



WORLD PREMIERE - 2020 SXSW FILM FESTIVAL

**2021 INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS NOMINEE
BEST FIRST SCREENPLAY**

2020 | USA | English Language | 108 minutes | 2.39:1 | 5.1

LAPISFILM.COM

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LOGLINE

Delivery man Ray Tincelli is struggling to support himself and his ailing younger brother. He turns to quantum cabling, a strange new corner of the gig economy, and faces a pivotal choice to either help his fellow workers or to get rich and get out.

SYNOPSIS

New York, an alternate present: the quantum computing revolution has begun and investors are lining their pockets in the quantum trading market. Building the network, though, requires miles of infrastructure to be laid between huge magnetic cubes by “cblers” – unprotected gig workers who compete against robots to pull wires over rough terrain.

Queens delivery man Ray Tincelli (Dean Imperial) is skeptical of new technology, and the buy-in to start cabling is steep, but he struggles to support himself and his ailing younger brother, who suffers from a mysterious illness. So, when Ray scores a shady permit, he believes their fortunes may have finally changed. What he doesn't expect is to be pulled into a conspiracy involving hostile cblers, corporate greed, and the mysterious “Lapsis” who may have previously owned his cabling medallion.

CAST

Ray
Anna
Jamie
Erica
Jo
John
Felix
Dr. Jedediah Mangold
Officer Peachey
Noori Capahardi

Dean Imperial
Madeline Wise
Babe Howard
Dora Madison
Ivory Aquino
Frank Wood
James McDaniel
Arliss Howard
Portia
Pooya Mohseni

CREDITS

Director
Executive Producers

Producers

Screenwriter
Cinematographer
Editor
Production Designer
Supervising Sound Editor /
Re-Recording Mixer
Music
Costume Designer
Casting Director

Noah Hutton
Alexandra Winter
Richard Winter
Jesse Miller
Joseph Varca
Taylor Hess
Noah Hutton
Mike Gomes
Noah Hutton
Alexander Linde
Josh Heilbronner

Noah Hutton
Sandy Siu
Erica Hart

SELECT PRESS

“CULT STATUS IS ASSURED.”

- VARIETY

“A SMART, CLASS-CONSCIOUS SCI-FI PARABLE.”

- THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

“HUTTON’S WORLD-BUILDING TAKES FLIGHT.”

- INDIEWIRE

“WITTY, ASTUTE, PERFECTLY ABSURD.”

- AUSTIN CHRONICLE

“SHARP, PROGRESSIVELY-MINDED SATIRE.”

- AV CLUB

“A WORLD AWAY FROM THE CLICHÉS OF POPULAR SCIENCE FICTION,
THIS IS THE REAL THING.”

- EYE FOR FILM

FESTIVALS

SXSW NARRATIVE FEATURE COMPETITION [2020]

WINNER – JURY’S CHOICE AWARD – BIFAN [2020]

FANTASIA FILM FESTIVAL – CAMERA LUCIDA [2020]

THESSALONIKI FILM FESTIVAL [2020]

SARAJEVO FILM FESTIVAL [2020]

DIRECTOR BIO

NOAH HUTTON (Writer, Director, Composer, Editor) directed the award-winning documentary features DEEP TIME (SXSW 2015), and CRUDE INDEPENDENCE (SXSW 2009). In 2015 he created *Brain City*, a multi-platform installation in Times Square commissioned by the Times Square Arts Alliance that brought visuals from six leading neuroscience labs to some of the largest outdoor displays in the world. His upcoming documentary IN SILICO is a critical look at a decade of neuroscience. Noah received the Jacob Burns Film Center's 2015 New Lens Award.

Noah Hutton Filmography:

IN SILICO (Documentary Feature, 2020)

LAPSIS (Narrative Feature, 2020)

KIND OF BLUE (Narrative Short, 2017)

DEEP TIME (Documentary Feature, 2015)

CRUDE INDEPENDENCE (Documentary Feature, 2009)

