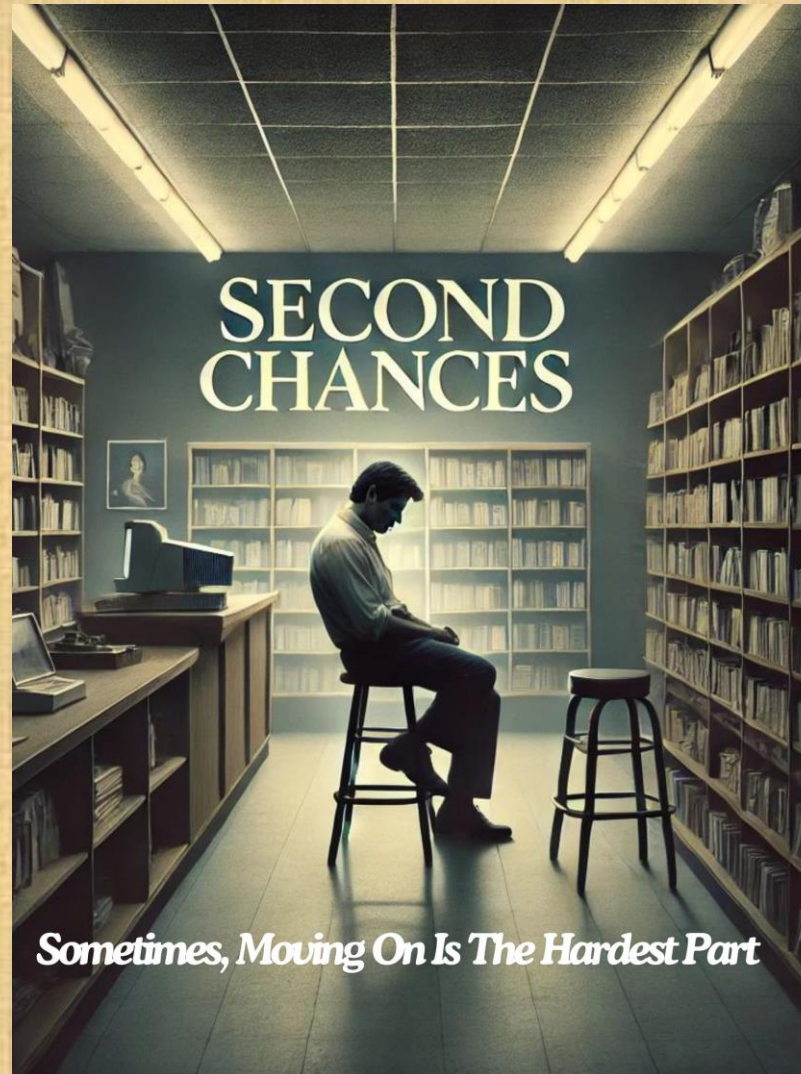


# Second Chances

A Feature Film by Scott Sawitz



# Logline & Synopsis

**Logline:** *A year after the tragic loss of his wife, the owner of Chicago's last video rental store must navigate the bittersweet journey of reopening his heart to love in a world that has moved on from the past.*

**Synopsis:** *Second Chances* opens in Chicago, where Ethan Cross, 45, and his pregnant wife, Danielle, shop for their future baby. Ethan's humorous paranoia about Danielle's pregnancy sets a light tone, but subtle concern about their upcoming ultrasound looms. Their loving bond is further explored during a tender moment in the parking lot as they load their SUV.

At Ethan's struggling video rental store, we meet Sylvester "Brick" Brykowski, an aspiring screenwriter, and Luke, Ethan's best friend and accountant. Luke suggests an exit strategy, but Ethan, emotionally attached to the store, resists. The store's history includes ties to Chicago mayors and mob-related murders, which Ethan shares with YouTubers.

At home, Ethan and Danielle's playful banter deepens their connection, while a dinner conversation highlights Danielle's quirky pregnancy cravings. However, tragedy strikes when Danielle and their unborn child are killed in a car accident. A year later, Ethan is still grieving, his life in disarray, and he's clinging to Danielle's memory. Financially strained, he reluctantly processes a refund for unused baby items.

Ethan begins to let go, cleaning his fridge and accepting advice from Harold, a local restaurant owner. Luke sets Ethan up on a dinner date to help him move on. Meanwhile, Ethan's interactions with Brick, his ex Kelly, and real estate investor James Brighton reveal his internal conflict over the store's future. As the store's financial troubles deepen, Ethan faces costly city-mandated renovations.

