

NOISE

written by **Walter Kirn**





The Rash is a darkly funny look at the madness surrounding the COVID era, and the next wave of public freak-outs yet to come. But at its core, it's also a warm nod to the quiet strength of personal integrity. In a world that's seemingly lost its mind, Dr. Chandra may just be the last rational man standing, facing off not just against a curious contagion, but against a more familiar affliction: the epidemic of cowardice, vanity, and unchecked ambition.

Set at a Stanford-like California university, the story follows the mysterious outbreak of a baffling skin condition known only as "The Rash." As principled immigrant scientist Dr. Neal Chandra races to get to the bottom of the bizarre outbreak, a colorful cast of posturing politicians, overzealous intelligence agents, unhinged corporate execs, and clueless Hollywood stars seize the moment for personal gain - chasing power, profit, fame, and even a few cheap thrills.

Standing in their way: the no-nonsense Dr. Chandra and a wily young math prodigy with a talent for trouble.



The Governor sits at his official desk frowning at his smudged computer camera. He's wearing red latex gloves. He wipes the camera with a finger and makes it look worse.

GOVERNOR LAWSON

Doctor Fox, it's me, the Governor of California. We met last May at a dark unholy ritual held in a tunnel beneath a theme park. I hope I'm not waking you. I know it's late.

We SPLIT the screen -- a Zoom call -- and see Fox inside his office. He's wearing blue gloves.

DR. ROMAN FOX

I'll take your word for that. I live in my office and don't get natural light.

GOVERNOR LAWSON

You asked my people a favor the other day. A celebrity singalong about the Rash.

DR. ROMAN FOX

Is it torture? Be honest.

GOVERNOR LAWSON

I haven't seen it yet.

DR. ROMAN FOX

By torture I mean do you think it has potential as a viral hate-watch?

GOVERNOR LAWSON

Let's find out now, oh Mighty Lord of Pain.

DR. ROMAN FOX

Don't make me blush.

FULL SCREEN. A succession of celebs sing lines from the song AQUARIUS by the Fifth Dimension. Some sing beautifully, some not. Behind them are their yards and homes. One sings naked with his crotch blurred out, his body gleaming with oil. Parker Payne.

He has the rash, but it looks good on him, as it does on a couple of the women, also wearing skimpy outfits.

The song lyrics have been very slightly changed.

SEXY STARLET

When the moon is in the second house --

HEART THROB TEEN

And Jupiter aligns with Mars --

LATINA WITH ACCENT

Then peace will guide the seven planets --

PARKER PAYNE

And love will steer the stars!

SUPERSTAR DIVA WITHOUT MAKEUP

This is the dawning of the age of Zenvidia --

AGING COMEDIAN

Age of Zenvidia --

GIANT BASKETBALL PLAYER

Zen-vi-di-a!

CHILD ACTOR

Zen-vi-di-a!

The screen SPLITS and people sing duets now. They pretend to be gazing at each other but obviously they aren't. Fake backgrounds of comets and have been inserted

DR. ROMAN FOX
Ridiculous. You chose to breathe
the air. You also want to choose
what's *in* the air?

Neal unbuttons the top buttons of his shirt.

NEAL CHANDRA
It gave me this.

He displays his chest.

DR. ROMAN FOX
You're flushed from stress. That's
stress. It's not the rash.

NEAL CHANDRA
What *is* the rash?

DR. ROMAN FOX
The rash is what you make it. The
rash is an opportunity. A set of
them.

(pause)
Or do you mean from a *scientific*
standpoint? Where did it come from?
Will it disappear? Is it natural or
is it... customized?

(pause)
Clearly, those answers are up to
me. I'm the science, after all.

Neal declines to dignify this outrage with a verbal response.

Fox brings out pen and a copy of the letter and pushes them
across the table.

NEAL CHANDRA
No.

DR. ROMAN FOX
We don't need a formal document.
It's fine. What's essential is
conveying your support. I'd like
you to say something for me, for
the record. You only have to say it
once.

He sets his phone down on the table. One index finger hovers
above the screen, prepared to hit "record."

DR. ROMAN FOX (CONT'D)
"You are the science."

