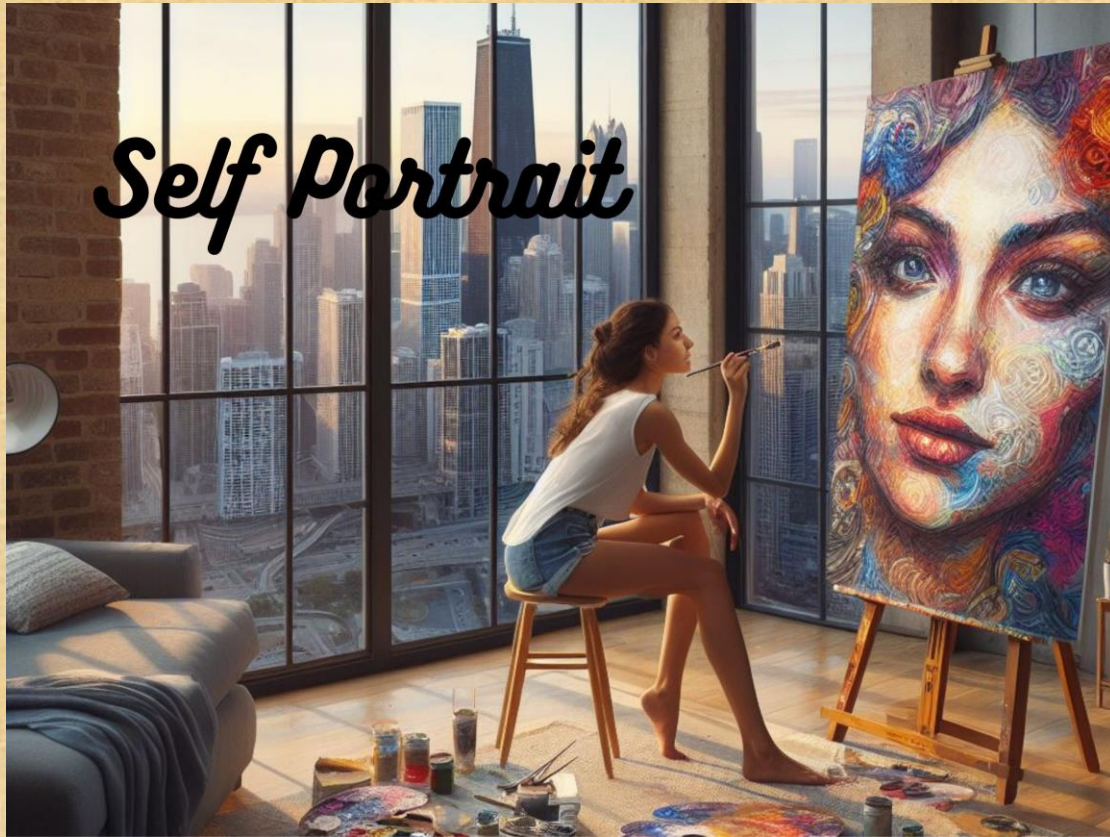


LOGLINE & SYNOPSIS

Logline: When she's diagnosed with terminal cancer, an introverted painter sets out to explore all the areas of her life that she's ignored in her pursuit of artistic expression before it's too late.



Chloe is an exceptional painter and life seems to be on the way up in her 20s. She's about to have her first exhibition that her best friend will attend, too.

