

Motherhood Inc.

Three Women. One Child.



Story by Sabine El Gemayel

Written by Tamar Halpern & Sabine El Gemayel

EXT. RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Colette and Eric kiss passionately. He pushes hard against her and she lets out a low moan, snapping his belt buckle.

Eric opens a condom wrapper with his teeth. She playfully tries to take it, but he avoids her. They struggle momentarily.

ERIC

Colette...

COLETTE

Shh. Kiss me.

She kisses him long and hard, tossing the condom to the ground. She works to guide him inside her. He breaks away, pissed.

ERIC

You killed it, Colette.

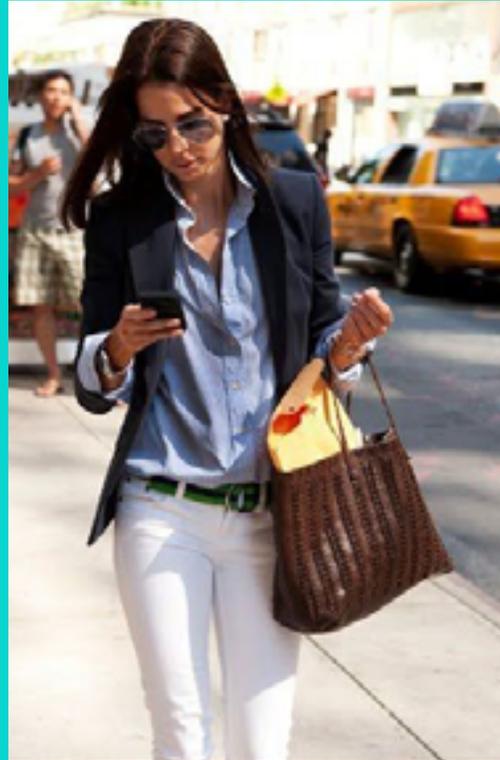
COLETTE

Then why tell me you want a baby?

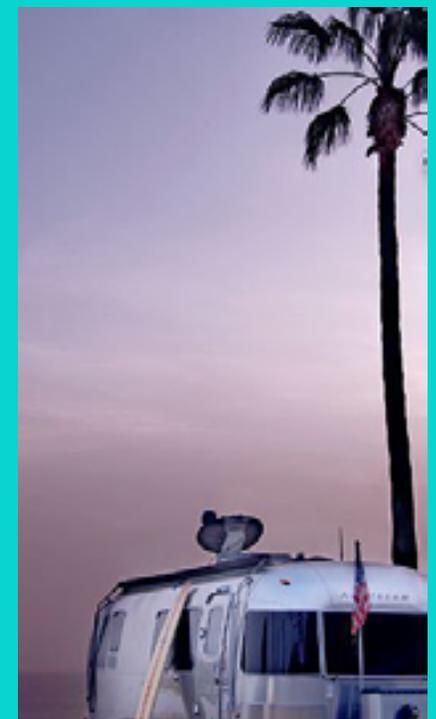
He keeps walking.



At 42, *COLETTE* wants nothing more than to be a mother. The successful co-owner of a progressive farm-to-table restaurant in a wealthy part of LA, her desperation to have a child drives away her boyfriend, so she propositions her best friend and executive chef, *PATRICK*, 40. Content with his gay lifestyle, Patrick declines and Colette looks into sperm donation, only to learn she's infertile. Instead of giving up her dream, she decides to try surrogacy, using donor eggs and sperm.



A loving mother of two, *STACY*, 29, is a military wife waiting for her husband's final tour in Afghanistan to end so they can move to the beach where they first fell in love. While he's away, she signs with a surrogacy agency, hoping to help earn enough to surprise her husband with a mobile home. When Colette and Stacy meet, their opposing backgrounds clash. Colette lives an organic lifestyle, while Stacy thinks it's healthy to drink Diet Coke.



Nick, in uniform, Skypes with Stacy.

STACY

I was thinking I better get a job. You know. Just to help out.

