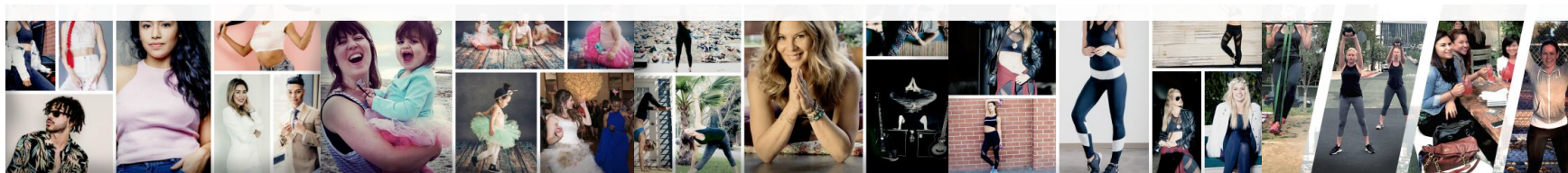


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DECEMBER 16, 2022

# Conversations with Nadia Voukitchevitch



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Today we'd like to introduce you to Nadia Voukitchevitch.

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Hi Nadia, we're thrilled to have a chance to learn your story! So, before we get into

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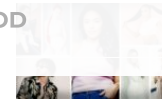
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specifics, maybe you can briefly walk us through how you got to where you are today?

I was born in a walk-up brownstone in New York City. I was the first home birth of five kids and according to my mother, I did not cry and facilitated my delivery for her. I then traveled a lot mainly because as a mixed family, my parents were trying to find a place where we fitted in. They tried West Virginia, Pine Bush in upstate New York, Cap-Haitien in Haiti and a tiny village, Torremanzanas in the province of Alicante in Spain. I decided I wanted to be a film Director at age 12 and my father told me he could not help me as he had no contacts in the business and was not Jewish. So from that moment on I knew I would have to make it on my own and prove myself all the way, especially as a young woman of color.

When I was about 15, I asked my father to go back to the US so I could learn how to make movies, as there were no film schools in the province we lived in Spain.

After being selected to the Future Filmmaker's Workshop at Tisch School of the Arts, NYU while an Art Major and Senior Class President at Washington



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Irving High School. I made my first short film. I was then selected to be part of the Future Screenwriters

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workshop at USC and then was accepted to Sarah Lawrence College. I worked in retail to support myself while in High School and at the Library when at Sarah Lawrence College where as a First Year I took my first Advance Filmmaking class with Experimental Filmmaker Abigail Child. Over the next four years, I made several short films on 8mm film and two documentaries one that became very controversial about racism and prejudice on campus and the other I shot in St. Petersburg, Russia about foreign women living in Russia and the harsh conditions they and local women had to deal with including blatant discrimination and sexism... My Senior year at SLC I was convinced by my Documentary Film Professor to submit my documentary I did in Russia to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Student Awards and became a Finalist in the documentary category.

To the astonishment of many, I did not have a job lined up after college so I continued to work as a freelancer and moved my way up from a PA to a Key PA working on indie features such as “Arresting Gena” a Good Machine production directed by Hannah Weyer and starring break out talent: Summer Phoenix, Adrian Grenier, Heather

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Matarazo, Sam Rockwell, Brendan Sexton, Aisha  
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washington directed by Norman Jewison walking talent to and from set in pouring rain... I also worked with Gloria Stephan, Meryl Streep and Angela Bassett on "Music for the Heart" directed by Wes Craven. I did some commercials as well and worked with Director Consuelo Gonzalez on CNN Newsstand who told me that the only way she became a Director was because the one she was doing Scripty for drop down dead on set and the Producer put her on as Director. That's when I realized how hard it was for women to be given the opportunity to direct whereas for men it was relatively easy in a male-dominated industry. About two years after graduating from SLC I moved to Miami and started working as a 1st AD and was then asked to work as an Agency Producer which led to me producing award-winning commercials for Fortune 500 clients. Then 9/11 happened and the Agency where ai worked close-down its NYC offices and started losing all its major accounts, so I accepted a job offer I was given in Los Angeles.

After three years working at that Agency and quickly promoted to Executive Producer and Head of the Broadcast Department, I decided to go back to writing and doing more creative directing and

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documentaries. I then did a film for non-profit  
Española Community Housing Corp which served  
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as a great fundraising tool and also helped increase awareness of the importance of the organization workers to the community in downtown Los Angeles. I also directed several PSAs for non-profit CHIRLA (Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles). I also worked with La Banda Films and Mexican filmmakers Rodrigo Prieto and Luis Mandoki and left to work as Assistant Director to George Sluizer on “The Chosen One.” I then became pregnant and decided to start my own Production Company, [Nadiafilms.com](http://Nadiafilms.com) where I produced commercials, corporate videos, short films such as “Ending Up” directed by Paige Morrow and also my first feature film “America’s Family” which premiered at Dances With Films this past summer and won 2 out of 3 Awards including Grand Jury and Audience. The movie also just won Best Narrative feature at the Roxbury International Film Festival in Boston. I’m currently working on my first novel and developing several scripts for films seeking funding.

**Can you talk to us a bit about the challenges and lessons you’ve learned along the way.**

**Looking back would you say it’s been easy or smooth in retrospect?**

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That's a big laugh! My entire life has been a rocky messy road. Not a smooth one.

