



THE WAIT

A Film by M Blash

2013 / USA / English / Drama

96 min / HD / 1.85 / 5.1

World Sales Contact:



173 Richardson Street, Brooklyn, NY, 11222

Office: +1.718.312.8210

Email: info@visitfilms.com Web: www.visitfilms.com

LOGLINE

Two sisters contemplate their mother's resurrection following a mysterious phone call.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

An enigmatic phone call from a psychic catapults a family into a state of suspended belief while waiting for their recently deceased mother to be resurrected. One sister believes the claim, and the other staunchly opposes it until she encounters a chance at love, giving her hope that anything, even resurrection, is possible. A discordant struggle between sisters plays out in a world where the virtual and real converge.

PRESS

“An unusual film, with a complex and layered aesthetic ... grounded by a beautiful script in which the actors convincingly portray a very real and mournful time in their lives.”

- PopBytes

“Leads Chloe Sevigny and Jena Malone should draw attention...but Blash’s quiet command of mood and mystique is an equal asset.”

- The Hollywood Reporter

“The Wait, (...) is nothing short of magical.”

- Portable

“A haunting film with powerful performances all around. Beautifully shot with vibrant colors and visually striking tones. Blash is a true artist with (...) the potential for a long and acclaimed filmmaking career.”

- Austin Daze

“(A) surreal – and stunningly shot – backdrop of isolation and immersion, beauty and loss.”

- Austin Chronicle

TECH SPECS

Running Time:	96 min
Country:	USA
Language:	English
Shooting Format:	RED
Exhibition Format:	DCP
Print:	Color
Sound:	5.1
Aspect Ratio:	1.85
Production Company	Essentia

CAST

Jena Malone
Chloë Sevigny
Luke Grimes
Josh Hamilton
Devon Gearhart
Lana Elizabeth Green
Michael O'Keefe

CREW

Writer / Director	M Blash
Producers	Neil Kopp Ryan Crisman Riel Roch-Decter David Guy Levy
Executive Producers	Leonardo Guerra Seràgnoli
Co-Producer	Alicia Van Covering
Director of Photography	Kasper Tuxen
Editor	Justin Kelly Jessica Brunetto
Original Music	Owen Pallett
Casting	Courtney Bright Nicole Daniels
Costume Designer	Heidi Bivens
Production Designer	Ryan Smith

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The Wait is about the altered states brought on by grief. While I have not experienced the death of a parent firsthand, at the time I was writing the film, my mother was revisiting the small town in Hawaii where she grew up. I felt like I was watching my mother transform into a teenage girl again. I was no longer her son, but suddenly just a friend. This sudden transformation in our relationship inspired many of the elaborate fantasies depicted in the film. Some people have delayed reactions to trauma. I wanted to explore that “pause” in life, that in-between space, where people act out the most extreme emotions.

In the experience of grief, these characters are sucked into a kind of hypnosis. They're returning over and over again to a period in the past. They're re-wiring something that has made them blocked, angry, or anxious—the film depicts a long experience of release.

While making the film, I found visual inspiration in design elements and symbols that occur in both natural and virtual settings. The confluence of these symbols might be perceived as psychedelic. I think of the mysterious symbols in my movie as a kind of cryptic visual code.

When I write scripts, I often first think of the topography of a classic platform video game. There is a huge map that has been designed, but you are only given access to a small part of the map at any given point.

To me, filmmaking is about eradicating certain truths to show others, and I wanted these characters to breathe as real people, but to have an emotional journey that is only possible in an unreal or hyper-real place.

The space that death opens up is a liminal space. There is a kind of paralysis. The characters in the film are trapped waiting. Waiting to make a decision, waiting to die, waiting in apathy or the daydream of love and pro-creation. These are the anxieties and cathartic experiences I was interested in exploring with this film.

CAST BIOS

JENA MALONE (*Angela*)

As a rising actress distinguished by her versatility and multidimensional roles, Jena Malone continues to evolve with each new project.

