



SEMAINE  
DE LA CRITIQUE  
CANNES 2014

A FILM BY DAVID ROBERT MITCHELL

# IT FOLLOWS



## SYNOPSIS

For 19-year-old Jay, fall should be about school, boys and weekends out at the lake. But after a seemingly innocent sexual encounter, she finds herself plagued by strange visions and the inescapable sense that someone, or something, is following her. Faced with this burden, Jay and her teenage friends must find a way to escape the horrors that seem to be only a few steps behind.





## INTERVIEW WITH DAVID ROBERT MITCHELL

**The premise of the film is so audacious. Where did it come from?**

The film sprang from a childhood nightmare – one that I had on a recurring basis as a ten-year-old boy (and one that I think a lot of people have) – where something is following you. In the nightmare, it was slow but ever-persistent. I dreamt that I was on the playground at school and I saw this other kid walking towards me. And somehow I knew in my dream that this was a monster. I ran away, down a whole block – and then I stood there waiting. After a moment, in the distance, the boy turned the corner and continued following me. This monster could look like anyone - assuming different shapes each time I saw it. Much later in life, after the nightmare went away, I thought it'd be interesting to turn those dreams into a film.

**It'd be interesting to hear a little bit about the rest of the journey, from when you started to write it to where it's at now.**

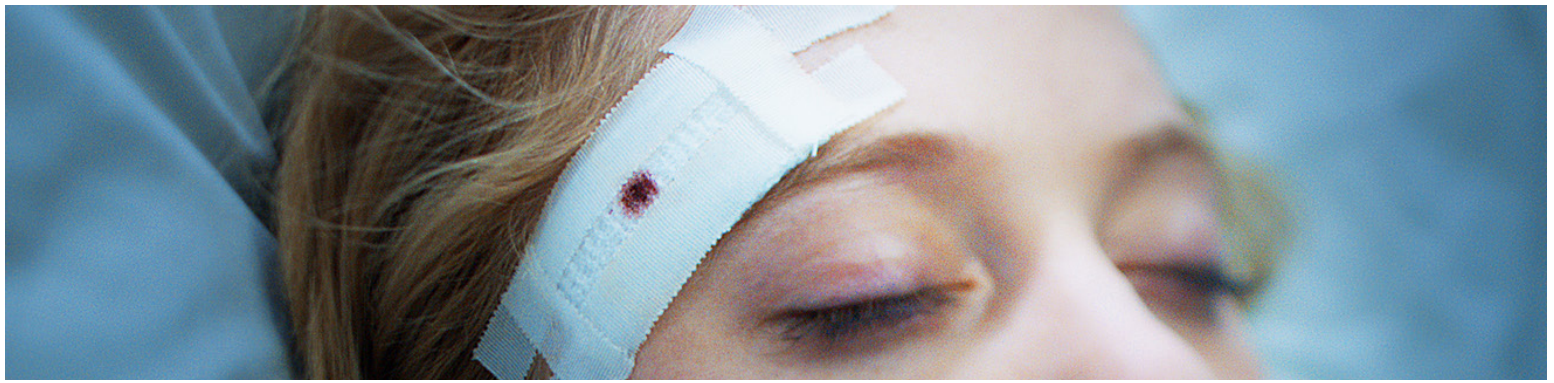
*I wrote it quickly, and the film (amazingly) came together very quickly. A friend introduced me to my producers and over the course of about a year, it came together. Early on, my focus was with the DP - working on a visual style. Before production began, we felt we had found the film's voice.*

**The look of the film is indeed one of its most striking aspects. Would you talk about your influences?**

*Wow - there are too many to name. The Carpenter movies, a lot of horror films, but also so many others. I watched Paris, Texas a lot. I obsessively watched Touch of Evil, Rosemary's Baby, The Shining and Invasion of the Body Snatchers (both the 50's and 70's versions, of course). Some Cronenberg, Blue Velvet and Creature From the Black Lagoon. There are also some still photographers – Todd Hido and Gregory Crewdson. Very amazing and inspirational stuff.*

**Tonally, atmospherically, what were you interested in going for with the camera? There's something both dream-like and real in what you're doing – long takes add to the sensation that what is happening is real, but the pans and zooms have a kind of dreaminess.**

*It was important to us not to telegraph everything. In my first film, there was much more subjective camera work. We wanted this film to feel much more objective – where the camera isn't telling you where to look all the time. So we kept the camera a little more distant. That way, things are out there, but we're not necessarily going to shout to you when there's something dangerous approaching. Our hope was that, by not pointing things out, but by letting people find things, we'd create a great sense of general unease – so that at any point you don't really know if anything's out there or not. As for the dreaminess, it's hard to say; of course, perhaps some of that can be accounted for by where the film came from, but some of it is a personal aesthetic – I love creating a world that isn't exactly real. In the same way, this isn't a period piece, but we hope that it's not quite modern either. We wanted it to be slightly outside of time – though with a lot of familiar, contemporary edges to things.*



## INTERVIEW CONTINUED

Two things: (1) This is very clearly a film by the guy who made *Myth*, which is very sweet; and (2) this is a horror film. So it's absolutely of a piece with *Myth* – but at the same time, it's very different. Can you talk about that?

