

Sort of A Chicago Love Story

A Feature Film by Scott Sawitz



Logline & Synopsis

Logline: *Five years after a college hookup, a comic and an investment banker will spend a night wandering the city of Chicago to see if their connection in college was for one night or eternity.*

Synopsis: In any other world, Grace Dalton and Riggs Cole never would've met.

He's a tough South Side Chicago kid, growing up poor and winding up tending bar while pursuing a career in stand-up comedy almost by accident. There's never a situation he doesn't have an opinion or a joke... and he's going to say it whether you like it or not.

Grace is an "old British pound", elegant, cheeky, and from a world where "no" is extremely foreign. Endless privilege, yet she yearns for a life beyond the posh and judgmental views of her spoiled peers. Daily strives towards the corner office with a breathtaking view and title has made her a workaholic who struggles with addressing her true need for self-care.

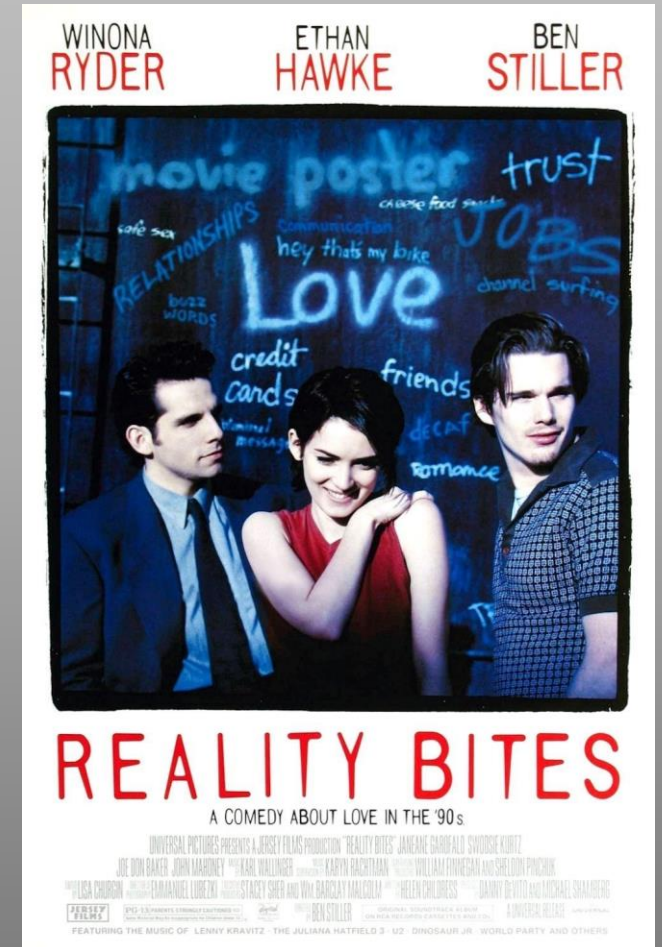
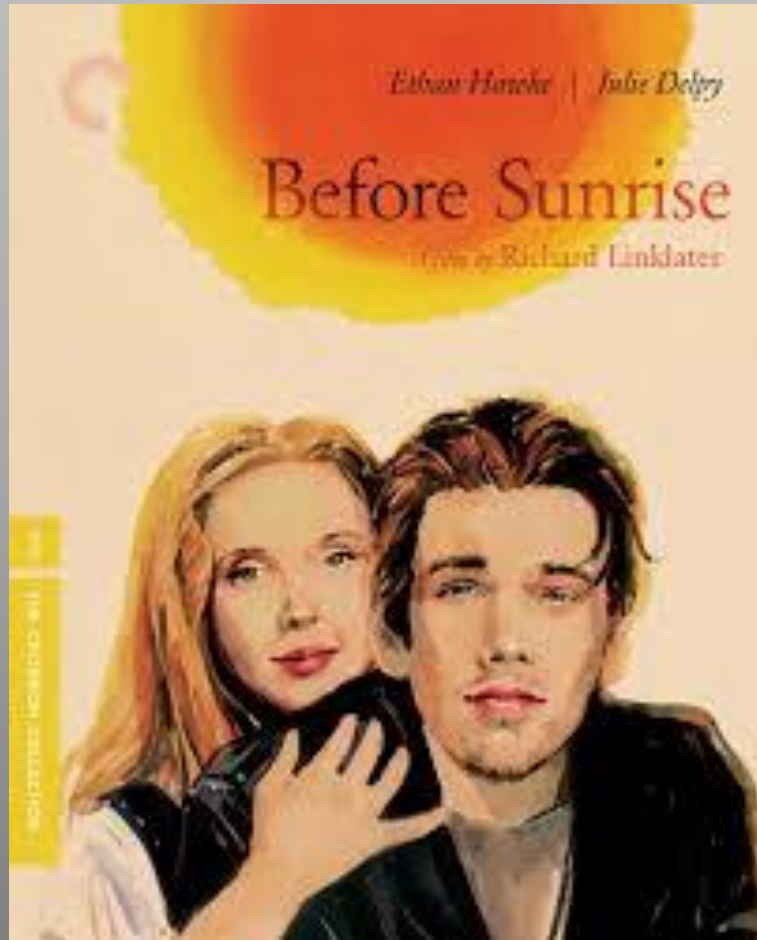