NICK

The kids need you, Stacy.

STACY

I found a possible work from home situation.

NICK

We already talked about it. My dad'll send you a check.

STACY

Don't you even wanna hear what it is?

NICK

(tense)

Baby, I gotta go, you understand?

STACY

Will you call soon?

NICK

I'll try...

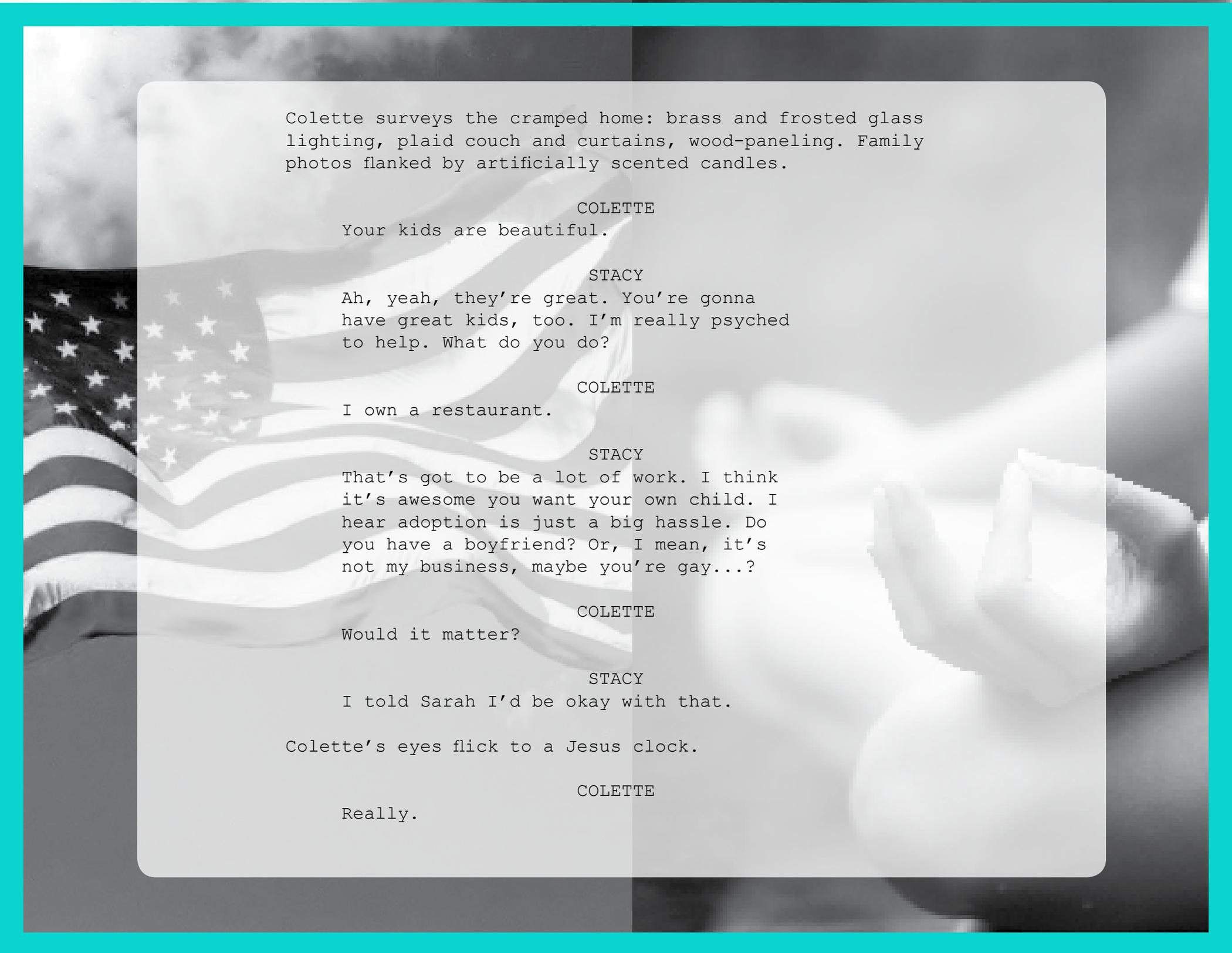
She knows what that means. A sadness washes over her.

