No Kidding Around

A Short Narrative Film



What should be unthinkable… has become routine

No Kidding Around

A Short Narrative Film by

Robert M. Herzog

Co-directed with Dean Imperial

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Logline: Three ordinary school days, filled with tender childhood moments alive with innocence, friendship, and connection, are shattered by gun violence, exposing not only what is lost, but how a national tragedy has become disturbingly routine.



Three ordinary childhood moments



Interrupted... forever



Why This Film?

To convey the humanity and quiet tenderness preceding tragedies that have become painfully familiar.

No Kidding Around brings home that behind every headline are lives interrupted, families forever changed, futures that will never happen.





Tone and Visual Language

Ordinary Moments. Sudden Interruption. Lasting Absence.

Story Structure

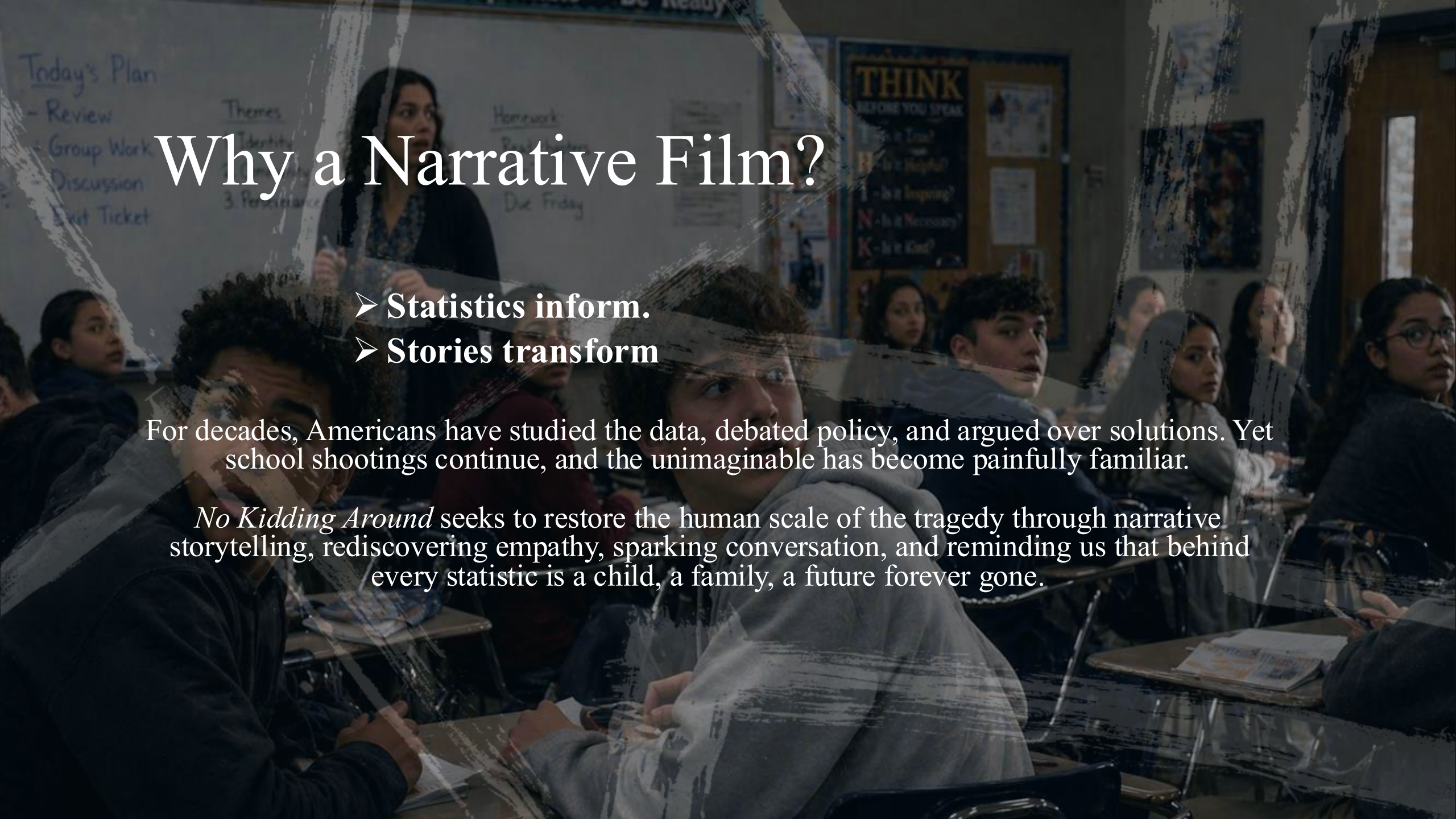
1. **Three Ordinary Moments**
   - **Grade School** – A father walks his daughter to school with a lunchbox she'll share with a friend.
   - **Middle School** – Friends laugh and debate the greatest basketball player of all time.
   - **High School** – Two teenagers discover a first connection.
2. **The Interruption**
   - Without warning, ordinary moments are shattered.
3. **The Response Cycle**
   - *"Thoughts and prayers."*
   - Deflections.
   - Rationalizations.
   - Inaction
4. **The Aftermath**
   - Overturned desks. Lunchbox on the floor. Silence



Artistic Approach

Rather than centering on the violence or the shooter, *No Kidding Around* focuses on what violence interrupts: the ordinary tenderness of childhood, family, friendship, and community—and the profound absence that follows.

