



Presents

Lovecraft Under the Gun: a 72 Hour Film Project: Make a Lovecraftian Short Film in 72 hours!

Rules and Guidelines`

This year's festival is a hybrid event with both in-person and streaming options. **This competition is open to teams anywhere in the world!**

1. The competition starts on Thursday, September 17th at 6:00 pm (Pacific Time aka GMT-7:00) and ends on Sunday, September 20th at 7:00 pm (GMT-7:00).
2. Finished movies must be uploaded and be downloadable, using a file sharing service or sent using a file sending service no later than 7 pm on Sunday, September 20th. Only entries that are uploaded, AND downloadable by the deadline will be eligible for screening and for the prize.
3. Qualified entries to the Lovecraft Under the Gun contest will be shown together in a shorts block at the H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival® and CthulhuCon on Sunday afternoon, October 4, 2026. The audience and a select group of judges (to be picked from our esteemed guests) will decide on the winner. Winners are announced during the Awards Presentation on Sunday evening of the festival. Prize includes a waived entry fee for one film submission for the next H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival®, an award statuette, and consideration to be included in the Best of HPLFF 2026 short film collection.
4. To keep everyone honest, and ensure that all filming is done within the contest time frame, there will be a prop and a line of dialogue that you must use in your film. When you register, you will find out what these are. All films have to use the prop - it must be plainly visible and you must tell us the time stamp when the prop and line of dialogue appear.
5. **Use of Generative AI in any way is expressly prohibited.** Any entries that are found to have used generative AI will be disqualified.
6. ****Any entries that fail to use the prop and line of dialogue will be disqualified.**
7. ****Any films that do not have the necessary completed paperwork will be disqualified.**
8. **Finished films must be a minimum of 2 minutes, but less than 8 minutes.** Closing credits don't count towards the total running time, but the narrative has to be finished

before the closing credits start.

9. **Credits at the end of each film are limited to a maximum of 30 seconds.** The 30 seconds is considered additional to the length of the film. (That is, a film may be 6 minutes long, with an additional 30 seconds of credits, for a total running time of 6.5 minutes.)
10. Opening credits are considered to be part of the film, and therefore DO count against the 8 minute maximum. Additionally, if your film has opening credits other than simply the film's title, you must include one of the following:
11. [your team name] presents [title of film], a Lovecraft Under The Gun 72 Hour Film Project

OR

[title of film], a Lovecraft Under The Gun 72 Hour Film Project
12. The end credits must include the sentence: This film was made for the Lovecraft Under the Gun 72 Hour Film Project.

We strongly recommend that you make sound levels relatively even throughout your film. (If your film has uneven sound or sound that peaks, it may be modified to protect the playback equipment.)

Projection specs vary on televisions and devices and are beyond the control of LUTG. If your film is very dark, it may be difficult to see.

All films received by the deadline (on-time) will be screened, presuming they are eligible according to the following:

To be eligible for the Project, Entries must be the original work of the Entrant; must not use generative AI, must not infringe third-party's rights; must be suitable for publication (i.e., may not be obscene or indecent); must not contain obscene or pornographic material; may not contain defamatory statements about any person, company, organization or entity; may not invade privacy or other rights of any person, company or entity; may not in any other way violate applicable laws and regulations; and may not contain any copyrighted elements (other than as owned by the Entrant and/or LUTG).

Entries containing prohibited or inappropriate content as determined by the LUTG, in its sole discretion, to be inappropriate will be disqualified. LUTG reserves the right to make the final determination as to which Entries are eligible. LUTG also reserves the right to refuse to screen a film or to make an announcement at the screening regarding the content of the film.

Each team must secure all required releases for talent, crew, music, art, and locations (and any other applicable releases), which must be turned in to the project organizers with the finished film/video. The film/video will not be screened before the organizers receive all signed releases.

****The Team Leader must submit a Certification Statement with his/her completed entry, certifying adherence to all Official Rules.**

LUTG may, in their sole discretion, disqualify Entries deemed to be inappropriate or otherwise non-compliant.

No SAG performers. We do not have an agreement with the Screen Actor's Guild to allow you to use SAG performers.

Make sure you have the rights to any music or materials you use in your movie, or use materials that are in the public domain.

Note: Song parodies (i.e., use of identifiable pre-existing compositions with new or altered lyrics or music) may not be included in the film without a signed release from the composition's rights holder. This rule applies without regard to whether the song parody arguably constitutes "fair use" under US or international copyright law.

Get a signed location release form if you're shooting on private property, even if it's your own property.

If you're shooting on public property, you may need a permit to film there and it is your responsibility to obtain any necessary permits.

You can not adapt any existing film.

All filming, editing, sound recording must be done in the 72 hour contest timeframe. (yes, this applies to stock footage).

YOUR FILM MUST BE SUBMITTED AS A DIGITAL FILE:

We can accept your film as a ProRes 422 (preferred), or Quicktime. Make sure the bitrate is at least 20mbps. Anything lower than that risks looking bad.

