

A

FILM

BY

JAKE

NOKOVIC

PLAY

WITH

ME

PRESS KIT

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Play With Me is a romantic black comedy about Nate and his unconventional birthday present for his boyfriend, David.

It's a story about the power of love and the loss of identity. Nate loses himself to forces beyond his control and transforms into someone, or something, he believes is worth loving.

From writer/director Jake Nokovic, this 16mm film was shot in Chicago on a conservative budget, relying on the love of cinema and the time generously donated by some of the best talent in the city.



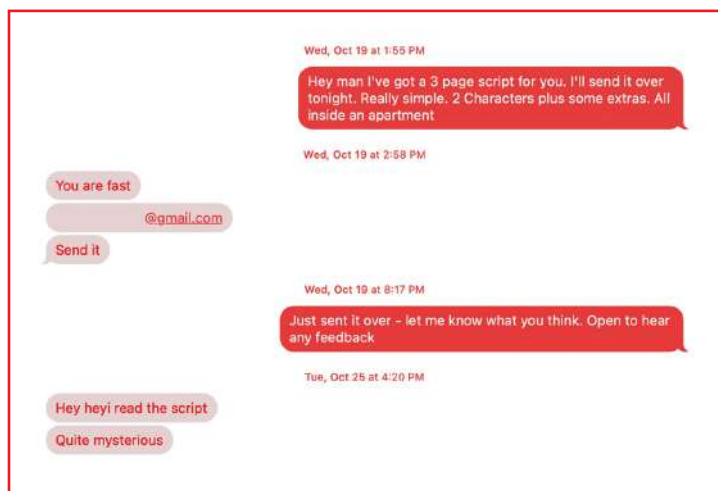


Play With Me began in October 2022 when writer/director Jake Nokovic and cinematographer John Jadkowski met for the first time. John offered to front the cost of a reel of 16mm (about 11 minutes of footage) for a new project, on the condition that the script was short and simple. A few days later, Jake sent John the first draft of what would become Play With Me. The final script was seven pages long and required six reels of film to shoot.

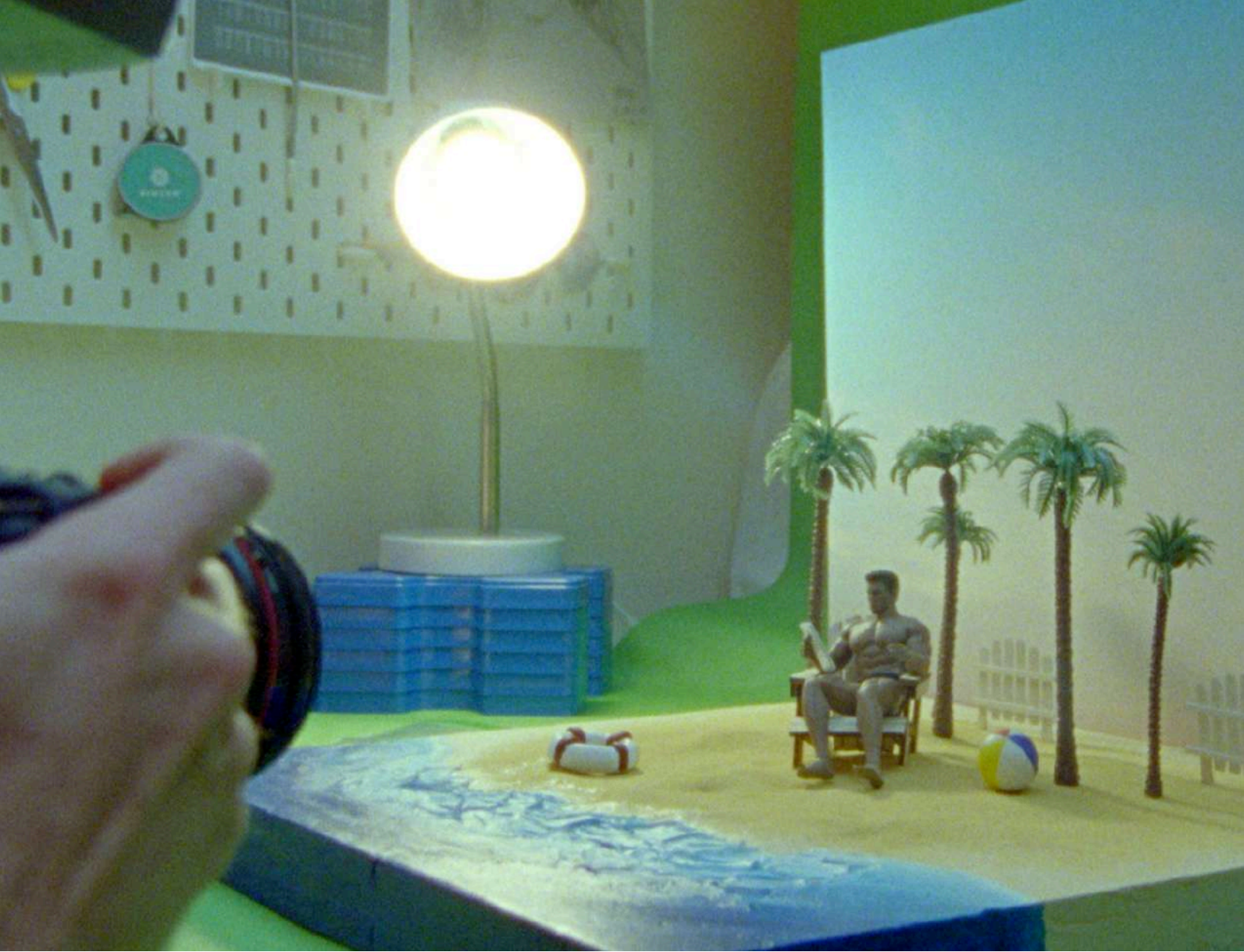
“The last reel of film ran out when I said cut on the final shot of the production, which I consider a good omen”

JAKE NOKOVIC, Writer/Director of Play With Me

Jake sought out producer Casey Lock and his production company Method & Madness in December of 2022 to produce the project. They had previously collaborated with Jake when he was directing music videos with John TerEick under the duo called Cool.



