

A young Mormon girl struggles to find her identity in Northern Utah while caring for her depressed mother and the return of her long lost father.



OVER THE SUNSHINE

A film by Kevin K. Watts





Tonal Concepts





Influences



Synopsis

Set in the poorest part of Brigham City, Utah centered around a girl named Sunshine with her disorganized mother, Sharon. It begins with the mother and daughter being evicted from their apartment out on the street with their trash bags of belongings surrounding them.

Not knowing what to do, Sharon knocks on a neighbor's door begging to stay a couple of nights to figure out her living situation. The neighbor declines, leaving Sharon with one last option - the homeless shelter in downtown Brigham.

Sharon and Sunshine make their way down to the shelter by bus, check in, and settle down for the night. Concerned about the future Sunshine asks her mother what the plan is. She states that everything will be okay and that they'll go to Bishop Turner at Temple tomorrow to ask for help.

The next day they arrive and wait anxiously to speak to Bishop Turner. Sharon convinces the Bishop to help them again but he declares that this will be the last time and that Sharon needs to understand the value of a dollar and to start taking responsibility.

After talking and getting the help they need from Bishop Turner things seem to be looking up for the mother and daughter. They move into a new low-income apartment and settle in with the donated furniture. After settling Sharon and get an invite from a neighbor to attend her daughter Olivia's birthday party. Shannon enthusiastically accepts, giving them a chance to know the community and for Sunshine to have some hope in normalcy with a few friends.

The next morning Sunshine is woken up by voices coming from the front door. Sharon and a neighbor are deep in discussion. The neighbor tells Sharon that a woman in formal wear was asking questions about the two and checking the conditions of the property.

Sharon disguises her emotions saying it's nothing to worry about. The moment Sharon closes the door the calm face is unmasked and replaced by fear.

She begins to tell Sunshine to clean her room as social services are going to visit soon. Not long after, a social worker named Cynthia knocks on the door. She mentions that an anonymous person filed a complaint about Sharon's capabilities as a parent.

Cynthia goes on to explain that she will be assessing and talking to not only Sharon but Sunshine as well to finalize her decision about Sharon's parenting.

As time goes on Sunshine sees that Sharon is going back to her old ways. She's behind on rent and has no choice but to pawn Sunshine's prized possession, her CD player among a few other things. Resentment boils in Sunshine as Sharon's motivation declines and her depression inclines.

Sharon gets a random knock on her door, completely catching her off guard. To her shock it's Cynthia. Cynthia asks to come in. Sharon politely asks her to come back, making an excuse. Cynthia is not amused and says that it'll be in her best interest to let her in. Sharon, having no choice, lets Cynthia into the apartment.

Cynthia scans her judgmental eyes around the messy room and asks where Sunshine is. Sharon calls for her daughter, but no response. Things don't look good as Cynthia questions where Sharon's daughter is. Sharon has no idea.

Eventually Sunshine comes home (after hanging with Olivia) and finds the two women awkwardly waiting for her. Cynthia can see that Sharon has unraveled overtime, back to her true self. Cynthia no option but to grant temporary visitation rights to Sunshine's biological long-lost father, Carlos.

The nervous Sunshine enters Carlos' house with Cynthia. Carlos doesn't speak much English but luckily his wife Maria does. Their awkward encounter is accentuated as Carlos and Maria give her presents. But Sunshine has no interest in the girly presents. Carlos and Maria give her one last present, a brand-new CD player. Sunshine's emotions take over as she bursts into tears and asks Cynthia to leave. Carlos and Maria are left puzzled.

Synopsis

After feeling like a stranger in Carlos' house and her mother on the decline, she turns to her new friend Olivia. They naïvely talk for hours about their lives, hopes, and dreams for the future. As the story goes on Sunshine grows close to Olivia. One day the two girls hang out and skip rocks near the lake.

As they giggle and continue to joke around Sunshine, overwhelmed with emotion, kisses Olivia. Olivia's face is shocked, speechless, and paralyzed. Seeing this Sunshine runs away in panic and embarrassment.

Sunshine notices muffled sounds coming from her room. Sunshine creeps open the door to see her mother on the phone crying and begging for money. Sunshine's eyes wander down scanning the bed, she sees pills scattered around. Sunshine demands an answer.

