

**A M A Z O N**  
**S T U D I O S**  
**P R E S E N T S**  
***EMERGENCY***



**SUDANCE FILM FESTIVAL**  
**OFFICIAL SELECTION 2022**

A film by Carey Williams and KD Dávila with Temple Hill Entertainment Productions

**Official Synopsis**

Kunle (Donald Elise Watkins) and his best friend, Sean (RJ Cyler), are both seniors in college about to embark on an epic night of Spring Break parties. Sean has the whole night planned out, including every party they will hit on their “legendary tour.” Kunle is down, yet mostly concerned with finishing up his mold experiment in his lab, as his acceptance to Princeton is hinging on the results. They return to their apartment to pre-game, yet find that their roommate, Carlos (Sebastian Chacon), left the door open. As they enter with trepidation, Sean and Kunle discover a drunk, semi-conscious White female they don’t know on the floor and an oblivious Carlos, who didn’t hear her come in over the videogame blaring in his ears. Kunle wants to call the cops but Sean vehemently opposes the idea concerned how it will look when the cops show up (two Black men, one Latino man and a passed out White woman). Together, Carlos, Sean and Kunle load the girl (who they nickname Goldilocks, but whose real name is Emma (Maddie Nichols) into Sean’s van, with the intention of taking her somewhere safe rather than calling the police. Meanwhile, Emma’s sister, Maddy (Sabrina Carpenter), has realized that Emma left the party they were at, and begins to search for her in a drunk panic using Emma’s phone’s location. What ensues is a chaotic, hilarious, and tension-filled chase all over town as our trio grapples with their differences while attempting to bring Emma to safety.

**Distribution**

Amazon Worldwide

## **Screenwriter's Interview KD Dávila**

**Please tell us what experiences inspired the *EMERGENCY* story?**

“The story was inspired by a few elements. I am Mexican-American and I grew up in Los Angeles. I’m the pale person in my family, yet my dad and a lot of the other men in my family would get stopped all the time by the cops for “fitting the description of a suspect.” I remember talking to my dad about it, and he couldn’t believe that getting pulled over by the police and searched all the time for no reason wasn’t a universal experience.”

“Growing up in the Latino community, I noticed that many of my friends and family members constantly had to do this calculation about how they were being perceived—trying to make sure that they weren’t being perceived the wrong way. Many members of the Latino community—along with the Black community—live in a culture of fear surrounding the police. Carey and I wanted to do something that touched on that fear, specifically, and what it does to you as you’re moving through your day-to-day life.”

“What does it mean to live in a country where a sizable segment of the population is more afraid of what might happen if they call 911 for help during an emergency than they are of the emergency itself?”

**Were there any specific aspects of the storyline that you were excited to expand upon in this feature film?**

“*EMERGENCY* was originally a short film, which was similar to the scene at the end of act one where Sean and Kunle find Emma and have to decide what to do with her. In expanding this into a feature film, it was really exciting to be able to really delve into the relationship between these characters, and watch their thought process as they’re making these decisions, and then see the consequences of those decisions play out.”

Dávila explains, “It was a lot of fun to write and watch the dominos fall.”

“We get to watch Sean and Kunle bend themselves into pretzels trying to anticipate how they are being perceived, and then we see how all the things they’ve done to try to avoid conflict just leading to further conflicts.”

Dávila further notes, “One of the biggest things we added in the process of adapting the short film to a feature film was the addition of Maddy and her friends, who operate sort of as antagonists in a chase movie. We consider this to be the world’s smallest road trip movie, because it was intended to be a twenty-minute journey, yet it quickly spirals out of their control.”

### **Can you talk about your working relationship with Carey?**

“Carey and I met in Project Involve at Film Independent when we made a short film together.

We made *EMERGENCY* the short, which was a great collaborative experience. I presented the concept to Carey and he really elevated the short with his unique visual style. It went so well that we decided to keep working together on the feature! We have a lot of trust in each other. He’s so good at grounding the actors and their relationships, and capturing their vulnerability. I feel very fortunate that we were able to make this film together.”

### **How does it feel to see the storyline coming together as a feature film?**

“It is a bit surreal, to be honest. As a writer, you dream things up in your head—you see the scenes, you hear the voices of the characters, you imagine what they’ll be like. Seeing it all come to reality, it has been really fun to watch. The actors bring so much of their own unique energies to these roles. Also, the party sets were so cool. I wrote a line in a script about a green room with fuzzy walls, and then I got to walk on a set with green fuzzy walls! That’s magical. Our production designer Jeremy Woodward was so awesome, and he really paid such careful attention to all the details.

“I wish I could live on his movie sets.”

### **Why do you think *EMERGENCY* is an important story to be told now?**

“It is funny because when Carey and I were originally going out and pitching *EMERGENCY*, suddenly people started telling us, “Oh wow, this story is so timely.” Because there were all of these news stories of police shootings that were coming out. Yet, Carey and I had been working on this for several years at that point. Because for us, this wasn’t a new issue at all. This is an issue the African-American community has been grappling with for the longest time. And in LA where I grew up, it is also a Latino issue. There has been tension between law enforcement and the communities of color that they police for a long time, and finally people are paying attention, seeing the damage that’s been done. We wanted to examine what that breakdown of trust has done to young people in particular. What happens when you aren’t confident that you can call for help in an emergency, without something bad happening to you?”

