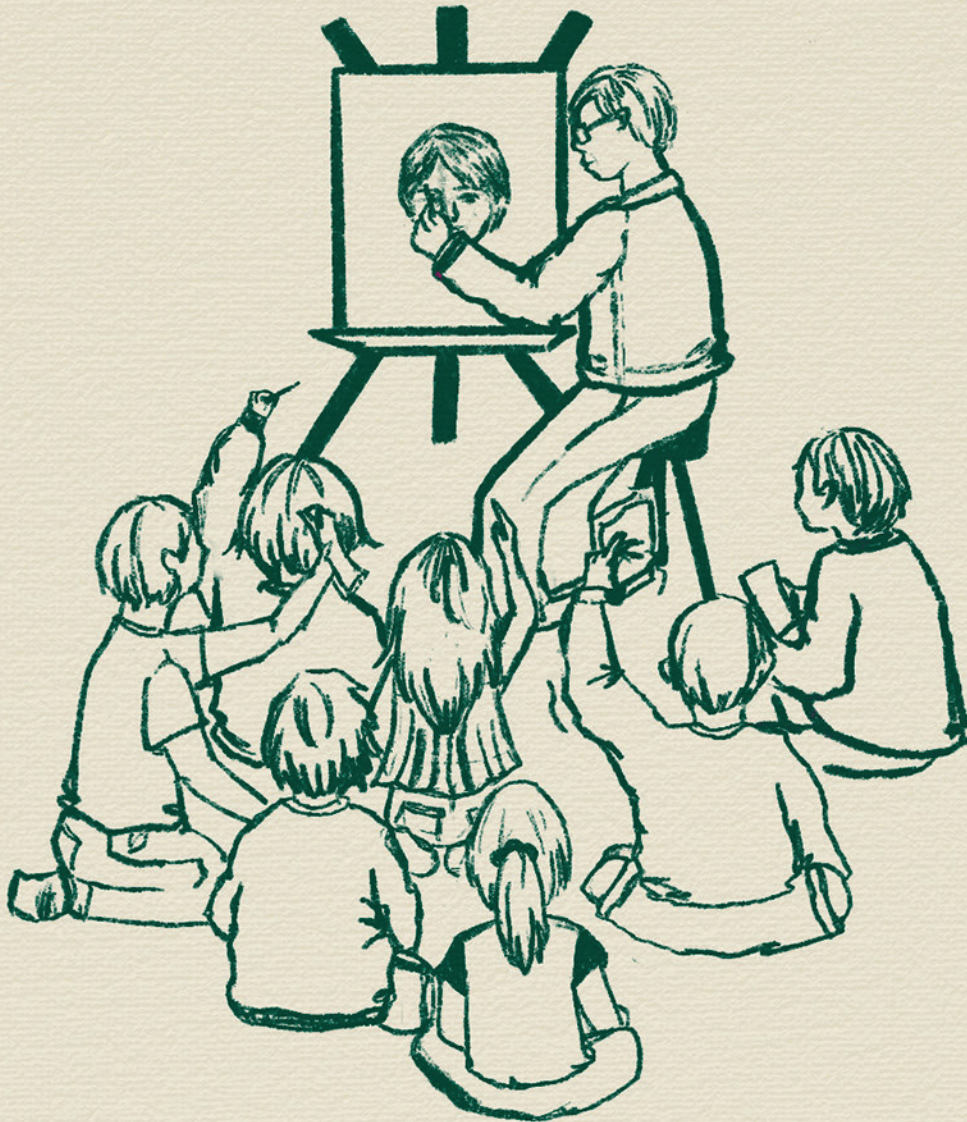


Papa's Corner

A short film by A. J. Lising



Press Kit

Overview

Logline

Jay's traumatic memory of his grandfather's death haunts him on the biggest stage of his life: the national spelling bee competition.

Social Media



@papascornerfilm



[imdb.com/title/tt31227586](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt31227586)

Fiscal Sponsorship Page

papascorner.allyrafundraising.com

Contact

papascornerfilm@gmail.com

Specs

Genre	Drama
Anticipated rating	PG-13
Aspect ratio	2.39:1
Shooting format	Digital
Audio format	Stereo
Frame rate	24 fps
Language	English

Download Photos



The Story

On the biggest stage of his life—the National Spelling Bee—sixteen-year-old Jay Domingo freezes. A familiar word forces Jay to confront an internal demon, because this word is not just any word, but a word that resurrects a tragic memory—the day he lost his grandfather, his Papa.

