

MADNESS COMES IN PIECES

**BOUNDED IN A
NUTSHELL**





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LOGLINE



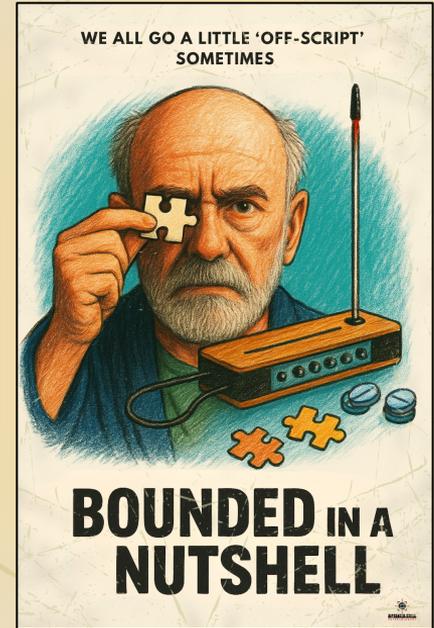
Jack McAvoy just wanted to finish his puzzle in peace. But at Trinity Heights Psychiatric, peace means a dead patient, a living cover-up, and enough medication to tranquilise reality itself.

“NARRATIVE IS A HELLUVA DRUG!”

SYNOPSIS:

“**Bounded in a Nutshell**” is a satirical noir set inside the Trinity Heights Psychiatric Hospital, where ex-insurance investigator Jack McAvoy - possibly delusional, definitely overmedicated - launches a private investigation after a fellow patient dies mid-dinner, taking with her the whereabouts of the one thing he needs to complete his 1,000-piece puzzle: the final part.

What begins as petty obsession spirals into a cracked detective quest through bureaucratic euphemisms, blue pills, and theremin solos, exposing either a pharmaceutical conspiracy or his own unraveling. But Jack isn't trying to save the world - he's just trying to finish the only thing left that



IN A LITERAL NUTSHELL

FORMAT

Prestige Mid-Budget Feature (Mature M / Rated R)

LENGTH

125 minutes (give or take a piss break)

SETTING

Australia, 1996

LOCATION

Trinity Heights Psychiatric Hospital

GENRE

Dark Comedy Noir / Satire

AUDIENCE

Adults 25-54 who like their comedy smart, dark, and fucked-up

THEMES

Absurdity of institutional logic, reality as performance, paranoia as entertainment