Ha. It wasn't a big leap for me in my head. I love horror movies. Particularly classic horror films. And I want to make a lot of different kinds of movies. I guess I had the idea that it would be interesting to take the tone of *Myth* and imagine the characters a little bit older, and put them in a scary situation and see how they would react. But keep them as genuine as I felt the characters in *Myth* were – I wanted them to be people I care about.

Obviously there are a number of ways you can interpret the source of the horror in the film... could you comment on the way that sexuality plays a part in the film?

*I worry that the more I try to explain it, the more it takes some of the magic out of it. But I think that the point in a person's life where he or she discovers his or her sexuality can be scary. There are all sorts of anxieties at that point in a person's life. And it felt interesting to examine that on another level.*

Can you tell me a little bit about what led you to cast Maika?

*It's simple: she read for the part and she was fantastic. And there was a vulnerability to her that went well beyond what I'd put on the page. It was clear she was the right person. Finding the actors is, of course, so critical – and I couldn't be happier with this cast. I think they all do a beautiful job.*

Yes, all of the performances are really interesting – and the film never feels like it leaves the naturalism of *Myth*. How did you create tone where high emotional notes

are being hit but it never feels like it's becoming campy or farcical?

*That's a tough one to answer (but thank you). Directing , I just tried whatever felt right in the moment to help suggest or guide the actors. With this film, I knew that things needed to go beyond normal day-to-day feelings. Still, I wanted us to stay in a performance space that I don't quite know how to describe - it is natural, but it's almost outside of being natural; it's a little more subdued, and a little softer than even life is. It's interesting to me... and perhaps that's what helps us, even in surreal circumstances in this film, to never quite leave what's real and natural.*

Yes, though natural is not the right word, there is something dreamy...

*It's just something a little different than what we're used to... at least I hope so.*



## BIOGRAPHY

**DAVID ROBERT MITCHELL** grew up in Metro Detroit and now lives in Los Angeles. His writing and directorial feature debut, *The Myth of the American Sleepover*, premiered at the SXSW Film Festival, winning a Special Jury Prize. The film had its international premiere at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival in the Critics' Week section, where it was one of only seven feature films selected worldwide – and the only one from North America. Other awards include the Prix du Jury at the Deauville American Film Festival in France, and the American Indie Newcomer prize at the Munich Film Festival.

*The Myth of the American Sleepover* was released theatrically by IFC Films in 2011. It was listed as one of the top 5 films of the year on Ebert Presents At The Movies.

David is currently writing and developing several feature projects.



## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

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### Jay – **MAIKA MONROE**

At just 20 years old, Maika has already demonstrated her many talents on an international level. Monroe exploded onto the scene in Ramin Bahrani's *At Any Price*, starring opposite Zac Efron and Dennis Quaid. The film debuted to rave reviews at the Venice, Toronto and Telluride Film Festivals. She also starred opposite Emma Watson and Kirsten Dunst in *The Bling Ring*. Monroe was last seen in *Labor Day*, directed by Jason Reitman and also starring Josh Brolin and Kate Winslet, and her film *The Guest*, directed by Adam Wingard, debuted at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival.



### Paul – **KEIR GILCHRIST**

Keir was born in London, England, and lived in Boston and New York City before settling in Toronto, which is where he currently calls home. Keir starred in the critically acclaimed Showtime series *United States of Tara*. Some of Gilchrist's film credits include the title role of Peck in the feature film *Just Peck* opposite Brie Larson, as well as *The Rocker*, *The Egg Factory*, and *Dead Silence*. Gilchrist starred in the Focus Features film *It's Kind of a Funny Story* opposite Zach Galifianakis, Emma Roberts, and Viola Davis. Keir also starred in the mini-series *Delete* opposite Seth Green.