Malone is currently in production on *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*. She landed the coveted role of Johanna Mason. The film is scheduled to be released in November 2013.

Malone recently starred opposite Kevin Costner and Bill Paxton in the History Channel's mini-series *Hatfields & McCoy's* which is based on a true story, and chronicles the bloody hostilities between two clans that escalated to the point of near war between two states. The mini-series broke cable records and became the new most-watched entertainment telecast of all time on cable and also earned an Emmy Nomination for Best Mini Series.

Malone will next be seen in the independent feature *In Our Nature* opposite John Slattery and Zach Gilford about an estranged father and son who are forced to share a vacation home with their respective girlfriends after a scheduling mistake. The film premiered at SXSW as well as the Sarasota Film Festival and is scheduled to be released this fall.

Malone is set to star in a web-based series directed by Ami Mann titled, *Dakota*. The series of webisodes is part of WIGS, a new YouTube channel that is producing high-end, original, scripted series about the lives of women from all walks of life. WIGS has also attracted the talents of Jennifer Garner, Alfred Molina, Stephen Moyer, Virginia Madsen, Julia Stiles, Maura Tierney, Michael C. Hall, and America Ferrera, who will all star in the various series which began airing this May.

Later this year, Malone will be seen in *The Wait*, opposite Chloë Sevigny, about two sisters who decide to keep their deceased mother in their home after being informed that she will come back to life, as well as the independent feature, *For Ellen*, which premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

Malone is set to begin production soon on the highly anticipated film, *Lonely Hunter*. In this biopic, Malone will star in the title role as Carson McCullers. Production on the film will commence this summer.

In 2011, Malone starred in Zack Snyder's, *Sucker Punch*, for Warner Bros. opposite Emily Browning and Abbie Cornish. In the action film, five young women use their imaginations to escape their bleak reality being held prisoner in a mental hospital.

Previously, Malone starred in Oren Moverman's *The Messenger*, Sean Penn's *Into the Wild*, Anthony Minghella's *Cold Mountain*, Brian Dannelly's *Saved!* and Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice*. As a young actress, Malone starred opposite Julia Roberts and Susan Sarandon in *Stepmom*, the cult classic, *Donnie Darko* and her very first role in the independent film *Bastard Out of Carolina* which earned her an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Debut Performance.

Malone has guest starred on several television series including *Law & Order* and *Chicago Hope*, and her performance in the TV film *Hope* earned Malone a Golden Globe® nomination for Best Performance by an Actress in a Mini-Series or Motion Picture Made for TV.

Malone currently resides in Los Angeles.

CHLOË SEVIGNY (Emma)

Academy Award-nominated and Golden Globe-winning actress Chloë Sevigny will next be seen in seven episodes of Ryan Murphy's *American Horror Story*. Chloë will play a nymphomaniac patient in the insane asylum that Jessica Lange's character now runs.

In January, Chloë will be seen in several episodes of IFC's *Portlandia*, with Fred Armisen and Carrie Brownstein. Chloë will play Alexandra, Fred and Carrie's new roommate on the third season of the hit show.

Chloë was recently seen in *Hit and Miss* a six-part mini-series airing on the UK's Sky TV and on Directv in the US. Created by Paul Abbot, (*Shameless*) Chloë plays Mia, a transgender assassin who takes on family life after her former wife dies.

Chloë took to the stage in June for *Abigail/1702* a new play by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa. The play follows Abigail Williams, 10 years after she had accused half the women in her

town of being witches, during the Salem witch trials. Believing herself responsible for their deaths, she is now living in Boston under an assumed name and trying to atone for her sins. The play, directed by David Esbjornson, will be at the New York Stage and Film in June

Chloë recently completed a cameo appearance in the much talked about biopic *Lovelace*. Chloë plays a feminist reporter who questions Linda Lovelace's life decisions in the porn industry. The film is directed by Ron Epstein.

