
GROOVENBUTTAFLY
PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS
Doll
A SHIA SHABAZZ SMITH FILM

# LOGLINE

In 1975, upon her mother's clandestine elopement in Vegas, a bright-eyed five-year-old girl spends a dream of a weekend, basking in the warmth, wonder, and unconditional love of her nurturing grandmother—only to return to the nightmare of the home shadowed by her mother's destructive choices.





# SYNOPSIS

**“Doll” is a visually rich and emotionally powerful short film about a young girl’s brief encounter with the love, safety, and dignity every child deserves, and the devastating reality that awaits her beyond it.**

**TONI “TJ” JUNIOR** lives in a cramped studio apartment in San Diego with her mother, **TONI**—a chain-smoking, emotionally erratic woman who struggles to outrun her own pain through alcohol, impulsive relationships, and denial. Toni is enthralled by her new secret boyfriend, **LUTHER**, a newly minted engineer, but who, palpably, has deeply disturbing intentions. Before unveiling this new chapter of her life by way of a clandestine elopement in Vegas, with no other option, Toni sends her daughter to spend the weekend with “Nana and Grampa.”

**NANA**, a Southern woman who carries herself with regal presence, treats her granddaughter like royalty. She lovingly calls her "**Doll**," and the two of them dress in coordinated outfits, styled like Hollywood starlets. Though their bungalow home is modest, Nana embodies a kind of Black Southern resilience—always dressed to the nines, not out of vanity, but as a deliberate act of dignity and defiance, rooted in her Arkansas upbringing.

**Her appearance is both personal and political:** a statement that she and her granddaughter belong in every space they enter.





**Over their weekend together,** Doll and Nana have lunch in town, get their hair done at a neighborhood salon, and share laughter that floats through the house like it was pumped from Nana's fanciest bottle of perfume. The highlight is an outing to see The Nutcracker ballet—a dreamy, sparkling evening that leaves Doll feeling transported. It is a weekend of love, softness, and protection —a glimpse of the life she deserves.

**But that dream is shattered** the next morning when Toni returns, now married to Luther, whose presence instantly changes the temperature of the room. Ignoring the visible discomfort of both Doll and Nana, Toni excitedly announces their new family arrangement. After a heated exchange, Doll is abruptly torn from the warmth and safety of her grandparents' love and led away to begin a life shaped by danger, confusion, and silence.

# CHARACTERS



## DOLL

Wide-eyed, observant, often silent. Her reactions carry emotional weight.



## TONI

Chaotic energy, performative confidence masking deep instability.

# CHARACTERS



## NANA

Restrained, poised, every gesture precise.
She is a quiet fortress of strength.



## LUTHER

Smiling menace—subtle, disturbing
undercurrent without overt theatrics.