Not only was he Jay's confidante and champion, Papa was also a gifted artist. In the midst of a weekend painting lesson for Jay and his grandchildren, Papa suddenly suffers a heart attack. Jay, being the oldest, has no choice but to step in to save his grandpa, but it was too late.

In the present, Jay must grapple with his trauma under the spotlight. Amidst this challenging moment, he finds solace as he recalls a sincere conversation he had with his Papa the night before the heart attack. This poignant memory serves as Jay's saving grace as he's forced to make his final attempt at spelling the proposed word.

As Jay emerges victorious, Papa's spirit was alive after all.



Director's Notes

As a storyteller that started my career in the narrative space, I recognized early on that the path to sharing any film with the world lay in authentically capturing my own truth. In February 2022, I was on a plane outbound to visit my homeland for the very first time. With 16 hours to kill on a flight to the Philippines, I figured what better way to pay homage to myself and to my Papa than to just write my truth.

“Papa’s Corner” is a love letter dedicated to my late grandfather, Papa Ernie. This story is a poignant glimpse into my childhood and relationship with Papa. Growing up, my cousins and I admired Papa’s boundless creative talent. If I were to ask him to draw Pikachu, he’d not only draw what I requested, but create two other fictitious Pokémon right next to it—yes, he was that good! Summers were the best because we had the time to participate in his impromptu art lessons that he would hold in his garage. Some days, Papa would go to the full nine, buying a handful of paint brushes, canvases, and art supplies to make sure all his grandkids could participate. I can proudly say he taught me basic principles of drawing and painting; yet as I got older, I started to realize that those cherished childhood moments with him allowed me to grow and discover myself as an artist.



“Papa’s Corner” reintroduces my Papa through the heartfelt relationship of a teenage spelling whiz, Jay Domingo, and his grandfather. And no, “Papa’s Corner” isn’t autobiographical—I’m the worst speller on this planet! My goal is for you to know Papa beyond just the stories; I want you to meet him, see him, love him as I did. I want you all to feel his presence, through his words, through his wisdom.

Papa, thank you for giving me a special environment—one where I could express myself freely, one I believe everyone deserves. To me, that is what a great artist does.

Cheers to the first artist I’ve ever met.

A. J. Lising

Writer & Director, Papa’s Corner

Director's Notes

Filipino Representation

I have a profound passion for Asian American stories that surface the world, especially when they're told by Asian filmmakers. As a Filipino director working in the commercial space, I always advocate for bringing diversity to my film sets as much as I can. It's so vital for these stories to be told by those who intimately understand and have experienced the depicted lives firsthand—the authenticity and passion shines through, strengthening the film with each collaborator.

Through “Papa’s Corner,” you’ll experience a Filipino lead in the light of an artist. While Filipino elements such as cuisine, landscapes, and language are frequently used to enhance cinematic creativity, the depiction of Filipinos as painters or illustrators remains scarce. I wanted to

fill the void and make a statement on the artistic talent of our people.

Themes

Though “Papa’s Corner” explores themes of perseverance and fate vs. free will, the primary driver of this coming-of-age story is love.

“Papa’s Corner” exemplifies a fundamental life truth: every experience, whether positive or negative, serves a purpose in shaping our lives. These trials and tribulations mold us into the individuals we are and reflect our origins.

The film is a testament to simple human values of love and familial bonds. Rather than exhibiting the themes of love through a conventional romantic story, the film celebrates resilience and the profound connection Papa shared with his grandchildren.



Our Team

Director

A. J. Lising

A.J. Lising is a Filipino-American director, photographer, and filmmaker from Buena Park, California. He's been working in both commercial and narrative spaces for over 5 years, producing work for clients such as Nike, Fitbit, Vans, Men's Health, and Urban Outfitters. In 2019, A.J. co-directed a spec ad call "Sonny Deodorant," which won Music Bed's People's Choice award. He has produced 5 short films, 2 music videos, and most recently directed the short film "Long Distance," which was submitted in the 2022 HBO APA visionaries competition.

