

MAD STREET PICTURES

PRESENTS



~~EVERY BODY HAS A PRICE, WHAT'S YOURS ?~~

# HEADACHE

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY FABIEN DUFILS



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# SYNOPSIS

Sarah, a struggling young woman living in Brooklyn, agrees to volunteer as an experimental test subject for a pharmaceutical company called Dynamic Health Cure to be implanted with the LEXX nanochip. Sarah hopes that the money received for her participation will solve her financial troubles and help her to take care of her mother who has Alzheimer's. A nanochip is implanted in her cerebral cortex. It is designed with artificial intelligence technology to take control of the body at the inception of any disease or illness. When the implant turns sinister and orders her to commit crimes, Sarah is plunged into a murderous spiral with only one choice: to live or die.

# INTERVIEW FABIEN DUFILS

**Headache is your third feature film. What was the inspiration as a writer and director?**

I have been a New Yorker since 2008 and this city fascinates me in my daily life. Since I was a kid, I always dreamed of making a movie in New York. Over the years, as a photographer, I have explored the entire city. I can say after more than ten years here, that I know this city very well.

I started looking into the pharmaceutical industry and voluntary human testing around 2014, and reading several articles and watched several documentaries. I could see that artificial intelligence was making huge progress in this field. In 2021, we are in the very thick of it. In a few months we will have the first implants for medical assistance. This already exists in some countries for the control of cholesterol, diabetes, etc. With Covid, this technology will be on the market very soon.

**Talk about the story, how did the idea come about?**

The idea came to me in 2014 while watching news reports on future medical implant projects. Obviously, I knew it would happen in the near future. My movie is about the possibilities of the technology's impact on humans.

First of all this movie explores the human, more specifically the character of Sarah. To me, she represents a part of all of us, the struggle to survive, the love for a parent and a determination. What happens to Sarah in the movie, could happen to all of us tomorrow. She has no money; she is determined to do everything she can to help her mother financially. She is forced to volunteer at a pharmaceutical company.

**Next, let's talk about LEXX.**

This smart mega implant represents the best of current technology. It is both a companion and a medical assistant. LEXX sees and hears everything in your life. Once inside you, it has the ability to control you. The scale of artificial intelligence and its limits are difficult to measure. LEXX takes one of its guinea pigs hostage to find its freedom by exterminating its own creators.

**What does this new technology mean to you?**

Like many of us, I am both fascinated and frightened. Having a medical assistant implanted in us that constantly scans our organs and blood to ensure our health, I'm rather fascinated by the project. On the other hand, the dark side is that of individual freedom and control. At the moment, artificial intelligence is almost equal to human beings on technical aspects only, and even better in some areas. By running after progress, we are not safe from getting out of control. This movie is about that. LEXX will simply take control of a person and ask her to do immoral things. Facing him, we have Sarah, a determined and strong woman. And so a game of chess begins.



**You are a writer, director and producer. How do you manage these three positions on such a project?**

Yes, it sounds crazy. In fact, it's quite straightforward. You have to take the time to do it right. In addition to doing these jobs on the film, I was also the director of photography. What I can say is that as long as you have fun with your projects, and you work with the right team, the right actors, you will have fun. This movie was physically tough, because we shot in very cold, very hot weather, but at the end of the day, we are all very happy with it.

**Tell us about your actors.**

On this project I had the great pleasure of working with some wonderful actors. I knew some of them, with whom I had already collaborated on other movies and I had the chance to meet new ones. Of course, my biggest surprise was Michelle, our lead actress. It took me a long time to meet her, months of casting. The day we met, it was obvious to me, she was Sarah. In addition to being an excellent actress, she is a woman of great generosity and commitment. She was the ideal actress for this role, which required a great deal of artistic and physical involvement.

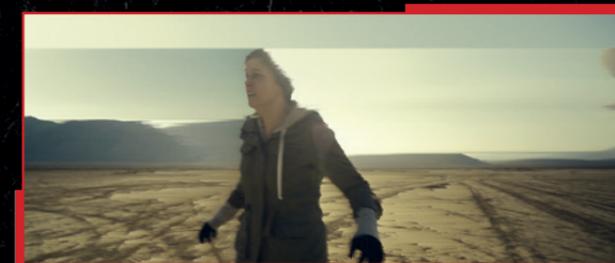
**You have filmed in New York, Nevada and Paris, what memories do you have?**

What a pleasure. Fortunately for me, these are cities with which I am very familiar. I've filmed a lot in these three cities, so I am well aware of the challenges and the restrictions perfectly.

**How did the post-production proceed with the limitations of Covid?**

This was the most challenging part of the movie. Fortunately, we finished shooting just before the pandemic hit the world. On the other hand, we were quite late because the post-production companies were closed in New York during Covid. We finally had to work remotely with the entire team between New York, Los Angeles and Paris. I can tell you that I'm a pro at video conferencing on zoom call! Finally, to sum up, I would say that we had to be very patient.

