

# Filmmaker DANIELE SESTITO Blends Cultures Through Cuisine in Bittersweet Series Pilot 'OFF THE MENU'

*New York City Premiere at 2023 Dances With Films New York*

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Rising filmmaker Daniele Sestito crafts a poignant culinary tale with his new bittersweet comedy series pilot, OFF THE MENU. The culture clash story will screen next on December 2, 2023, as an 'Official Selection' at the 2nd annual Dances With Films New York (DWF:NY), an east coast offshoot of the respected Los Angeles based independent film festival.

OFF THE MENU follows Chef, a perfectionist, Italian cook, who works for an unordinary institution and takes great pride in fulfilling the culinary desires of his patrons. When forced to make a meal that's beyond his grasp, the typically stern and grandiose Chef must discover a new side of himself to move beyond his old-school ways.

Written, produced, and directed by Sestito, the 37-minute pilot stars George Lombardo as Chef, along with prominent performances from Chuja Seo, Cory Shanbom, and Garrett Hendricks. OFF THE MENU hit the



OFF THE MENU, a bittersweet comedy series pilot by Daniele Sestito



festival circuit earlier this year making its West Coast Premiere at 2023 NFFTY (National Film Festival for Talented Youth) followed by the Lake Placid Film Festival in New York. In addition, Lombardo earned a Best Actor award from the Mystic Film Festival for his leading performance.

Raised in Old Bridge, New Jersey, and now based in the New York City area, Sestito is thrilled to bring this culturally relevant story his hometown audience. "I grew up surrounded by many traditional Italian immigrants," reflected Sestito, "This pilot celebrates the beauty of their passion, while exploring how abundant pride and lacking empathy can make any of us short-sighted. It's a human and timely story told with a cartoonish and comedic liveliness — akin to one of my favorite films, *Do The Right Thing*."

Sestito created the project while attending Emerson College in Boston, after being awarded the Black Box Theater Grant for production design with veteran Art Director Charles McCarry acting as an advisor. The screenplay also earned Sestito the 2019 EVVY Award for Outstanding Writing for Film, an award recognizing the best of student work across every major. Previously, he earned the EVVY for directing musical artist Alec Meza's latest video, *Adam & Eve*.

Sestito strives to craft cinematic stories that restore our appreciation towards life and humanity. He proudly approaches storytelling from his perspective as a bilingual Italian-American and a dedicated spiritual seeker. He is currently a Fellow of the 2023 AICP Mentoring Program (Association of Independent Commercial Producers) and works as a freelancer on professional productions, allowing him to appreciate the art of filmmaking at all levels.



Director Daniele Sestito behind the scenes of OFF THE MENU

Sestito is currently developing two film projects, including Sweet to the Soul, about a young boy's adventure through an assisted living facility, and Up An Octave, following two men in the piano industry, which reunites him with Off The Menu star George Lombardo.

OFF THE MENU at Dances with Films New York

Date: Saturday, December 2, 2023

Time: 11:30am ET – PILOTS GRP 4

Location: Regal Union Square, 850 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

Tickets/Info: [danceswithfilms.com/off-the-menu](https://danceswithfilms.com/off-the-menu)

For more about DANIELE SESTITO visit: [DanieleSestito.com](https://DanieleSestito.com)

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