

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The Choice, a powerful Virtual Reality documentary on abortion rights, will have its **North American premiere at SXSW 2022.**



In *The Choice*, participants have an intimate, interactive conversation with Kristen, a young Native American woman from Texas, who dreams of raising a family but instead finds herself facing a painful system that forces women into dehumanizing situations just to survive.

**SXSW is spotlighting reproductive rights** at this year's festival, booking as their keynote [Alexis McGill Johnson](#), President and CEO of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

At this crucial moment for *Roe V. Wade*, VR has a psychological impact no other tool can match. Feedback has been immensely promising from test audiences and [the world premiere at IDFA](#): even those opposed to abortion said *The Choice* made them reconsider their stance.

**The Choice** will be a part of the SXSW Film Festival and will be presented as an immersive installation as a part of the XR program.

**Kristen**, the documentary's subject, will be present at the screenings to meet with attendees.

## **THE TEAM**

**Director, Producer:** Joanne Popinska

**DOP, Producer:** Tom C. Hall

**Illustrator:** Zoe Roellin

**Composer:** Janal Bechthold

**Sound designer:** Michael J. Brinkman

**Dialogue editor:** Ryan Cota

**Lead Software Engineer:** Becca Little

**Unity Developer:** Hannah Estes

**Associate Producer:** Ada Vaughan

**Associate Producer:** Sönke Kirchhof

**Production:** Infinite Frame Media

## **Contact**

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## **LOGLINE**

Behind every decision is a human story.

## **SYNOPSIS**

Debate about reproductive rights is often heated. But behind every family planning decision there is a human story. Using volumetric capture technology and creative design, this film lets us see from a different perspective the emotional and complex nature behind one woman's Choice. In this unique VR documentary viewers will meet Kristen, a young Native American woman from Austin, TX who dreams of raising a family but instead finds herself facing a painful system that forces women into dehumanizing situations just to survive.

The Choice blends techniques from traditional documentary storytelling, personal conversation, and animation, using virtual reality and interactivity to redefine not only how we tell the stories, but how the audience experiences them and connects with the subject on a deep, emotional level.

**TRAILER:** <https://vimeo.com/631428131>

**WEBSITE:** [www.thechoice-vr.com](http://www.thechoice-vr.com)

## **Social media:**

[https://twitter.com/thechoice\\_vr](https://twitter.com/thechoice_vr)

[https://www.instagram.com/thechoice\\_vr](https://www.instagram.com/thechoice_vr)

<https://www.facebook.com/thechoice.vrdoc>

Press Kit (pictures and other materials):

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rOhU4AWpNtg8UNdmFAuypNhR1yxVEF6->

### **The Choice in media - selected articles**

2022, Gazeta Wyborcza, [Polska reżyserka jedzie na ważny festiwal z filmem o aborcji. Dlaczego nakręciła go w technologii VR](#)

2021, Powidoki, The Choice - interaktywny dokument VR

2021, Peeps, Talking Across Difference with Virtual Reality: Using New Technologies to Enable Conversation in The Choice

2020, VR Scout, [Powerful VR Documentary 'The Choice' Awarded Two Kaleidoscope Grants](#)

2020, Austin Chronicles, [One in a Crowd: The Choice. Immersive VR doc explores the right to choose abortion](#)

2019, The Guardian, [The female game designers fighting back on abortion rights](#)

2018, Wysokie Obcasy, ["The Choice" - Załóż okulary VR i zobacz jak to jest być w niechcianej ciąży](#)

### **The Choice is coming home to Texas, where abortion is at the forefront of the conversation**

*"I'm American, I am Lumbee, I am Native. This is my country. And I deserve to have my children where I want them and on their native land."*

*-Kristen in The Choice*

In March 2022, The Choice brings Kristen's story home to Austin, Texas for a coveted North American premiere at SXSW, now in its 35th year.

Texas is both the setting for Kristen's story in The Choice, and a battleground in today's fight for abortion access.

Reproductive rights are at serious risk in the United States. A US Supreme Court ruling is expected this year on Dobbs V. Jackson Women's Health Organization, which could eliminate the rights established in Roe V. Wade.

SXSW recognizes the gravity. In 2021, they condemned the restrictive Texas abortion bills SB 4 and SB 8. As this year's keynote speaker, SXSW booked Alexis McGill Johnson, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

The Choice contributes a unique tool to the fight for reproductive rights: empathy.

As state-level organizers prepare for the possibilities of a post-Roe V. Wade world, The Choice – **and its track record of changing views on abortion** – can help them foster empathy for the human story behind each choice.

