



The Slugger





BAM!



SYNOPSIS

Boxing scout RICK, CHAVEZ, (50's) struggles to find the next big star in the "lost art" of professional boxing. Facing eviction notices and alimony demands, Rick feels desperate to discover new talent. He receives a delivery from Australia that guides him to a promising athlete who is purported to be a "real animal" and a true boxer who fights five to ten in a night.

Rick meets with his boss, DAVIS (early 30's), at the swanky sports management agency where he works. Davis is the son of Rick's childhood friend and business partner, ART DAVIS. Davis tells Rick that times have changed, and that boxing is not as lucrative as it once was. Davis calmly tells Rick that he will be fired because his old-school mentality does not fit with the current trends in scouting. Davis holds a grudge against Rick for encouraging his late father's drunken antics in gambling away the family's money. He offers to buy Rick into retirement by sending him to Australia. Rick does not take the bait and compromises with Davis: he will go to Australia to bring back the ultimate fighter, and Davis will give him his job back.

At the Melbourne International Airport, Rick climbs into a dingy private plane where the PILOT offers him beer for the in-flight beverage service. They land in the Outback where a taxi shuttles Rick to a dilapidated hotel in a small town that holds a church, a couple of bars, and a general store. Cheers emanate from the street, and suddenly, Rick sees FIGHTER #1 flying out the door and stumbling down the stairs. Boxer #3 is then carried out by paramedics. Rick is in Heaven.

He enters the bar to get a glimpse of FIGHTER #2. As the robed figure pivots to face the next challenger who is the most gnarly and disgusting beast Australia has ever seen, Rick realizes that although his expectations were high, his savior is something unexpected. The hero he has been looking for is a kangaroo. Rick takes a swig of alcohol despite having quit years ago. He observes the fighting kangaroo with disbelief and awe as it mangles the challenger with skillful boxing moves. After the kangaroo defeats his opponent, the kangaroo's manager, GUS (50's) goads audience members into fighting. He tries to coax the hesitant spectators into the ring by abusing the kangaroo to show that it isn't tough at all. ZACH, a 10 year old boy, watches tearfully as Gus humiliates the kangaroo. The Kangaroo does not try to fight back although it wants to erupt at its owner. The crowd fights back against Gus, but he retaliates, and a bar brawl ensues. Gus and the Bar Owner have a confrontation over money after the uproar, and Rick interrupts. He believes that Gus mailed him the package, but Gus remains clueless.

Rick discovers that Gus, Zach, and the kangaroo wind up at the same motel that he is staying in. He finds out that Gus is not Zach's father, and the boy and the kangaroo are a united team against Gus.

Watching WWF on the motel TV the next morning, Rick stumbles across an idea and calls Davis. He observes an African fighter dressed in lion skins and a lion head battling against a little person. Davis informs him that he will judge the fighter Rick has found. If he approves, Rick and the boxer will both go to L.A. If Davis dislikes the fighter, Rick will not get money to return to the U.S. Rick and Gus agree to exchange the kangaroo (MATT) for \$8,500 U.S. dollars. Zach is stowaway in Matt's crate, and he manages to smuggle himself into America with the kangaroo. Rick tries to send Zach home, but Matt protects him. Rick discovers that Zach was the person who sent him the letter. He takes pity on their plight and reluctantly agrees to shelter them from the authorities. Rick and Zach hatch a plan to transform Matt into a star boxer to save themselves from trouble.

Rick reveals Matt to Davis as a marketing gimmick. Davis is about to abandon Matt's fighting debut when Zach initiates it. Matt beats his opponent easily, and everyone in Davis's entourage is impressed except for him. Davis abruptly fires Rick. Zach encourages Rick to set up his own business in which they could jointly promote Matt's fights. He tells Rick that they can start the promotions with the \$8,500 he paid Gus because Zach swiped it when Gus wasn't looking. Rick tries to contact everyone he knows to set up a showcase for Matt. They celebrate their first opportunity with a dinner at Chuck E. Cheese – and Zach uses his money stash to pay for it.

The next day, Zach, Matt, and Rick arrive at a seedy bar for the first competition. Zach hands Matt a half-finished glass of beer, which the kangaroo finishes in time to battle. The crowd hesitates to believe that a kangaroo can fight, and individuals start placing bets. Matt attracts the attention of a health inspector whom Zach subsequently bribes to overlook Matt's animal qualities. Zach tells Rick that his mother abandoned him, and that Matt only fights when Zach is around. After a successful night at the bar, Rick wakes to find that Zach and Matt are gone. He searches all over before finding them with a group of MEXICAN GUYS in an alley. Rick recognizes BERNARDO (20's), a gold-toothed acquaintance from whom Zach is trying to extract a boxing deal.