If you have the ability to create a DCP, please do so, but please send the ProRes 422 or Quicktime file with it.

If you are only able to send another format, please communicate with us **before the deadline** to make sure that we can use it.

HOW TO SUBMIT THE DIGITAL FILE:

You can use any kind of file sending service or file locker such as Google Drive, Dropbox, WeTransfer, Massive.io, etc. If you use Google Drive or Dropbox, you must make it shareable to anyone who has the link (we use multiple emails for downloading, we promise we won't share the link with anyone) **GIVE YOURSELF SEVERAL HOURS BEFORE THE DEADLINE TO UPLOAD YOUR FILE.**

Tips for keeping your filming manageable

"You can make a movie without money. What you must have is an idea worth filming."

- Don't overreach; keep your script simple and to the point. Remember that you won't have time for a lot of special effects in post-production.
- Good picture and good sound will go a long way towards making your film enjoyable to watch. Keep it relatively simple and keep the atmosphere moody.
- We encourage you to create original scripts that fit in the Weird Tale genre or the Lovecraft genre. You may adapt a Lovecraft story, but keep in mind some Lovecraft stories are easier to adapt to Film than others. Stories like Hypnos, Polaris, The Hound, Memory, In the Vault, are all stories focused on ideas rather than monsters, which may or may not be more complicated to put on film.
- Set your story in modern day. Unless you have access to lots and lots of period props, sticking to a contemporary setting will allow you to focus more on the story and the filming.
- Keep shooting locations to a minimum. Remember it takes time to drive across town, set up and shoot. Time you probably don't have.
- Don't make anything in your script dependent on the weather. You have a very limited amount of time! The last thing you want to do is stand around and wait for the sun to come out (or go away).
- A shooting location where you can easily control the lighting will make your shooting less of a hassle. (i.e. indoors). Pro tip: Lighting can help or hinder your final look. Bad lighting is something that can't really be fixed in post!
- Cast size will have an impact. Again, keep it simple!
- Crew size will have an impact. Recruit all your friends and family to help out! Making a film can be a big job, so the more people you have helping, the more you may be able to get done.
- Your film should have a beginning, middle, and end. It's a short film, but the usual narrative framework still applies!
- Creativecommons.org is a great resource if you need to use licensed materials. You may use Creative Commons music or materials that are Attribution Only. If the Creative Commons license is either Non-Commercial or Sharealike, it is not compatible with the LUTG's Team Leader's Agreement and therefore cannot be used.

Important documents:

these are all posted and downloadable at <http://hplfilmfestival.com/hplfilmfestival-portland-or/lutg>
Forms marked with * are **REQUIRED** and must be turned in with your finished film.

It is your responsibility to print these out and have your team members complete them.

SEND COMPLETED FORMS

You can digitally sign them and save them out as PDFs, or you can print them out and have your team members complete them by hand (you can scan them or take a very clear photo and upload them). We recommend that you create a Google Drive or Dropbox folder and gather your forms there. When you're ready to turn everything in, you just need to share the folder and email the sharing link.

***REQUIRED Team Leader's Agreement**

The Team Leader must sign this form to indicate agreement with LUTG's rules and requirements, and bring to registration.

***REQUIRED Team Roster**

List of people on your team, what they did, and their email address

***REQUIRED Certification Statement**

Team Leader must sign this to certify that all creative work on the film took place during the 72 hour competition timeframe

***REQUIRED Waiver and Release Form**

This is a combined Talent Release and Liability Waiver. All cast and crew must sign a separate form. This protects you, the team leader, as well as LUTG.

Music Release Form

This form is required for any music that you put in your soundtrack that isn't public domain. For example, if you have someone compose music specifically for your film, they'll need to complete this form.

Materials Release Form

This form is required for any photographic or other materials that appear in your film (unless they are public domain).

Location Release Form

You must submit this signed form for any private property you film on (one for each location if you are filming at more than one), you'll need to have the property owner sign one of these.

Tickets

Each team will receive two complimentary tickets for Sunday's in-person screening (for those in Portland, OR), or one complimentary streaming ticket for the block (for those not attending the in-person event). Additional tickets and streams may be purchased. For your friends, fans, and family (who are not in your house) Festival passes or Sunday tickets may be purchased at the box office. The audience judges the winner! *Because of the way the festival is ticketed as a complete day, we are not able to pre-sell tickets for just one portion of the day. We may be able*

to do this as a rush ticket on the day of the screening if there are tickets available. This is something we won't know until the doors open on Sunday morning. Sunday does not usually sell out, and we will do our best to post about it if it does.

You can follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or join the [HPLFF discord server](#), which is where we post our day to day updates during the festival.

If you have any questions about the requirements, formats, forms, etc. please reach out immediately to staff@hplff.com as we will be keeping a close eye on email throughout the competition.