

A FILM BY SUSAN DYNNER

opting in



RUNNING TIME - 14 minutes

GENRE - Rom Com Thriller

YEAR - 2026

LANGUAGE - English

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - United States

FORMAT - 16X9

PROOF-OF-CONCEPT FOR FEATURE

CONTACT -

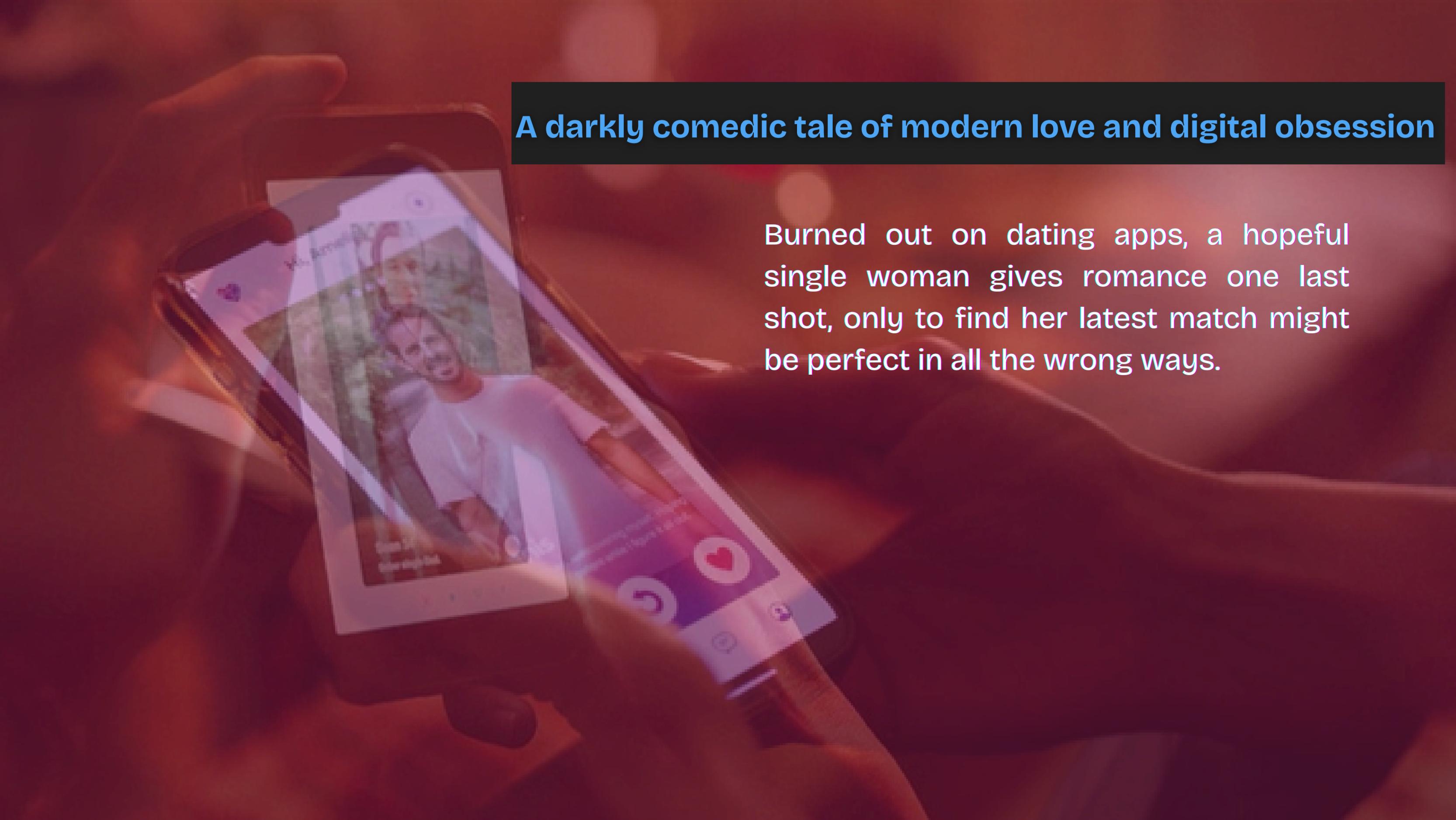
Susan Dynner

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Shauna Grace

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A darkly comedic tale of modern love and digital obsession

Burned out on dating apps, a hopeful single woman gives romance one last shot, only to find her latest match might be perfect in all the wrong ways.