STACY

I was gonna show you my tits.



The two women strike an awkward understanding, with Stacy trying to follow Colette's organic and healthy regimen. As the pregnancy progresses, Stacy sneaks junk food and Colette, trying to keep control of her unborn child, asks Stacy and her children to move into her home so she can better monitor the business arrangement. Stacy declines as her daughter develops an innate distrust of Colette.



Colette surveys the cramped home: brass and frosted glass lighting, plaid couch and curtains, wood-paneling. Family photos flanked by artificially scented candles.

COLETTE

Your kids are beautiful.

STACY

Ah, yeah, they're great. You're gonna have great kids, too. I'm really psyched to help. What do you do?

COLETTE

I own a restaurant.

STACY

That's got to be a lot of work. I think it's awesome you want your own child. I hear adoption is just a big hassle. Do you have a boyfriend? Or, I mean, it's not my business, maybe you're gay...?

COLETTE

Would it matter?

STACY

I told Sarah I'd be okay with that.

Colette's eyes flick to a Jesus clock.

COLETTE

Really.

LUNA, a newlywed at 23, lives in Guatemala. Just after giving birth, a mudslide kills Luna's parents and leaves her new husband badly injured. Colette's housekeeper, who is Luna's Aunt, suggests Luna be hired as the wet nurse, as Colette wants her baby to be fed breast milk. Despite Luna's resistance to leave her infant and husband behind, she feels forced to accept the job. She says goodbye to her young family and is smuggled into the states by a Coyote.



EXT. ROAD

Luna rides a burro with the baby and her son, Sebastian.

EXT. BUSY QUETZALTENANGO STREET

Luna keeps her children close as cars whiz by.

INT. CLINIC OFFICE

Wealthy women sit in the fancy office, glancing at Luna and her children dressed like peasants.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Dr. Rodriguez examines Luna as Sebastian watches.

DOCTOR RODRIGUEZ

How nice to be offered work in
California. Ever been?

Luna shakes her head.

DOCTOR RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

Hollywood. Beverly Hills. Lucky you.
Okay, you look healthy. We have your milk
and blood samples. I'll send the results
soon.

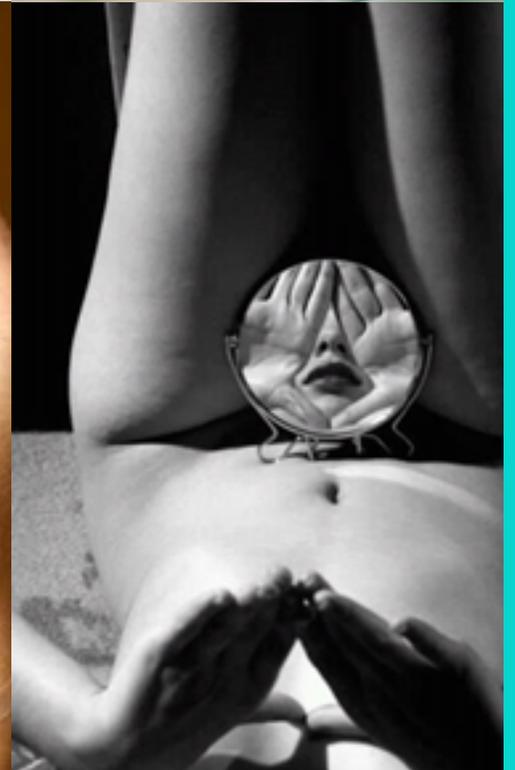
He turns to leave.

LUNA

Uh, pardon me. They said you'd look at my
children, too?