"Papa's Corner" is inspired by his late grandfather who passed away in 2014. His grandpa was a handyman, and secretly the most talented artist A.J. ever met. His Papa spent a lot of time drawing and painting cartoon characters, superheroes, and portraits to entertain the grandkids. A.J. realized it was Papa's way of expressing his love for them. This story serves as a love letter to Papa about how much he meant to him and his family.

In any way he can, A.J. continues to push the envelope for a more diverse and inclusive film industry by creating raw, emotionally resonant stories that connect with people, especially those of his color.



"Jay Domingo" / Producer Erik Luminarias

A first-generation Filipino-American originally from Anaheim, California, **Erik Luminarias** graduated with a B.A. in Media & Cultural Studies from UC Riverside in 2017. He now resides in Los Angeles where he works full time as an actor and filmmaker.

The foundation for Erik's career has been his background as a Filipino-American. Erik has acted in projects for Philippines-based media companies MYX TV & ABS-CBN. More recently, he has acted in the short film "Long Distance," which was submitted to HBO's Visionaries APA Competition.

Pairing his studies in college with his experiences growing up in a Filipino household, Erik continually strives to bring his unique perspective to the screen.

Our Team

Producer

Regina Pigsley

Regina Pigsley is a half-Chinese writer, director, and producer from Santa Rosa, California. Her short film “The Phoenix” (2022) played at 35 festivals and won 17 awards. In 2023 alone she produced 4 short films and co-produced her first feature, *In Flight*, which was announced in *Deadline* magazine.

When she’s not working on narratives, Regina produces music videos for independent and signed artists (Capitol Records), as well as music festival/ concert broadcasts such as Outside Lands, Bonnaroo, EDC, and Ye’s Sunday Service, on platforms such as Hulu and Amazon.

Regina loves to tell stories that reflect the strength and resilience of women, youth, and underdogs in society. She hopes to continue to tell stories that empower, uplift, and challenge the norm.



Director of Photography

Mohamed Samra

Mohamed Samra is a Syrian-American cinematographer based in Los Angeles, CA. He has an extensive portfolio in the music video, narrative, and commercial fields. In the past five years, he has worked with notable artists and groups such as Olivia Rodrigo, Dreamville, Rauw, and Def Loaf. In 2021, the film he DP'd, “Creature,” won Best Horror at the LA Independent Women Film Awards; it also placed 3rd at the Nosferatu Festival and was selected to screen at the Montreal Independent Film Festival.

Across his body of work, you can truly feel every frame and its purpose. He is known for his distinct lighting patterns, colors, and tones that he chooses on set.

Our Team

Key Production Credits

Writer & Director
AJ Lising

Producers
Regina Pigsley
Erik Luminarias

Director of Photography
Mohamed Samra

Production Designer
Katrina Songco

Editor
Pattie Esguerra

Costume Designer
Riza Clave

Hair & Makeup
Hailey Giles

1st Assistant Director
Liv Li

Gaffer
Andrew Kowalski

Marketing
Avery Chung-Melino

Still Photographer
Jeremiah Malingkas

Cast

Jay Papa
Erik Luminarias **Val Victa**

Hannah
Maya Vioria

Josh
Brian Calo

Micah
Jax Mendoza

Aron
Audrey Palos

Ester
Alina Palos

Ashley
Jordan Seto



Photos

Photos by Jeremiah Malingkas

Download here:







Papa's Corner

A FILMBYAJ PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH SANDBOX STUDIOS

ERIK LUMINARIAS VAL VICTA "PAPA'S CORNER" MAYA VILORIA BRIAN CALO JORDAN SETO JAX MENDOZA AUDREY PALOS ALINA PALOS

CASTING BY A.J. LISING REGINA PIGSLEY MUSIC BY JULIUS MAKEUP BY HAILEY GILES COSTUMES BY RIZA CLAVE EDITED BY PATTIE ESGUERRA

PRODUCTION DESIGNER KATRINA SONGCO DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MOHAMED SAMRA EXECUTIVE PRODUCER A.J. LISING

PRODUCED BY REGINA PIGSLEY ERIK LUMINARIAS WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY A.J. LISING