

PRETTY/VACANT

A BIOTHRILLER SATIRE



Pretty/Vacant
by
Michael Herrmann

FILM PROJECT PITCH DECK

SCRIPT VAULT REGISTRATION NO. 107942

Log Line

- ▶ **Dr Lionel Carter**, a brilliant geneticist, creates a revolutionary weight-loss treatment - one that melts fat at a DNA level. The only catch? She hasn't figured out how to stop the process once it's kickstarted.
- ▶ When her research is stolen by **Darnel Depardieu**, the ruthless CEO at 'big pharma' DietMax, and rebranded as *D'minishe*, a 'skinny plague' engulfs Los Angeles.
- ▶ Framed for the rising body count, Lionel must join forces with **James Bell (a.k.a 'Mariana Trench')**, an outré drag queen and sole *D'minishe* survivor, to expose DietMax's shedding shitstorm before she becomes its ultimate victim.



Synopsis

- ▶ At failing pharma giant DietMax, CEO **Darnel Depardieu** is frantic. Desperate to put her balance sheet back in the black, she steals **Dr Lionel Carter's** promising-but-unfinished genetic research (code-named GS0458) and hastily rebrands it as **D'minishe** - marketing it to the ultra-rich clientele of **Le Waif**, an elite Montecito spa run by the imposing calorie commandant **Fraulein Inga von Kluck**.
- ▶ But there's one problem – *D'minishe* simply doesn't stop. **L.A.'s finest** soon find themselves fuckstarving to death at terrifying speed. Dozens of gruesome deaths spark a media frenzy.
- ▶ Meanwhile, Lionel's personal life collapses. Her husband, **Abe**, morbidly obese and in failing health, suffers a heart attack. Lionel gambles on injecting Abe with GS0458 to ease pressure on his damaged heart - knowing full well the risks. His weight plummets, but without a way to stop the process, Lionel must race against time to save her husband.



Synopsis

- ▶ Among the early *D'minishe* users is **James Bell (a.k.a. 'Mariana Trench')**, a drag performer desperate to slim down before taping a forthcoming TV special.
- ▶ Unlike other victims, Mariana doesn't immediately waste away - making them the genetic key to stopping *D'minishe's* deadly effects. But before Lionel can synthesize a cure, she's branded a 'rogue scientist', arrested, and thrown behind bars.
- ▶ In the high-stakes courtroom finale, Mariana injects Darnel with GS0458. As her body violently morphs, Darnel confesses and implicates co-conspirators Fraulein Inga, presiding judge, **Janice Morte**, and LA District Attorney **Randall Einhorn**.
- ▶ Exonerated, Lionel races to save Abe, administering the life-saving 'stop' gene based on Mariana's unique DNA just in time.
- ▶ As the dust settles, DietMax collapses, Mariana dedicates their TV special to the *D'minishe* 'fallen' and Darnel, Einhorn and Judge Janice are arrested.
- ▶ But Fraulein Inga vanishes - until a post-credits sting reveals her launching a new luxury spa on the sly in South America.