COLETTE (42) Detail oriented, controlling, smarter than most and a fierce businesswoman, Colette has been married to her restaurant longer than she ever planned. With her mother ailing in a nursing home and ravaged by dementia, Colette longs to be connected to family and has the smarts, money and determination to make it happen.



INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD

Stacy watches from the bed as Colette rocks the baby.

COLETTE

Little man, don't cry. Mommy screwed up.
Just hang in there.

Dark wet spots form on Luna's shirt. She reaches for the crying baby.

COLETTE (CONT'D)

No. We wait for the pump. It'll be here
in a half hour. Treinta minutos.

The MATERNITY NURSE enters and goes to Stacy.

MATERNITY NURSE

Hi there. Your chart says you're
scheduled to take Dostinex to stop your
milk? Great. We'll prepare a bottle.

COLETTE

No thanks.

The Maternity Nurse isn't sure why Colette is answering.

MATERNITY NURSE

Well, he's hungry. And it's up to his
mother.

COLETTE

I am the mother and there will be no
formula or plastic, thank you.

MATERNITY NURSE

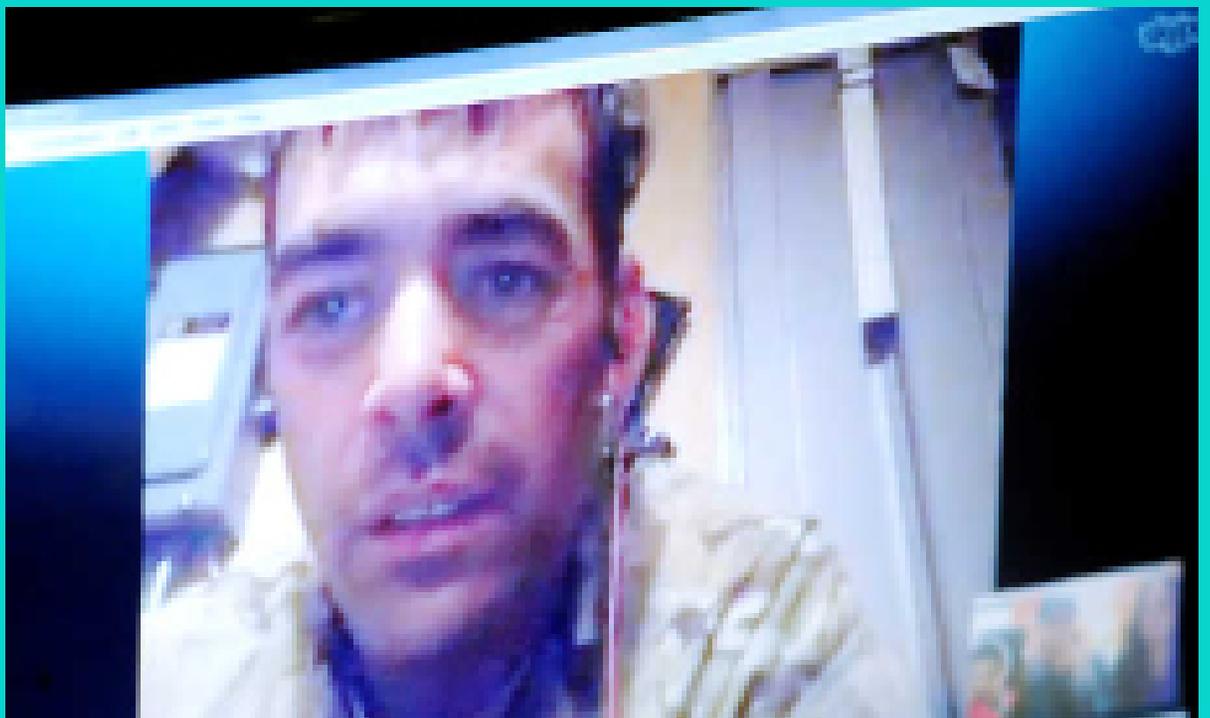
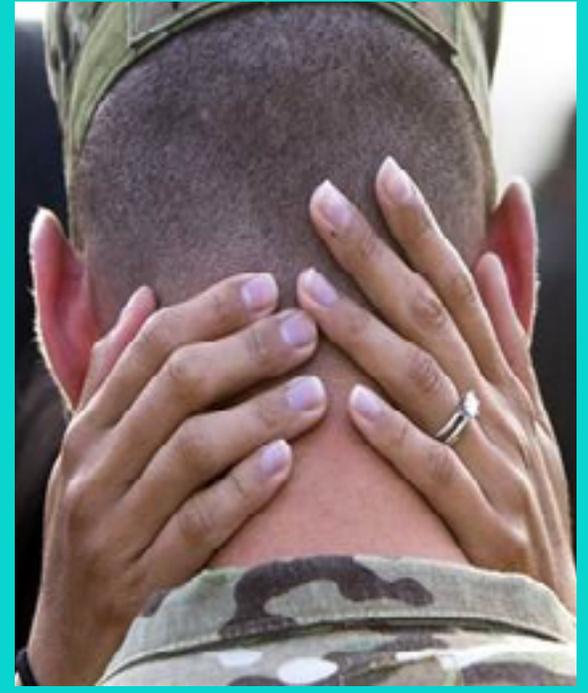
Oh, I'm sorry. My shift just started and-

