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MORNING VIGIL

a Night Maire Séance

short film press kit

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SYNOPSIS



➤ *logline* : A pious sister and her inflexible brother mourn the passing of their beloved mother.

➤ *short synopsis* : A pious sister and her inflexible magistrate brother mourn the passing of their beloved mother. To honor her memory, the siblings burn the midnight oil over their mother's old correspondences with family members whom she so often spoke of, until they come across a letter from someone she had never mentioned.

➤ *inspired by* : Guy de Maupassant's 1880 short story "A Dead Woman's Secret".

➤ *runtime* : approximately 6-8 minutes long.

DIRECTOR'S EPISTLE

Hailing from Provincial France, Guy de Maupassant was always part of my scholastic upbringing, his pessimistic themes and disillusioned characters resonating with my more macabre condition. Like many of the author's best short stories, 'A Dead Woman's Secret' has a dark and mysterious undertone despite its extrinsic simplicity. It is a cautionary tale of moral virtue as a cudgel that destroys people's lives, extolling how sanctimonious dogma breeds restrictive multi-generational prejudice and intolerance.

My appreciation for the story developed while living with my grandparents during the pandemic. This experience was incredibly impactful on my perception of them, as I had to come to terms with certain hard truths about them during my time there. It made me realize just how much our opinions of others is so often influenced by biased impressions, and how any new information about a person can drastically alter our judgment of them.

I found this brief, yet meaningful story relatable in many ways. Through the cinematic medium of a calling-card short film, I seek to explore those facets of the human condition - whether it is truly possible to know someone - while serving as memento mori to live true to one's self - especially LGBTQ+ members - despite any fear of castigation that living in secret may shelter you from.



AESTHETIC APPROACH



Filmed in an intimate 1.19:1 aspect ratio with static frames to make it a more authentic period piece, evocative of cinema's earliest days, particularly German expressionism. This old-fashioned style of immobile shots with a box-like ratio carries several meta-textual implications, including building a claustrophobic mood mirroring the protagonists' narrow points of view. The square-ish shape also mimics that of the titularly symbolic letters being read by our characters.

Lit for a near-monochromatic sepia-heavy color palette reminiscent of 19th century photography, with a heavy reliance on diegetic sources to motivate low and high-contrast lighting. This sole light source creates dark backgrounds with starkly lit subjects, offering dimensionality to the space and dynamism to the characters and, metaphorically, their psyche as they seek balance between light and dark, good and evil, right and wrong. Such stylistic chiaroscuro techniques also creates a dramatic, shadowy mood, as well as build tension and suspense by bringing secret hidden details to the surface for all to witness.

PRODUCTION SPECS

➤ *shoot length* : production took place over the course of 2 days on May 14 & 15th, with the initial day for prep, setup and B-roll, and the secondary day for principal photography with talent.

➤ *shoot location* : shot on location at King Manor Museum, Jamaica, Queens, New York, USA.

➤ *crew size* : circa 25 crew members.

➤ *shot with* : an Alexa Mini camera package with a single Cooke 18-100mm T3.0 Varotal Zoom lens.



PRODUCTION FACTS



➤ “*Dead Secret*” is Night Maire’s second directorial independent short film (unaffiliated with a scholastic institution).

➤ “*Dead Secret*” is the second collaboration between Night Maire & McLean Peterson (*Sister Eulalie*), the former having produced director Andrew Edison’s student thesis thriller short film “Birdie,” in which the latter was cast as a school shooter’s unsuspecting babysitter.

➤ “*Dead Secret*” is the second collaboration between Night Maire & Nancy Nagrant, the former casting the latter as a dotting victim to vintner cannibals in his graduate thesis film “Chateau Sauvignon: terroir.” Anthony Pepe helmed SPFX for both projects as well, and remain the last two independent films he’s worked on.

➤ “*Dead Secret*” is the second collaboration between Night Maire & Almudena Caminero, the latter who previously Production Designed the former’s first independent short film “Horologium.”



CAST

Biographies & Links

Blanche Baker as Mother

Blanche Baker is an American actress of stage, screen and television. Born Blanche Garfein in New York, her mother is actress Carroll Baker, who won a Best Actress Oscar nomination for "Baby Doll" (1956), several months after baby Blanche arrived. Her father is stage director Jack Garfein, who later went on to direct movies and teach acting.

After attending Wellesley College, she took her mother's surname and made her television debut in the miniseries "Holocaust" (1978), for which she won an Emmy Award for Best Supporting Actress.