Method & Madness was looking to add to their growing portfolio of narrative films. Jake felt that they would be a great fit because of their shared vision for the project.



The film was shot with a small budget over the course of two days in February 2023 in Chicago. The cast and crew were all friends of Jake and John, and they collaborated for the sake of making something fun and creative. It didn't hurt that February is a notoriously slow period for the film industry in Chicago.





“We chose to shoot on film due to its unique beauty. We also liked the discipline it demands from every department on set. We chose 500T specifically for its versatility. We knew we would be shooting with a minimal lighting package, and 500T gave us the flexibility to handle anything that was thrown at us. The way it renders daylight in particular was a perfect fit for the cold atmosphere we wanted to create for the movie. We also wanted the scenes to have a certain texture and grit, which was a perfect fit for the subject matter of the film.”

JOHN JADKOWSKI, Cinematographer

“Shooting on 16mm film presents certain challenges but the benefits heavily outweigh the drawbacks. It creates a magic on set that is hard to replicate. It also forces you to trust your crew. Two weeks later, when the film comes back and looks great, your bond with everyone is strengthened and you develop a sense of appreciation for the art form.”

JAKE NOKOVIC, Writer/Director

The negative was processed at Kodak Atlanta and scanned by Nicki Coyle at The Negative Space in Colorado.





The film's Colorist, Matt Gehl, is a friend and collaborator of Jake's. They came up in the same scene in Chicago. Matt now works in New York City with Blacksmith as a Color Assist.

The film's art direction and design comes from Brian Hedrick, a multi-talented artist who created the entire visual design of the movie, from the poster, titles, promo materials and more.

"Brian really understood the vibe right away and just went full speed ahead. He showed me his first idea for the poster and that was it. The final version is pretty much what he showed me that first day."

JAKE NOKOVIC, Writer/Director of Play With Me







Miniature artist Kelly Hood brought the miniature environments and action figures to life, playing a crucial role in the success of the film. The character of David works as a photographer, shooting action figures in various roles, usually with an erotic flair. Skater, beach bum, construction worker, cop, etc.

He creates thematic miniature environments that inform the wardrobe. So, naturally, we had to source someone who could bring these ideas to life.







“I wanted an apartment that was small and compact with not many rooms, so the tension between Nate and David felt more palpable. Every shot in the apartment takes place within the same 300 square foot area.”

JAKE NOKOVIC, Writer/Director of Play With Me

Chris and his wife agreed to vacate their home for two days and allow the shoot to take place. Their generosity made the film possible.

The film was shot over the course of two days in the Wicker Park neighborhood of Chicago.

Jake recalled that his friend, Chris Bain, owned a stunning loft apartment with massive skylights that would make it possible to shoot on film with minimal lighting. It was also a fitting home for the character of David, a trendy photographer living in the city.



The shoot went smoothly. The atmosphere was very positive and everyone seemed to walk away with a good experience. The weather was perfect, and the location was stunning.





Play With Me is a very quiet film, which called for an effective musical score and sound design that is able to create a wider sonic experience.

Our composer and sound designer, Cody Nelson, has a natural feel for music and tonal aesthetics, which helped when creating our soundscape. He worked closely with Jake to create two opposing moods: an upbeat feel for the diegetic pop

music played by the characters, and a darker suspenseful feel for the non-diegetic moments. Cody used primarily synths, but also introduced Jake to needle drop tracks that were used in the film.

His score is enhanced by the sound design. He set about cultivating a minimalist, realistic accompaniment to the film's imagery.

Directed by
JAKE NOKOVIC

Produced by
CASEY LOCK

Starring
WESLEY
TOLEDO
MAX STEWART

with
EMILY MASSEY
JENN CHUN
ELLIE COLBERT
ANDREA ZELEN
DALTON ALLISON

Photography
JOHN
JADKOWSKI

1st AD
PHIL EVANS

Mix
BRETT ROSSITER

1st AC
DAVID EDMONDS

Gaffer
MATT HATLEBERG

Key Grip
MAYANK MISHRA

Production Design
EMILY MASSEY

Miniature Artist
ELLY HOOD

Sound Recordist
ERIK RASMUSSEN

Boom Operator
TITUS WONSEY

Art Direction
BRIAN HEDRICK

Editor
MAX MOONEY

Sound Design
CODY NELSON

Colorist
MATT GEHL

Production Assistants
DALTON ALLISON
WALTER GERAGHTY

Special thanks to
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BRENDAN BROWN
KRISTA BROWN
MCKENNA GRAMOLL
ALEX LEEDS
JAKE HIRSHLAND
EMMA THATCHER
STEPHEN WESTER
BRIAN DELISI
ALEX WALLBAUM
EVAN SHEEHAN

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