In 2011, Chloë completed production on *The Wait*, which was written and directed by M. Blash (*Lying*). Chloë stars with Jena Malone, playing two sisters who decide to keep their deceased mother in the house after being told she will come back to life.

Chloë recently completed five seasons on the critically acclaimed and highly popular HBO series *Big Love*. As everyone knows, Chloë played the wickedly delicious Nikki, daughter of the prophet and second wife to Bill Henderson (Bill Paxton). The Golden Globe-nominated series was created by Mark Olsen and Will Scheffer and produced by Tom Hanks' and Gary Goetzman's Playtone Entertainment. Chloë won the 2010 Golden Globe for the performance.

In addition to films and television, Chloë's fourth fashion collection recently sold out worldwide under the label: *Chloë Sevigny for Opening Ceremony*.

Chloë lives in New York City.

LUKE GRIMES (Ben)

In his debut feature, Luke Grimes starred in the thriller *All the Boys Love Mandy Lane*, about a spurned admirer who takes it upon himself to eliminate the competition. Proving that he too has many admirers, Grimes has used his captivating good-looks and innate penchant for acting to beat out the competition for a succession of film roles, as well as a coveted role on Greg Berlanti's hit ABC drama *Brothers & Sisters*, which he then transitioned into the central role on the FX drama pilot *Outlaw Country*.

He starred alongside the likes of Bruce Willis in the dark comedy *Assassination of a High School President*, was awarded a special jury prize at the Savannah Film Festival for the drama *War Eagle*, stars opposite Ellen Barkin in Cam Archer's *Shit Year* which premiered at Director's Fortnight in Cannes, and has since completed three consecutive dramatic

features: *The Wait* with Chloë Sevigny, *Squatters* with Richard Dreyfus, and *Forever* opposite Deborah Ann Wohl. Most recently, he appeared in the international box office smash *Taken 2*.

The son of a Pentecostal pastor in Dayton, Ohio, Grimes spent summers at church camp where he learned to play drums, which lead to his other passion – music. He is also the lead of an alt-country band called Mitchell’s Folly. In advance of moving to Los Angeles, Grimes studied acting in New York City and received a degree from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

DEVON GEARHART (Ian)

Devon Gearhart starred opposite Naomi Watts, Tim Roth and Michael Pitt in *Funny Games*. In 2008, he also appeared in Clint Eastwood’s *Changeling* then went on to shoot *Shorts* for Robert Rodriguez. Most recently, he wrapped the lead in *The Wait* opposite Chloe Sevigny and Jena Malone for director M. Blash, as well as *Power of Few* opposite Christopher Walken.

LANA ELIZABETH GREEN (Karen)

Lana Elizabeth Green makes her film debut playing the principal role of Karen in *The Wait*. Described by co0stars Chloe Sevigney and Jena Malone as “a natural,” Lana’s approach to the craft is intuitive and focused beyond her years. Appearing in various theatrical and musical productions since age six, Lana’s 2009 performance in a BBK production caught the eye of writer/director M. Blash, who tested and eventually cast her in the role of Karen.

When she is not acting and creating characters Lana plays the violin and cello and has performed with the SCDS Youth Orchestra since 2007. She also loves to sing, performing as a soloist at various venues. She enjoys reading and creative writing, penning her first novel (“Trapped”) in 2012. Currently, Lana is 11 years old and a member of ACT’s Young Actors Conservatory Theater in San Francis.

CREW BIOS

M BLASH (Writer/Director)

M studied film at New York University and The School of Visual Arts: BFA. 'Lying', his ultra low budget first feature, premiered in the Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival. He is native to Portland, Oregon and currently lives in New York City.

OWEN PALLETT (Composer)

Owen Pallett is a composer, violinist, keyboardist, and vocalist. His violin-looping live project spawned several records under the moniker Final Fantasy, including the Polaris Prize-winning *He Poos Clouds*. He currently releases records under his own name, including 2010's *Heartland*.