The baby screams.

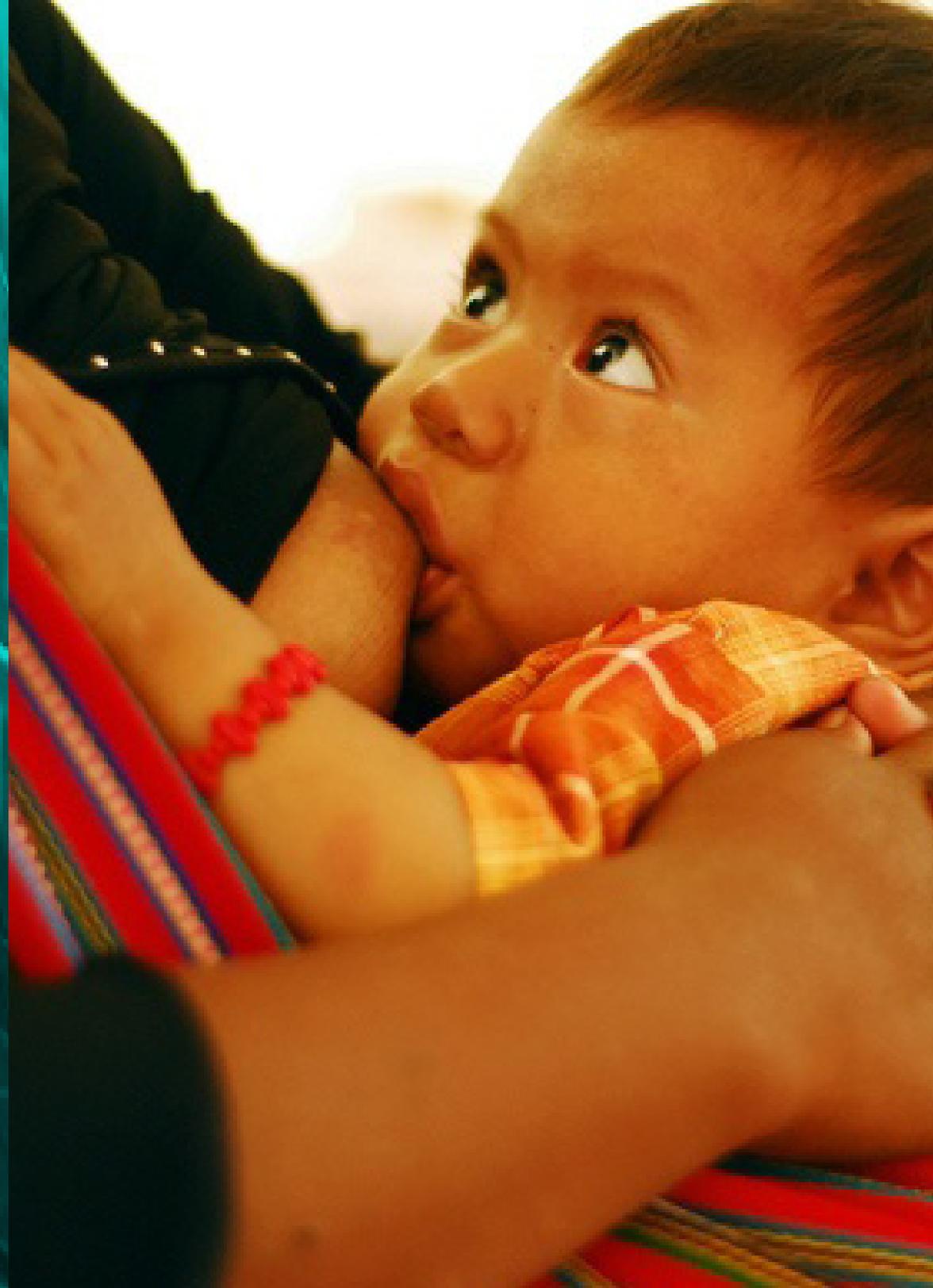
STACY

I could nurse him just as easily,
Colette.

STACY (29) A wild child who lives to surf, Stacy fell madly in love and raised two children on a military base in the Inland Empire, waiting for her husband to finish his Middle East tours so they can finally start living their lives. Smart, but not educated, Stacy has great empathy for Colette's infertility. She tries to be kind and follow Colette's rules as the tension between them bubbles under the surface.



LUNA (23) Despite surviving the hardships of poverty, loss of loved ones, and a devastating natural disaster in Guatemala, Luna maintains a pragmatic innocence. Radically devoted to her children and tortured by financial strains, she dreams of a better life with her new husband. She just didn't realize she'd have to be the one to try and get it.



EXT. BUS STATION, TIJUANA - NIGHT

Luna waits by a light post. A COYOTE approaches.

COYOTE
To Los Angeles?

Luna nods and pulls out money. He counts it, then looks her up and down. He walks away. She follows.

INT. HOUSE

The Coyote leads Luna past a family eating their dinner.

EXT. HOUSE BACKYARD

The Coyote's gold teeth flash in the moonlight.

COYOTE
When you get to the other side, there
will be a blue van with Arizona plates.

He opens the dilapidated storage shed. A light clicks on inside. Her POV: a tunnel with hand cut dirt steps.

LUNA