DISTRIBUTION

Theatrical, festival darling, SVOD, limited collector's Blu-Ray

BUDGET

Approx. A\$3 - 6M

STATUS

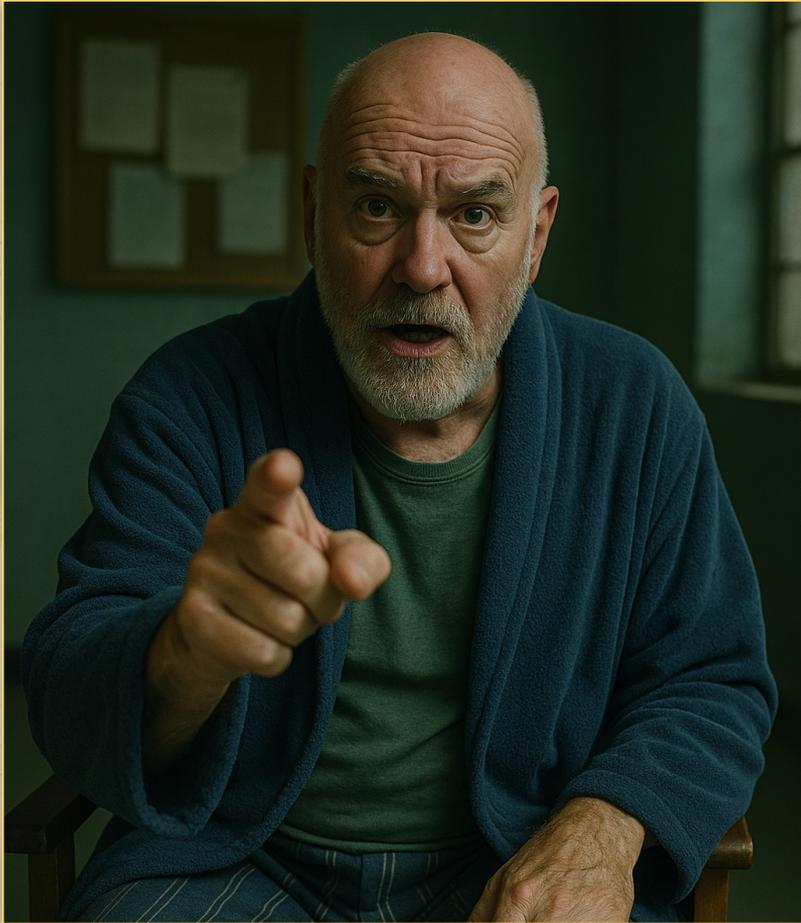
Script Available

WHY THIS PROJECT?

- Slated as the follow-up to **“Universe”**, Dissenter Stage’s debut feature: a chaotic sex farce built to punch through the noise with dangerous comedy and unapologetic bite.
- **“Nutshell”** is the tonal pivot – the quieter film that hits deeper. Paranoid, intimate, hilariously absurd, and unshakeably human.
- Where **“Universe”** explodes, **“Nutshell”** implodes – into the institutional void where absurdity, grief, and narrative collide.
- The ‘70s gave us **auteurs**. The 80’s gave us **mythmakers**. The ‘90s brought back the auteurs until the IP/content deluge – and **vision** got replaced by volume.
- **Dissenter Stage** is here to give vision back – by any means (and genre) necessary.

The image features a central dark grey rectangular box containing the text "YOUR SELF-APPOINTED PROTAGONIST" in bold yellow capital letters. This box is set against a light beige background with a greenish-yellow splatter or marbled texture. Surrounding the central box is a border of blue, oval-shaped pills, each with a vertical score line, arranged in a grid-like pattern. The entire composition is framed by a thin orange border.