### Greg – **DANIEL ZOVATTO**

Daniel made his feature film debut in *Innocence*, an adaptation of Jane Mendelsohn's best selling teen novel directed by Hilary Brougher for Killer Films. Daniel was also the lead in the Chiller Network's *Beneath*, a horror film directed by Larry Fessenden. 2014 has continued to be a busy one for Zovatto with the Sundance premiere of Lynn Shelton's *Laggies*, playing opposite Sam Rockwell, Chloe Grace Moretz, and Keira Knightley. Daniel can also be seen on the small screen playing memorable guest roles on ABC's *Marvel Agents of Shield* and *Revenge*.



### Hugh – **JAKE WEARY**

Jake began acting in his early teens with his first role on his mother's hit soap opera show CBS' *Guiding Light*. After booking guest roles on shows such as NBC's *Law and Order: SVU* and *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*, he originated the role of 'Luke Snyder' on the CBS serial *As the World Turns*. This year, Jake can be seen in Jordan Rubin's horror spoof *Zombeavers*, which premiered at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival. Jake currently lives in Los Angeles, where he also pursues his other passions of writing and producing his own music.



### Yara – **OLIVIA LUCCARDI**

Olivia blasted onto the scene in a memorably acerbic role on HBO's *Girls* and has since had a banner 2013 with supporting roles in feature films including Frank Whaley's *Like Sunday, Like Rain* opposite Leighton Meester, and Marc Lawrence's *The Rewrite* opposite Hugh Grant. In 2014, Olivia can be seen starring opposite Dakota Fanning in Gerardo Naranjo's yet-to-be-titled feature and the new season of Netflix's *Orange is the New Black*.



### Kelly – **LILI SEPE**

Lili first came on to the scene in her debut film, *Spork*, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival 2010. Since then, she has appeared in over 15 national commercials.



## PRODUCTION COMPANIES

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**NORTHERN LIGHTS FILMS** started in 2010 with the goal of providing equity financing for promising and up-and-coming filmmakers. Northern Lights Films first produced Matt Walsh's *High Road* starring James Pumphrey, Dylan O'Brien, Matt L. Jones, Lizzy Kaplan, Rob Riggle, Joe Lo Truglio, and Ed Helms, which was distributed by Millennium Entertainment. In 2011, Northern produced *The Brass Teapot* starring Juno Temple, Michael Angarano, Alexis Bledel, and Bobby Moynihan. *Teapot* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2012 and was distributed by Magnolia Pictures.

**ANIMAL KINGDOM** was founded in September 2012 to develop, produce, and finance feature films, television and digital content. The company's first feature, Destin Daniel Cretton's *Short Term 12*, was one of the most critically acclaimed films of 2013. The film won both the Grand Jury Prize and Audience Award at SXSW and was named one of the 10 best films of the year by many, including New York Magazine, The Wall Street Journal, The Los Angeles Times, The Atlantic, Forbes, and E! Online. The film currently carries a rating of 99% "fresh" on Rotten Tomatoes.

**TWO FLINTS** is a newly formed production company founded by producing team Rebecca Green and Laura D. Smith, who met over a decade ago while assistants at Lionsgate and Ghouardi Film Company respectively. *It Follows* marks their first feature film together. Two Flints is currently in post-production on *I'll See You in My Dreams*, co-written and directed by Brett Haley (*The New Year*). The film stars the legendary Blythe Danner alongside Sam Elliott, June Squibb, Martin Starr, Rhea Perlman, Mary Kay Place, and Malin Akerman. The duo also produced the pilot presentation episode for the television show *Schitt's Creek* with Anonymous Content and co-creator/star Eugene Levy, which was picked up by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for series in 2014. Rebecca and Laura were 2012 Film Independent Producing Lab Fellows with the feature project *And Then I Go*, currently in development.



## INTERNATIONAL SALES

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## CANNES PUBLICITY

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NORTHERN LIGHTS  
F I L M S

visitfilms animal kingdom.

## MAIN CAST

Jay	Maika Monroe
Paul	Keir Gilchrist
Greg	Daniel Zovatto
Hugh	Jake Weary
Yara	Olivia Luccardi
Kelly	Lili Sepe

## TECH SPECS

Run Time:	100 min
Aspect Ratio:	2.39:1
Shooting Format:	HD
Sound:	5.1
Country:	USA
Language:	English
Production Companies:	Animal Kingdom Northern Lights Two Flints

## CREW

Writer / Director	David Robert Mitchell
Producers	Rebecca Green Laura D. Smith David Robert Mitchell David Kaplan Erik Rommesmo Robyn K. Bennett
Co-Producer	Michael Gioulakis
Cinematography	Julio C. Perez IV
Editor	Michael T. Perry
Production Design	Mark Bennett
Casting	Disasterpeace
Music	