“This story needs to be told. And I’m glad we have the opportunity to tell this story now.”

### **You mentioned that you and Carey were in discussions prior to the pandemic and the situations that occurred in 2020. What inspired this story? Was there a particular experience that inspired this story with you and Carey?**

“There were a few real experiences that inspired this story. I’ve had several friends who have been in similar situations to the one in the film. One of my good friends, who is also Chicano, dealt with a similar situation: a random young White woman showed up at his door, super drunk, and she passed out. My friend is the sweetest person. He took the good Samaritan approach and said I’ll be the nice person and drive her back from whence she came. Then he started driving, and it occurred

to him he had this passed out White woman in his car, and it just didn't look good. I remember him telling me 'It was the longest drive of my life.'"

"If you have pale skin and you are a woman you might not have to think about the ramifications of just calling 911. For Carey and I, one big question of the film boils down to, "What if you were more afraid of calling 911 than you were of the emergency itself? This film illustrates a situation that many people can relate to, and people who have not been in a situation can also place themselves in that position and see it even if they have not been through it."

### **How important is original storytelling to you?**

"Original storytelling is so important. There are so many stories that have not been told. There are so many communities that have not had the ability to have their stories told. We see this as an opportunity to tell our stories, about the things our communities experience on a day-to-day basis. It is great to be able to do that. I am a big believer that originality is more about how you choose to tell a story than anything else. And we tried to do something unique here—it's a sort of hybrid dark comedy/thriller.

"It deals with darker themes but we hope that it also makes people laugh along the way. "

### **Director's Interview (Carey Williams)**

#### **Tell is in your own words what *EMERGENCY* is about?**

"*EMERGENCY* is a friendship drama which on the surface appears to be a college comedy, yet it is a love story about two friends whose friendship is challenged due to differing ideologies. Those ideologies reveal a deeper commentary about what it reveals to be a young Black man in this country."

#### **What type of messaging do you think *EMERGENCY* gives to audiences?**

"It presents something that people will think is one thing, yet it flips to something else. It is so important to hear Sean say the words, I love you to Kunle. At the end when they hug and say I love you. You do not see this vulnerability from Black men. That's special."

#### **What was your vision for directing *EMERGENCY*?**

"I was initially hesitant to come on board as Director. I wanted to make sure this film was as cinematic as possible. I wanted to honor this by giving it a structured visual language, cinematic with a beautiful friendship at the center."

### **Director's Biography (Carey Williams)\***

Carey Williams is hailed by Filmmaker Magazine as one of 2018's New Faces of Independent Film, Carey Williams is a director bringing a unique and visually striking cinematic eye to the exploration of the human condition. Williams' short film *Cherry Waves*, won Best Short awards from HBO, NBC Shortcuts, San Diego Film Festival, as well as Best Narrative from Hollyshorts Film Festival. He recently premiered his feature *R#J*, a modern-day retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*, at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival and is in post-production on the feature version of his 2018 Sundance and SXSW Award-winning short film *EMERGENCY*.

### **Screenwriter's Biography – KD Dávila\***

KD Dávila is a Mexican-American writer and filmmaker based in Los Angeles. KD studied Arabic and creative writing at Princeton University before earning her MFA in Writing for Screen and Television from USC's School of Cinematic Arts. She went on to be a fellow of the Film Independent Episodic Lab, Film Independent Project Involve, the Almanack Screenwriter's Colony, and the Universal Pictures Emerging Writers Fellowship. KD wrote and executive produced the Amazon feature *EMERGENCY*, which will premiere at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival. The film is based on the short of the same name, which won Best Narrative Short at SXSW 2018 and the Special Jury Award at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. Her award-winning directorial debut *PLEASE HOLD* is currently shortlisted for the 2022 Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film. KD has written for several television shows, most recently *MOTHERLAND: FORT SALEM*, and is now developing a new series for CBS Studios.

\* Denotes approved bio

## TOP CREDITS

### CAST

Sean  
Kunle  
Carlos  
Maddy  
Emma  
Alice  
Rafael

RJ Cyler  
Donald Elise Watkins  
Sebastian Chacon  
Sabrina Carpenter  
Maddie Nichols  
Madison Thompson  
Diego Abraham

Director  
Screenwriter

Carey Williams  
KD Dávila

Producer  
Producer  
Producer  
Co-Producer  
Executive Producer  
Executive Producer/Unit Production Manager

Marty Bowen  
Wyck Godfrey  
Isaac Klausner  
Joenique C. Rose  
John Fischer  
Paul Davis

Director of Photography  
Script Supervisor  
Costume Designer  
First Assistant Director  
Sound Operator  
Editing  
Sound Editing  
Sound Editing  
Sound Editing  
Mixing  
Post Production Supervisor

Michael Dallatorre  
Claire Tanner  
Icy White  
H.H. Cooper  
Paul Reed  
Lam Nguyen  
Nicholas Schenck  
Steven Visscher  
Allan Zaleski  
Emily Gilmer  
Sherrell Hodges

Production

Temple Hill Productions

In association with

Big Indie Pictures

With the support of

The Georgia Film, Music &  
Digital Entertainment Office,  
a division of the GA Depart.  
of Economic Development