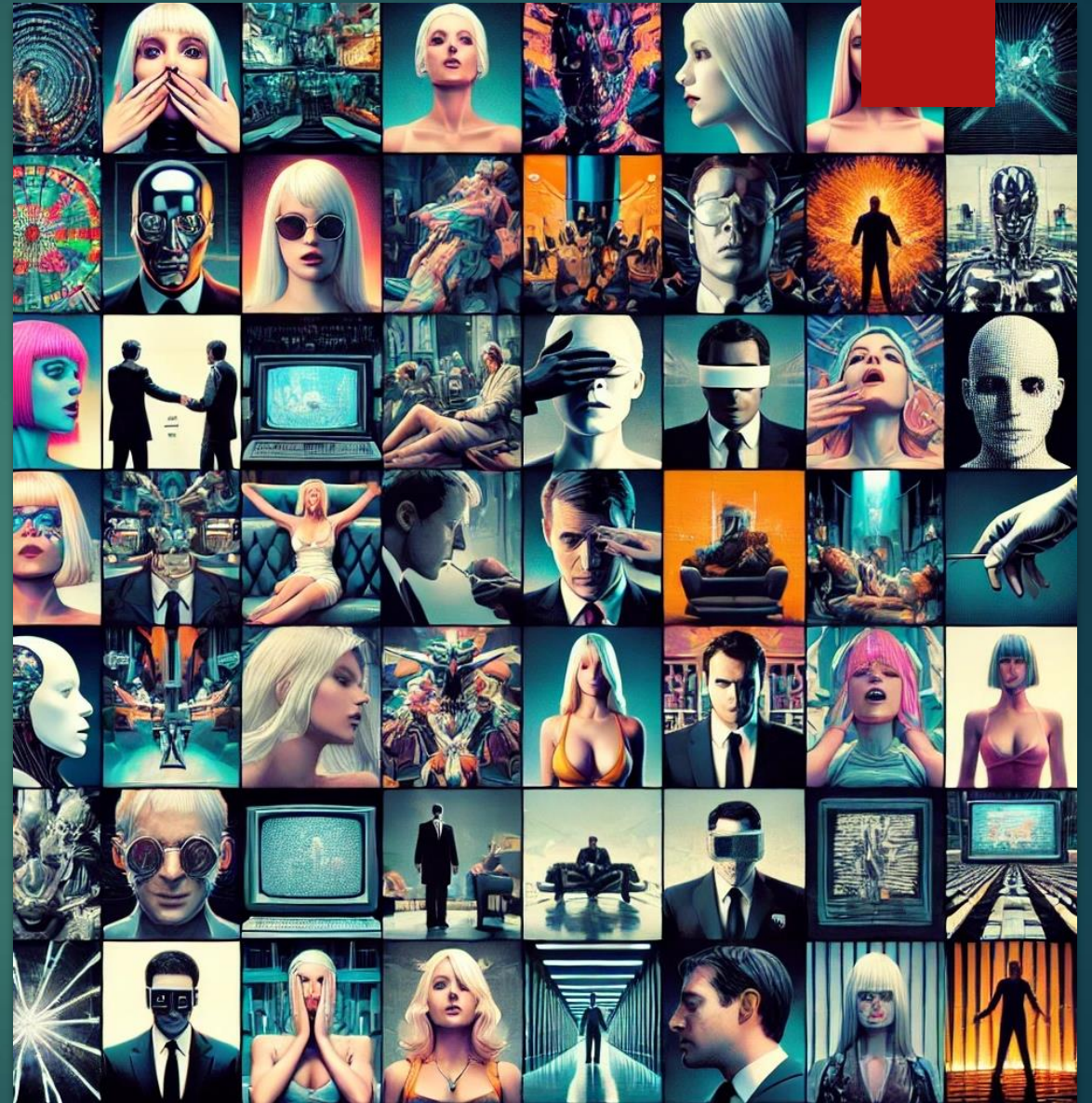
Draft Tag Lines

- ▶ 'It's to die for. Seriously.'
- ▶ 'Size really does matter.'
- ▶ 'Welcome to the dietary dark side.'
- ▶ 'DNA? Make that DOA.'
- ▶ 'Beauty can be a real bitch.'
- ▶ 'A thinspirational new comedy.'



Tone & Style

- A **darkly comedic thriller** in the vein of *Painkiller*, *American Psycho* and *The Substance*, blending sharp satire and cutting-edge biotech.
- **Tonal influences:** *Death Becomes Her*, *The Lobster* and *Clueless*.
- A sleek, stylish visual aesthetic that juxtaposes **high-glam wellness culture** with **OTT body horror**.
- **Bold, rapid-fire dialogue** reminiscent of *Black Mirror*, *Smoggy Queens* and *The Menu*.



Themes

- **Diet Culture & Corporate Greed:** A savage expose of the multi-billion-dollar global weight-loss industry.
- **Biotech & Body Image:** Explores the terrifying implications of genetic engineering run amok.
- **Image vs. Reality:** Critiques the extremes people go to for perfection, and the price they pay – physically, emotionally and financially.
- **LGBTQ+ Identity & Survival:** Celebrates a drag queen hero fighting against a MAGA culture that promotes intolerance, shame and insecurity.