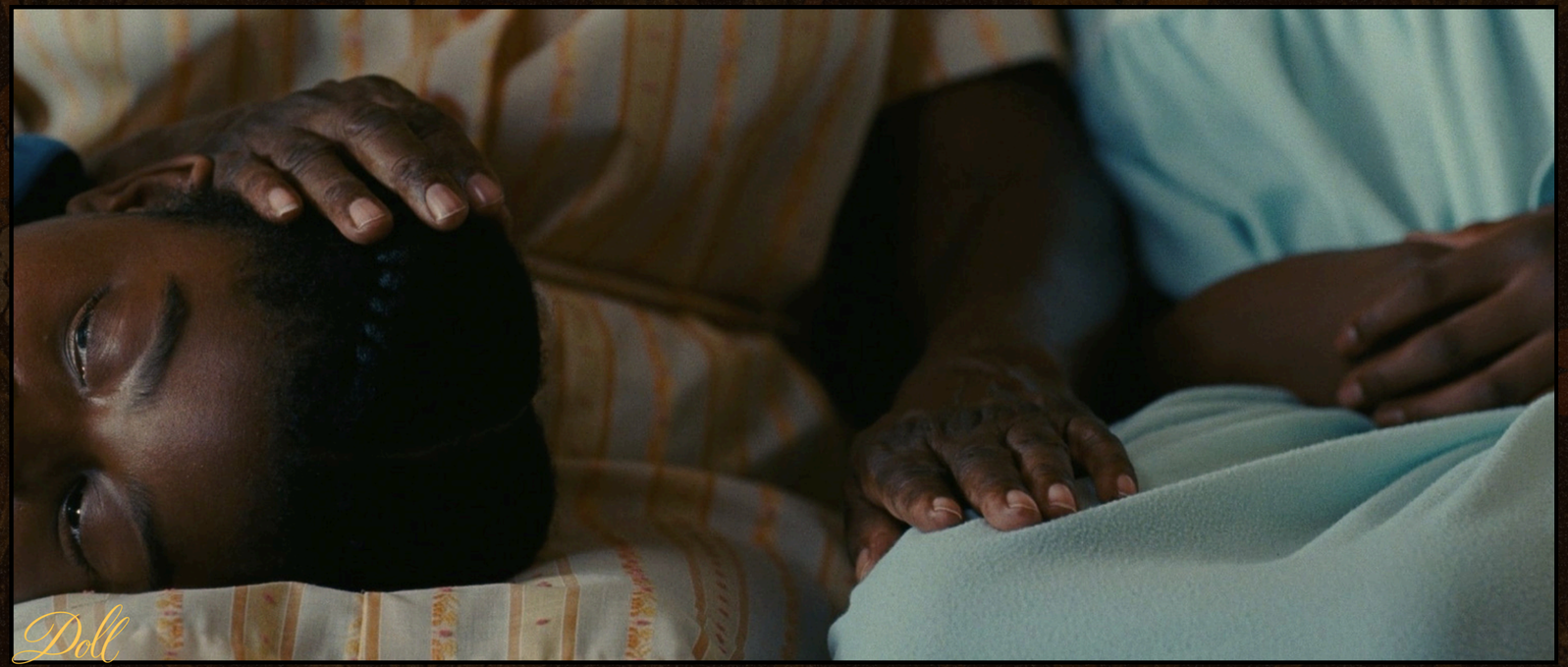





# MOOD & TONE

The film aims to hold two seemingly opposing tones—safety and devastation—in tension. Told from the child's perspective, "Doll" juxtaposes the dollhouse craftsmanship of Wes Anderson's cinematic world with the quiet psychological realism and emotional gravity of Emma Donoghue's "Room." Even further, "Doll" hopes to emphasize what's left unsaid: a child's quiet resilience, the tragedy of impermanence, and the unbearable tenderness of fleeting safety. The result hopes to be a film that feels both composed and cracked, refined and raw—one that asks the viewer to see the world as this little girl does: beautiful, broken, and briefly, hers.





# VISUAL APPROACH

Cinematically, a 2.35:1 aspect ratio will be employed to communicate loneliness as it gives screen space to use the “rule of thirds”; the negative space used as a reflection of the feeling of emptiness within shots. Additionally, the occasional (but critical) use of a split diopter will help to visually convey the complex relationship between the three generations of women.

# CINEMATOGRAPHY





## TONI'S WORLD

Handheld, gritty, shallow depth of field
Claustrophobia, instability, cigarette haze

- Overstuffed ashtray, worn couch, TV playing
- Mahogany, cramped balcony.
- Hints of former beauty — silk robe hanging behind the door, old framed photos half-hidden.