Sharon walks away trying to avoid the conversation, but Sunshine is sick of history repeating itself and pushes on. Sunshine accuses Sharon that she was trying to commit suicide again. Sharon responds silently, which only makes Sunshine angrier.

Sharon begins to feel lightheaded as she collapses on the floor, Sunshine rushes to her aid and shoves her small fingers down her mom's throat to get her to throw up. Luckily it works, but leaves Sunshine completely heartbroken. The mother and daughter's relationship have completely fallen apart.

Sunshine decides that the best thing is for her to live with her dad. Carlos and Maria bring Sunshine one more gift, a soccer ball, Carlos and his daughter finally spend some time playing soccer together.

Whilst their bond grows Sharon's loneliness sinks in as the realization hits her that she might lose her daughter. Sharon begins to get herself together and starts looking for a job. After a few weeks of searching, she finally gets an interview.

Sharon is nervous about her first and only interview but gets through it and lands the job. Her confidence starts to shine through, feeling like her old self.

Sunshine and Sharon's bond start to rekindle as Sunshine begins to spend more time with her mother. Sunshine goes to the local lake to skip rocks, as she does, Olivia stands beside her. They smile at one another and both skip rocks together. Sunshine decides she wants to cut her hair. Feeling she wants to be unique in some way, Olivia helps her, they go back to Sunshine's place, grab some scissors and begin to cut her hair.

After finishing the cut, Olivia proudly looks at the finished hairstyle then scatters home before Sharon comes back from a busy day of work. Her initial reaction is shock as Sunshine shows off her uneven hair to her mom. Sharon can only say "if you're happy with it I'm happy with it".

Unfortunately, Carlos and Maria can't say the same thing, Sunshine's face drops as she sees the look of disgust from her father and Maria. Sunshine goes to their bathroom, only to snoop around the house, she goes into their bedroom and rummages around in their drawers. She holds up paperwork presenting UCIS Immigration expiry documents. Confused, Sunshine places them back into the drawer. She returns to the living room.

Sunshine can feel the cold shoulder from Carlos and confronts him saying why now? Why come back into my life now? Carlos and Maria try to convince her that it wasn't so easy with the legalities of it but Sunshine doesn't believe them. They sit in silence as a soccer game comes on.

It's the day of the custody battle. Sharon is there with Sunshine and Cynthia, but Carlos and Maria are nowhere to be seen. The judge questions where they are and Cynthia has no answer to give him. Cynthia speaks out about Sharon's improvement and how she is working a part-time job. She convinces the judge and Sharon is granted full custody of Sunshine.

They both go home; Sunshine watches the snowfall down as she drifts off into her world visualizing the happy end of a Christmas movie full of food and toys. But reality shows that that's not the case. Although they don't have much food and toys, Sharon surprises her daughter finally with a cooked meal she made and an early Christmas gift - her old CD player.

Director's Statement



Kevin Watts is a first-generation Indian Brit. He was born in Birmingham, England to a factory worker father and art teacher mother.

Kevin discovered his love of film at the age of thirteen when he began sneaking into the living room late at night to obsessively watch his parents' copy of "Goodfellas" on VHS.

His passion led him to a degree in film from Leeds Metropolitan University, but Kevin knew he'd have to continue to develop his technical and business knowledge in order to realize his ambitions of becoming a writer and director, and bringing his ideas to life on the big screen.

After college, Kevin worked as a camera assistant and operator, as well as for a film rental company in Vancouver, Canada. He also travelled extensively, meeting new people with diverse stories and backgrounds from all over the world — inspiring to him to imbue their stories into his writing.

Kevin is a multi-award-winning director and writer, and currently resides in Los Angeles.

Why this film

The reason for this film is because it was part of my life. My ex-wife is from Utah, and her mother and younger sister are from Brigham City.

I saw point-blank what they both went through. I use to have countless conversations with my ex about the type of childhood she had growing up with a mother like that.

As I got to know her mother 'Sharon', I got to understand her. Change and motivation are hard, not just with her but with everyone, including me. She struggled to change her old ways by not taking on the responsibility of a parent.

That lack of responsibility affected her motivation and mental health, she was desperate to cling onto happiness even at the hands of men who treated her terribly and didn't respect her. This quickly decreased her motivation and elevated the depression she had in life, which affects her daughter.

Why this film? It's because if we learn to overcome our limits and push through to new challenges we all can have better lives. Even someone like Sharon with the distractions and the situations she goes through can turn it around.

