THE GHOST at SIELETOIS SIELETOIS ROCK

> a film by Bobby Abate



## Winner, Princess Grace Special Projects Grant, 2024 World Premiere, 2026



Arri Alexa, Cinemascope TRT: 20:30



# SHORT SYNOPSIS: Summer 1992. At the height of the AIDS crisis, 18-year-old Vinny reels after his first time with another boy, a goth named Gabe from the city. In the off-kilter Catskills town of Callicoon, his only confidant is Chris, a ghost he's been channeling on a Ouija board. When Vinny and Gabe meet again, terror and shame collide in a world where desire and death are interlocked, and nightmares spiral into

reality.

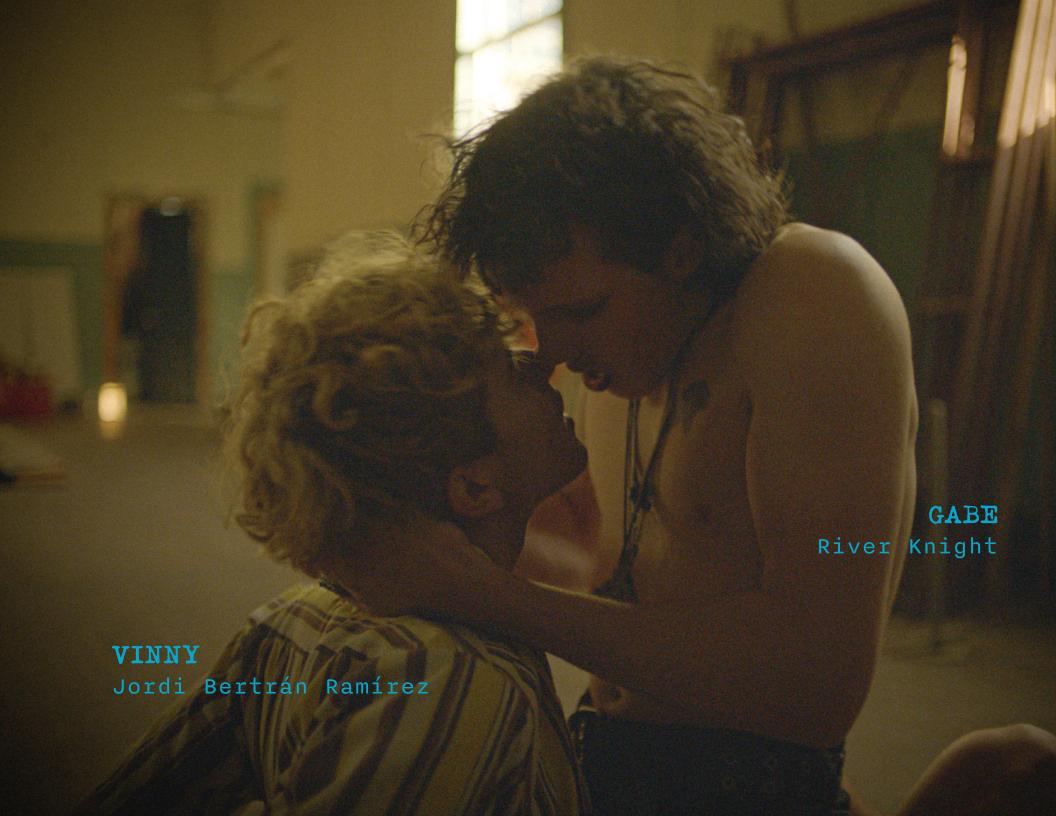


## LONG SYNOPSIS

In the summer of 1992, at the height of the AIDS crisis, 18-year-old VINNY is reeling after being with a boy for the first time. In the eerie Catskills town of Callicoon, New York—a place that feels both idyllic and off-kilter—VINNY's only confidant is CHRIS, a ghost he's been secretly channeling through a handmade Ouija board. In the aftermath of his charged hookup with GABE—a snarky goth from the city—Vinny pours his confusion and fear into a sketchbook filled with obsessive, otherworldly drawings he can't explain.

When the two meet for a second date, Vinny is consumed by a wave of terror and shame, fueled by a world where desire and death are interlocked. Desperate for answers about the first person he was ever with, Vinny brings out his Ouija board beneath the ruins of the crumbling Callicoon bridge. A skeptical Gabe quickly learns that Chris isn't just a figment of Vinny's imagination—he has the power to twist reality into nightmares.