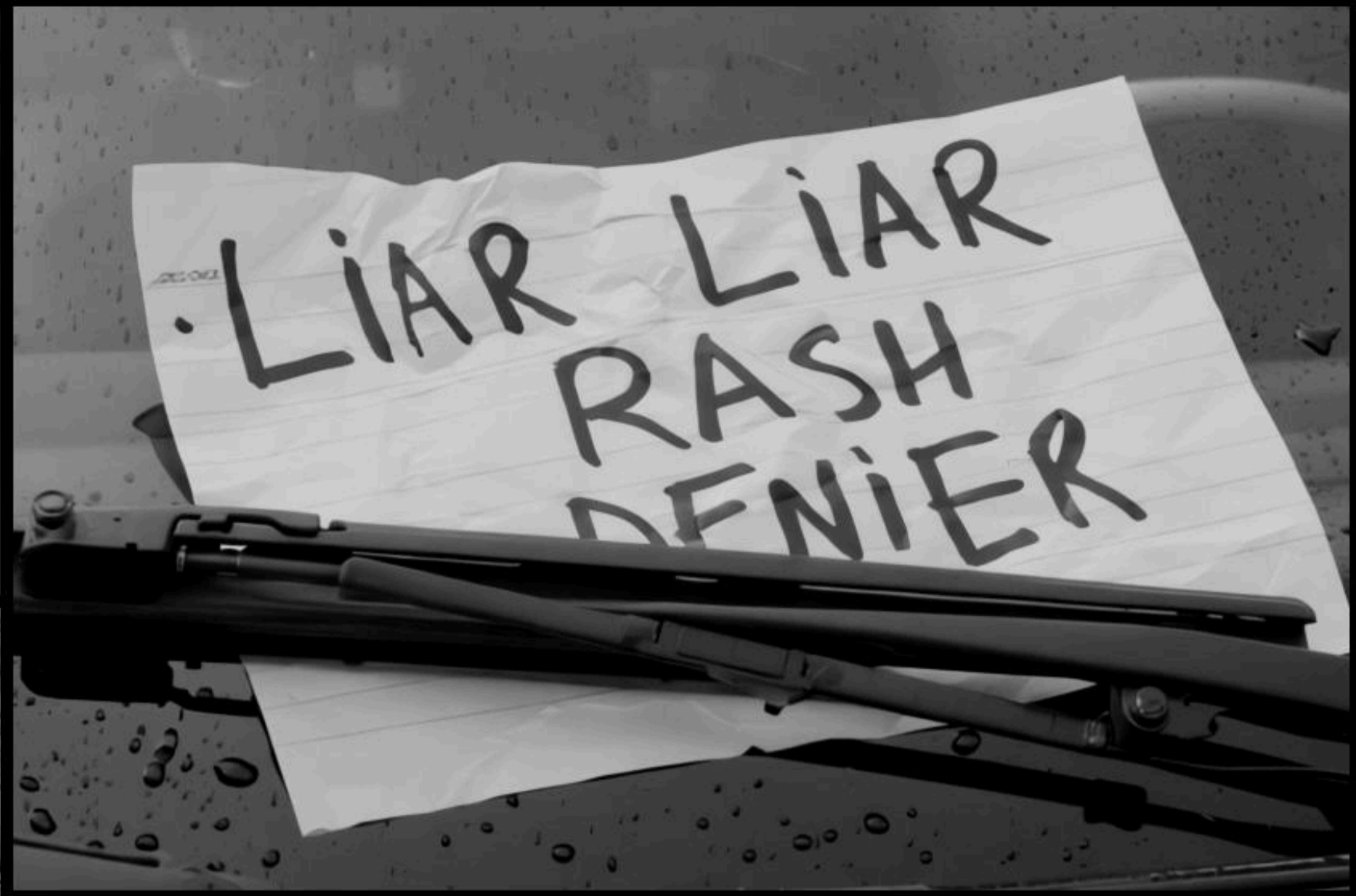


APPROACH

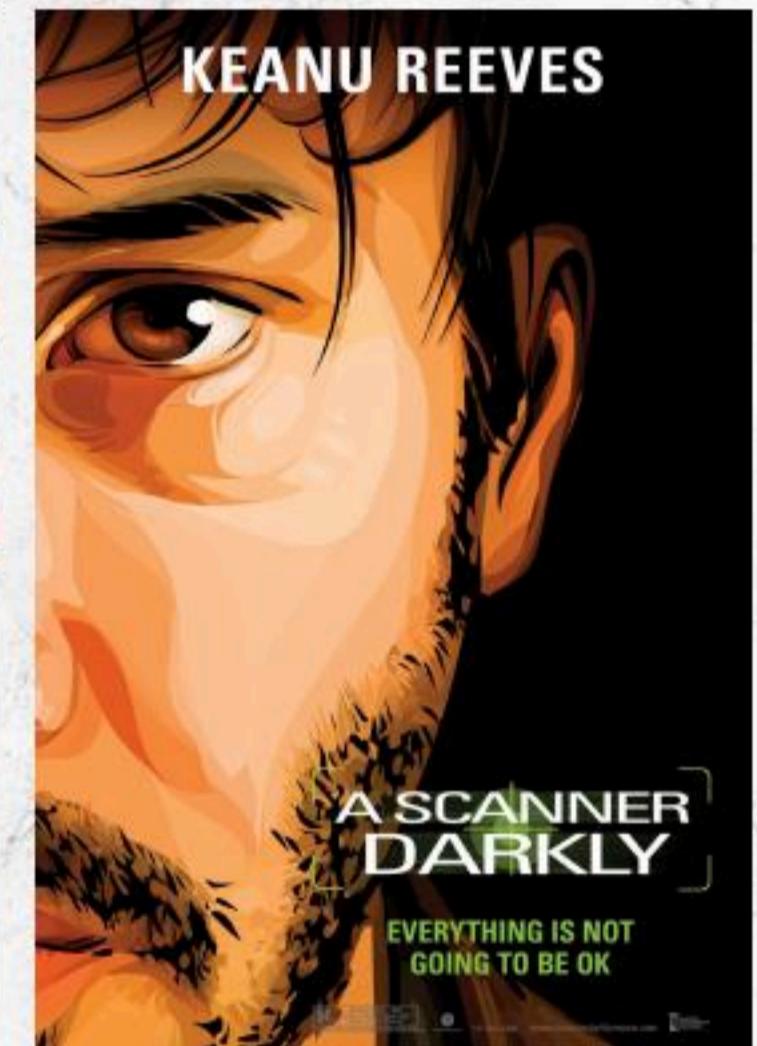
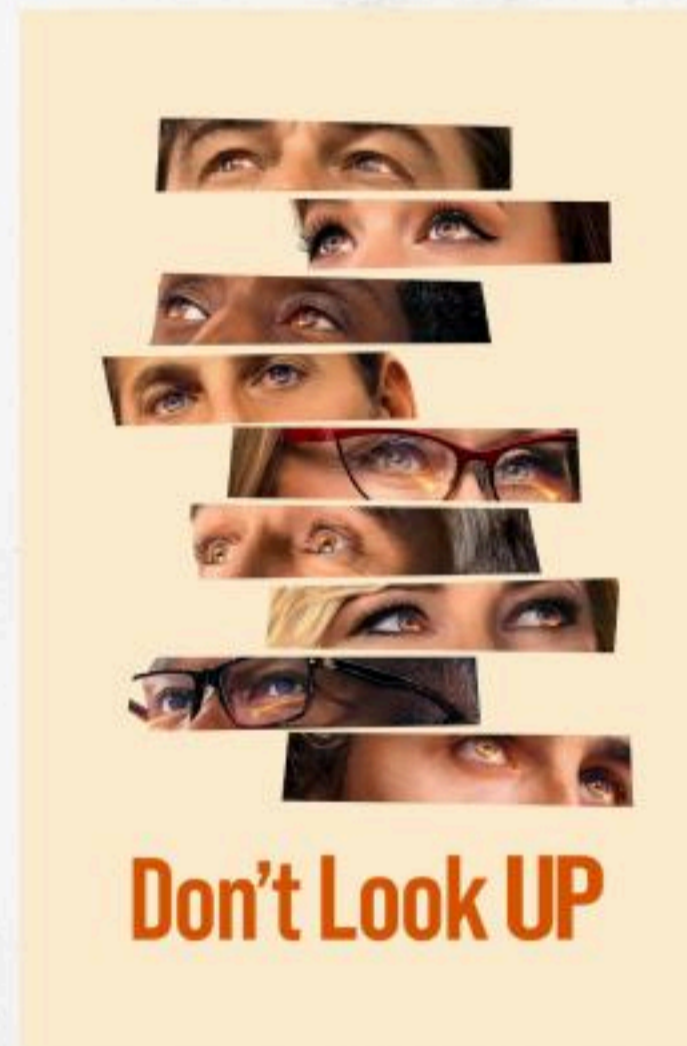
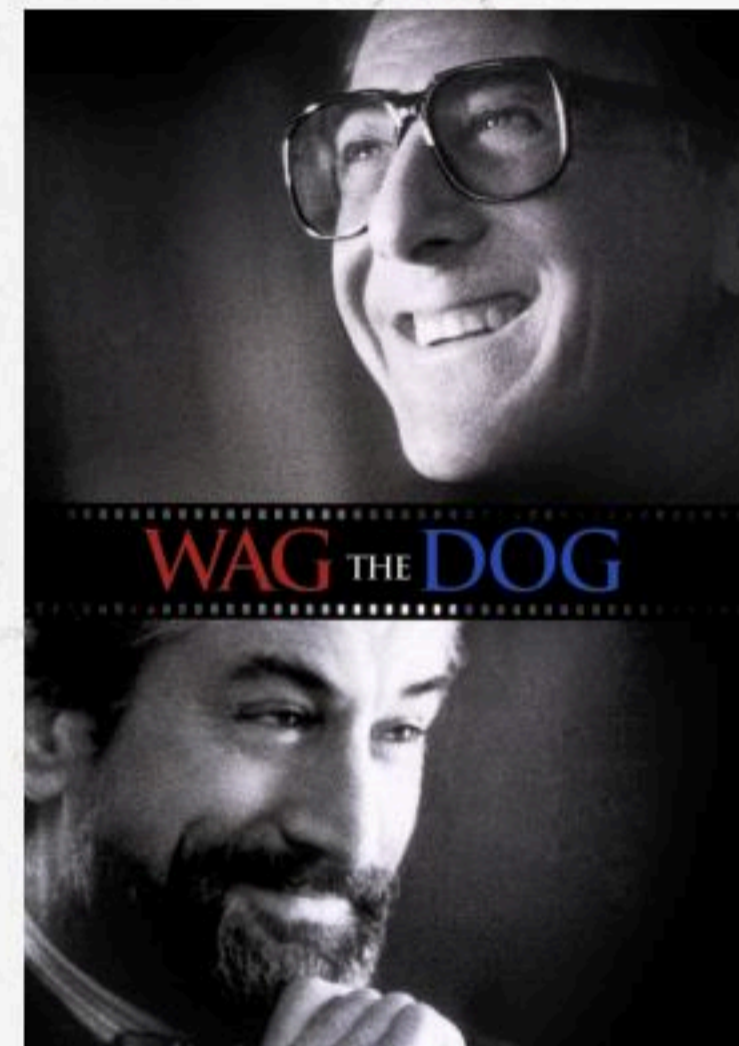