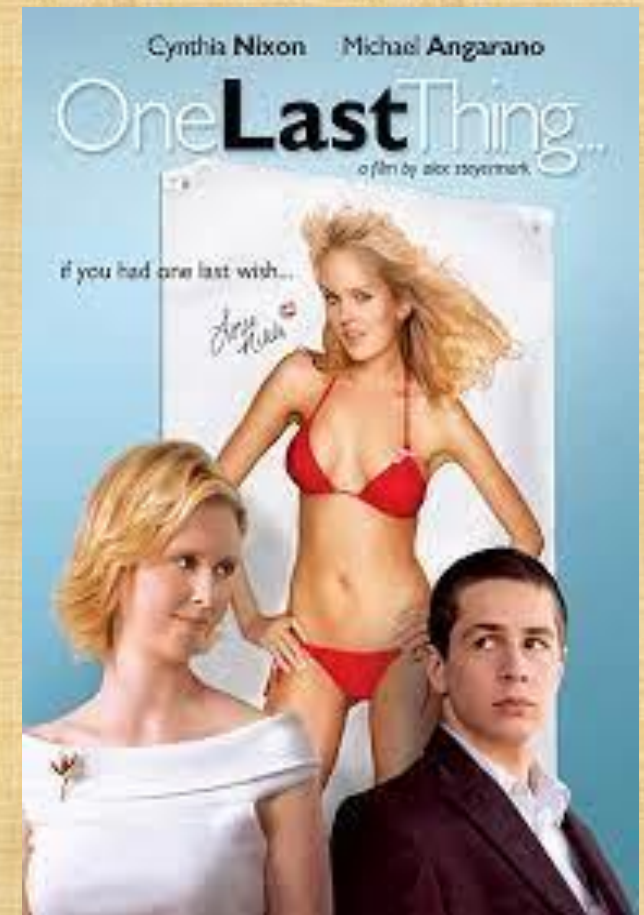
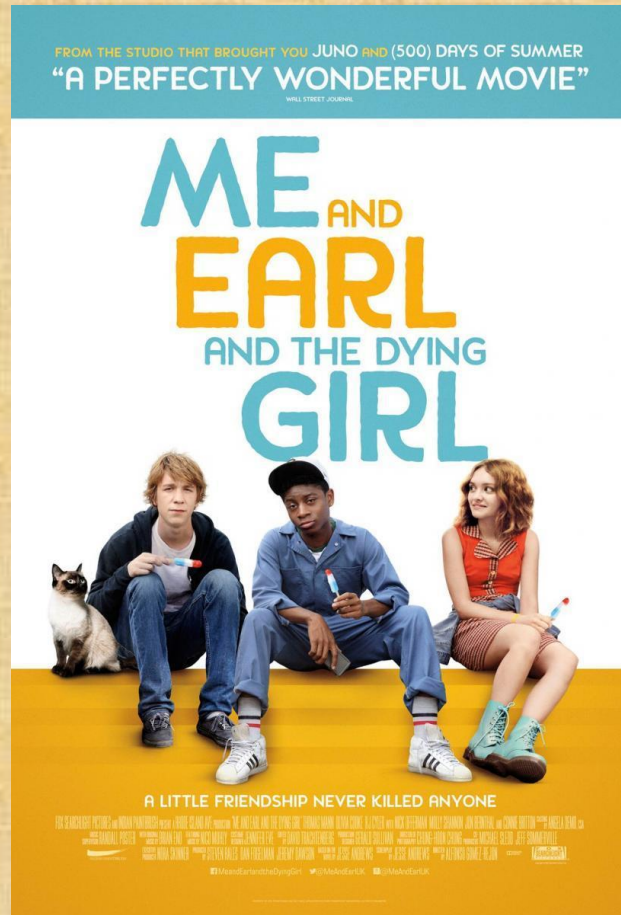
As a childhood cancer survivor, everything she's ever wanted is about to hit... and that's when cancer comes back.

This time it's terminal, too, and Chloe will decide to explore the things she didn't do while she was focused on painting.

Writing down things that mean something to her on a pizza box after indulging in marijuana for the first time, Chloe takes a trip back through her life as she goes after a prize worth winning (a t-shirt from a spicy chicken wing contest no one has won before), sing in front of a crowd (absolutely terrifying for an introvert who hates being the center of attention), forge a knife (make something of note), confess (where she runs into the priest who baptized her years ago and confronting the sudden nature of her parents' death), be loved (finally lose her virginity, as she never really dated) and then finally visit the cancer patient she never got to say goodbye to: Roberta, or more accurately her grave.

It's a unique take on dying; instead of learning to jump out of an airplane, it's a deep but funny look at doing meaningful things before you die from the vantage point of someone trying to find it before she passes far too young.