**YOUR SELF-APPOINTED
PROTAGONIST**

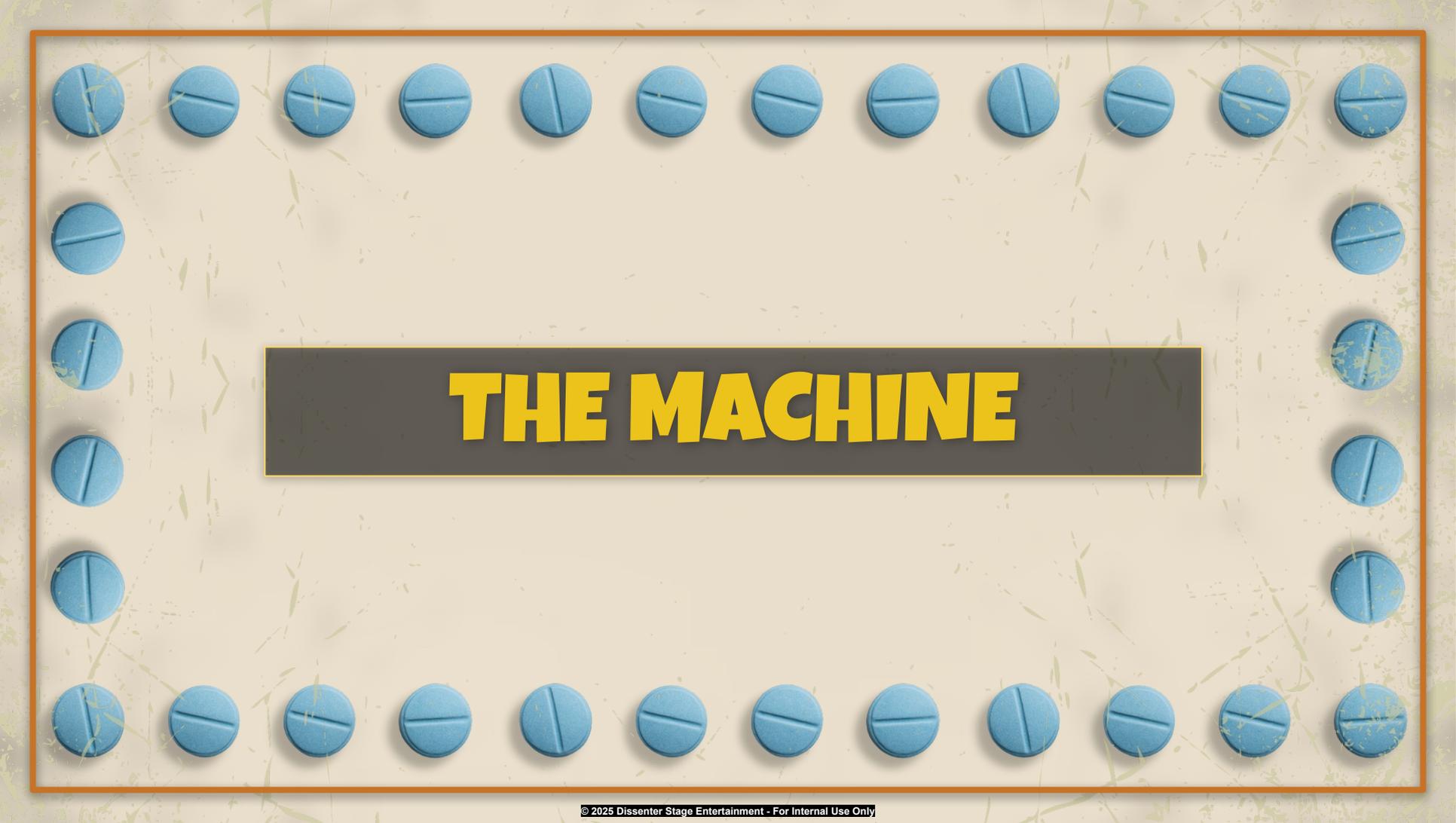


JACK MCAVOY

Former funeral home claims adjuster and current involuntary philosopher.

Jack narrates his institutional descent with a cigarette in one hand and a possible delusion in the other.

Unreliable, overmedicated, and possibly the only person left who makes any sense – simply because he still believes in narrative justice. Even if he has to invent it to get to the truth.

The image features a central black rectangular box containing the text "THE MACHINE" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. This box is set against a light-colored, heavily textured background that resembles a piece of paper or fabric with numerous scratches and scuffs. Surrounding the central box is a border of blue, oval-shaped pills, each with a vertical score line. The pills are arranged in a grid-like pattern, with one row at the top, one at the bottom, and two rows on each side, framing the central text.

THE MACHINE



Dr. Bock

Dr. Sandra Bock - Head of Psychiatry. Guardian of protocol. Reluctant apologist for a system she no longer believes in. Dr. Bock is brilliant, bitter, and quietly burning out. She's seen too much, said too little, and now spends her days managing risk instead of healing people. Jack drives her insane – mostly because he reminds her of everything she used to question.



