



Retrograde

a film by Adrian Murray

74 minutes | HD | English | Canada

Adrian Murray | abamurray@gmail.com | 416 629 0305

Logline

A minor traffic citation spirals into an all-consuming obsession for a neurotic young woman.

Synopsis

After a jarring encounter with a police officer leaves her with a minor traffic citation, Molly becomes determined to get the ticket dismissed. But when her housemate refuses to testify as a witness, Molly's pursuit escalates into a self-destructive obsession that threatens her job, her friends, and her morality. Disquieting and intimate, *Retrograde* explores truth, power, and accountability through a dryly comic lens.

Director's Bio

Adrian Murray is a Canadian writer and director. He holds a MFA in Film Production and Screenwriting from York University in Toronto. His first feature, *Withdrawn*, premiered at the 2017 Slamdance Film Festival. *Retrograde* is his second feature.

Interview With The Director

What inspired the film?

I tend to write about people “fighting the system” in some way, so the idea of this escalating fight over a traffic ticket appealed to me on that level. I wanted to examine truth, how we create and dismantle it in our everyday lives, who controls it and how. A legal dispute over a minor traffic ticket was also a good vehicle for my style of dry humour; I wanted to take a common occurrence and blow it out of proportion from an emotional standpoint.

Most of the scenes play out over one long take. Can you talk about the visual style of the film?

Since this film is an exploration of truth and how we observe it, the cinematographer and I wanted to keep the look of the film as “honest” as possible with mostly unbroken takes — as if to say there’s no room for hiding anything; the camera would never lie. Even though we follow Molly throughout the film, the camera is a neutral onlooker. This is also why there’s no score or soundtrack. It was important to me that the film does not take a side from a formal perspective.

There are a few scenes that are shot and edited more traditionally, such as Molly asking Gabrielle to be her witness, and the final hearing. In those cases, I wanted to suggest that truth may be directly altered or negotiated with.

Tell us about *Retrograde*'s title and astrology in the film.

Retrograde's title has a few meanings. It plays on the idea of moving backwards or referring to a worsening state, which is a reference to Molly's inner journey. And in astronomy/astrology, a retrograde is when a planet moves in a reverse direction. People always go on about how Mercury retrogrades in particular are responsible for miscommunications and misunderstandings, which also thematically ties into the film.

Dramatically, astrology was a way to get under Molly's skin, and it thematically ties into the film's exploration of truth. People latch on to everything Gabrielle says about astrology, but then meet Molly's recounting of the ticket incident with scepticism. Both Molly and Gabrielle are asserting their observed truth into the world — but for whatever reason, people find it easier to accept a stranger's reading of their birth chart over the idea that a cop cut Molly off. Poor Molly!

We don't see direct evidence for either of these, so the audience is put in the position of having to decide if anything these characters are saying is true. At the end of the day, we see that the idea of truth relies a lot more on belief than we'd like it to. Truth is a powerful assertion, and it's funny and sad how Molly comes to understand this, and what she does with that revelation.

Personally, I'm on Molly's side. Even though astrology is so popular for our generation, I'm still a non-believer. That said, I have more fun with it than she does! My wife tells me that I'm a textbook Capricorn, that they're ambitious and dry-humoured, and I'm like sure, I'll take what I can get!

Credits

Written and Directed by Adrian Murray

Producers — Priscilla Galvez, Adrian Murray, Sennah Yee

Cinematographer — John Palanca

Editor — Marcus Sullivan

Cast

Molly — Molly Reisman

Gabrielle — Sofia Banzhaf

Rose — Bessie Cheng

Caleb — Meelad Moaphi

Michael — Erik Anderson

Dean — Dean Tardioli

Susan — Meredith Heinrich

Constable Webber — Peter Frangella

Justice Russel — Joanne Steven

Adrian — Adrian Murray