## NANA'S WORLD

Static, symmetrical, centered frames
Composure, order, quiet beauty

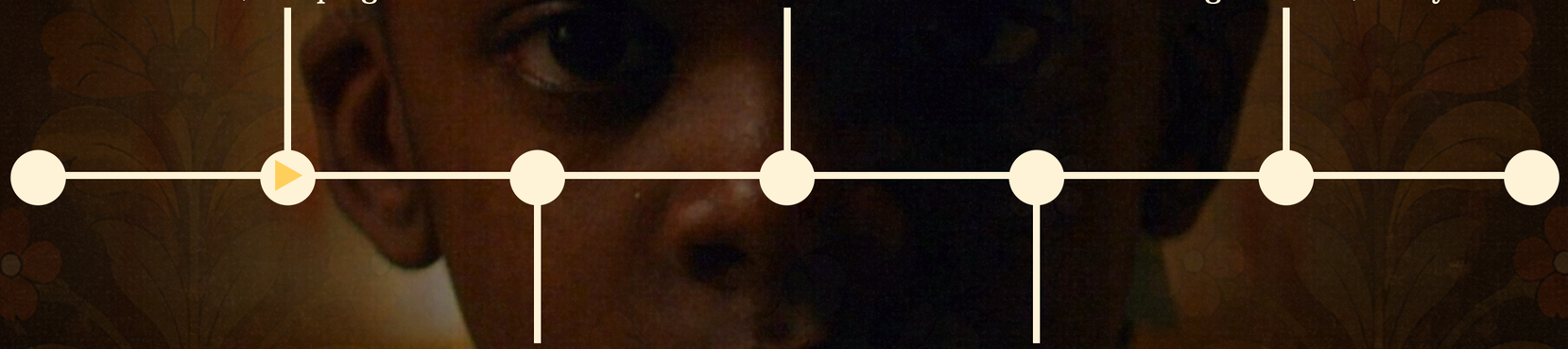
- Carefully curated: polished wood, white floral couches.
- Vintage wardrobe pieces, family photos.
- Subtle signs of Southern heritage & world travel: peacocks and chinese statuettes, framed scripture, pressed doilies.

# PRODUCTION TIMELINE

## DEVELOPMENT
**(Now)**
Script locked. Team assembled. Funding secured, campaign active

## PRODUCTION
**(Jan 2027)**
Principal photography. SF Bay Area & San Diego, CA

## DISTRIBUTION
**(Summer 2027)**
Target festivals such as Cannes, TIFF, SXSW, NAACAP, Image Awards, & beyond.



## PRE-PRODUCTION
**(Nov 2026)**
Crew, cast, locations, logistics locked.

## POST-PRODUCTION
**(Feb 2027)**
Edit, color, sound, score, DCP delivery.



# ACCOLADES

**Bluecat Screenplay Competition**

Semifinalist, 2026

**Diversity in Cannes**
**Short Film Showcase**

Selected for

2026 Table Read

**Outstanding Screenplays**
**Screenplay Competition**

Semifinalist, 2026

**Sedona International Film Festival**

Finalist, 2026



# SHIA SHABAZZ SMITH

**Writer, Director**

Shia Shabazz Smith is a writer-director, educator, and storyteller whose work centers "the voiceless," healing, and liberation. Her directorial debut, *Dawn*, blends romance and Afrofuturism, while her comedic short film *Curdled*, starring KeKe Palmer, screened internationally. Shia is also an award-winning educator and mentor to emerging writers and filmmakers.



# SHAKAJAMAL

**Producer**

ShakaJamal is an Emmy-winning, culturally innovative artist and filmmaker from Oakland, California, and founder of Olu8 Film & Culture and Olu8 Records. His passion for storytelling grew through travel, especially time spent in South Africa, and his work uncovers the inspiring, often-untold stories of community change makers. He was the first Oakland filmmaker to receive the Game Changers Fellowship, premiering documentaries at Harlem's Schomburg Center. His films have screened nationally, internationally, on television, and at festivals worldwide. A 200-hour certified trauma-informed yoga teacher, he also serves as CFO of Namaste Ready, supporting healing in the Black community. He holds an MFA in Cinema from San Francisco State University.



# DESIRE LACAP

**Cinematographer**

Desire Lacap, known professionally as Lacapture, is an accomplished videographer and filmmaker based in Los Angeles and founder of Lacapture Productions. Creative from a young age, she built her production company from the ground up, producing dynamic visual content for major artists including Alicia Keys and G-Eazy, as well as brands like Adobe. After leaving behind a traditional career path, Desire went full-time as a creator, eventually relocating to Los Angeles to expand her reach and craft. Her work has evolved from brand collaborations into a deeper focus on music videos and narrative filmmaking, blending commercial polish with authentic storytelling and visual artistry.