## **Virtual reality for real-world impact**

The Choice is changing how people think about abortion. We designed it that way.

Virtual Reality packs a psychological punch that traditional 2D stories cannot match. Participants want to hug Kristen and feel compelled to help her.

*"I felt her pain" - Test Audience Member*

**Interactivity**: Participants don't just watch Kristen tell her story – they join the conversation, asking her questions and making eye contact.

**Proximity**: Kristen is virtually seated five feet in front of the participant, the distance humans subconsciously place between themselves and a close friend, creating a personal connection.

**Immersion**: The VR headset takes participants out of their physical environments and creates a sense of real, intimate presence in a quiet space with Kristen.

## **Breaking new ground with custom volumetric video technology**

**Volumetric Capture**: Allows participants to move freely along the 6 degrees of space (forward, backward, up, down, side to side).

**Stereoscopy**: Mimics human vision by capturing the subject from two points in space, creating a 3D experience.

Only a combination of volumetric capture and stereoscopy could make Kristen look and feel alive, building a sense of real intimacy with participants. But there was no existing solution that would do it – **so we created our own.**

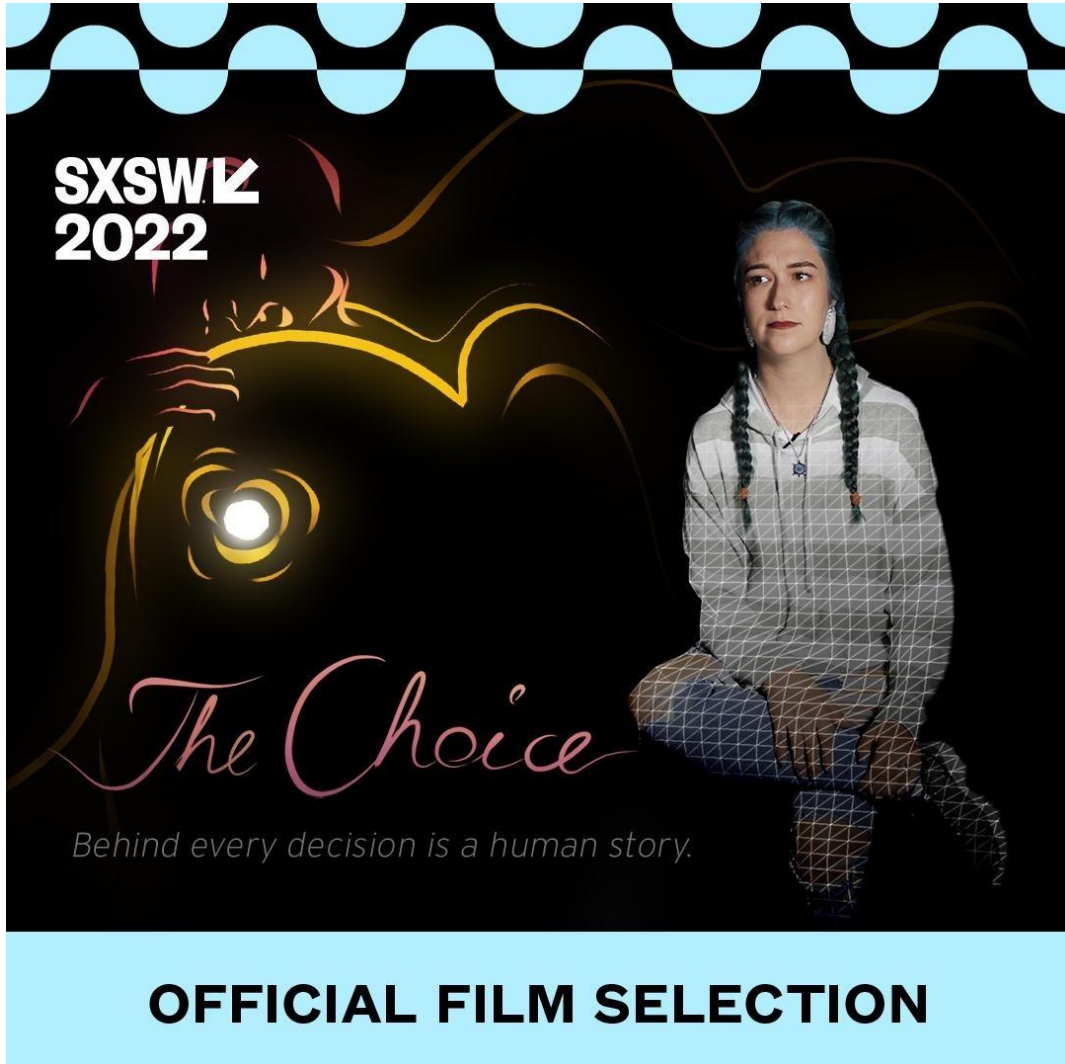
The result is incredibly lifelike, elevating the experience from watching a hologram to meeting a real person and sparking genuine connection.