That night, Rick, Matt, and Zach pull up to a big shed to find MEXICANS and other CENTRAL AMERICANS in a cockfight. Bernardo's UNCLE JAIME (50's) will help Rick negotiate a deal for \$200. Matt's next opponent is the MEXICAN THUG, the fiercest fighter in the crowd. Matt flippantly tosses the thug into the wall, and Jaime tells Rick that he can help them.

At a swap meet/flea market, Jaime introduces the crowd to Matt at a performance. If opponents win, they receive \$200 for beating Matt, but they all fail. Matt's success scares the fighters away, but his celebrity status is rising. Rick stumbles upon Zach and Matt giving pawprint autographs to children at the swap meet in exchange for cash. Rick later drives to ANGIE, his ex, to give her alimony in wads of dollar bills and asks her if she will take him back. She politely rejects him.

sign Matt to the agency ASAP.

another swap meet and attracting larger crowds. He travels throughout Southern California with Zach and Rick. Gus tells the receptionist that he called from Australia to inquire about Rick, but she relays that Davis has no time for him and sends security to throw him out. Inside his office, Davis is furious that Rick purchased Matt because he does not want to deal with a company lawsuit against Gus. The only way he can evade liability is if Rick bought Matt with his own money, so he prepares to send Rick a letter stating that the company is not responsible, and furthermore, that denies having employed Rick at all.

Rick reveals that he wants to put Zach in school and adopt him. The next morning, Jaime runs over to the apartment with a copy of the Spanish newspaper, "La Opinion," which features a front-page spread on Matt in the sports section. Gus walks out of his seedy motel room and observes a bum who happens to be sleeping on a copy of "La Opinion" as well, and he becomes furious when he learns that Rick is profiting from Matt's fame. Davis's assistant, TOM, and his secretary inform him that he needs to turn on his television to the Spanish language channel. Matt's celebrity status saturates the press, causing Davis to lament not having signed him. His focus is to contact Rick and sign Matt to the agency ASAP.

Jaime surprises Rick, Zach, and Matt with an upcoming tour in Central California. Rick will not agree to touring unless Zach enrolls in school to make his presence in the U.S. official. He tells Zach that if he does not attend classes, everything they have worked for together will be put in jeopardy. After they embark on their Central California tour, Davis's cronies search L.A. for Rick in order to sign Matt. Rick, Zach, Matt, Bernardo, and Jaime celebrate another victorious match before heading up to Fresno for the next competition. They dress Matt up as a Mexican wrestler in a mask and cape and they call him "El Kangaroo"

Davis watches news coverage on Matt in L.A. with his children and is pestered to get them the kangaroo's autograph. He escapes to Fresno to ambush Rick. Gus also races to Fresno trying to find Zach and the kangaroo.

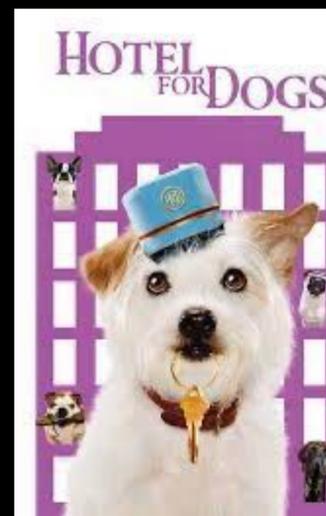
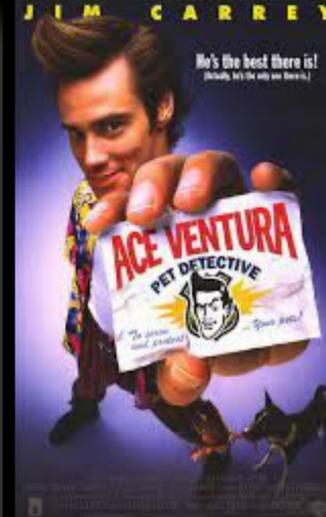
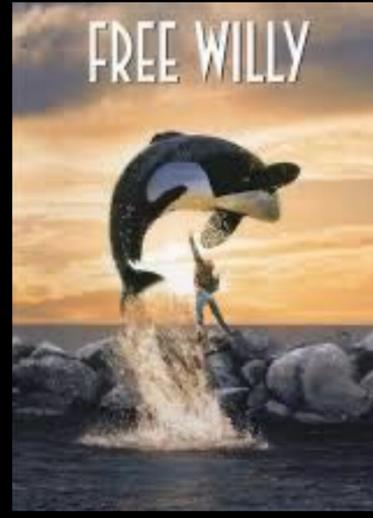
Davis makes it to Fresno to try and win the Kangaroo and Rick back for his "latino" division because he sees the financial potential. Matt could be the next big thing.

Davis makes an offer, the Zach and Rick refuse it. Matt gets "weird," they land in a courtroom, Matt loses a fight due to a sickness.

In a race to finish, Matt gets sick again before a big fight and we find out that Matt is not a boy but a girl and is pregnant. Gus gets arrested by immigration. Rick adopts Zach and they keep Matt who is really a Matilda, pregnant female kangaroo who gives birth to a baby kangaroo. It's a big happy ending.