You don't go with me?

COYOTE
That costs another hundred. Maybe you can
afford it. Most walk across the desert.
The tunnel costs extra. You must have a
good job, even though you dress like you
don't.

PATRICK (40) An astonishingly skilled French chef with the tolerance of a saint, Patrick is the perfect business partner and best friend for Colette. With a tendency to drink, Patrick has his sights set on selling the restaurant concept he and Colette worked so hard to realize, retiring with his piece of the empire. His relaxed approach contradicts his fierce talent in the kitchen.

*Eric R.
Le Bern*



Sabine El Gemayel

Living in the Middle East at a young age under inconceivable circumstances during the Persian revolution and the Lebanese wars, Sabine considers herself a citizen of the world. Storytelling has become her coping mechanism, leading her to advocate for peace and dialogue in a world of conflict.

Her passion for filmmaking brought her to Los Angeles in 1994, where she edited features including the award-winning Palestinian feature *The Olive Harvest*. Her debut as writer-director came with *Nilofar*, produced by Jean Brehat and Rachid Bouchareb (*Days of Glory*, *Out of the Law*, both Oscar nominated for Best Foreign Film). *Nilofar* competed in the Berlinale 59th, Cannes Junior, and AFI, along with screenings at the National Geographic All Roads Film Project and the Skirball Center in Los Angeles.