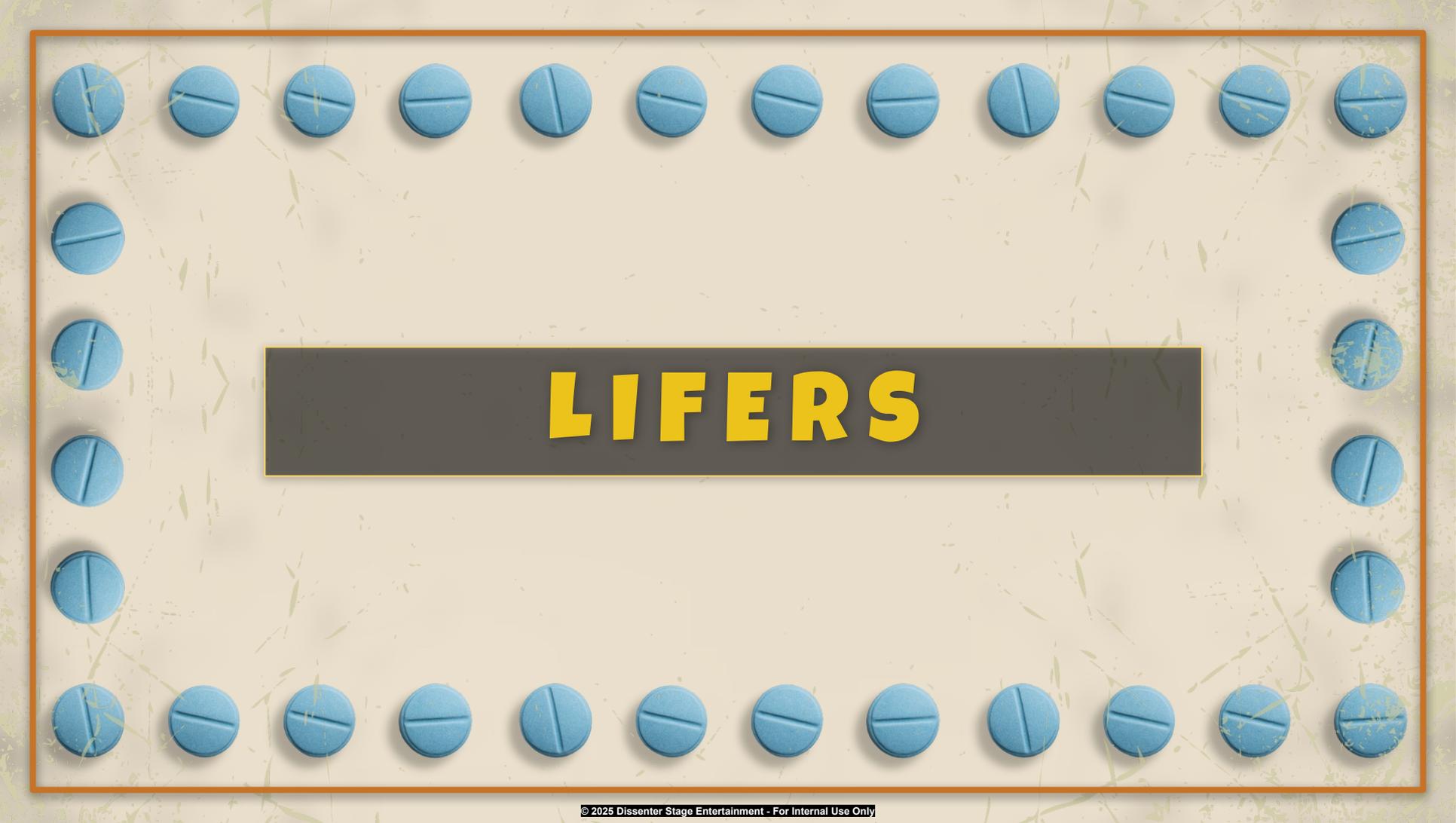
Nurse Ellie

Nurse Ellie Comstock - Young enough to still care. Old enough to know better. Ellie walks the fault line between policy and compassion, trying to help patients inside a structure built to manage them. She sees Jack as both a threat and a signal flare – proof that something's off, even if she can't name it yet. Empathy is her gift. And her liability.

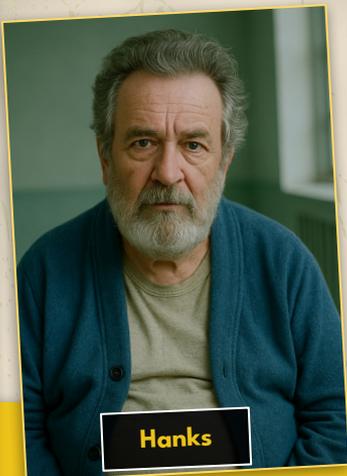


Dr. Godwin

Dr. Ross Godwin - Executive Director of Trinity Heights. Impeccably polished, profoundly unreadable, and never not in control. Godwin doesn't run a hospital – he runs an ecosystem of liability, silence, and optics. To patients, he's a phantom. To staff, a mandate. To Jack, the smiling face of erasure. Whatever's happening here, Godwin has a folder for it.