- Violence is never shown.
- Naturalistic performances.
- Sound and reaction replace spectacle.
- The emotional focus remains on those left behind.



Why a Narrative Film?

- **Statistics inform.**
- **Stories transform**

For decades, Americans have studied the data, debated policy, and argued over solutions. Yet school shootings continue, and the unimaginable has become painfully familiar.

No Kidding Around seeks to restore the human scale of the tragedy through narrative storytelling, rediscovering empathy, sparking conversation, and reminding us that behind every statistic is a child, a family, a future forever gone.

Why Now?

Firearms have been the leading cause of death for American youth since 2020.

If not now, when?

Filmmaker’s Statement

- This film was born out of outrage at how familiar news of school shootings has become, the platitudes that follow, and the inaction that plagues the nation.

- It depicts three ordinary school moments, filled with humor, awkward connection, and small acts of kindness, and what is at stake when they are shattered.

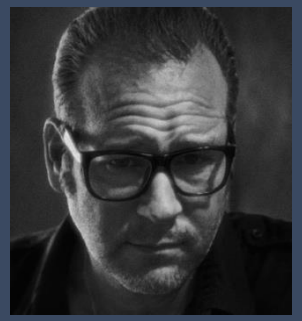
- The film presents a pattern rather than arguing policy, inviting the audience into a stillness that rejects the idea that child loss is an acceptable cost of broad firearm access.

Filmmaker Team



Robert M. Herzog
Producer, writer, co-director

Award-winning filmmaker, novelist, playwright, and essayist. Produced, wrote, and directed the short film **Flights**, screened at the Hamptons, Los Angeles, and IFP festivals. Author of the Barnes & Noble **Nook Book of the Day** *A World Between* and the essay collection *Views from the Side Mirror*. His recent screenplays have been recognized by **Cinequest**, the **Los Angeles Independent Film Festival**, **New York Script Awards**, **Best Script Award London**, and **Filmmatic** competitions.



Dean Imperial
Co-director

Filmmaker, director, and television writer whose feature debut, **CAPER**, premiered at the **2025 SXSW Film Festival**. He also co-wrote, co-directed, and co-starred in **The Plea**, and has written for **Godfather of Harlem**, **Hotel Cocaine**, and **Imposters**. Dean is represented by **Creative Artists Agency (CAA)**, and **Untitled Management**. Dean brings extensive experience directing and producing high-quality narrative projects.

PRODUCTION ROADMAP

DEVELOPMENT

✓ Script Complete
- Screenplay finalized
- Pitch deck & budget complete

✓ Fiscal Sponsorship
- Gotham fiscal sponsor
- Grant-ready infrastructure

Fundraising
- Foundations
- Film finance
- Strategic supporters

PRODUCTION

Pre-Production
- Casting
- Locations
- Scheduling

Production
- Six-day shoot
- Experienced cast & crew

Post-Production
- Editorial
- Sound • Score • Color

IMPACT

Festival Premiere
- Major Film Festivals
- Press, screenings, audience engagement

Educational & Community
- Schools
- Community organizations

Long-Term Distribution
- Streaming
- Educational licensing

Designed as both a festival-caliber narrative film and a lasting educational and community engagement resource.

NO KIDDING AROUND	
Summary Production Budget (Preliminary)	
Category	Amount
Above-the-Line — Cash (excludes $30,000 deferred fees)	$30,000
Cast	$25,000
Production Crew	$41,500
Locations & Production Design	$21,000
Equipment	$16,000
Post-Production	$25,000
Insurance / Legal	$9,000
Festival & Distribution	$10,000
Contingency	$10,000
TOTAL CASH BUDGET	**$187,500**
Fiscal Sponsorship / Administration (Est.)	$10,875
TOTAL PROJECT CASH BUDGET	**$198,375**
Deferred Writer / Co-Director / Producer Compensation	$30,000
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET	**$228,375**
Fiscal sponsorship administration is estimated using Gotham's published fee schedule.	



Help bring this story to audiences

No Kidding Around **is designed not simply as a film, but as a catalyst for reflection, conversation, and lasting community engagement.**

Your support will help bring this story to festivals, classrooms, communities, and audiences across the country.

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