The magical meeting one day after graduation was by accident, but feels like fate as both discover a once in a lifetime connection. Right person at the wrong time, however 5 years later their second act being in the buzz of the Chicago night life.

From their upbringing to their current wealth gap, the two curiously crave to answer one question... Are they still compatible after all these years?

With a pending layoff leaving her potentially ready to be deported, and his stand-up career leading to plenty of gigs but not much money, the two will hash out things like the nature of their past lovers and relationships, the differences in how they were raised, the nature of chasing dreams and the differences between Chicago and New York Pizza.

Comparable Films



Purpose

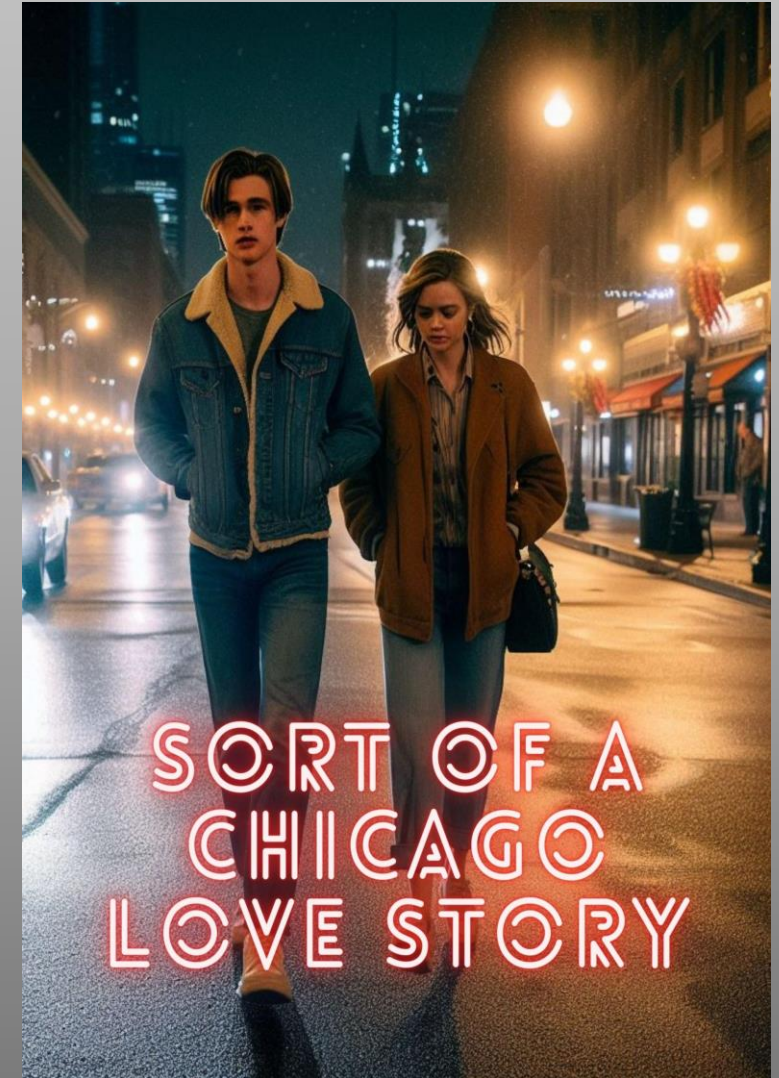
Romantic comedies are full of meet cutes but rarely does a film really explore what happens in that moment after you meet someone who gives you the butterflies.

There comes the long conversations where you really get to know someone... and whether or not being with them makes sense beyond the bedroom. It's always short-shrifted for the overall story and I'd like to change that.

Sort of a Chicago Love Story explores this idea with a pair of twenty-somethings still finding themselves.