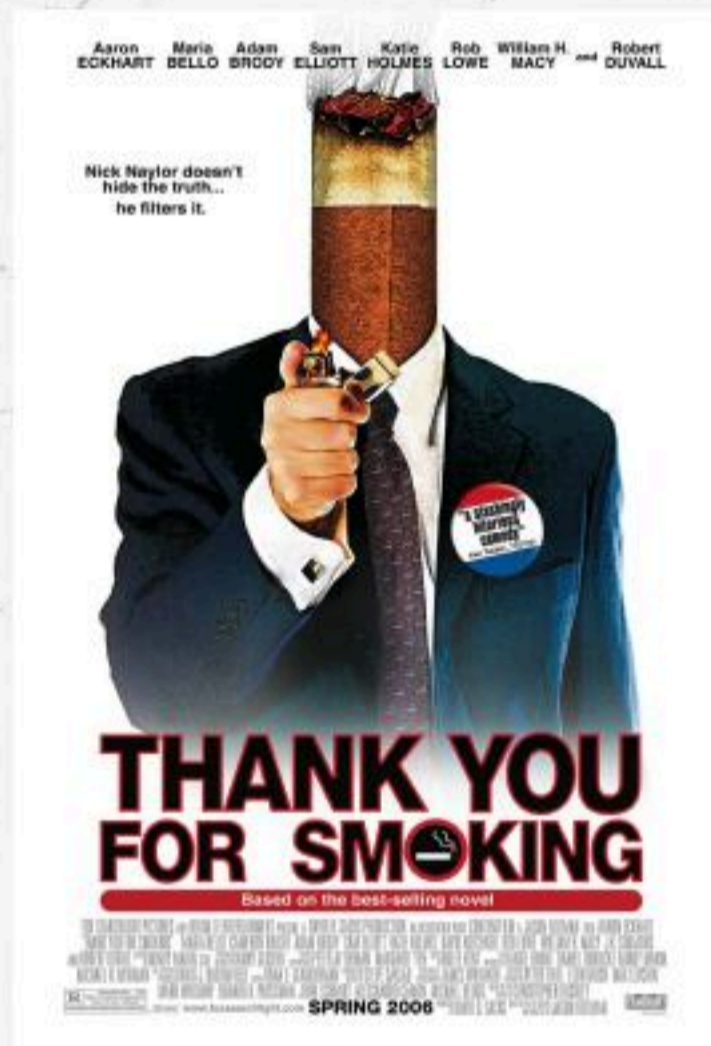
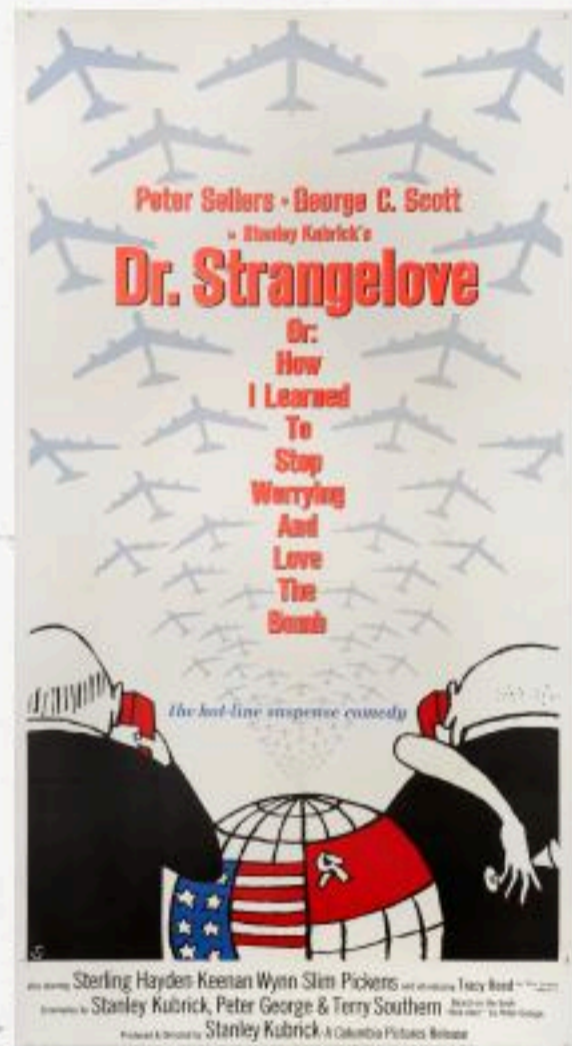
Cinematography will toggle between composed shots that reflect Dr. Chandra's rational perspective and looser, handheld coverage that captures the surrounding chaos: influencers melting down on livestreams, press conferences spinning off-script, executives high on their own power. The world bends while Chandra stays still. Brief media montages—buzzing with social media clips, pharma ads, and political spin—break the fourth wall **demonstrating how fast the spectacle swallows the signal.**

