

## Interviews: Red-Carpet Talk for Reeling2016 Opening Night

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CHICAGO – Reeling2016, Chicago's LGBTQ+ International Film Festival, opened last week (Sep. 22nd) with a hurricane force, through Bianca Del Rio. The comic goddess premiered the film "Hurricane Bianca," directed by Matt Kugelman. Del Rio, Kugelman and others walked the Red Carpet at Chicago's Music Box Theatre.



Bianca Del Rio and Director Matt Kugelman on the Red Carpet at Reeling2016

Photo credit: Jon Espino for HollywoodChicago.com

Reeling2016, the Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival is in its 34th year, and has an incredible line-up of films, events and parties from September 22nd-29th. Theater venues include the historic Music Box Theater, Landmark's Century Centre Cinema and Chicago Filmmakers.

## ★ Bianca Del Rio for “Hurricane Bianca”

The outrageous and awesome Bianca Del Rio debuted her feature film at Opening Night Reeling2016, and also had another role as Roy Haylock. Roy performs comedy as his alter-ego Bianca in shows all over the country, and was crowned the winner of “RuPaul’s Drag Race” during Season 6 (RuPaul makes a cameo in “Hurricane Bianca”). Haylock’s theater credits include “Rent,” “Cabaret” and “Gypsy.”



Bianca Del Rio on the Red Carpet for the film ‘Hurricane Bianca’

Photo credit: Jon Espino for HollywoodChicago.com

**HollywoodChicago.com:** When you developed Bianca, how long did it take before she became separate from who Roy is?

**Bianca Del Rio:** I think we’ve always been the same, but Bianca was just the outlet for Roy to get away with murder. [laughs] If I don’t wear a wig, I’m called a nasty f\*g, if I do wear a wig, I’m hilarious. It’s all in the packaging.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What did you have to pay attention to most, since you are in every scene in the movie?

**Del Rio:** It was an incredibly tight shoot, 18 days to do everything around my traveling schedule. Since I was in virtually every scene, it was in-drag, out-of-drag, in-drag and so on. But director Matt Kugelman was brilliant in planning it and making it work. And we wanted to talk about a serious topic – 29 states can legally fire a person if they’re gay – in a comedic way. We wanted to balance it, and not get preachy.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What you find better about being a woman that most men will never understand?

**Del Rio:** [Laughs] It’s not as fun as you think it is – put your balls in panty hose some time, it’s not that exciting. To call me a woman is very nice, especially since you’re standing this close to me. I’m more of an ‘erotic clown,’ it doesn’t fall into the female category.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Which performers did you admire as a kid, and how do you think you do a tribute to them now?

**Del Rio:** I loved smart and fearless comedians like Joan Rivers and Don Rickles. When they started out, what they did wasn’t always socially accepted, but they both had careers that lasted over 50 years. I love an act that makes fun of the situation, and of course makes fun of yourself. That’s important, you can’t take yourself too seriously. I’m standing here on a red carpet in a wig, and I’m really making my father proud today. [laughs]

## ★ Director Matt Kugelman for “Hurricane Bianca”

Matt Kugelman is from the Chicagoland area, a graduate of Columbia College here, and made his feature film debut as a director for “Hurricane Bianca.” He worked as a research assistant during the production of “Fahrenheit 9/11, and also as the editor and photographer of the “CBS News on Logo” show. Matt currently works as a video editor, covering breaking news stories for the “CBS Evening News” and “CBS This Morning.”





Matt Kugelman and Bianca Del Rio Introduce 'Hurricane Bianca'

*Photo credit: Jon Espino for HollywoodChicago.com*

**HollywoodChicago.com:** How did you develop the film, and what were some key evolution points in the process that really jumpstarted the whole thing?

**Matt Kugelman:** I met Roy when I moved to New York City, and had always wanted to collaborate with him on a feature film. He said 'Sure!' but he told me later he thought, 'That will never happen.' [laughs] We started with crowd funding, and once he won 'RuPaul's Drag Race' it took off from there. We got more funding after that, and made it happen.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Since this was a micro budget, what did you have to compromise on, that actually came out better in the final result?

**Kugelman:** Most films shoot the footage, then cut it down afterward. We had to make all our cuts BEFORE production. It was very much about 'kill what you care about now.' We had a blueprint for what we wanted to do, but also – even in our limited time – we were able to improvise a bit, with Bianca and the other comic actors.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You work on the ground floor of CBS News...

**Kugelman:** Yes, literally, my office is in the basement. [laughs]

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What is the insider's view on the presidential campaign of 2016, does there seem to be discussion on the media's role in all this?

**Kugelman:** I'm a video editor, so it's really a 'time to make the donuts' type job, I just crank it out. Overall, and I'm not talking about any particular person at CBS, but there is some fear in the atmosphere. We know that the media is to blame for all the free coverage we've given on his side, but we have to play both sides equally.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** When you're in a creative block, which person do you have on your 'What Would \_\_\_\_\_ Do?' bracelet?

**Kugelman:** That's easy. 'What Would Bianca Do?' I feel like she's a pretty good compass, because we've been friends for a long time. Part of her many charms is that she tells it like it is.



#### Carly Usdin and Brittani Nichols of "Suicide Kale."

"Suicide Kale" is an example of filmmaking in a true guerilla style. Shot on a budget of ZERO dollars – according to director Carly Usdin and screenwriter Brittani Nichols – the completed-in-five-days film had a prominent screening at Reeling2016. Nichols also has been part of the cast in the hot series "Transparent."





Filmmakers Carly Usdin and Brittani Nichols of 'Suicide Kale'

Photo credit: Jon Espino for HollywoodChicago.com

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Since this was an amazing way to take on a film, from the initial idea to when you first turned on the camera, what was the most significant step?

**Carly Usdin:** It was a meeting that took place with the cast. It was me, Brittani, Robin our cinematographer and the rest of the cast and crew.

**Brittani Nichols:** Since it was partially improvised, we talked about character development, and blocking, and location.

**Usdin:** It was logistical. From the first idea to the finished and locked film, it took three months.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** A zero budget film has to be a series of compromises. Which compromise actually turned out better in the end?

**Nichols:** The way that we did it, ended up in a way that would never have happened if we had to set up, light, all that stuff. It's a testament to the process, and the energy it took in shooting it in five days was continuous. There was no breaks, so we went for it.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Brittani, since you've just joined the cast of 'Transparent,' what satisfies you most about the reaction to the show?

**Nichols:** It's opening up so many conversations, that have never been talked about before – the way that they cast the show, the writers and crew, it's the most 'trans' inclusive staff that have ever existed. It's inclusiveness from the top to the bottom. That was amazing to witness, and to be on set to observe. Everyone cares about this show, and elsewhere I don't know if that is the case.

*"Reeling2016," the 34th edition of Chicago's LGBTQ+ International Film Festival, runs from September 22nd-29th, 2016. For film, events, venues and ticket information [click here](#). [27]*



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