Millennials had this sort of movie with *Nick & Nora's Infinite Playlist* and Gen X had them with the *Before* trilogy... but Gen Z hasn't had that sort of "what is love" sort of film that resonates.

That's what this film will be; the sort of film with great conversations that get posted and debated on TikTok in minute chunks, watched on a cell phone on the gym and at home after a long day of work... or another bad date at a bar.





Riggs Cole

(Casting Idea: A Dylan Minnette type)

Riggs Cole is the sort of guy you'll love or immediately loathe; there's no middle ground.

The funniest guy in the room, and the guy who always has *something* to say, Riggs knows a lot about a lot of things but somehow has wound up being the funniest bartender in Chicago instead of on the sort of track a poor kid who somehow has made good is supposed to be on.

Growing on the *Shameless* portion of the South Side, Riggs is has a Top 10 list of stories about friends who've been in (or are currently in) jail... and could do a second and third list without repeating entries.

Somehow he's managed to become an upstanding citizen but the old South Sider in him manages to come out every now and again.



Grace Dalton

(Casting Idea: A Carey Mulligan type)

There are two types of people who handle generational wealth.

The first wind up cursing the system and pretending to hate the wealth and privilege they've been provided... while not giving a single dollar up because having money is better than not.

The second are the ones that view it as a useful annoyance; it's nice to have, of course, but an expensive meal doesn't taste as good at 2am as a White Castle burger.

Grace is the second type.

Born into luxury, she's never bought into money and wealth defining her. With a posh British accent that makes her stand out in her native London, she enjoys just being another person in America... despite the fact that she can't get a fish & chips worth a damn on this side of the Atlantic.

Everyone Else Who Matters



Amy – Grace’s best friend from college... and an alcoholic waiting to hit bottom but doesn’t quite know it yet.

Casting idea: A young Ari Graynor, an actress with great comedic timing and a large personality.



Vince – Riggs’ best friend and fellow stand-up comedian.

Casting idea: A young Martin Starr type.



Oscar – Amy’s newest boyfriend and burgeoning MMA fighter.

Casting idea: A UFC fighter like Aljamain Sterling would be a great stunt cast for a role that does require a physical presence.



Marvin – A young criminal who tries to rob Riggs and Grace.

Casting idea: A hip-hop artist or young musician with ties to Chicago like G Herbo would be a good fit, potentially, and a nice small cameo.

Sweet Home Chicago



There's the Chicago that everyone knows and then there's the real city.

The one everyone knows is either the tourist landmarks like the Sears Tower, the Bean, Wrigley Field, etc, or that the West Side is extraordinarily violent on occasion.

The real Chicago is a great place where everything cool in American history has come from.

For *Sort of a Chicago Love Story* I want to craft a film that pays tribute and is a genuine Chicago film... there hasn't been one since Edward Zwick's *About Last Night...* and every film focusing on the city could be set elsewhere and not a miss beat.

From shooting on location to referencing all of what makes this city great, and a lot of what gets in the headlines for all the wrong reasons too, this is showcasing what gets missed like the Buckingham Fountain, the Museums, and the sort of small boutique stores that manage to stay in business.

Approach



With an eye towards showcasing Chicago, we'll be shooting all over the city with an eye towards places that feel like the real city, not the ones people have already seen on TV and film.



For the soundtrack an indie-style rock sound fueled by Chicago bands like Friko, Emblems, Chin Up Chin Up, Monday's Hero, and Project Rocket among others. This should feel like the soundtrack to *Singles* was to Seattle; a sampling of that distinct era you can put on a CD or a Spotify Playlist and remember the vibe and time period *like that*.

Distribution & Budget

Sort of a Chicago Love Story 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.

The production would not like to rule out the possibilities of acquiring international pre-sales. There is potential for an American Dramedy to bring revenue abroad.

Ideally the goal would be to emulate a film like Edward Burns' "Summer Days, Summer Nights," Isao Yukisada's "River's Edge" and Jason Reitman's "Thank you for Smoking" as a festival favorite that winds up being picked up a larger distributor.

Estimated budget between \$450,000 - \$500,000

Team

Scott Sawitz, Writer/Director

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.

Mike Noyes, Producer

Mike Noyes received his Masters Degree in Film from the Academy of Art University, San Francisco in 2013. He also earned a Communication Studies degree at Sonoma State University in 2000. He has been writing and making short films since high school. He graduated from SSU as the first student to write/direct/produce a feature length film in one semester for his graduating thesis project. Mike has been Scott’s producing partner and personal editor on both short films Scott created as well as his producing partner on “Save State.”



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