As a mother of three, Sabine is currently producing a documentary to bring awareness about the harmful effects of cell phone radiation and wireless technologies on children's health, called *Generation Zapped*.

Sabine and co-writer Tamar Halpern met at Dreamago's invitational Plume Et Pellicule program for screenwriters in Switzerland. When Sabine learned of Tamar's reality show pitch about surrogacy, she brought her on to Motherhood, Inc.

Tamar Halpern

Tamar Halpern's feature documentary *Llyn Foulkes One Man Band* premiered in competition at the LA Film Festival and released theatrically 2014-2015 "A joy to watch" (The Hollywood Reporter) "undeniably fascinating... with an air of a queasy thriller" (Variety).

2015 screenwriting projects include the film adaption of Stacey Moskall Parsons life story for producer Robert Stillman and, for TV, the story of civil rights activist Clyde Kennard for producer Chuck Simon. Halpern wrote and directed the short *Death, Taxes and Apple Juice*, invited to over 35 festivals 2012-2015, winning 16 awards.

She directed *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life*, starring Mira Sovino, Joe Pantoliano and Michael Urie. Halpern adapted the screenplay from the book by New York Times bestseller Wendy Mass. Previous writer/director work includes *Shelf Life*, "a whip smart film that taps into a fresh source for American comedy" (Variety), starring Betsy Brandt of *Breaking Bad*.

Halpern's script about legendary journalist Nellie Bly is in development with Sobini films and her script *Ezzy Fish* was on the Black List, a Nicholl's semi finalist, an IFP/NY finalist, and accepted into the Producers Lab and Directors Lab at Film Independent. Halpern has an MFA from the USC School of Cinema/TV and has twice been awarded residencies at Hedgebrook, a retreat for women writers.

In 2002, Sabine El Gemayel was pregnant with her second child when she met a gay couple and their Surrogate, inspiring her to work on MOTHERHOOD INC. In 2011, she brought on co-writer Tamar Halpern, who had worked with one of the top surrogacy agencies to create a pitch for reality TV. Because both writer/directors are mothers and have compassion for the longing to have a child, they were compelled to explore the challenges inherent in this relatively new form of bringing life into this world.

Using intimate camera and natural light, the directors will transport the audience through profound human connections and emotion similar to Lisa Cholodenko's *The Kids Are Alright*. The story portrays the socio-economical constraints and potential tension between Intended Parent and Surrogate, as well between Intended Parent and Childcare Giver in the style of Philippe Claudel's *I Loved You So Long*.

The visuals of Los Angeles will provide strata of bluish bright and cold to show the broad and ultra contemporary side of Colette's world, much like Steven Soderbergh's *Traffic*, while incorporating the down to earth, sun-soaked military compound where Stacy and her family live, a nod to Oren Moverman's *The Messenger*. The colorful, crowded Hispanic areas of downtown Los Angeles will provide a vibrant rush of visuals, along with shots of green, lush landscapes of Guatemalan coffee fields and towns, underlining the visual and economic gap between North and South America, dictating the miles Luna must traverse.

MOTHERHOOD INC is ultimately hopeful, depicting an act of extraordinary generosity and self-awareness - to be a Surrogate, to give one's body so another can love.



INT. COLETTE'S HOUSE

Luna studies the spacious house. She touches the white couch, the gleaming surfaces, the beautiful paintings.

JOSEPHA
Don't touch the art.

LUNA
Which part is the art?

JOSEPHA
Come wash your hands and see your room.

INT. GUEST ROOM

Luna takes in the pristine room, bigger than her entire home, with sweeping views of the ocean.

JOSEPHA
The nursery is next door and Colette's room is down the hall.

LUNA
The baby doesn't sleep with her?

JOSEPHA
No.

Luna takes this in.

LUNA
And she doesn't want the room closest to her baby?

JOSEPHA
It's how they do things up here.



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