Ethan's relationship with Kelly rekindles, leading to an almost kiss, but he abruptly leaves, still conflicted. His budding romance with Cindy, a potential new love interest, progresses, though Ethan remains emotionally tied to the past. Luke continues to push Ethan toward practicality, suggesting he sell the store. Ethan's first sexual encounter post-Danielle is fraught with emotional complexity.

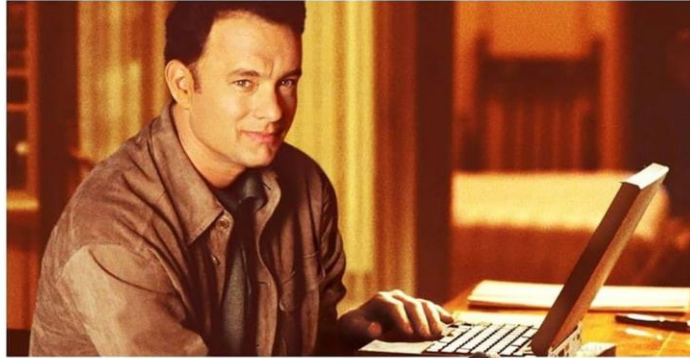
Brick's script finds success on the Blacklist, providing a glimmer of hope. Despite Ethan's efforts to save the store through crowdfunding, its financial problems persist. He receives a \$3.25 million offer from James to buy the store, a tempting solution to his troubles. As Ethan contemplates the offer, Harold's death symbolizes the end of an era, and city inspectors demand \$750,000 in repairs or closure.

Ethan's growing romance with Cindy helps him begin to move forward, choosing her over rekindling things with Kelly. He also presents Brick with a check to produce his movie, supporting his friend's dream. The story ends with Ethan and Cindy in a tender moment, leaving their future and Brick's movie uncertain.



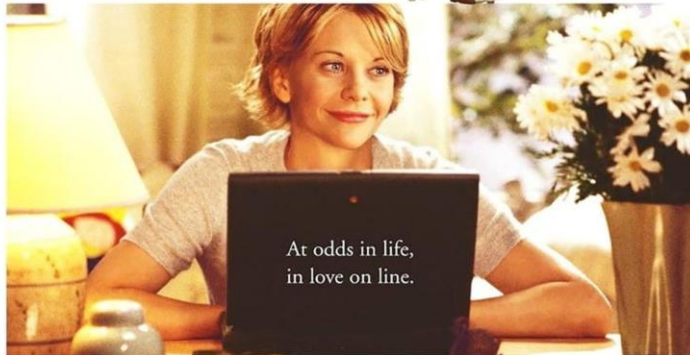
# Comparable Films

Tom Hanks Meg Ryan



from the Director of *Sleepless In Seattle*

You've Got M@il



At odds in life,  
in love on line.

WARNER BROS. PRESENTS  
A LAUREN SHULER DONNER FILM  
"YOU'VE GOT MAIL"  
STARRING TOM HANKS AND MEG RYAN  
MUSIC BY JOHN WILLIAMS  
EDITED BY DAN DAVIS  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER JOHN LINDLEY  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DELIA EPHRON, JULIE DURKIN, G. MAC BROWN  
PRODUCED BY LAUREN SHULER DONNER AND NORA EPHRON  
DIRECTED BY NORA EPHRON



DVD + DIGITAL HD

JAKE GYLLENHAAL NAOMI WATTS

A JENN MARGULIES FILM

DEMOLITION

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF WILD AND THE DALLAS BUYERS CLUB

"BREATHTAKING... A TRULY INCREDIBLE PIECE OF CINEMA"

★★★★★ ★★★★★ ★★★★★ ★★★★★ ★★★★★

"CASEY AFFLECK GIVES THE PERFORMANCE OF A LIFETIME"



CASEY AFFLECK MICHELLE WILLIAMS KYLE CHANDLER AND LUCAS HEDGES

MANCHESTER BY THE SEA

A PICTURE BY KENNETH LONERGAN





# Purpose

A certain way to tell how old someone is to ask them if they remember record stores, drive-in theaters, roller skate venues and video rental shops. If you can, you remember an Older America... the pre social media, streaming service America where finding the next great movie/song/trend meant being out in the world and discovering it.

I wanted to write a tribute to those shops through a man desperate to hold on to the last vestige of his life and family. A lot of us remember what it was like to rent a movie but what about the last guy to make a living at it?