My goal is that this film will give motivation to people without hope in life to strive for success and happiness, to understand the values of who and what is important in life.

This character is not fictional, it's a real person, as this real person is one out of millions who either have it just as bad or even worse. Being able to showcase this film shows that you can make something out of your life.



Key Characters

Sunshine

- 11/12 years old
- Born and raised in Brigham City, Utah
- Has three older sisters who she barely sees because of her mother
- Lives with her mother in low income housing
- Wants to be a police officer to help people when she is older
- Introvert and struggles socially
- Learning difficulties
- Has a long lost father named Carlos
- Hopeful and naive



Key Characters

Sharon

- In her late 40's
- Was born and raised in Logan, Utah
- Suffers PTSD
- Is a rape victim
- Depressed, irresponsible, and unmotivated
- Burns bridges with everyone she comes in contact with, including her older daughters
- Doesn't pay much attention to her youngest and only daughter remaining in the house
- Hopeless in seeing a bright future for herself
- Was once an amateur model
- Every daughter she has is from a different man



Supporting Characters

Olivia

- Is 13 years old
- Befriends Sunshine, after her birthday party
- Has an older sister who's on the other side of the country
- Close to her mother, Heather
- An extrovert
- Loves to entertain, by singing and dancing
- Wants to be a Hollywood actress



Cynthia

- Mid to late 30's
- Works for social services
- No children but loves kids
- Was abused in the past, which made her lead into her profession
- Very professional but empathetic at the same time when dealing with children, especially Sunshine.



Supporting Characters

Carlos

- In his late 50's early 60's
- Born and raised in Irapuato, Mexico
- Used to be an alcoholic
- Loves soccer
- Doesn't speak much English
- The rest of his family are either in Mexico or have passed away



Maria

- In her mid 50's
- Wife to Carlos
- Has no children
- They met after Carlos got clean a couple years back
- Born in Culiacan, Mexico
- Came to America with her mother who has now passed away
- Has motherly instincts
- Is a house wife





Locations

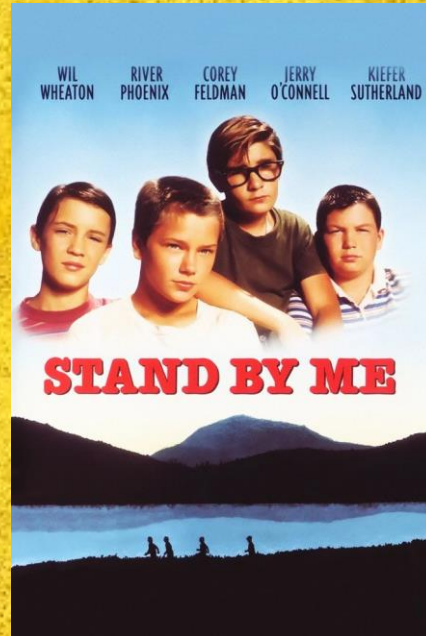


Comparisons



Budget \$2 million

Box Office \$11.3 million



Budget \$8 million

Box Office \$52.3 million



Budget \$3 million

Box Office \$5.9 million



Budget \$7 million

Box Office \$43 million

Additional Information

Movie Production Incentives

Utah

- 15% of the cumulative qualified production costs
- 15% on wages, salaries, and fringe benefits to all NV resident personnel
- 12% on wages, salaries, and fringe benefits to non-resident above the line personnel

Nevada

- 15% of the cumulative qualified production costs
- 15% on wages, salaries, and fringe benefits to all NV resident personnel
- 12% on wages, salaries, and fringe benefits to non-resident above the line personnel

