

SHORT FILM PITCH DECK

TRAFFIK(ED)

A contained survival thriller set almost entirely in the back of a moving van.

Written by
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THE HOOK

The first person who finds her dies trying.

Logline

A woman wakes drugged and bound in the back of a traffickers' van. She breaks free just as a traffic stop turns fatal - and has to use everything left in the van to get out before the men up front decide she's a loose end.

Contained. Immediate. Brutal.



AT A GLANCE

A contained short, built to shoot lean.

FORMAT	Short film / proof-of-concept potential
RUNTIME TARGET	10-12 minutes
GENRE	Survival thriller / dark comedy / action
PRIMARY LOCATIONS	Cargo van interior + industrial exterior
CAST	1 lead, 2 captors, 1 officer, dispatch VO
LANGUAGE	English + Russian, with subjective subtitles
CONTENT NOTES	Abduction, drugging, gun violence, implied trafficking





STORY ENGINE

Every object becomes a weapon.

Each object in the van shows up first as evidence of captivity, then becomes something she survives with.

Stiletto heel -> broken zip tie

Children's clothes -> larger horror

Police stop -> false rescue

Radio + keys -> live signal out

Vest + syringe + gun -> reversal

SYNOPSIS

A rescue attempt becomes another prison.

A young woman wakes bound inside a white, soundproofed van. She escapes her zip tie and finds children's things among the debris - proof that she is not the first cargo.

When a traffic stop seems to offer rescue, her cries are swallowed by tape, foam, and radio noise. The officer opens the van and is killed. Now handcuffed beside his body, she uses his radio to call for help - triggering a chase that ends at an abandoned industrial complex.

At dawn, she turns the officer's vest, keys, syringe, and gun into a brutal escape.



LEAD ROLE

The Woman

She is not written as a passive victim. She is overpowered and drugged, and still thinking faster than the men holding her.

What the role needs

- Breath, eyes, pain, calculation
- Split-second decisions under panic
- Problem-solving with her body, not dialogue
- Fear that hardens into focus
- Survival, with something darker underneath





THE THREAT

The captors are a moving cage.

Man 1 and Man 2 are not elegant masterminds. They are banal, cruel, nervous, and dangerously stupid. That makes them scarier: the violence is not mythic. It is procedural, sloppy, and immediate.

Their ugly humor is the film's tonal edge - every joke lands wrong, every screw-up escalates, every bit of incompetence becomes a new danger.

Russian fragments and broken English keep her - and us - locked outside the full picture.

tone + references

No-exit thriller with teeth.

Tense, sensory, and compact - a chamber piece that turns into a chase, then a revenge beat, without ever losing the claustrophobia of the van.

Reference points

Green Room - no-exit pressure

Run - body as obstacle / survival mechanics

Revenge - cathartic bodily reversal

Blue Ruin - ugly accidental violence

Nightcrawler - nocturnal industrial rot





VISUAL LANGUAGE

White box. Red bleed. Blue interruption.

Inside the van, the image is compressed and tactile: foam, plastic, rubber, steel, sweat, tape. The camera stays close enough that every object feels reachable and every breath feels audible.

Palette arc

- Sterile white: captivity
- Red LED: danger and panic
- Police blue: hope corrupted
- Dawn gold: escape, but not innocence

Camera plan: macro inserts, shallow depth, hard practicals, handheld pressure inside; wider locked frames once the world opens up.

SOUND DESIGN

Silence is the antagonist.

The van is soundproofed, so we hear everything that can't get out: muffled screams, swallowed impacts, breath, tape, radio static, sirens, voices just out of reach.

The Russian works as both texture and threat. When she's drugged, the subtitles slip - words misfire, then correct - so the audience has to fight to follow, the way she does.

The radio is the first thing in the film that carries her voice past the walls.





WHY NOW

Make the crisis immediate, not abstract.

The film never stops for a speech. It puts a huge problem into a single concrete event - a closed van, a muted scream, a failed rescue, and a woman who has to become dangerous to survive.

Current context

UNODC reported a 25% increase in detected trafficking victims in 2022 compared with 2019. ILO, Walk Free, and IOM estimated that 50 million people were living in modern slavery in 2021.

Our approach: stay with her, and with what she does. The film points at the larger system without turning victimization into spectacle.

Sources in presenter notes: UNODC 2024; ILO / Walk Free / IOM 2022.

PRODUCTION APPROACH

Small footprint. High finish.

The short is built for a focused professional shoot: one controlled vehicle interior, one industrial exterior, a small cast, and a strong sound and lighting package.

Plan

- 3 shoot days: van interior, police stop, dawn exterior
- Removable van-wall sections for camera access
- Prelight red LED / police blue looks
- Stunt coordinator + weapons safety
- Trauma-aware set practices and closed-set protocols
- Post emphasis: sound design, radio texture, color



INITIAL BUDGET TARGET

\$60,000 target ask

A lean professional short. Final numbers depend on location, union status, insurance, and gear package.

CATEGORY	USE OF FUNDS	TARGET
Above-the-line	Producer, director, lead cast, supporting cast	\$10,500
Production crew	DP, AD, grip/electric, sound, art, HMU, PA support	\$18,000
Equipment	Camera, lenses, lighting, grip, sound, expendables	\$8,500
Locations + vehicles	Van, industrial site, permits, insurance, security	\$6,500
Art / wardrobe / safety	Props, van build, wardrobe, SFX, stunt + weapons safety	\$5,500
Post-production	Edit, sound design, score, mix, color, captions, DCP	\$8,500
Festival + contingency	EPK, trailer, submissions, contingency reserve	\$2,500
TOTAL	Preliminary target budget	\$60,000

Scalable range: lean \$35K-\$45K / premium \$75K+ depending on crew size, location control, and post package.

FESTIVAL + RELEASE STRATEGY

Festival-first, with impact screenings to follow.

Primary target: elevated genre festivals and Oscar-qualifying short programs. After that: survivor-support organizations, campus screenings, and impact conversations beyond the premiere window.

Festival targets
Sundance Shorts / SXSW / Tribeca Shorts
Palm Springs ShortFest / HollyShorts / Clermont-Ferrand
Fantastic Fest / Screampfest / Fantasia
Regional premieres + issue-aligned screenings

Release package: DCP, captions, poster, EPK, trailer, director statement, safety/intention note.





THE ASK

Help make the van impossible to ignore.

Seeking

- \$60K target financing
- Producing partner / line producer
- Controlled van and industrial location access
- Lead actor with strong physical performance range
- DP, sound designer, editor, colorist
- Stunt, weapons, and trauma-aware safety support

Next package: locked budget, schedule, shot list, casting plan, location lookbook, and director's statement.

A closed door. A dead radio. One last opening.