# Thematic Elements



"Legacy vs. Progress": The film explores the tension between holding onto the past and embracing the future, embodied in Ethan's attachment to his video rental store and the pressure to sell it for financial stability.

"Pathways of Grief": Ethan's journey illustrates the various stages of grief and the search for meaning after a devastating loss. His interactions with Danielle's memory, his reluctance to move on, and his eventual steps towards healing reflect this theme.

"Rekindling Old Flames": The re-emergence of Kelly in Ethan's life and their complex past relationship highlights the theme of revisiting old connections and the potential for rekindling or closure.

"The Power of Support": Throughout Ethan's struggles, the support from his friends Luke and Brick, as well as his developing relationship with Cindy, demonstrate the importance of community and companionship in overcoming life's challenges.

"Embracing Change": Ethan's eventual willingness to consider new opportunities, both in his personal life with Cindy and professionally by supporting Brick's filmmaking dream, underscores the theme of adaptability and the courage to embrace change.



# ***Ethan Cross***

***(Casting Idea: A Tom Hanks type)***

A tall, handsome, and slightly dorkish 45-year-old video store owner, Ethan is emotionally invested in his past, particularly the store and his late wife, Danielle. Throughout the film, he evolves from a man paralyzed by grief to one who begins to embrace change and new possibilities. His character arc is reminiscent of Tom Hanks' character in "You've Got Mail," transitioning from resistance to acceptance of change.





# ***Sylvester “Brick” Brykowski***

***(Casting Idea: A Finn Wolfhard type)***

A film school student and aspiring screenwriter, Brick is passionate about movies and is working on his screenplay. He is a source of youthful energy and ambition, contrasting with Ethan's initial stagnation. His character development is akin to Matt Damon's Will Hunting in "Good Will Hunting," with untapped potential waiting to be realized.



# ***Harold***

***(Casting Idea: A Richard Kind type)***

Harold is a 75-year-old wing restaurant owner with white hair and a beard. He is tall and carries a wealth of experience and nostalgia. He is extroverted and confident, often sharing life lessons and advice with others. Harold is deeply connected to his family and hopes to leave a legacy through his son's business endeavors. He reflects on the past and the changes in his life, often using humor to cope with his experiences.



# ***Kelly & Cindy***

***(Casting Idea: A Kate Winslet and Sandra Bullock type, respectively)***

The women of Ethan's life.

Ethan's ex-girlfriend, Kelly, is complex and carries a mix of resentment and vulnerability. She reconnects with Ethan, revealing a caring side and a shared history that complicates Ethan's emotional landscape. Her character has shades of Kate Winslet's Clementine in "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," with a fiery past and a nuanced present.

A potential new romantic interest for Ethan, Cindy is empathetic and shares common interests with him. She represents a new chapter and the possibility of love after loss. Her character is reminiscent of Sandra Bullock's Lucy in "While You Were Sleeping," offering a chance at unexpected love.



# **Distribution & Budget**

*Second Chances* is a great movie for streaming services such as Hulu and Netflix where the film would be accessible to a range of audiences and take advantage of the long-tail and data-driven recommendations on the platforms. With the right cast it could be potentially very desirable as a theatrical release, as well.

Estimated budget between \$500,000 - \$600,000



# About The Writer

## Scott Sawitz

What began as a deep father/son conversation brought Scott from being a multi-time optioned screenwriter into daring to be one of the few who had embraced the grind of feature film-making as a writer/director with his 2023 film "Save State."

A romantic comedy in the vein of "Groundhog Day," "Save State" was inspired by the failings of his own long term romantic relationship and the sage words of his father. Confronted with a son who wanted to go back to the moment of his break up, and find a way to make it work, he asked two profound things that would inspire the film: "What would you have changed?" and "How would it be better?"

Film Threat praised Scott for his "stellar writing" on the film.

A 2001 Saint Norbert College graduate who spent nearly two decades as a freelance journalist (and just as many in the financial services field at all walks of the life insurance industry), Scott's byline appeared all over the internet and covered a variety of topics, from mixed martial arts (where he covered the second UFC on Fox card live from Chicago's United Center) to film and television criticism, Scott evolved into a filmmaker when he collaborated on the web series "Confessions of a Web Series" with his producing partner Mike Noyes.



# **Contact Info**

- [DrunkJusticeProductions.com](http://DrunkJusticeProductions.com)
- [SJSawitz@Yahoo.com](mailto:SJSawitz@Yahoo.com)