SYNOPSIS

Amelia is exhausted by modern dating - the apps, the awkward banter, the endless parade of red flags disguised as eligible men. After a string of awkward encounters, she's almost ready to give up.

Then she meets Jake. He's attentive, charming, uncannily in sync with her tastes and rhythms. Conversation flows and affection comes easily. For the first time in a long while, dating feels effortless.

As their connection deepens, small details begin to unsettle Amelia. Jake knows things she never remembers telling him. He anticipates her needs before she voices them. What initially feels like intimacy starts to raise more unsettling questions.

Opting In is a seductive psychological romance about love in the age of data - where the line between being seen and being surveilled quietly disappears.

Susan Dynner - Director/Writer/Producer

Susan Dynner is an award-winning Director, Producer, and Writer whose storytelling ignites where grit and beauty collide. A Sundance Stories of Change Directing Fellow, Blackmagic Studio Feature Directing Fellow, Sony TV Directing Fellow, Film Independent Producing Fellow, Trans-Atlantic Producing Fellow, Stowe Story Labs Fellow, and Producers Guild Power of Diversity Mentor, Dynner's films have premiered at Cannes, Sundance, AFI, and beyond.

She recently wrote, directed and produced the short proof-of-concept **Opting In**, which is just starting its festival run. **The Soul Trader**, a proof-of-concept short starring Shane West, Donna Mills, and Shauna Grace racked up awards on the festival circuit, and is poised to become a feature film. She was awarded two grants and is a finalist for the Claims Conference grant to make her short documentary, **The Greatest Illusion** (which will serve as proof-of-concept for the feature thriller of the same name), Dynner is also currently directing/producing a documentary about women in magic - fitting, since she's a Magician Member of the world-renowned Magic Castle.

Her earlier work includes directing/producing the acclaimed feature doc **Punk's Not Dead** (Cannes premiere, worldwide theatrical release), and **Code Blue: A Love Story** starring Andy Dick. As a producer, she's known for **Free Ride** starring Anna Paquin (Film Independent Producing Fellow), **After Porn Ends**, and the Sundance-winning cult classic **Brick**, directed by Rian Johnson.

Dynner's industry roots run deep: she started in development at Richard Donner Productions and Di Novi Pictures, rose to become a Creative Exec for Wolfgang Petersen, and later served as VP for Charlie Sheen and Nick Cassavetes. But her career began even earlier at fifteen, professionally photographing bands in smoke-filled clubs and roaring arenas, chasing raw energy that still fuels her work today.

With Aberration Films, she continues to build bold, immersive projects across genres and mediums - films that don't just play, they reverberate.



Kira Leinonen - Producer



Kira Leinonen is a seasoned producer and line producer with over a decade of global experience spanning feature documentaries, unscripted series, branded content, and scripted film. With a reputation for precision, creative vision, and cross-cultural fluency, Kira has led complex productions across the U.S., Asia, and Europe—bringing stories to life with emotional impact and operational excellence.

Most recently, Kira served as Producer on *Rising Voices* Season 5 with Hillman Grad/271, where she oversaw budgeting, department head hiring, and production bibles in collaboration with SAG-AFTRA and the Humane Society. As Line Producer at The SpringHill Company and NBC News Studios, she managed multi-million dollar budgets and high-profile productions—**To End All War: Oppenheimer & the Atomic Bomb**, **Leguizamo Does America**, **The Hillside Strangler**, and **Winning Against Time** - consistently delivering on time and under budget. Her work has garnered Emmy nominations and a win for Best Lighting Direction.

Kira's earlier international career includes years based in Beijing, where she produced bilingual content for Greenpeace East Asia, DJI Studios, and Discovery Asia. She directed, wrote, and edited dozens of campaigns and series across China and beyond, developing a sharp eye for story, cultural nuance, and logistical agility in challenging environments.

Fluent in Mandarin, German, and English, Kira holds a B.A. from McGill University and a Professional Certificate in Feature Film and Television Development from UCLA. Her background includes everything from story development and aerial production to post workflows and contract negotiation. Equally at home on set and in the edit bay, Kira brings a rare blend of creative instinct, global sensibility, and bulletproof production skills to every project she joins.