Comps



WISH LIST



Antonio Banderas



Javier Bardem



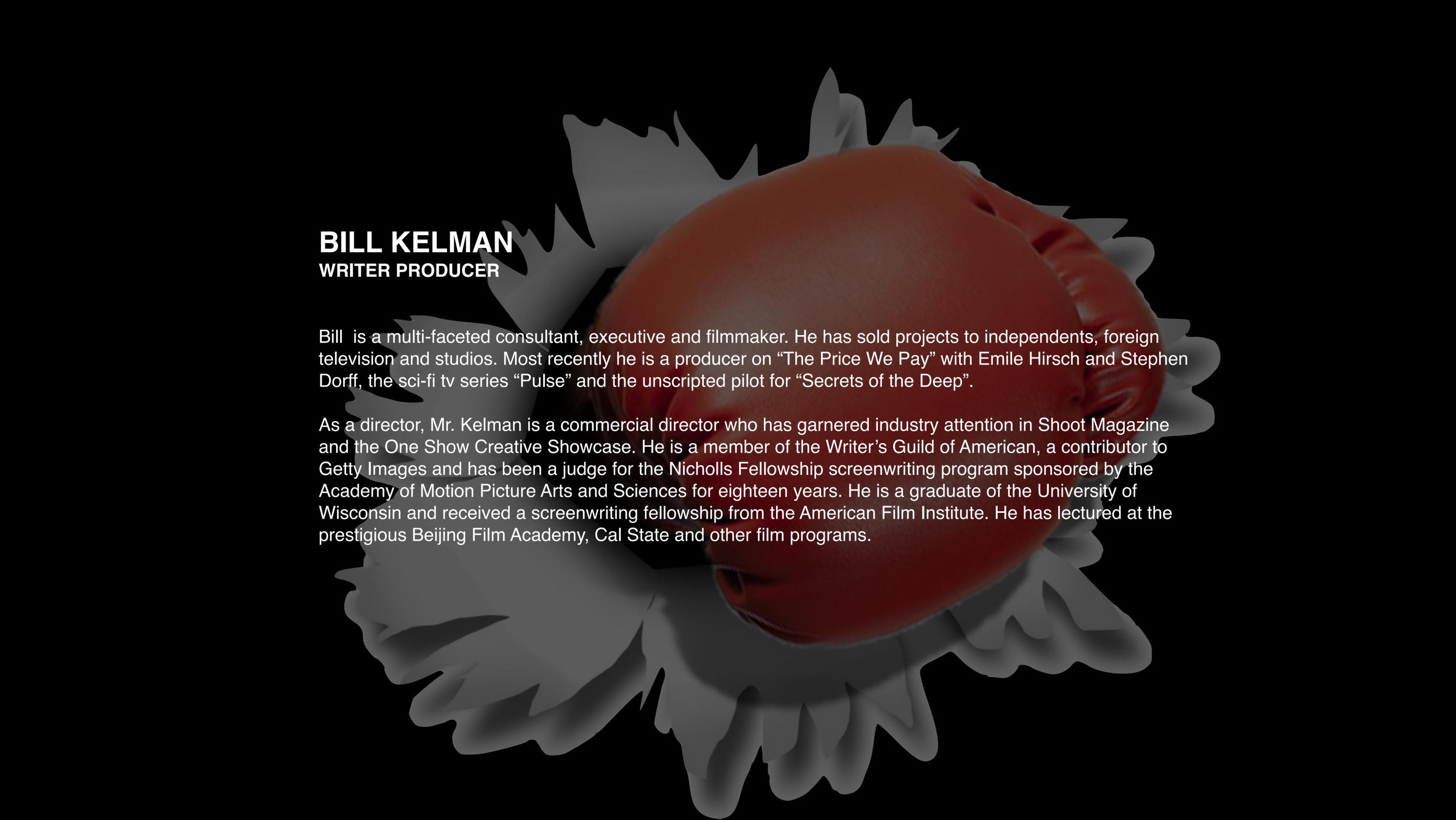
Andy Garcia



John Leguzamo



Benecio Del Toro



BILL KELMAN
WRITER PRODUCER

Bill is a multi-faceted consultant, executive and filmmaker. He has sold projects to independents, foreign television and studios. Most recently he is a producer on “The Price We Pay” with Emile Hirsch and Stephen Dorff, the sci-fi tv series “Pulse” and the unscripted pilot for “Secrets of the Deep”.

As a director, Mr. Kelman is a commercial director who has garnered industry attention in Shoot Magazine and the One Show Creative Showcase. He is a member of the Writer’s Guild of American, a contributor to Getty Images and has been a judge for the Nicholls Fellowship screenwriting program sponsored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for eighteen years. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and received a screenwriting fellowship from the American Film Institute. He has lectured at the prestigious Beijing Film Academy, Cal State and other film programs.



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