

# Film Notes

By Ann Siswell

## Private Life

2025 | 105mins

Director: Rebecca Zlotowski

Written by: Anne Berest, Gaëlle Macé, Rebecca Zlotowski

Starring: Daniel Auteuil, Virginie Efira, Jodie Foster



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Premiering out of competition at Cannes this year before going on to the Toronto International Film Festival, *A Private Life* stars Jodie Foster as an American psychiatrist who decides to investigate the death of one of her patients with co-sleuth Daniel Auteuil.

As follow-up to her well-received *Other People's Children* (2022), director Rebecca Zlotowski treats *A Private Life* as both a search for identity and a crime thriller, even tending to screwball comedy as it was described at a Cannes press conference. Co-writing with Anne Berest and Gaëlle Macé, the screenplay is bright, and Foster and Auteuil share a chemistry that is both romantic and comical. Overall, Zlotowski presents a striking visual package that includes surreal dreamscapes, strange shifts in tone as well as well-honed performances from award-winning actors. Zlotowski has long wanted to direct Foster, and this film provided the opportunity to showcase the actor's many talents, including her fluency in French.

In January 2025, director Zlotowski received the French Cinema Award from Unifrance (the film promotion body) at the Ministry of Culture. The tribute honours those who have 'contributed to making French cinema shine abroad' and Juliette Binoche is among its previous recipients. At the ceremony, Zlotowski was acknowledged for her active promotion of her work and for casting actors from diverse social or ethnic backgrounds in non-stereotypical roles on screen.

*A Private Life* may be a 'genial, preposterous psychological mystery caper' (The Guardian) but 'Zlotowski never commits fully to a single genre or tone, but there's always a sly, knowing wink beneath the surface' (The UpComing, 2025).

**'From the bright red cursive opening titles, it's anyone's guess what will follow, but *A Private Life* is a genre-bending mashup of an absurdist comedy, a romance, a murder mystery, and a surreal examination of self and mortality'**

-Alliance of Women Film Journalists

What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

Please add any further comments here



Excellent

Fair

Poor



Private Life

Please detach this from your Film Note and drop it into the box or hand it in at the end of the screening. Thank you!



Did You Know?

- Jodie Foster’s impeccably fluent French is largely thanks to her Francophile mother who also introduced her to New Wave cinema.
- Director Rebecca Zlotowski graduated from the French cinema and television school, La Fémis, Paris, where she wrote the screenplay for her first film, *Belle Epine*, as her graduate project.

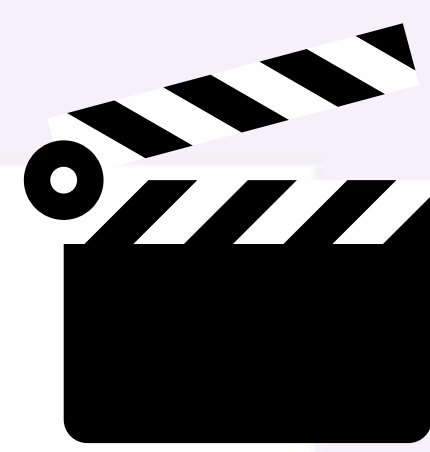
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**The Naked Face (1984)**

Follows a psychiatrist who becomes a target for a murderer, while the police believe him to be the suspect.



**A Dangerous Method (2011)**

Starring Kiera Knightly, the film follows the turbulent relationship between Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud and Sabina Spielrein.

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