



TRYING MEMORY

a film by ruben harjono

Electronic Press Kit
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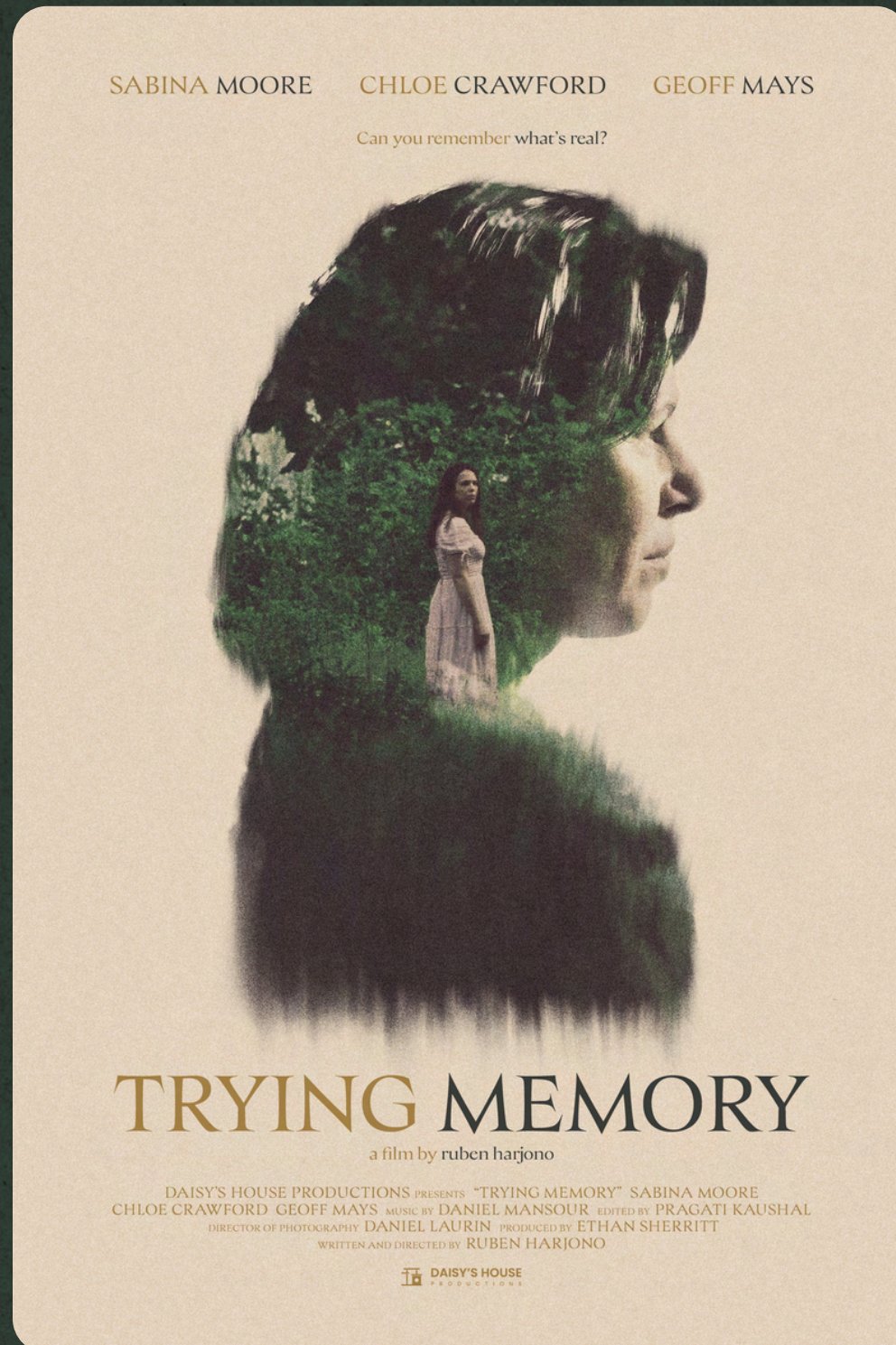
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Genre

Drama

Running Time

8 minutes

Format

4K

Aspect Ratio

2.39:1

Sound Mix

5.1

Completion Date

August 31, 2024

Logline

A woman is interrogated by an invasive figure during the sudden disappearance of her husband. As she fends for her dignity, her mind begins to unravel as an important memory weaves in and out, challenging her truth.

Synopsis

Trying Memory is a non-linear drama that explores themes of memory, trust, and familial love through the fragmented perspective of Mabel, a middle-aged woman grappling with memory loss. Mabel lives in a haze of confusion, unable to recall key aspects of her life, including the whereabouts of her husband, Bren. Adding to her turmoil is the presence of Penelope, a young woman whose identity Mabel cannot fully place. While Penelope appears kind and attentive, Mabel grows increasingly suspicious, even questioning whether Penelope might have been involved in Bren's mysterious disappearance.

Flashbacks to a memory offer glimpses of Mabel's relationships, blending moments of joy, heartache, and uncertainty. From Mabel's limited and unreliable point of view, the lines between memory, reality, and imagination blur—leaving the audience to piece together the truth. In a tender revelation, Penelope's true identity as Mabel's daughter is unveiled, illustrating the profound bond they share despite Mabel's fading grasp on reality. The film concludes with a quiet moment of connection, underscoring the enduring power of love amidst the disorienting loss of memory.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

It is estimated that over 55 million people worldwide are living with dementia—the most common symptom being Alzheimer's disease. However, my desire to tell a story about this subject began not with clinical data or medical statistics, but from my personal connection to it through my family. I have witnessed the immense toll that my parents would endure in dealing with my grandmother's cognitive decline; the challenges of her losing her memories, identity, and willingness to connect with the world stirred within me a deep desire to explore this reality through film.