The Ghost at Skeleton Rock is a supernatural Queer coming-of-age thriller about the fears we conjure—and what happens when those fears turn on us.



## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

BOBBY ABATE (Brooklyn, NY) is a Queer filmmaker, artist, and editor whose work fuses supernatural drama, emotional intensity, and personal history. Named one of Film Comment's "Top 25 Filmmakers for the 21st Century," Bobby is a recipient of the prestigious 2024 Princess Grace Award Special Projects Grant. Their films have screened around the world—from the New York Film Festival and MoMA's MediaScope series to the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the Rome International Film Festival, ICA London, San Francisco Cinematheque, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

Their latest project, THE GHOST AT SKELETON ROCK, based on their coming-out story during the height of the AIDS crisis, was produced by Todd Stephens (Swan Song, Edge of Seventeen). Earlier films include LOVE ROSE, A PARTY RECORD, and THE EVIL EYES (winner of the \aut\FILM Award at the 50th Ann Arbor Film Festival). Their underground feature CERTAIN WOMEN, co-directed with Peggy Ahwesh, premiered as the opening night film of the 9th Annual New York Underground Film Festival and was later praised by MoMA.

As an editor, Bobby worked on HBO's WE'RE HERE (Seasons 3-4), which received Peabody and Television Academy awards, and creates animations for drag icon Sasha Velour. They hold an MFA from Bard College and have received grants and residencies from LMCC, the Leighton Artist Exchange, Saltonstall Foundation, and VCCA.





## THE GHOST AT SKELETON ROCK Arri Alexa / Cinemascope TRT: 20:30

Written and directed by BOBBY ABATE Produced by TODD STEPHENS Cinematography BRIAN RIGNEY-HUBBARD

#### CAST

Vinny.. Jordi Bertrán Ramírez Gabe...River Knight

Chris..Jack Quinn

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
Michael Levine
Rhet Topham

EDITOR
Bobby Abate

CASTING DIRECTOR Eve Battaglia

COLOR Marika Litz

SOUNDTRACK Björk, The Breeders, Abul Mogard

Made with support from the PRINCESS GRACE FOUNDATION and a community of KICKSTARTER backers.





### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

THE GHOST AT SKELETON ROCK is the film I've been waiting decades to make. It's rooted in the summer of 1992, the year I came out as a teenager in a small conservative town during the height of the AIDS crisis. Back then, silence was survival—and the fear around Queerness was so thick, it felt supernatural.

This is a fictional story, but it's haunted by real memories: frantic drawings, rambling journal entries, obsession, and horniness. It's a coming-of-age thriller about shame, desire, and what happens when a ghost story turns out to be true.

What makes this film unique is that it captures a specific moment in Queer history that's largely unknown to younger generations—the moment when every act of intimacy, even a kiss, could feel dangerous. The specter of AIDS was everywhere, and so was the misinformation. You could catch it from a toothbrush. From sweat. From looking too long. That kind of fear shaped how an entire generation experienced desire—not as freedom, but as threat. That moment defined how many of us learned to cope and survive. That's the energy I wanted to bring to this film.

This history is vanishing, even as we see the same rhetoric and repression rising again. THE GHOST AT SKELETON ROCK is about keeping that memory alive and sharing stories so we don't repeat the same silences.

Made with support from the Princess Grace Foundation and a community of backers who understand what's at stake, this project turns that haunted past into something beautiful, unnerving, and real. This is the film I needed when I was 15. I made it for anyone who's ever felt invisible—or worse, cursed.



## TODD STEPHENS, PRODUCER

Renowned writer/director Todd Stephens, known for acclaimed films such as EDGE OF 17, GYPSY 83, ANOTHER GAY MOVIE and SWAN SONG starring Udo Kier and Jennifer Coolidge, will serve as producer. Todd's mentorship has been invaluable in guiding me back into the director's chair. By setting the story in Callicoon, where Todd and I both have homes and local connections, we can leverage our intimate knowledge of the area to bring a sense of authenticity to the project.

## BRIAN RIGNEY-HUBBARD, CINEMATOGRAPHER

As a director of photography, Brian Rigney Hubbard's dedication to visual innovation and excellence in film and television has garnered awards and notoriety while maintaining a passion for integrating diverse perspectives on screen. His projects have brought him to varied corners of the globe: from CIRCUMSTANCE in the Middle East, to DRAMAWORLD in South Korea, LA SANTA MEURTE in Mexico, PAINT IT BLACK in LA, and BEAU on Broadway.





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