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

LAPSIS is a blue collar sci-fi story that comes from two places. Years ago, I read an essay by the philosopher Patricia Reed which would inspire the concept for the film, but it would take actual life lived with my brother as he dealt with a debilitating disease to cook those ideas in the heat of the real world. Reed called for a new type of fiction that could deal with the financialization of the world as we find it today, the way in which the wild abstractions of global markets have come to rule our existence as if written in stone. Reed wrote, "While we seem quite adept in the proliferation of dystopic fictions (a symptom of nihilism), we already inhabit a highly fictionalized world predicated on 'the economy', even before credit swaps and options; the sublimation of everyday objects into a commodity form is wholly dependent on a sublime fiction. As the supreme energy driven by capital-fictions steer reality towards pyramidal inequality (with a steeple) and socio-climactic devastation, it seems urgent to seize upon the recursive power of fictions to repurpose their plastic force with an ethos of jujitsu-like acceleration." I read those words as a call-to-arms, but it was just a series of ideas until real life happened, and the characters in LAPSIS draw from my experiences as a brother and a worker. This film is a piece of imagined fiction, but at its core it has messages and meanings – none that are required or expected – but they come from a place of imagination and criticality, and from a whole chorus of creative voices that helped bring this story to life. Thanks again for your consideration and I hope you enjoy watching the film!

- Noah Hutton

BACKGROUND

THEMES

LAPSIS is a genre film, using sci-fi in similar ways to shows like *Black Mirror*. But instead of focusing on a glitzy, high tech, white collar world like so many other sci-fi films and shows do, LAPSIS is *blue collar sci-fi*. It's a gritty story of the messy exploitative underbelly that tech companies often rely on to uphold their glossy facades.

The film imagines a gig economy organized around a boom in quantum computing where predatory corporate forces threaten everyday workers tasked with the work needed to lay this new quantum infrastructure in rural areas. This work takes the form of laying cable through huge swaths of forests, connecting massive cubic transistors. The film portrays human laborers who are forced to work without basic protections and are often robbed of their routes by automated cabling robots. These themes are central to some of the political discourse surrounding the 2020 presidential campaign, raised by Andrew Yang and others, about the threat of automation and the issues faced by gig economy laborers around the world. They are also part of the growing awareness of the exploitation of workers subcontracted by big tech giants like Amazon, kept on timers and forced to sacrifice basic physical comforts in order to compete for their paychecks.

THE MAKING OF

The making of the film mirrored the message of the film. Director Noah Hutton distributed a production handbook (which is [publicly available online](#) and open source), adapted from the lab handbook of CLEAR, a queer, feminist, radical ocean plastics lab in Newfoundland that Hutton previously made a short documentary about for the *The Atlantic*. On the set of LAPSIS, the production handbook enforced a set of policies meant to increase the equity amongst members of the crew. This included sharp policies on sexual harassment, no unpaid labor, and building in all full-time crew to the backend profit structure of the film.

The cast featured over 40 speaking roles and nearly 150 total roles including background. The production fulfilled SAG's diversity incentive and included two trans actors playing non-trans characters in key supporting roles (Ivory Aquino as JO and Pooya Mohseni as NOORI CAPAHARDI).

Noah wrote the original screenplay for LAPSIS and rounded up a team of collaborators to make the world of the film come to life in upstate New York last summer. His vision included an army of automated robots, so he sought out a robotics lab at UPenn (the Kod*Lab) who had just the right solution for LAPSIS. Working on a tight schedule, the weather gods cooperated and the film was shot in twenty-six days. The team started post-production immediately, with Noah editing and scoring the film.

KEY TERMS

QUANTUM TURN: The film takes place in a parallel present after the quantum turn where the internet and all computing has shifted to Quantum systems. (Something like this is actually happening right now).

QUANTUM BOOM: The quantum turn has created a boom in the economy, giving rise to various industries, start-ups, and a resulting gig economy.

QUANTUM TRADING: Wall street has utilized quantum technology for high-speed trading (something else that is also in the process of occurring). These high-speed trades rely on a workforce of unprotected laborers without health insurance plying their trade in different rural landscapes throughout the world.

CABLING: The gig that is at the heart of quantum trading, cabling involves trekking in different natural landscapes throughout the world. In the US, Cablers work in state and national parks rebranded as cabling zones. They embark on routes to attach cables from one large metallic transistor cube to another, earning money for every connection they make. Although cabling companies offer beautiful adventures in nature and lucrative routes, their workers are often left in dangerous situations, forced to lug pounds of cable through difficult terrain while trying to outpace the automated robots that threaten to steal their routes.

CBLR: One of many seemingly independent cabling companies that are actually under the umbrella of one exploitative monopoly.

OMNIA: A mysterious disease that is affecting many young men in the post Quantum world. It is closest to CFS (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome), but experts can't agree on its causes and there is no surefire cure. Some people think that this disease isn't real.

BARR-CLYDER CLINIC: An elite clinic that promises a cure to Omnia. Led by renowned Dr. Jedidiah Mangold, the clinic does not accept health insurance.

REFERENCES

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