna discovered a love for choreography early on, and has worked on several professional and educational productions since, including working as an assistant choreographer for Drury Lane Oakbrook and Chicago Shakespeare Theater, as well as being resident choreographer for the Youth company, Music House Inc.





# MAKING OF

I was introduced to Ricky Rodriguez through a series on the Children Of God cult by The Last Podcast On The Left in 2017. As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse myself, his story resonated with me on a deeper level. I watched his manifesto and was mesmerized by the duality of his demeanor - calm and well-spoken one moment and overflowing with rage and pain the next.

The concept of VOLITION quickly came together in my head. From the beginning I knew I wanted to take an unconventional approach and put the recording of his manifesto center stage. In 2019 I finished the script and after 10 years of searching for the right project to be my directorial debut, I knew VOLITION was it.

Knowing that the entire film hinged on the portrayal of Ricky, I took my time in the casting process. When I came across Dominick Alesia's reel, I saw a raw talent with incredible potential. Casting Dominick was not an easy decision, but in hindsight it was the best possible decision I could make. He was an absolute professional on set, and he also ended up using his musical skills to create the film's original score. Plus he introduced me to his partner Anna Roemer, who I immediately cast as Elixcia Munumel after a single phenomenal audition.

I wore many hats in the creation of *VOLITION*, but I couldn't have pulled it off without my small but dedicated crew of Alec Naffziger and Jordan Luker. Alec was my roommate in college and we've been creative partners since, while Jordan is my brother-in-law. I knew I could trust them, and in return they provided incredible support to help make production run incredibly smooth.





We were fully prepared as our scheduled production dates in May 2020 approached, but then the world began to shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic and everything was thrown in the air. I provided the entire cast and crew the opportunity to decline to participate - some did - but our entire principal cast and crew decided to move forward. Restrictions in Wisconsin were rolled back just two

weeks prior to our shoot, which set us firmly back on track.

Our brisk 11 day shoot passed quickly but was relatively free of problems. We never fell behind, and typically wrapped far earlier than anticipated - the best example being the day we shot 40% of the film's runtime in just 4 hours with only two takes needed... a testament to Dominick's preparedness and the crew's efficiency.

We wrapped production in June, and the film was largely completed by the end of September thanks to audio engineer Joel R. Martin and visual effects artist Jesse Kujava providing steep discounts so that I could stretch what little budget I had left and still have a professional and polished film.

In October I held a private screening for family and friends at the very same movie theater that I worked at as a teenager. 17 years prior I interviewed for the job and I was asked why I wanted to work there. I said it was because I wanted to make movies. In that moment sitting in the dark theater as VOLITION began, I smiled, knowing I finally did it.

The entire VOLITION team is proud of what we were able to accomplish, and we look forward to sharing our work with the world. Equally important are the relationships we forged during this unique shared experience - the bulk of the cast and crew will be reuniting on a new feature film set to begin production in 2022.



Anthony Catalano  
Writer, Director, Producer





# RESOURCES

**Trailer:** <https://vimeo.com/523611772>

**Website:** <https://www.adc-video.com/volition>

**IMDB:** <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13062780>

**EPK:** <https://rb.gy/ltolbt>

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# CREW

## Anthony Catalano

Writer, Director, Producer, Director Of Photography,  
Editor, Production Designer, Casting Director,  
Hair and Makeup, Music Producer

## Alec Naffziger

Assistant Director  
Assistant Camera  
Script Supervisor  
Key Grip

## Jordan Luker

Production Sound Mixer  
Grip  
Stand-in

## Dominick Alesia

Music

## Jesse Kujava

Visual Effects Supervisor

## Joel R. Martin

Post Audio Engineer

# CAST

## Dominick Alesia

Ricky Rodriguez

## Anna Roemer

Elixcia Munumel

## Rima Sabal

Susan Kauten