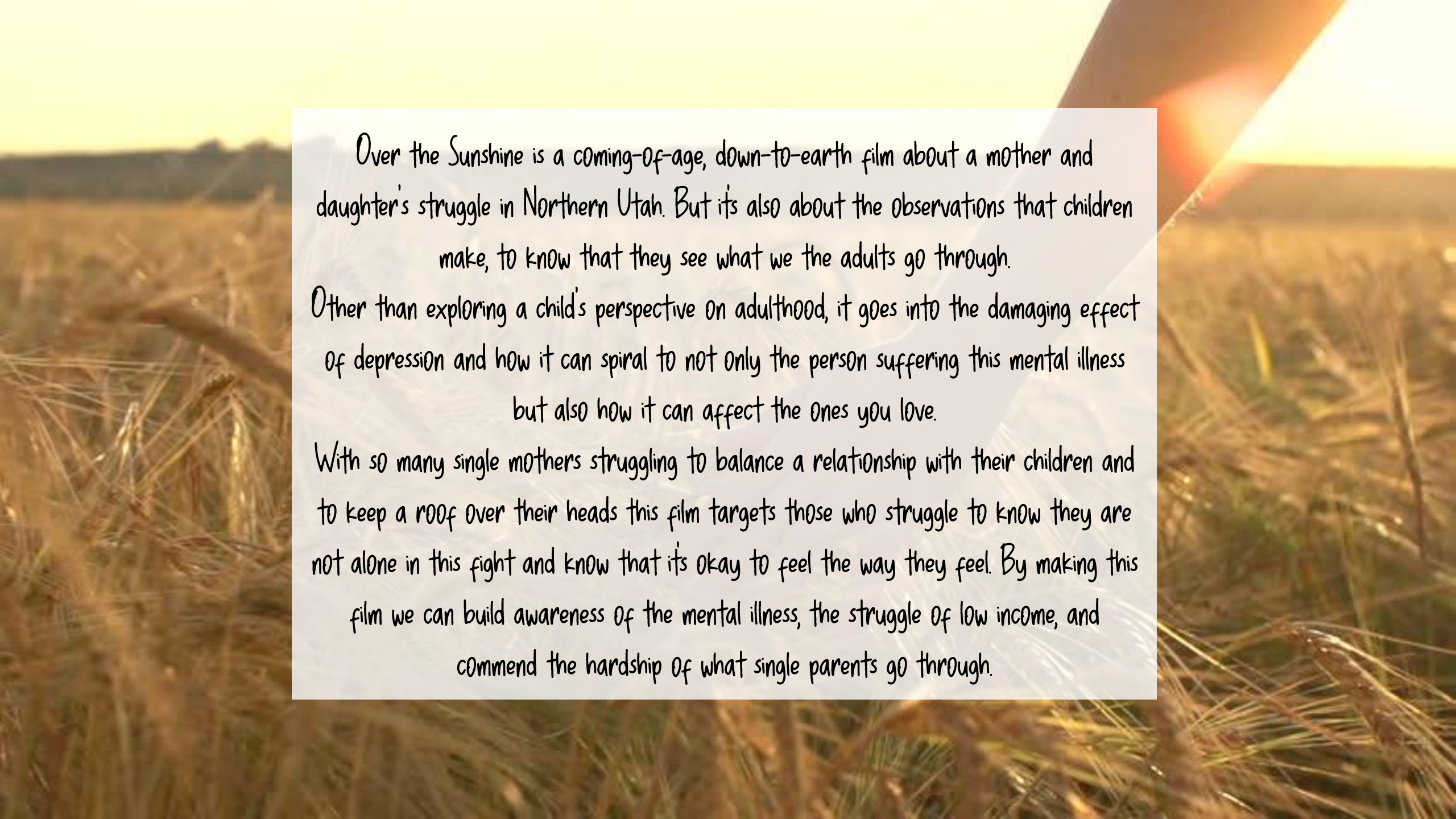
Production Estimate \$1 million

Arizona

- No-fee application permits on state roads, state parks, and cash rebates from production equipment vendors paid within 30 days
- No audit process
- No local equipment hire
- No per-project cap on tax credit
- Discounts and rebates up to 30%

New Mexico

- Offer a 25% rebate all production expenditures in the state
- 15% credit for the payment of wages for BTL crew who are not New Mexico residents
- Film Crew Advancement Program (FCAP) provides 50% reimbursement of the qualifying participants (on-the-job training for NM residents) to 1040 hours physically worked by the crew members



Over the Sunshine is a coming-of-age, down-to-earth film about a mother and daughter's struggle in Northern Utah. But it's also about the observations that children make, to know that they see what we the adults go through.

Other than exploring a child's perspective on adulthood, it goes into the damaging effect of depression and how it can spiral to not only the person suffering this mental illness but also how it can affect the ones you love.

With so many single mothers struggling to balance a relationship with their children and to keep a roof over their heads this film targets those who struggle to know they are not alone in this fight and know that it's okay to feel the way they feel. By making this film we can build awareness of the mental illness, the struggle of low income, and commend the hardship of what single parents go through.

Thank you



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