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Brandon Keropian Olmos Finds a Filmmaking Career in San Antonio

By [Jordan Gass-Poore](#) on July 10, 2012 - 10:00am in [Local Cast and Crew](#) | [Production News](#)



It was a straight shot down I-10, but ever since, it has been a winding journey for California-born filmmaker [Brandon Keropian Olmos](#).

In 2008, Olmos came to San Antonio to produce an album for the former Sony Latin-signed duo *Amor y Pasion*. A chance encounter in a parking lot two years later led to a collaboration with Alamo City filmmaker [Aaron Lee Lopez](#).

"I was just about to go back to California when I met Aaron, and I said we should make a bunch of movies together," Olmos said.

Through Lopez's production company, [Mutt Productions](#), Olmos has been the sound mixer, supervising sound editor, composer, director, associate producer, cameraman and editor for a number of Texas-themed documentaries and feature-length films.

"I ended up staying in San Antonio because I fell in love with San Antonio and it was so much fun here," Olmos said.

His first feature-length film collaboration with Mutt Productions, [The Return of Johnny V.](#), premiered last December at the Josephine Theatre in San Antonio. Olmos described the action/comedy, about a burnt-out ex-cop seeking revenge, as an experiment to see if a movie could be shot entirely in San Antonio with a local cast and crew.

Actor and highwire performer [Paul Matthew Lopez](#), brother to Aaron Lee Lopez, reprises his role as Johnny V. from Mutt Productions's 2009 film [Curse of the Lechusa](#). Other San Antonio cast members include actress and model [Dana De La Garza](#), who returns as Angel from the same film; and actor [David Rodriguez](#), brother to director Robert Rodriguez, who returns as corrupt cop Agent Lee.

The 22-day shoots at San Antonio locations, such as Riverwalk nightclub Kremlin and Hays Street Bridge, proved to be successful.

"When we played the film (in San Antonio), people's reactions were, 'Wow, I wasn't expecting this,'" Olmos said.

Prior to joining the Mutt Productions team, Olmos worked on feature-length and short Hollywood films and television series, such as *American Me* and *Battlestar Galactica*, for more than 20 years. His father is actor [Edward James Olmos](#).

Two years and six films later, Olmos's and Lopez's collaboration is going strong. Up next for Mutt Productions: Olmos said the company's latest film, [Dani the Ranch Hand](#) will premiere July 21 at the Josephine Theatre.

Olmos and Lopez are working to produce a remake of the 1980s made-for-television movie [Three Hundred Miles for Stephanie](#). In addition, the team will shoot a Christmas-themed film in Canada next year and hope to produce a third installment in the Johnny V. saga.

Slackerwood: Can you talk a little about *Dani the Ranch Hand*?

Brandon Keropian Olmos: We're finishing up (*Dani*) *the Ranch Hand* right now. [Brian Douglas](#) came to us as a young assistant, and Aaron put his thumbprint on him, that's a nice way to say it. He came in every day and Aaron whipped this kid into shape. He really did. This was Brian's film. He came to us and said he had a script.

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Did Brian write the screenplay?

Olmos: He wrote this; first-time writer, first-time director. And he says, "I know there's going to be no way I'm going to be able to do this on my own." So, what we were able to do was, with this group of professionals and our cinematographer in L.A. and other people that Aaron has mentored, like our production coordinator and other people, we now have a well-oiled and greased outfit. This little project ended up being an incredibly powerful movie.

The Return of Johnny V. was Mutt Productions' first feature. What did the company do next?

Olmos: During the year of editing *Johnny V.*, I finished *La Gloria: Contemporary Art in the Cultural Zone*. It's a documentary about the San Antonio arts community on the West Side. You know, I gave that film to PBS (in San Antonio) and they closed-captioned it, and they were supposed to play it this year. I don't know if they ever did or not.

We were also talking to PBS about doing another documentary about **Willie Velasquez** and the Latino civil rights movement that came out of San Antonio. These kinds of projects are a long process sometimes. Sometimes you plan 'em for years.

Then we did this other music documentary; and then we did this documentary about the Rio Grande River, that's called *Dia del Rio*. It's about how the Rio Grande River is in peril; it's in bad shape. That film right now, we just finished it last week. That was funded by the World Wildlife Fund and other organizations.

For me, documentary films are important work. We have fun making movies because we grew up in the '80s, and we love those kinds of movies: the *Back to the Futures* and *Rocky* and *Star Wars*; all those great movies, the reasons people love going to the movies; we're still fans of that. We get to do that every day, but our serious side also allows us to make these environmental documentaries and political documentaries.

Did you have any idea you would go into the film business with the music aspect?

Olmos: Not really. I mean, I always anticipated that I was gonna be in the film business, but I never thought that I was going to sort of merge the two. I always knew that I was going to continue playing in bands for a long time, and I knew that I would work on movies and I always knew that one day I would end up producing movies. I always knew that, that was never a question, even when I was a little kid. I'm happy to be able to sort of combine the two talents together.

What was your first role in the film industry? Did you have any odd jobs?

Olmos: Well, you start off as a production assistant, and I think before my first job, hanging around the sets ... I remember hanging around the *Miami Vice* set, way back in the '80s. I think my first time I was given a task was, they said, "Hey, you guys go play in the background." There was a scene in *Miami Vice* where we played in the background, but we took it seriously. My first job on a movie set that I had my name on the call sheet was *American Me*. That was in 1991.

Aaron is from Texas. You're from California. Why is Texas important to you?

Olmos: It's not. Documentaries are studies of the human condition, okay? And where are we? We're here in Texas. So, that's what our documentaries are about.

Johnny V

Submitted by Anonymous on July 16, 2012 - 10:15am.

I saw *The Return of Johnny V* and was literally blown away. I just couldn't get over what a great movie it is. It is hilarious and extremely artistic at the same time. The camera angles alone make this film such a pleasure to watch. I am a huge fan and can't wait for the next adventure *Johnny V* finds himself in!