Sound will bleed between the real and the unreal—news bites, podcasts, and viral videos weaving through the background: **the soundtrack to modern life.**





FILM REFERENCES



This story draws inspiration from classic and contemporary political thrillers that expose the machinery behind national panic and institutional control. Echoing the corporate cynicism of films like *Thank You For Smoking* and the paranoia of *A Scanner Darkly*, the film uses the outbreak as a lens to explore the erosion of truth. Its darkly satirical tone also nods to the sharp critiques found in *Network* and *Dr. Strangelove*, framing chaos not as an accident, but as a product.



A Scanner Darkly (2006)



Network (1976)

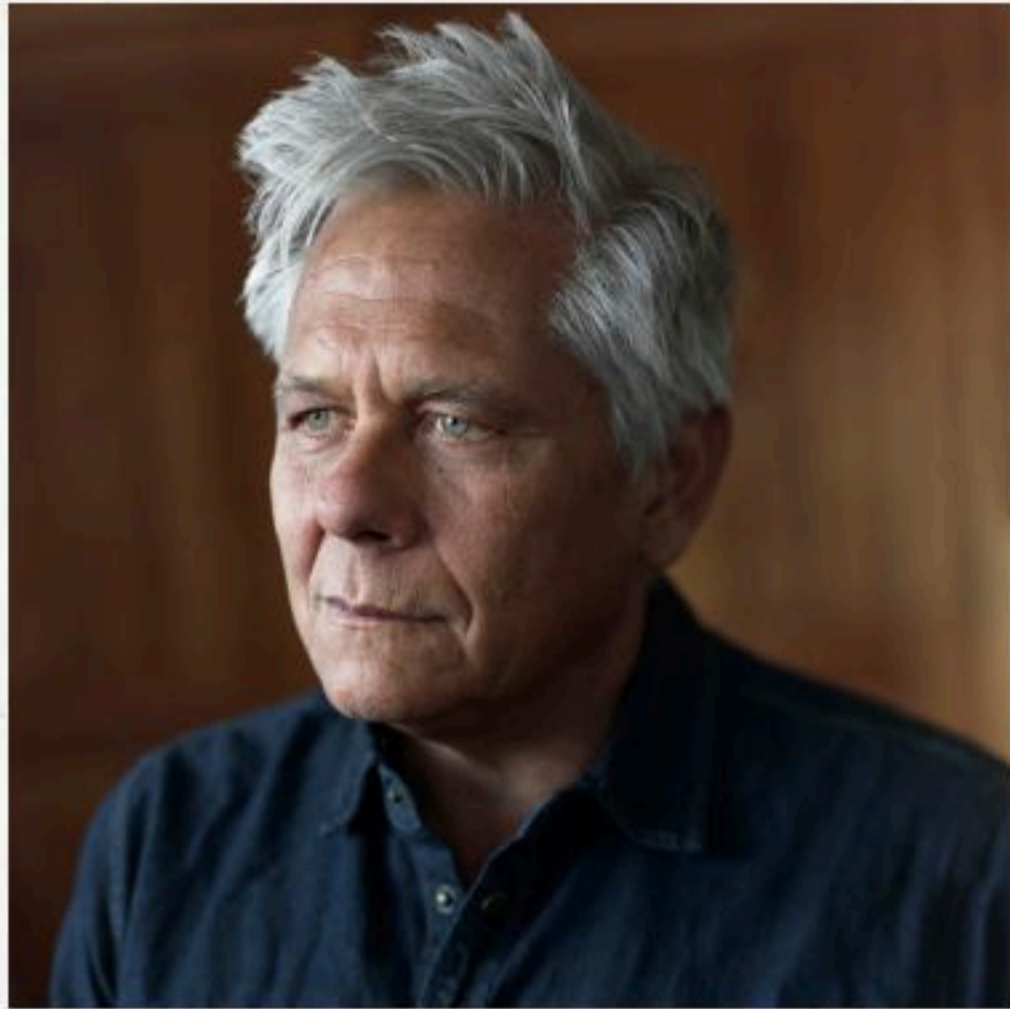


Don't Look Up (2021)



Thank You For Smoking (2005)

WRITER



Walter Kirn is an American novelist, essayist, and literary critic, best known for his novel **Up in the Air**, which was adapted into the feature film starring George Clooney.

His other notable works include **Thumbsucker (1999)**, also adapted into a feature film, and the memoir **Blood Will Out (2013)**.

Walter continues to explore themes of American culture, identity, and societal narratives through his writing and commentary.

His essays and reviews have appeared in publications such as **The New York Times Book Review, The Atlantic, Time, and Harper's**.

He co-hosts the podcast *America This Week* with journalist **Matt Taibbi** and serves as editor-at-large of *County Highway*.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



Nicole Shanahan is an American attorney, entrepreneur, and philanthropist known for her work at the intersection of technology, law, and social impact.

Nicole has emerged as a prominent figure in the ***Make America Healthy Again*** movement, a health-focused political initiative co-founded with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Following her tenure as Kennedy's vice-presidential running mate in the 2024 election, Shanahan continued to champion the MAHA agenda, which emphasizes preventive healthcare, food system reform, environmental sustainability, and government transparency.

She hosts the podcast ***Back to the People***, where she features conversations with experts, activists, and everyday individuals, delving into issues such as healthcare reform, food system integrity, and personal autonomy. In April 2025, Shanahan partnered with Blaze Media to expand the podcast's reach.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



Jacob Strumwasser is an American technology executive and former Wall Street professional.

Jacob spent 15 years in finance before transitioning to the cryptocurrency sector. He served as vice president at *Lightning Labs*, a company focused on expanding the Bitcoin Lightning Network, where he aimed to make financial tools more accessible to underserved communities.



ONSET

CREATIVE

Alex Lee Moyer, critically acclaimed filmmaker (*TFW NO GF* [2020], *Alex's War* [2022]), founded *Onset Creative* in response to a cultural landscape where media has become decentralized and old models are buckling under the weight of the times.

Onset produces thought-provoking films that reflect the mood of the moment – free from the constraints of a risk-averse establishment.

The *Onset* model is to cross-pollinate with partners and creators across the realms of Tech, Hollywood and the online cultural arena to bring good ideas into reality.

The Rash - Production Budget Estimate