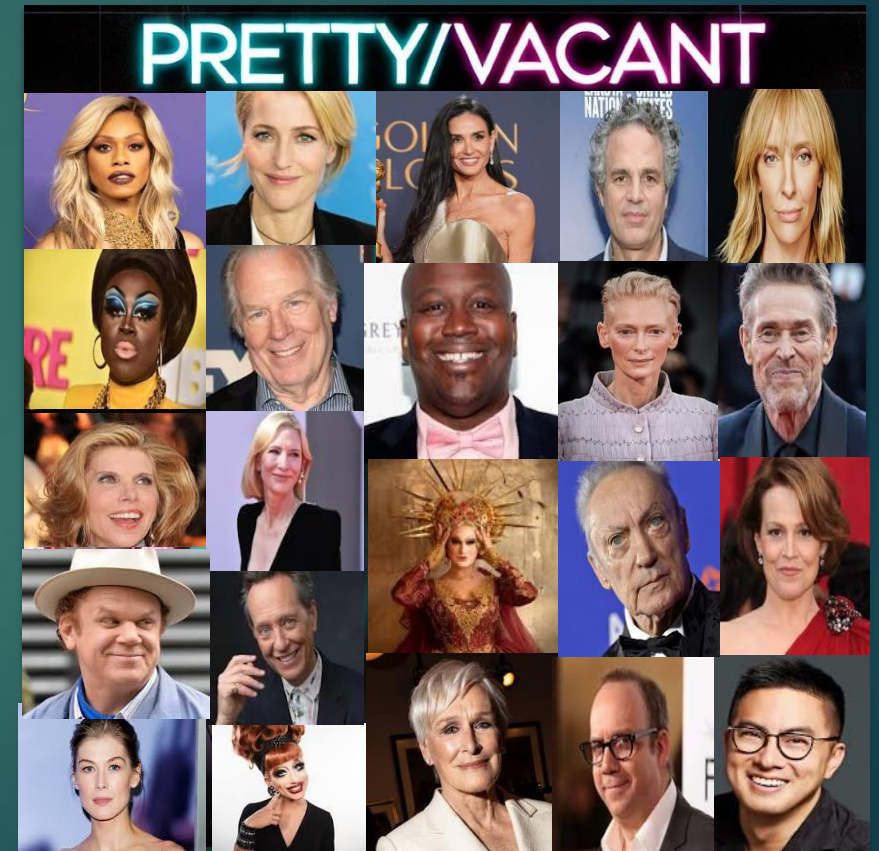
Market Potential/ Target Audience

- **Streaming Appeal:** Potentially a good fit for **Netflix, HBO, Amazon Prime, Mubi** or **Hulu**, given its mix of comedy, horror, satire, and pop cultural references.
- **Festival Buzz:** With its dark humour and body horror, *Pretty/Vacant* is primed for **Sundance, TIFF, Venice** and **SXSW**.
- **Genre Cross-Over Potential:** Blending **comedy, sci-fi, horror** and **satire** gives *Pretty/Vacant* broad indie-cinema appeal and cred.



Casting Ideas

- **Dr Lionel Carter:** Toni Collette, Rosamund Pike, Laura Linney, Gillian Anderson
- **Darnel Depardieu:** Laverne Cox, Charlize Theron, Demi Moore, Allison Janney, Jinkx Monsoon
- **James Bell / Mariana Trench:** Bianca Del Rio, Tituss Burgess, Bowen Yang, Bob the Drag Queen
- **Fraulein Inga von Kluck:** Cate Blanchett, Tilda Swinton, Willem Dafoe, Richard E. Grant, Udo Kier
- **Abe Carter:** Mark Ruffalo, John C. Reilly, Paul Giamatti
- **Judge Janice Morte:** Glenn Close, Christine Baranski, Sigourney Weaver
- **D.A. Randall Einhorn:** Michael McKean, J.K. Simmons, David Strathairn



Conclusion + Thanks

- *Pretty/Vacant* is a **razor-sharp, genre-bending satire**.
- It has the **potential to be a breakout cult hit**, appealing to both mainstream audiences and arthouse aficionados.
- With the right team, this project could be the next ***Death Becomes Her*-meets-*Painkiller*** sensation.
- I'm seeking **producing partners** to help attach talent, secure funding and to pitch to platforms and studios
- **Many thanks for your consideration.** 🚀



Bio: Michael Herrmann

- ▶ Originally from Brisbane, Australia, Michael has authored the crime comedy novels **bigjesustrashcan** and **breakfastinfur** (both published by Fremantle Press), and written books for the stage musicals **Earth Girls Are Easy** (Village Gate Theatre, NYC, 2002) and **Gabba Gabba Hey!**, based on songs by the Ramones (Australian, German and Swiss seasons, 2004 – 2006).
- ▶ In addition to **Pretty/Vacant**, he has recently completed pilot episodes for two TV series. The first, **The Mother of All Lies**, charts the unravelling of a seemingly normal family when a mother's long-standing cancer diagnosis is exposed as a meticulously maintained hoax, while **Divine Madness** is about a disillusioned Pope who, spurned by God for years, pleads for a sign there's at least some love left in their relationship, only to wake up the next morning pregnant.
- ▶ He's big on unique characters, intriguing plots, absurdist comedy and sharp dialogue - all viewed through a queer lens. His influences include John Waters, Andy Warhol, Almodovar, Douglas Sirk, Jean Genet, Angela Carter and James Ellroy.
- ▶ Michael works in corporate comms to pay the bills, but his first love is writing. He lives in Folkestone with his husband, Flynn, and their two Bernese Mountain Dogs, Rollo and Major Tom.