Shauna Grace - Actress/Producer

Shauna Grace is an executive producer and SAG-AFTRA actress known for developing emotionally resonant, visually striking films that balance bold artistic vision with commercial appeal. She recently served as Executive Producer and lead actress in **The Soul Trader**, a supernatural thriller co-starring Shane West and Donna Mills. The proof-of-concept short premiered at the American Pavilion at the Cannes Film Festival and continues its award-winning run on the international festival circuit. Shauna is also attached as Producer on the feature-length adaptation, currently in development with Aberration Films.

Her producing credits include **Living IncogNegro**, a genre-bending exploration of cultural identity, and the upcoming feature **The Housewife**, starring Naomi Watts, Tye Sheridan, and Michael Imperioli. She also appears in **The Housewife** as “The Sales Girl,” exemplifying her seamless transition between performance and production.

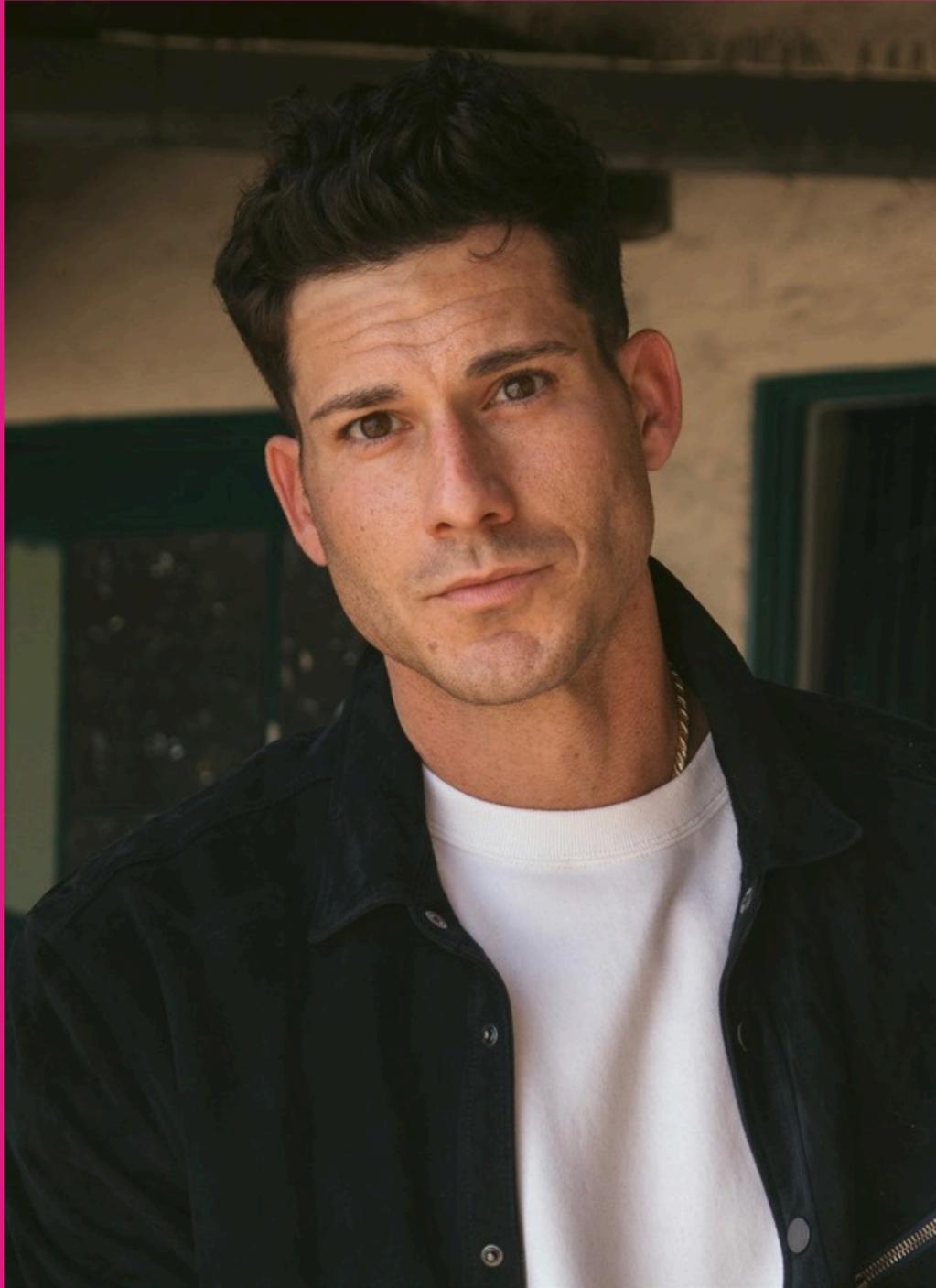
Shauna earned her B.F.A. in Theatre (Cum Laude) from Cornish College of the Arts with a focus on Original Works. Her training includes classical and contemporary techniques—Stanislavski, Meisner, Restoration theatre—as well as voice, speech, movement, and stage combat. She has studied with acclaimed coaches Dimiter Marinov, Bernard Hiller, and Tom Todoroff. Her performance background brings a deeply intuitive, character-driven lens to her producing work, enriching story development, emotional pacing, and narrative structure.