COMPARABLE FILMS



PURPOSE

How do we handle death?

We talk about it in the abstract, like something that will happen when you're old and infirm, but we do not when it'll happen. It's why death hits so hard; one day you won't wake up to see the sun rise but you don't know what day that is. We'd live our lives much differently if we did; nothing would remain unsaid, people would have limited regrets the moment they pass, etc.

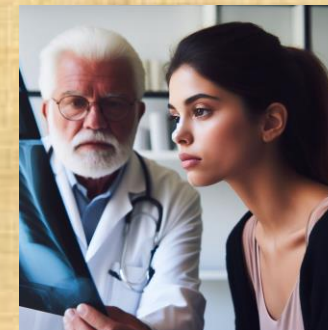


You can talk about it with ministers of faith, you can speculate on what's next after this life (or even if there is one) but the nature of our own mortality is something viewed as more of an abstract for the most part. We don't know when our own lives will end... just that they will.

Like many twenty-somethings, Chloe views life with many decades ahead of her. Having already beaten cancer once, her perspective is different when she's given a terminal diagnosis. Turning down treatment after remembering what she felt like as a child, Chloe decides to go out on her own terms.

Writing down the things she's always wanted to do, if only to pass the time, she'll discover a lot about herself and the world around her as she struggles to cross items off that list before her time on this planet ends. Think of it as the sort of film "The Bucket List" could've been. Everything on her list is meaningful and crossing them off is more than just a rich guy opening up his wallet.

Despite it being a one-woman narrative, *Self Portrait* is about the importance of living life. While her journey ends before most of her generation's will, the story shows young and old that it's never too late to do meaningful things in the time we have.





Casting idea:

A Karla Souza type, a young character actress type that normally would be more of the best friend type but has a big personality and good comedic chops.

CHLOE FINLEY

When most teenagers were getting ready for homecoming and prom, Chloe was battling cancer while struggling to find inspiration for her self portrait. What kept her going? Her desire to paint one more time.

Introverted, Chloe hates being the center of attention and would prefer to just be able to paint and let everyone else handle it.

Diagnosed with terminal cancer in her 20s, Chloe is given a choice. Either go through the process again, this time with a “not zero” chance she can beat it, or live whatever days she has left finally spending some time outside of her loft.

Her journey is a coming of age while also coming to grips with her life ending much sooner than she ever expected it to.

DYLAN HERRERA

Dylan at 16 wanted to be a professional musician, playing piano in front of strangers while figuring out what he wanted next.

Trading in tickling the ivories for a suit and life, Dylan would wind up as a lawyer at a Big Law firm while living the life of a fun-time pursuing playboy.

Every time he needed someone for a drink, a talk or just to watch a movie he'd have his best friend Chloe to lean on.



Casting idea:

An Austin Butler type, someone with a big personality and a background in musical theater.

THE PEOPLE IN CHLOE'S LIFE

- **Melissa Church, her psychiatrist** – Recommended by Chloe's oncologist, she's there to help Chloe deal with the aftermath of some of her choices as well as come to grips with her own mortality.
- *Actor types for Lindsay:* An Anna Kendrick, Mayim Balik type
- **Father Payton** – Chloe's priest since her first days on Earth. Chloe goes to church looking to confess, as her mother was religious, and finds someone helping her through some dark times instead.
- *Actor Ideas for Payton:* A Philip Baker Hall, veteran character actor type. Someone like Eric Roberts could be a perfect fit to add star power to the cast without massively expanding the budget, either, as the character has a short but memorable appearance.
- **Joanna, the knife maker** – Roberta's daughter, she proudly keeps up her mother's tradition of being a badass knife maker and master bladesmith. She teaches Chloe how to make a proper knife.
- *Actor Ideas for Joanna:* "Forged in Fire" has had several female master bladesmiths as winners; someone like Kelly Vermeer-Vella would be an ideal fit for authenticity.
- **Maxwell, the gallery owner** – A longtime art aficionado who views Chloe as the next great American artist and is willing to stake his family's reputation on it.
- *Actor Ideas for Maxwell:* An older Chris Colfer type
- **Roberta, her chemo buddy** – Diagnosed with terminal cancer and going through chemotherapy, she developed an instant friendship with a teenage Chloe. Knowing her days were ending, Roberta made it a point to be positive.
- *Actor Ideas for Roberta:* This could be a great way to shoehorn in a star for a brief cameo early on, as the role is one scene but means so much towards the overall film.
- **George and Beth Finley, Chloe's parents** – Blessed to have made a small fortune in real estate early, they pour their efforts into allowing Chloe to become the painter she desperately wants to be. Dying of a fluke car accident years before Chloe's second diagnosis, they remain a presence in her life despite their passing.
- *Actor Ideas for George and Beth:* Two strong character types in their mid 40s would be ideal.