Baker made her movie debut in "The Seduction of Joe Tynan" (1979), an A-List production featuring Alan Alda at the height of his popularity and another "Holocaust" co-star at the start of her career, Meryl Streep. She then appeared as the Holy Mother in the TV movie "Mary and Joseph: A Story of Faith" (1979).

Baker is also known for her role as Ginny Baker in "Sixteen Candles"; she also starred in the title role of "Lolita" on Broadway. In 2012, she produced and starred in a film about Ruth Madoff titled "Ruth Madoff Occupies Wall Street."



McLean Peterson as Sister Eulalie



Nancy Nagrant is an award-winning actor-producer living in Brooklyn, NY. She received her B.A. in Theatre with a minor in psychology from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI, before moving to New York to pursue an acting career.

After working extensively in the indie theatre scene, she began to pursue on-camera work, booking her first co-star role in 2012 on the ABC pilot *Dark Horse*. Since then, Nancy has appeared in more than a dozen T.V. shows including Amazon Prime's *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, NBC's *Law & Order: SVU*, CBS's *Bull*, ABC's *Quantico*, as well as Netflix's *House of Cards*. Big-screen credits include Laura Kosann's *The Social Ones* (2019), Steven Soderbergh's *Side Effects* (2013), and Ken Scott's *Delivery Man* (2013) alongside Vince Vaughn.

She began producing in earnest in 2014, and vowed only to take on projects with an emphasis on women protagonist. By choosing stories in which women are at the center of the action we diversify the storytelling spectrum, and through diversity we create opportunities for greater empathy and understanding, and ultimately a more equitable society. Nancy produces under the name Anemone Productions, although it's really just her... and some badass collaborators.

Nick Doolan as Magistrate Henry

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Fenton Lawless as Priest



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Ethan Viera as Gossip

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KEY CREW

Biographies & Links

WRITER & DIRECTOR & PRODUCER & EDITOR

Cosmopolitan in nature, David M. Night Maire is a creative independent filmmaker Writer, Director, Producer who's gritty, character-driven films have received endorsements and worldwide acclaim. With a decade of industry experience pitching, collaborating and consulting on projects of fluctuating scopes, from shoestring micro-budget music videos to nine-figure studio blockbusters, David has carved himself a niche within the genre-based film circuit.

A bilingual International Baccalaureate diploma recipient, and alumnus of the prestigious New York University: Tisch School of the Arts, Night Maire earned his B.A. with honors in Film & T.V. with a focus on Directing, and Minors in Psychology and Producing for Film & T.V. This native Alpine's passion for directing led him to then pursue a Masters in Directing at the School of Visual Arts under famed music video and commercial director Bob Giraldi. Since, he's been invited on a number of occasions to return as a Guest Lecturer to talk on an array of production topics to the program's graduate students.

David premiered music videos on MTV and Glamour, and produced content for the likes of Moët Hennessy . Louis Vuitton, Red Bull and the Leslie-Lohman Museum, amongst others. Moreover, Night Maire has garnered thousands of laurels and awards for the many short films he's Directed and Produced His cultivated persona and visual aesthetic have also precipitated invitations to Program and Judge diverse film festivals across the United States, including Shriekfest Horror Film Festival, DC Shorts International Film Festival & Screenplay Competition, Blackbird Film Festival, and the PA Indie Shorts Film Festival.



PRODUCER



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SPECIAL FX MAKEUP

Anthony has worked as a special makeup effects artist in the film and T.V. industry for the past two decades. As of today, Anthony has worked on over one hundred film and T.V. projects.

His film resume includes many large Hollywood tent-poles and independent features like “Sharknado 2: The Second One,” “The Amazing Spider-Man 2,” “Non-Stop,” “Hunger Games 2: Catching Fire,” “Red Hook Summer,” “Sharknado,” “The Amazing Spider-Man,” and “The Woman.” His television portfolio lists CBS’s “The Good Wife,” and “Elementary,” FOX’s “The Following,” and “Law & Order: Special Victims Unit,” HBO’s “Boardwalk Empire,” and most recently became head of the makeup department for NBC’s “The Blacklist.”



PROD. DESIGNER



Almudena Caminero is a production designer and painter hailing from Spain. She earned her B.F.A. in Fine Arts in 2012 from the Universidad Europea de Madrid, and received her M.A. in Set Design for Film, Theater and Television from TAI School.

After working on a number of short films and television shows in Madrid, she decided to move to New York City, where she graduated in Filmmaking from The New York Film Academy.

She continues to live in Brooklyn, NY, and since her most recent graduation, has refined her artistic craft on a myriad of feature and short films, as well as television shows and web series.



FIN

Thank you.