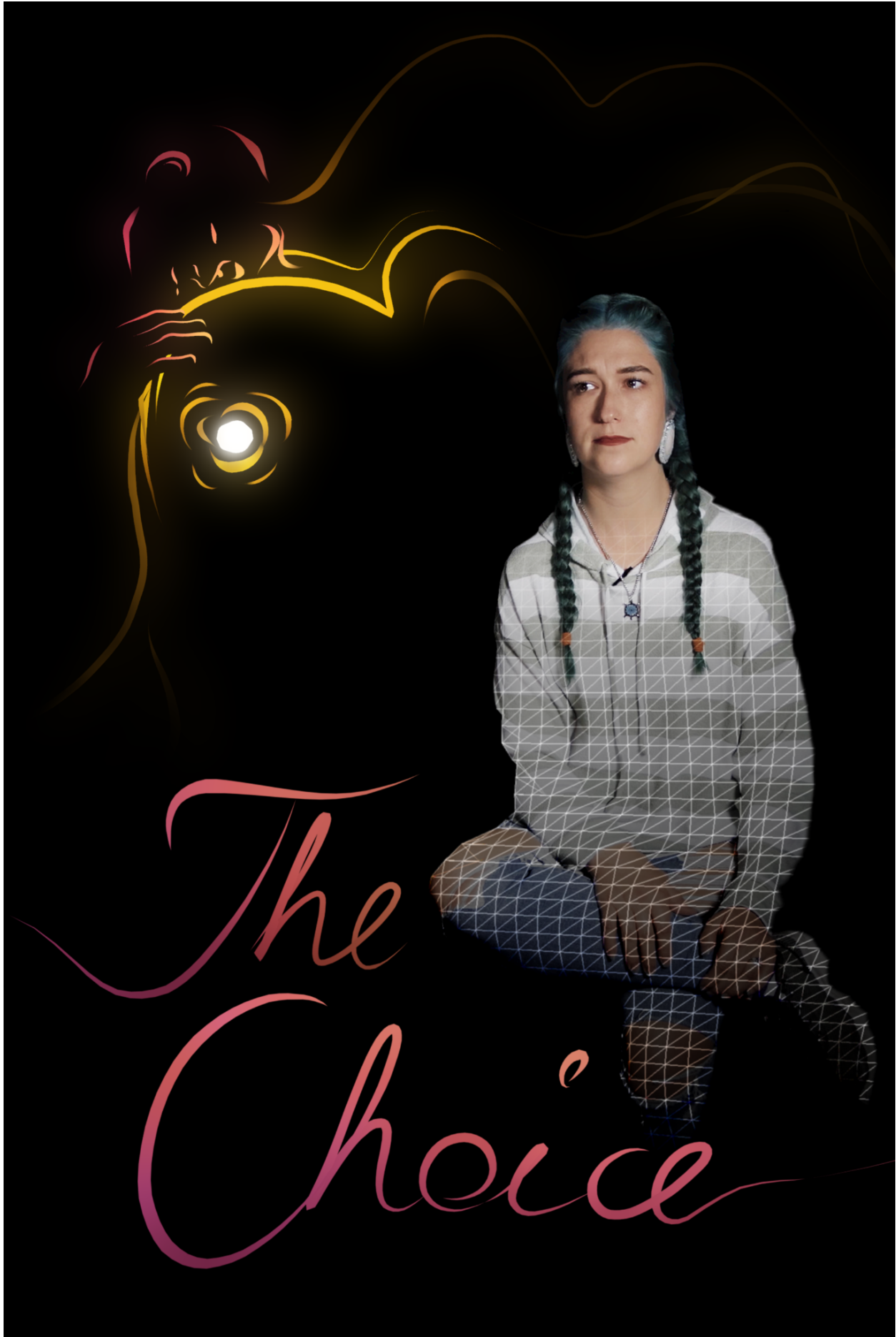
*"It's like I'm talking to Kristen!" - Test Audience Member*

*"It really makes me feel in the same room" - Test Audience Member*

**Stills**

All stills and media: by Infinite Frame Media





The  
Choice