CHLOE'S PIZZA BOX TASKS



- Win Something Worthwhile – We all have wins in our life; from contests at work to soccer games as a child. But how meaningful are they? Chloe wants to win something that's appropriately hard and settles on the wings from the Devil's Taint at her favorite bar. Can she survive six torturous wings?
- Make Something Glorious – Chloe has been a painter for some time, so making a painting would be easy right? She gets it into her mind to go outside of her comfort zone, to make something that isn't a painting, and winds up deciding to make a kitchen knife from scratch with a master bladesmith. Winding up in Joanna's shop, she learns about how sometimes life gives you shitty choices and you have to choose the best of the ones you got.
- Go To Confession – The daughter of a very religious woman, Chloe decides to go to confession like her would've wanted her to. Running into her old priest, her issues with Dylan's desire for her to do chemotherapy are worked out as she takes some time to look at other people's vantage points to her situation.
- Sing – What's the most terrifying thing you can ask an introvert to do? Be the center of attention. Chloe remembers a time when Dylan tried to get her to sing in front of a large crowd and she couldn't because of terror. She'll return to that same piano bar to gather the courage to sing in front of a group of strangers.
- Be loved – What happens when you spend your whole life focused on being an artist and forget to find someone to love? Chloe, still a virgin, wants that feeling of being loved just once before she dies.
- Visit Roberta – Roberta died between sessions of her chemotherapy and Chloe was too weak to go to her funeral. Years later, she's never visited it because saying goodbye proved to be difficult for her to handle. Before she goes, she'll have to summon the courage to face her own mortality through the grave stone of a woman who kept fighting to the end.
- Finish her Self Portrait – Chloe's able to paint everything she wants but her. She even has a canvas picked out... but she can't quite finish it for any numbers of reasons. Her overall story arc will coincide with her finally having the courage to finish it.

APPROACH

- At its core, this film is a comedy sprinkled with themes tackling the nature of death, the depth of a creative's legacy in life & death as well as preparing for the moment you won't be around anymore. The audience will be able to laugh with and at Chloe, feeling embarrassed for her at times as she tackles life lessons and attempts to come to grips with her own mortality. Scott is a comedy director who can tow these lines and will be aided by the casting a versatile young female actor as Chloe that can perform drama and comedy interchangeably.
- For the soundtrack, a guitar driven indie-rock style sound would fit the film's low key tone.
- For Chloe's big singing moment, "Because the Night" by Patti Smith has been written into the script but similar sorts of songs could be switched in. Alternate choices would be "One Headlight" by The Wallflowers, "Solsbury Hill" by Peter Gabriel, "Winds of Change" by the Scorpions, "The Impression that I get" by the Mighty Mighty Bosstones and "Breathe" by Michelle Branch would all be suitable. The idea would be to make it feel like "10,000 Maniacs" on MTV's Unplugged; small, intimate but something that will make people never forget the film (or Chloe).
- Self Portrait will also utilize the unique landscape of Chicago, Illinois, and its' surrounding suburbs. When you break down the state's demographics, they are a near perfect reflection of the cosmopolitan nature of America and I'd like this film to reflect that.

DISTRIBUTION & BUDGET

- *Self Portrait* 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 \$400,000 - \$600,000
- Estimated production schedule of 14 days, post production of 16 weeks

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?”

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.

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