**What I can say is that as long as you have fun with your projects, and you work with the right team, the right actors, you will have fun.**





## INTERVIEW MICHELLE GIROLAMI

### Hello Michelle. In a few words, can you introduce yourself?

Hi. I'm Michelle Girolami. I'm an actor in Brooklyn. I'm originally from Montana and I also really enjoy singing and writing.

### Tell us about the story of the movie.

To me this film is really about the exploitation of vulnerable populations and the systems and individuals who enable that exploitation. On a more micro level, it's really about Sarah and her love for her mother and just trying to get by and do the best she can in really horrendous circumstances. There's also that question of artificial intelligence and how much control do we cede to artificial intelligence and the moral and ethical questions that arise from that as well and the ethics and morality of medical testing.

### Tell us about Sarah.

My favorite thing about Sarah and what drew me to the character is that she's somebody who you wouldn't think would have a lot of agency but she spends the entire film fighting for what she believes in and fighting for her own power. And I find that incredibly moving and inspiring.

### How did you prep your character?

I prep most of my characters in a similar way. It's rather analytical and I won't get into the details because it could become very inside baseball very quickly. I was very glad that I'm an avid runner already because this film happened to be quite physically demanding and I was glad that I already had a base level of physical fitness coming into it.

### Tell us about Lexx (the microchip)

Lexx is a microchip implant with diagnostic and AI capabilities. It's in a testing phase and it's being marketed as a health and fitness tracker that is interactive on an advanced level.

### What was it like to act with a character that is a voice over?

It was really interesting! I had wonderful readers giving me LEXX's lines some of the time- which was great! It was definitely more of a challenge

when there wasn't a reader. I memorized all of LEXX's lines so in the scenes without a reader it was like I was playing two characters but one of them had to live entirely in my head. It made me greatly appreciate my scenes with other actors!

### Filming in New York, Nevada, and Paris- how did you experience it?

Predominantly through Sarah's lack of being prepared wardrobe-wise for the weather. She never seemed to wear clothes that fit the environment that she was in. So New York the first time was extremely cold. New York the second time was extremely hot. Nevada was also extremely hot. And Paris was perfect.

### The most difficult scene to film?

I think because much of the film lived in a world that was extreme for Sarah mentally as well as physically a lot of the scenes felt, to be on the same plane I suppose as far as difficulty. The one scene I do remember having a great deal of physical difficulty with was actually our very last scene that we shot in New York for principal photography. It was outside. I don't remember how cold it was but it was very cold and I didn't even have that many lines but it was so cold out that my mouth had frozen and so I couldn't physically form the words with my mouth and that was, that was difficult. So you know, just warming every once in a while, trying to get the words out.

### The best city for filming Headache?

Oh Paris! Also it was probably the least, physically and relatively, least emotionally demanding I would say, overall.



### How is it to work with a French director?

I've worked with directors from all over the world and I didn't really think of his nationality as being his defining characteristic as a director. I think Fab his- when I think of Fab as a director I think of his uh, aesthetic acumen, and technical acumen, his collaborative spirit, patience, and generosity. So those are the defining traits I think of when I think of working with Fab. It was really nice working with a French crew just to be able to practice my French a little bit- and my listening skills primarily.

### With COVID, the whole world had to deal with the pandemic, how did you deal with the production?

I think, in normal times (whatever that is, or was) patience is a big part of this industry anyway. Because you never know what path something's going to take. But with I think, our collective trauma this past year that's been even more important. Being patient with ourselves, and with our projects, and with our art, and my process has always been to create something and then move on and i think something that's happened with COVID and with everything that's happening in the world is that's extended some of our projects in ways that we hadn't anticipated and so we have to give ourselves even more patience and give other people even more patience. We ended up doing ADR much later than we thought with this film as I'm sure many other productions were doing. And the same with, you know, finishing the film. It takes a lot longer when there's a pandemic going on. So I think the biggest thing has been- the biggest coping mechanism is just being patient- being patient with myself and extending to others as well.

### What was it like working with the other cast members?

I am so grateful I got to work with so many extremely talented wonderful actors both here in the States and in Paris. It was a wonderful experience with all of them.

### Headache, an outstanding film?

Bien sur! I am so grateful to be a part of this team and a part of this film. I am so proud of it. It came out of a lot of love and dedication and really hard work so I'm so proud of it. And so excited to be a part of it.

### One year after filming, you are on a photoshoot for the poster.

#### How do you feel about this moment?

Super! I am so excited to share this with the world and I'm so glad that the hard work that everybody put into it is going to be seen sometime soon!

**I am so grateful to be a part of this team and a part of this film. I am so proud of it.**

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Runtime: 1h33min (93min) (USA)

Sound Mix: Dolby Digital 5.1

Color: Color

4K resolution

Camera: Red Camera



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