LIFERS



Hanks



Zadie



Trevor

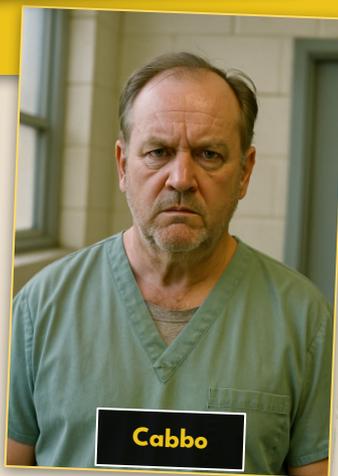
**...I'D RATHER JUST
SAY 'MAD?'**

-John Burnside

**"I DON'T
LIKE THE TERM
'MENTAL ILLNESS'...**



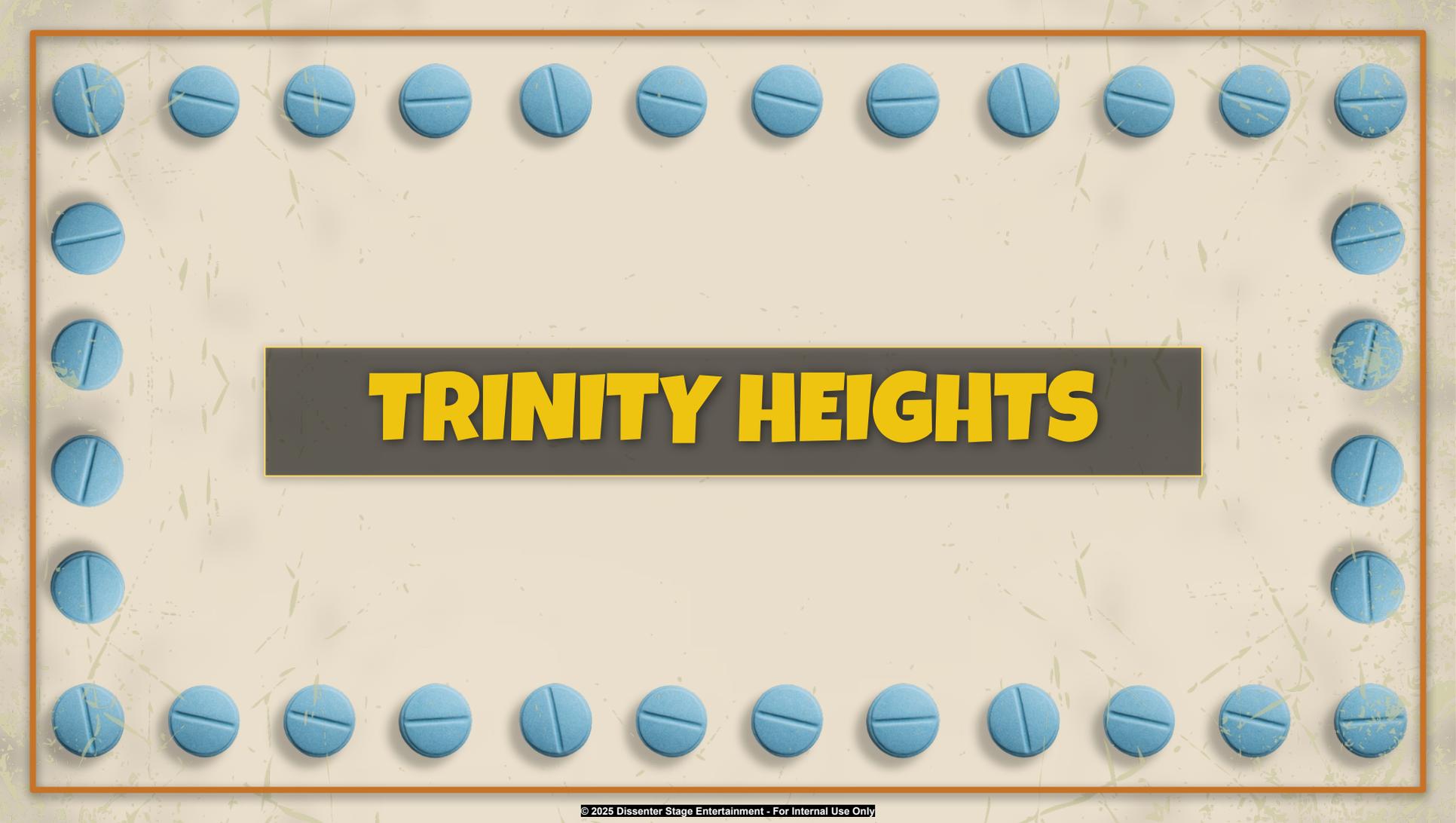
Nadine



Cabbo



Reenie

The image features a central title 'TRINITY HEIGHTS' in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The text is set against a dark grey rectangular background. This central element is surrounded by a decorative border of blue, oval-shaped pills, each with a vertical score line. The pills are arranged in a grid-like pattern on a light-colored, textured background that resembles aged paper or parchment. The entire composition is enclosed within a thin orange border.