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it never is a smooth road for people of color and especially women of color. Particularly in this business that is still white and male-dominated, you really have to work hard and make yourself available for any opportunity you can get to keep moving forward and working your way up. I often tell younger filmmakers looking for advice that you must create opportunities for yourself and help each other out especially women supporting other women. There's no denying things have changed a bit and that the #metoo movement helped bring sexual harassment and other forms of abuse to the forefront, but I can tell you from experience that we still have a long way to go, despite most major companies trying to show how they are focused on BIPOC hires, but it's more like they are filling in a quota requirement. I once had a director who was married to another accomplished woman director who would not allow her to direct any of the commercials I booked for her because he always had to co-direct them with her. A year later when I was working as a freelance Agency Producer, I hired her to direct by herself several commercials.

This business is a very discriminatory one, where people only work with people they like and click

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are rarely ever seen on a film set. In the feature, I produced “America’s Family” I had a long conversation with the Director, Anike Tourse who is also a woman of color, about hiring a predominantly female crew and when possible women of color and members of our LGBTQA community and of our differently-abled one as well, and I’m proud to say that we did and we didn’t do it to earn the “re-frame stamp” but to finally give other women who looked like us and were extremely talented and skilled at the crafts and jobs an opportunity that they would never get from an all-white male production company.

So yes! I’ve had to overcome many obstacles and challenges, but I have not let that slow me down, no matter how disappointing. I have had to endure all kinds of harassment, not just sexual, bullying, envy, jealousy and verbal abuse. Not to mention that when I was pregnant with my son, I experienced many women blocking me from jobs as they questioned my ability to do my job as a Producer simply for being pregnant when none of them had even had a child or even knew what they were talking about. I’ve even had to fight women CEOs for a better-hire pay for my work when if the

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given her the raise and more.

So sadly, it has not been easy, I wish I could say it has, but it hasn't and it's still a struggle. Look, we just had the first woman Director of Photography nominated for an Oscar just last year in all this time- How is that ok? and only three women directors have won Oscars over decades and miraculously one is a woman of color. Regardless, I have not let that make me bitter or resentful, and I'm grateful to all my clients and collaborators-partners for the work that they have given me and the opportunities I made happen with them over the years. Again, I'm proud to have worked with many women directors and I recently posted a list on my social media.

### **Appreciate you sharing that. What else should we know about what you do?**

I am a

Producer/Director/Writer/Educator/Photographer/Artist.

I work primarily as a Producer and Director, but I'm also a Writer and Photographer/Videographer.

Nowadays they call us Creative Content Producers which basically encompasses any kind of video for any kind of medium, so you really have to be a

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chameleon of sorts. Often you get clients now that  
want you to also edit the videos you produce and  
manage all the digital distribution, so you need to  
know how to do all those tasks, and when there is  
no budget or very low budget, you cannot always  
hire crew who are specialized in those areas. What  
sets me apart is definitely my ability to adapt to  
whichever situation and solve problems rapidly. I  
also get called a lot for challenging budgets which  
means great and expensive concepts/ideas/scripts  
but they have low budgets so you have to get very  
creative and have excellent resources you can draw  
on to maintain the optimum quality of the  
film/video.

What I'm most proud of aside from my son, I would  
say the film that I just produced that has won  
several prestigious awards and that more  
importantly delivers a very vital message of hope,  
love and unity in these uncertain times where there  
is so much political divide and misinformation. So  
go watch "America's Family"!

**Risk taking is a topic that people have widely  
differing views on – we'd love to hear your  
thoughts.**

I would say that I am a pretty big risk-taker. I think  
it comes from being rather impulsive when I get

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excited about an interesting project or job or idea. I think part of being a brave and bold person is

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willing to take big risks. You have to look at it from the perspective of a business investment whether that be monetarily or for your own life experience and knowledge. Often if we do not come out of our comfort zone we are not able to grow and see how far we can go and what are capable of. I'm not suggesting that everyone should take major risks in order to get to the next level, but sometimes a bold move is what stirs the fire up.

I certainly have suffered for many risks that I've taken, but in life, you learn from your mistakes, just try not to repeat them.

When I decided to have my son, I took a huge risk especially as a single industry-working mother, not knowing where the next job would come from, but I had faith and believed that I would manage somehow, and I did with the help of a village of other dear close women friends, without them I wouldn't have been able to make it as a single parent working in this industry. I also had to endure a lot of judgment from many cultures and religions, and especially people I worked with who looked down upon single parents. Nonetheless, as the old

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### Contact Info:

- Website: [www.nadiafilms.com](http://www.nadiafilms.com)
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/baronesanadiavoukitchevitch/>
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- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/vfilms22>
- Youtube: <https://studio.youtube.com/channel/UC2GGcC8kww4u1BTc6reAYPw/editing/>

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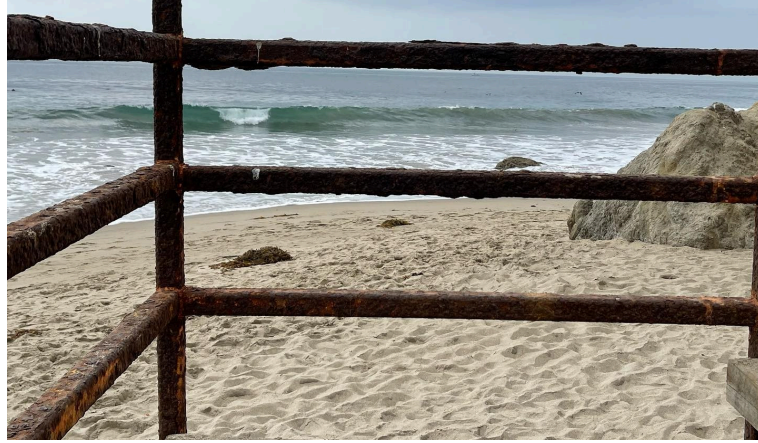
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