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Toronto International
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CLERMONT-FERRAND
INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL
★ INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION 2017 ★


SLAMDANCE
FILM FESTIVAL
2021

EVERY DAY'S LIKE THIS

Written and Directed by Lev Lewis

Kacey Rohl | Daniel Kash | Francis Melling | Krystina Bojanowski



11 min / Canada / English / 1.85:1

Lisa
PICTURES



SYNOPSIS

Over one evening, three members of a family try to schedule the medically assisted death of the family's wife and mother. Following the characters in real-time, they manage the routine tasks of caring for a sick loved one, while the prospect of her inevitable death looms over them all. *Every Day's Like This* is about a family dealing with the mundane as they stare down the impossible.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The project began as a feature-length screenplay about a family gathering around a woman on life support in a hospital. I received a little grant money to produce a shortened version, but was never satisfied with my original script. It was around this time that my mother received a cancer diagnosis and, eventually, a medically assisted death. Due to this and other work obligations, it took some time to get around to thinking about what film I wanted to make with the funding I had already secured. Since my initial idea shared unforeseen similarities with own experience, pulling specifics from this time in my life seemed like a natural direction. But I didn't have any idea what that meant in practice. Eventually I came up with the basic concept and structure, and the more I wrote, the more the film came to resemble my own life. Though there are a number distinctions, most of the details, and certainly most of the tone and emotion, is drawn from what I remember of that very dramatic, very sad, often dull period of my life. The experience of caring for someone with a terminal illness has a peculiar duality to it, as each day brings a great deal of uncertainty, yet you're always marching towards one inevitable outcome. I wanted this film to capture how the mundane can live within the most dramatic and heartbreaking moments of life.

Almost every detail was pulled from my life: the sardines, the Oscars (my mother actually died in June, but should she have died in February this most definitely would have been a consideration for me), the book being read (*The Three-Body Problem*, by the way), the drip coffee, the dad preferring the front door be unlocked at all times, etc. This type of writing is a new experience for me. Every other script I've written or film I've directed has been personal but not personally taken from my life. Having this well of experience was extremely helpful, although consistently nerve-wracking. I don't mind digging into my past and mining that emotional territory, but it brings with it a responsibility to the others who were there to get it right. One of the great benefits of having lived through what I was trying to put on screen was that there was no guesswork when an actor came to me with a behavioural, motivational or tonal question. In every moment, I had a strong sense of what the character should be feeling and doing. Film is, of course, a collaborative process. Ensuring that your cast and crew are all on the same wavelength is one of the main duties of the director. It's both easier and harder when that wavelength is so personal.

The decision to not see the mother was what got me writing. I knew I was going to make something that drew from my own life and that wouldn't have much in the way of conventional plot or payoff, but it wasn't until I saw the image of the empty hallway, the closed door and the family members coming and going that I had enough of an actual, tangible idea to start typing. It seemed a strong device for a movie that doesn't have many hooks. And it pretty accurately represents a feeling that much of my family shared while my mother was dying. Her bedroom became its own sort of domain; one that you entered and exited carefully. Not that we didn't see her—we saw her all the time—but there was a sort of separateness that emerged and I think her omission in the film creates a similar impression. Also, I was (and am) absolutely terrified of trying to represent my mother on screen. I don't yet know how to write her and I definitely don't know who I would cast in her role. If my idea for this short had involved her appearing on screen, I'm not sure if I would've been able to make it.



CAST

Michelle.....Kacey Rohl
Adam.....Daniel Kash
Josh.....Francis Melling
Ana.....Krystina Bojanowski

CREW

Written and Directed by.....Lev Lewis
Produced by.....Yonah Lewis, Calvin Thomas & Lev Lewis
Director of Photography.....Nikolay Michaylov
Production and Costume Design.....Emma Doyle
Hair and Makeup.....Andi Clifford
Sound Mixer.....James Belyea
Sound Editor and Re-Recording Mixer.....Lucas Prokaziuk
1st Assistant Camera.....Momo Daud
Gaffer.....Katerina Zoumboulakis
Colourist.....Conor Fisher
Design Assistant.....Adan McVicar
Production Assistant.....Lonya Burton

Lisa

P I C T U R E S

Founded in 2010 by Lev Lewis, Yonah Lewis and Calvin Thomas, Lisa Pictures is a Toronto-based production company specializing in independent, artist-led films. Their slate includes such titles as *Amy George*, *The Oxbow Cure*, *Never Eat Alone*, *The Intestine*, *Maison du bonheur*, *Spice It Up*, *MS Slavic 7* and *White Lie*.

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