TRINITY HEIGHTS



Trinity Heights isn't built for healing. It's built for containment. A relic of post-reform psychiatry dressed in fresh paint and false progress. The routines are circular, the architecture is indifferent, and everything from the lighting to the paperwork is designed to outlast you. It's not hell, exactly – it's just the waiting room we all find ourselves in when the world starts pretending. And like every waiting room, you're never supposed to ask how long. Everything in here technically works, after all. **Unfortunately, it's just not working for you or anyone else who cares.**



The image features a central dark grey rectangular box containing the word "CINEMA" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. This central element is surrounded by a decorative border of blue, oval-shaped pills, each with a vertical score line. The pills are arranged in a grid-like pattern: a top row of 12 pills, a bottom row of 12 pills, and vertical columns of 5 pills on both the left and right sides. The background is a light beige color with a distressed, splattered texture. The entire composition is enclosed within a thin orange border.

CINEMA

SEE...

The visual world of “**Bounded in a Nutshell**” is stark, voyeuristic, and institutional – capturing 1996 Australia through the yellowed lens of bureaucratic neglect. Influenced by the drama of “**One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest**” and the satire of “**Network**”, the style is observational, unblinking, and quietly accusatory. If we can shoot on film, we will. Cinematography is patient, precise, and mildly sinister – mirroring Jack’s belief that he’s always being watched... and maybe he’s right. Framing is often wide, symmetrical, and a little too composed – like the camera itself is following protocol. We’re not just in the room with Jack. **We’re part of the diagnosis.** The palette is washed-out and sickly: sun-bleached yellows, nicotine browns, linoleum greens. Nothing new. Nothing fresh. Just decades of decisions made by people who don’t work here anymore. Lighting is flat and overexposed – like it’s trying to catch you doing something wrong. The 2.35:1 aspect ratio isn’t for beauty – **it’s for surveillance.** Every inch of the frame is a record. And the longer you look, the more it starts to feel like someone’s looking back.



The auditory world of “**Bounded in a Nutshell**” is dry, intrusive, and just a little too pleased with itself. Inspired by the psychological unease of “**Cuckoo’s Nest**” and the broadcast bite of “**Network**”, the sound design plays with noir tropes – only to twist them into something stranger. A sparse, **jazz-influenced score** led by a lonely theremin hums beneath the film – moody, haunting, and slightly ridiculous. At first, it reads like pure soundtrack. Then we realise: **the theremin might be playing in the room**. Or in Jack’s head. Either way, we hear it too. Diegetic sound is crucial – buzzing fluorescents, the squeak of staff shoes, distant echoes of a group therapy session gone off-script. **Dialogue overlaps, crackles**, and occasionally contradicts itself – because in Trinity Heights, no one’s really listening. They’re just waiting for their turn to speak. Silences stretch too long. PA systems cut in at just the wrong time. Laughter sounds anecdotal. **And when Jack starts narrating again...**

...The score knows to wait its turn.

...**HEAR**...



“Christ, mate, you ever try to sleep with a
theremin solo bleeding through the walls?”

“They say I’ve got issues with reality. I say
reality’s got issues with consistency.”

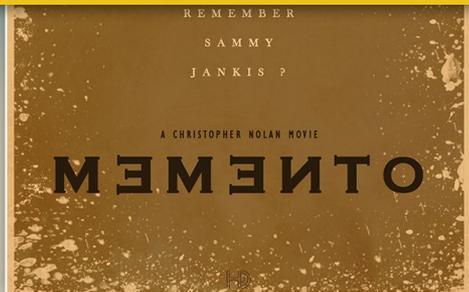
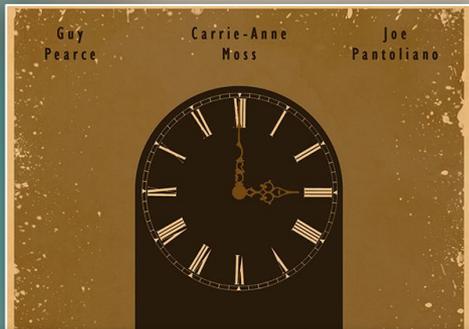
“Now that I’m the complaint form -
no one has a pen.”