Pallett has written string, brass and orchestral arrangements for numerous bands, including The National, R.E.M., Pet Shop Boys, Duran Duran, The Last Shadow Puppets, The Mountain Goats, Beirut, Grizzly Bear, Linkin Park, Robbie Williams, Titus Andronicus, Snow Patrol, Taylor Swift and Arcade Fire. He has scored several films, including Richard Kelly's *The Box*, with Win Butler and Regine Chassagne, and The New York Times Magazine's Emmy-Award winning *Fourteen Actors Acting*.

As a soloist, he has performed with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, Symphony Nova Scotia, the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Noord Nederlands Orkest, yMusic and the Britten Sinfonia. Owen's violin concerto written for Pekka Kuusisto, co-commissioned by the Barbican and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra will be performed as a part of the New Creations Festival in 2013.

RYAN WARREN SMITH (Production Designer)

Ryan Warren Smith is a multifaceted production designer who designs commercials, music videos, and Independent feature films.

Ryan began his film career as an on-set dresser working alongside high profile directors such as Sean Penn & Gus Van Sant. His first film as Production Designer was Kelly Reichardt's *Wendy and Lucy*, starring Michelle Williams, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival before being screened at numerous film festivals around the world. It was also nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards, including Best Feature.

In the last two years, Ryan designed four upcoming feature length films, including: *Some Days are Better Than Others* directed by Matt McCormick, starring James Mercer & Carrie Brownstein; M Blash's *The Wait*, starring Jena Malone and Chloë Sevigny, Polsky Brothers' *The Motel Life*, starring Dakota Fanning, Emile Hirsch, and Stephen Dorff; and the 2012 Sundance pic *For Ellen*, directed by So Yong Kim, starring Paul Dano, Jon Heder, & Jena Malone.

FILMMAKER Q&A

Director M. Blash (*The Wait*) in conversation with filmmaker Matt Wolf.

MW: What are the kinds of altered states that the characters in your film experience? In a sense is the film about those altered states?

MB: Yes, it's about the altered states of grieving that we experience after the death of a parent. While I haven't experienced it firsthand, at the time I was writing the film, my mom was living in the small town that she grew up in Hawaii. Seeing her was like watching her become a teenage girl again. At times, it felt like I wasn't her son, but suddenly just a friend. With this came an acute sense of her possible death, which deeply upset me but made for a rich projected fantasy world.

Some people have delayed reactions to trauma, some experience all seven steps of the grieving process, some start on stage three then go back to stage one and so on, but I didn't follow that idea of bereavement exactly. The states these characters experience are exaggerated because the truth can't always depict the depth and profundity of what is happening internally. The bigger challenge with my characters was to show them almost entirely consumed in these states without knowing much of anything about how they are normally. As an audience, we really don't know what they were like before this, but we began to understand their pasts in how they deal or don't deal with the present. I imagine the experience of watching them can be mildly disorienting without their personal context, but in real life, the transition from a normal state to the altered state of grief can happen instantaneously, as quick as death itself, and I wanted to depict that.

MW: In many ways the form of the film and its visual experience induces this kind of hypnosis. Could you reflect?

MB: Well yeah, I feel that, grief is sort of a self-imposed hypnosis. Hypnosis is the act of imaginative role enactment or conjuring up the past to reflect and re-experience your initial reaction to trauma. It's about returning over and over again to a period in the past. Having experienced hypnosis several times, it's more personal, muggier and heavier than meditation, it's like a gross archaeological work that you have to do in order to re-wire something that has made you blocked or angry or anxious. The state of hypnosis relaxes you enough to access a memory. In this film, I'm accessing my own personal memories to deal with my fear of death. Even the location of the film is a place I use to vacation when I was a boy. It has always had a neutralizing or calming effect on me, but at the same instant is also feels very separated from time. It creates a place where you feel like death can't penetrate. In that sense, it is hypnotic, but also terrifying. I re-visited as an adult during the summer of 2004 when there was a huge forest fire going on nearby and Mars was the closest to Earth that it had been in a long time, so all of these things got me thinking that this place would be great to tell this story.

