

New Movie Review: How to Cheat



By Ashley DelBello

What drives someone to cheat? Director and writer Amber Sealey sets out to explore this question in her independent and somewhat provocative film, *How To Cheat*, which was shown throughout June at the Los Angeles Film Festival. Typically, when we think of cheating we think of it happening after a night of drinking or unexpectedly, but what happens when a person actually sets out to cheat?

Meet Mark (Kent Osborne), an unhappy husband in his thirties, stuck in a marriage where he and his wife Beth (Amber Sealey) are trying to get pregnant, but are repeatedly unsuccessful. Mark feels like something is missing from his life and that his best years are behind him so he decides to try online dating while still married. Through these quick snippets of dates, we learn that Mark can't lie about being married.

Naturally, the majority of the women he meets have an adverse reaction to it. All, but one, Cue Louise (Amanda Street,) a free spirit with a drinking problem, who is also searching for something to fill a void in her life. She can tell almost immediately that Mark has someone at home, but still continues with the date. As you can probably guess they end up sleeping

with each other and a series of atypical events unfold.

As a single woman, I assume it's a fear that every woman has once they enter into a committed relationship – will my boyfriend/husband become bored and cheat? I know it's a fear of mine. However, I also have the opposite thought. Will I get bored and think about cheating? Does that make me a bad person because I have these thoughts? I don't think I would go through with it, but I am human. I've made mistakes too.

I spoke with Sealey about her film and she believes that cheating doesn't always happen out of the blue. Sometimes the individual does make a conscious decision to cheat. However, her film doesn't set out to portray Mark and Louise as bad people. "I wanted to look at the characters with the least amount of judgment and not lay the blame on any one of them," she said. Sealey explained that Mark's character is essentially a good guy who has always done the right thing. He doesn't necessarily want to hurt his wife, but he feels that being "the good guy" hasn't really gotten him anywhere.

Since Sealey takes such an objective stance toward each of the characters, the film is a very raw and real portrayal of what marriage and relationships look like today. This is made even more true by the fact that she didn't script out the entire movie. She only wrote an outline of it and guided the actors in the direction she wanted the film to go during production.

When I spoke with Street about how she was able to get into her character of Louise, the "other woman," given that there was no script or lines for her to follow. She said, "It was really important for me to find what part of me could connect to this dynamic and try to bring the humanity there." While cheating or entering into relationship with someone who is married may not be something that one normally contemplates,

How to Cheat does an excellent job in pointing out that relationships can be scary and that we as humans are very complex individuals.

For more information and updates on where *How To Cheat* will be played next, check out its Facebook page or www.howtocheatfilm.com.