“Butt fuck my crusade?”

“Who am I if not Kafka in a house robe
and a chip on his shoulder?”

...SPEAK.

TONAL COMPARABLES



'Cuckoo's Nest' meets 'Lebowski', but screwed by an unreliable narrator.

Gary Sweet as **JACK MCAVOY**

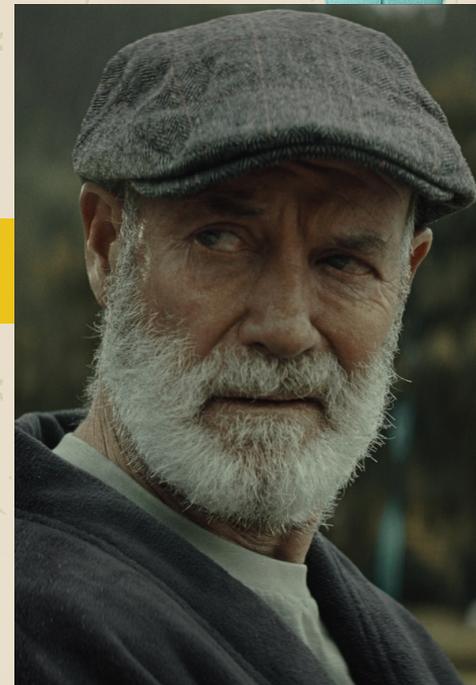
Legendary Australian actor **Gary Sweet** brings decades of gravitas, mischief, and lived-in charisma to the role of Jack McAvoy – making him the only actor who could walk the tightrope between noir paranoia, existential wit, and emotional truth.

Slated to first reintroduce Sweet in “**Universe**” – as a swaggering tech-billionaire whose charm hides a void – “**Bounded in a Nutshell**” marks the tonal pivot. This is the performance piece. The slow burn. The legacy role.

This isn't just casting. It's resurrection. Where most see a larrikin, we see Lear in a bathrobe – cornered, brilliant, unraveling with style.

“**Bounded in a Nutshell**” offers Sweet the kind of late-career, character-defining role that wins awards and rewrites legacies. Like Alan Arkin in “**Little Miss Sunshine**” or Bruce Dern in “**Nebraska**”, it's the kind of turn that reminds audiences of the man's wit, charm, and chops.

And earn the character a **Pop Vinyl figure** at the very least.





Casimir Dickson, ACS is attached as cinematographer across all three features in the Dissenter Stage slate. An award-winning talent with over two decades of experience, Casimir is known for his dynamic visual storytelling, intuitive comic timing, and ability to craft bold, distinctive imagery under pressure.

His camera doesn't just capture tone – it helps create it. From “**Universe’s**” chaos to “**Nutshell’s**” surveillance-laced stillness, Casimir gives each film its visual spine while maintaining a cohesive style across the slate.

He isn't just a Cinematographer – he's a **co-conspirator** in tone.

Casimir Dickson, ACS - **THE EYE ON THE MADNESS**

WHY AUDIENCES WILL LOVE THIS

“**Bounded in a Nutshell**” is a cult classic in the making – a dark, razor-edged comedy for people who love cinema, distrust authority, and laugh hardest when they probably shouldn’t.

Set in 1996 but unmistakably wired to the modern age, it weaponises institutional nostalgia to **skewer contemporary systems of control, gaslighting, and narrative spin**. This isn’t a period piece - it’s a mirror with a nicotine stain.

With echoes of “**Cuckoo’s Nest**”, “**Network**”, “**Memento**”, and even “**The Big Lebowski**”, the film delivers satire with teeth and a protagonist who might be paranoid – or just paying closer attention than the rest of us.

It’s indie done the way it’s supposed to be: **bold, weird, and unapologetically human**. Made for adults 25–54 who like their comedy smart, dark, and fucked-up – and for younger audiences **who didn’t even realise they were this patient until now**.

Because in a world full of content, “**Bounded in a Nutshell**” remembers how to be a **Film** with a capital F.



THANK YOU!

Let's talk about how this thing sets the room on fire.

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