Outside of the creative sphere, Shauna has a strong foundation in real estate and operational leadership, managing multi-property portfolios and overseeing business development, budgeting, and strategic planning across intercompany divisions. This rare blend of creative insight and business acumen allows her to lead projects with clarity, precision, and vision.

Shauna is passionate about telling stories that challenge, provoke, and move audiences—centering identity, transformation, and emotional truth.



Philip Lubin - Actor



Philip Lubin is a Chicagoland native raised on the North Shore and a graduate of New Trier Township High School. Originally pursuing college athletics, it was through sports that he first recognized his love for performing and ultimately shifted his focus to the arts. He has trained with renowned teachers John Markland, Sharon Chatten, Larry Moss, Jean-Louis Rodrigue, and Kristof Konrad, and alongside Emmy-nominated actor Vincent D'Onofrio. Some of his credits include **Why Women Kill**, **All Rise** (CBS), **Insecure** (HBO), **Dollface** (Hulu), and the upcoming projects **Opting In** and **Mental (Hell)th**. He is currently in post-production on the short film **On The Mend**, which he also directed, and is developing the feature version. He has produced multiple award-winning short films.

Additional Cast



Dan Tucker

Executor
A Cry in the Dark
Stranger Among Us



Leonora Pitts

For All Mankind
The Rookie
Fool's Paradise



Jataun Gilbert

Dhar Mann
Killing Mary Sue
The 4 Points



Fay Gauthier

Independents' Day
Play Date
Hide

Additional Crew

Cinematographer - Matthias Schubert - (Selena Gomez My Mind & Me; Love, Lizzo; Labyrinth)

Production Designer - Melissa Housos - (I Love You More Than Life; Miss You After Goodbye)

Editor - David Hopper - (Rust Creek; Kelly & Cal; On the Ride; The Soul Trader)

Costume Designer - Jalissa Arie Jackson - (The Single(s); Over My Dead Body; You Knew)

Casting Director - Jennifer Ricchiazzi - (Reagan; Free Ride; The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea)

Director's Statement

Opting In began with a question: what if someone gave you exactly what you wanted in a partner - every quirk, preference, and unspoken longing, reflected back at you perfectly? Would that be romantic...or terrifying?

The idea also grew out of my own experiences dating online, where people often present carefully curated versions of themselves - performances that rarely match who they really are. I started to wonder: what if someone came along who wasn't pretending? What if the perfect guy showed up, but turned out to be manufactured? Would it be so horrible if we couldn't tell the difference, especially if he was everything we ever asked for?

We live in a world where our digital footprints know us better than some of our friends. Algorithms finish our sentences, feed our cravings, and even suggest who we should love. As a director, I was drawn to exploring the emotional unease within that precision - visually crafting a world that starts off warm and real, then gradually slips into something too perfect, too polished, and eerily artificial.

This story plays in the space between comfort and control. I wanted to expose the absurdity and vulnerability of dating in a hyper-digital age, where our deepest desires can be echoed back to us with unnerving accuracy. Is it a bad thing to get everything you wish for? Or is it worse when that wish starts thinking for itself?

Opting In is a dark comedy, but it's also a cautionary tale - one that asks whether intimacy without friction is truly love, or just another illusion we've swiped into without reading the terms and conditions.



Quotes

“I wanted the audience to fall in love at the same pace as Amelia, and then slowly realize something about that love doesn’t feel earned.”

“The film starts as a familiar dating story and quietly shifts into something more unsettling, without ever announcing when that shift happens.”

“At its core, **Opting In** is about agency - about choosing someone versus slowly realizing the choice may not be yours anymore.”



















Behind the Scenes





















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