

Staff member to screen film at NOLA film fest

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When the lights go down at a New Orleans Film Festival screening this Friday (Oct. 12) at the Contemporary Arts Center, Alan Velasquez will be nervously watching the audience.



Sherri Eakin plays the protagonist Elisha, in *Tomorrow*, a film by staff member Alan Velasquez about a career-driven government officer who's been hiding the secret that she's actually a spy and an assassin. (Photo from *Tomorrow*)

Velasquez, who works in the Tulane School of Architecture library, wrote, directed, shot and edited the 20-minute film, *Tomorrow*, which will run in the "Louisiana short film" category of the film fest.

Tomorrow is about a government agent who agonizes over telling her new fiancé that she is an assassin and a spy. The short film was created with 2012 graduate, Amy Leonard, who produced and helped to edit the film. Velasquez says he and Leonard were thrilled when they found out their submission was accepted by the festival.

"They told us they received around 1,200 entries and only selected about 11 percent," Velasquez says. "Obviously, that was really exciting."

Completed as a project for a digital media class, the film was shot over the course of three days with an extremely limited budget and a small crew that included friends and family. Velasquez says he's always been interested in movies, but it was only after he took classes at Tulane that he realized how much he liked the process.

"I started out by taking some screenwriting courses," Velasquez says. "Once I saw that production courses were offered, I started so I could see if I liked it. As I took those, I grew to really enjoy the production aspect."

Velasquez says he's "learned a lot" from the classes, and the fact that festivalgoers will be watching is proof that his work to improve as a filmmaker is "really paying off."

"It's tough, which is why it's rewarding," Velasquez says. "I feel like I'm getting better, but it's nice to get the validation from the film festival community."