MW: This and your previous film, *Lying*, show boundary blurring, intimate relationships between women. What kind of female relationships are you interested in exploring in film.

MB: I don't think of women any differently than I think of myself. These women are reflective of me perhaps if I were in their situation. We share all the same longings, fears, hopes, denial, and transgressive tendencies. My father was a pilot and traveled, so I was very much raised by the women of my family. When you remember being raised by women and around women, you give them a lot of power – you find them becoming characters in your movies. This film has a lot to do with my sisters, my mother and my aunt. I cast some bit parts specifically to represent my mother physically at different periods in her life. For my first two films, I was just better prepared to access myself through female bodies.

MW: Are you influenced by the visual vocabulary of new media, video games, and the Internet? Do you perceive the visual experience of the film to be psychedelic?

MB: Throughout making the film, I was often finding design elements and symbols that reoccur in both natural and virtual settings. The confluence of these symbols is the element that I think people perceive as psychedelic. I sort of treat these symbols in my movie like code.

I'm interested in the Internet as the staging ground for our immortality. Tracking the luminescence in the color correct was really important because I wanted some scenes to kind of look like they're being played off a computer monitor or laptop, without it being distracting.

When I write scripts, I often first think of the topography of a classic platform video game such as Zelda, in which there is a huge map that has been designed, but you only get to be on a small part of the map at any given point. Spatially, I had hoped the film would operate like that, in the sense of a place that grows and unfolds in front of you. I'm certainly influenced by the vocabulary of new media and the topography of a platform game, but I also care about the person/subjectivity of the characters. Filmmaking is all about eradicating certain truths to show others, and I wanted these characters to register as real people have emotional resonance in an unreal place. However, one of my next projects is a video game based on a script I wrote a while ago.

MW: Are you interested in genre, and do you see the film as an experiment in hybrid genres?

MB: I'm more interested in generating a personal mythology or lexicon that viewers eventually come to understand (or perhaps not) than investigating genre. I hope to give them enough to become intimate with the film on some level.

MW: Discuss the queer content in the film. This seems to be the most personal intervention in the story. What are some of the personal emotional and psychological dynamics shown in the characters that resonate with you?

MB: I wanted to make a love story that was initiated by the rejection of another potential love story. This, in a way, is my own personal love story. At 15, I wanted to express my love for other boys but I wasn't quite ready and even if I thought I found someone who was like me it often wasn't the case, which of course I'd only find out about after attempting to be with them. In this film, the whole story wouldn't exist without the young gay character Sammy and his anger. He is rejected and plays a prank on the family of the boy who rejected him setting in motion the conflict. It is a sort of spite born out of shame of rejection. To amplify his disembodied resentment, I wanted him to stay hidden for most of the film, so that what's left of him is only gleaned through his father and a vague online presence. The rejection that Sammy experiences from Ian, and similarly, Ian's denial of his own sexuality, only amplifies the presence of death and decay for both those boys.

MW: The time and space before, during, or after a natural disaster is a kind of in-between zone...a kind of traumatic lapse. Does the mother's death have a metaphorical significance in this regard?

MB: The zone that death opens up is sort of liminal, and so it's partially represented in the metaphor of waiting; waiting for what? To make a decision, to die, to say goodbye to the dead body, to prepare for the resurrection, these are the anxieties people experience in this traumatic lapse. The bigger metaphor in the film is the burning forest. This is happening all around us in the United States every year and the forest fires seem to get worse and we are just waiting to see what its like when its all done (we have very little power in these natural disaster situations). The ambiguities in the characters' motivations and feelings about this death attempt to fill that in-between zone.