What drew me to this project was not just the tragedy of Alzheimer's but also the remarkable resilience and humanity of those living with the disease. I would often see the hardships that my grandmother would impose on those around her, but ultimately the commitment of service and persistence of love would still be evident in caring for her. I love being reminded that despite the struggles someone with Alzheimer's might inflict, they still have the capacity to feel, to be happy, or to be frustrated—and thus deserving of our care and respect.

One of the things I felt strongly about in the making of *Trying Memory* is that I wanted to create a narrative story that resonates on an emotional level rather than merely presenting a clinical depiction. I'm always drawn to genre films as my sources of inspiration, so I set out to hide the subject matter within a story of possible betrayal, deceitfulness, and mystery.

To achieve this, I used a variety of specifically designed techniques, from interrogative visuals to splicing non-linear elements. I experimented with soundscapes and imagery to convey both the possible disorientation and moments of clarity to hint at the experience of Alzheimer's. The disease itself however, is never mentioned throughout the film, an almost lingering presence that asks the audience to figure it out on their own.

Balancing the emotional aspects of Alzheimer's while keeping the film engaging was a fun challenge. I would constantly question how to present enough context without spoon-feeding the audience with obvious clues. I'm always fond of non-linear storytelling, and I would constantly be grateful at how perfect of a storytelling device it was for this film. In the end, I hope it provides viewers with a deeply satisfying and empathetic exploration of this all too common condition.



MEET THE CAST



SABINA MOORE
AS MABEL

Other Credits: *Altar Boy* (2021)



CHLOE CRAWFORD
AS PENELOPE

Other Credits: *The Witness* (2024)



GEOFF MAYS
AS BREN

Other Credits: *Were-Wool* (2020)
Flames of Fury (2019)



“ SABINA MOORE ON BRINGING MABEL TO LIFE

“Mabel could have easily been me, which allowed me to slip into her shoes fairly easily. This helped me with the most challenging part of the role which was facing the reality of her situation and her emotions.”

“ ON THE CREW

“The crew was incredible! You could tell they knew each other prior and are used to working with one another. Their understanding of each other’s talents allowed us to shoot an amazing film in a limited time.”



THE CREW



RUBEN HARJONO - WRITER/DIRECTOR

Driven by a passion for the cinematic process, Ruben Harjono wrote and directed his first short film *It's Real to Me* in 2023. Raised in Toronto, Ontario, his love of film photography influenced his visual methods in creating thought-provoking narratives and imagery. Harjono is also the co-founder of Daisy's House Productions, a film production company based in Toronto. He looks to explore morality, ethics, and the complexities of the human psyche in his writing and storytelling journey.



ETHAN SHERRITT - PRODUCER

Ethan Sherritt is a 21-year-old filmmaker from Mississauga, Ontario with a variety of interdepartmental experience in his back pocket. Sherritt's second go-around as a producer on *Trying Memory* is marked with success as he pushes purposeful, methodical strategy into every aspect of production. As a resourceful creative, he has the agility to make the film thrive under the most adverse circumstances by coordinating the crew's efforts efficiently. Sherritt lives to make ideas into reality, seeking to deliver increasingly innovative storytelling through his work.



DANIEL LAURIN - DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Daniel Laurin is an emerging cinematographer pursuing the mastery of visual storytelling through his narrative projects. He grew up inspired by the resourcefulness of the internet video era but finds true joy in the smell of popcorn and the feeling you get when you step outside the theatre after a perfect movie. On set, Laurin is a camera nerd with a fascination for light and an eye for composition. He ensures that the image is crafted with purpose, delivering the highest visual fidelity and emotional impact possible in every frame. Working professionally in Toronto, Laurin now has a wide range of experience on student, indie and professional productions. Notably, he was the cinematographer on the documentary *Big Kids* (2024) and the award-winning short films *It's Real to Me* (2023) and *Signs of Absence* (2023).

THE CREW

EDITOR
PRAGATI KAUSHAL

COMPOSER
DANIEL MANSOUR

1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
EILEEN CAHILL

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
PRATIBHA KAUSHAL

ART DIRECTOR
RO CHARIFA

CAMERA OPERATOR
AMANDA HACKSEL

1ST ASSISTANT CAMERA
WILLIAM ROBOTHAM

2ND ASSISTANT CAMERA
KIRBY SLOAN
BEN FUDGE

LOCATION SOUND RECORDIST
DANIEL SARGEANT

BOOM OP
SOPHIE MORENO KRIS

GAFFER
SAMUEL FRANCESCHETTI

KEY GRIP
SAM CMELO

GRIP
LILY CHIASSON

SCRIPT SUPERVISOR
THOMAS MURGATROYD

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
ABHISHREE SHARMA

COLORIST
JESSE HILTON

RE-RECORDING MIXER
POURNAM ABBASI





STILLS





BEHIND THE SCENES



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[@tryingmemoryfilm](https://www.instagram.com/tryingmemoryfilm)



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