

Detention Films & Ambyth West Entertainment present  
in association with Slated and Moo Studios

A Film by Dillon Tucker

# Pure O



2023 | USA | 118 min | Color | Narrative



**Contact:**

Detention Films

Ricky Fosheim

[rickyfosheim@detentionfilms.com](mailto:rickyfosheim@detentionfilms.com)

## **LOGLINE:**

Inspired by the filmmaker's own story, an aspiring screenwriter and musician's life quickly unravels when he is diagnosed with a crippling form of OCD. While struggling through his darkest hour, he must help himself, and those around him, tackle a litany of universal issues: grief, coming-of-age, addiction, redemption and the power of social connection.

## **SYNOPSIS:**

Cooper Ganz's seemingly perfect life quickly unravels when he is diagnosed with a crippling form of OCD called Pure Obsessional. This often-misunderstood illness forces him to question his identity and sanity, all while trying to keep it together for his fiancé, family, and co-workers. As he struggles to accept his disease, and the vulnerability that comes along with it, his world starts to open up. The addiction recovery clients he works with at a high-end Malibu drug rehab center return the favor and help Cooper through his darkest hour. Throughout his personal journey, he must help himself and others tackle a litany of universal issues – grief, coming-of-age, addiction, redemption and the power of social connection.

Inspired by the filmmaker's own true story.

## **PRINCIPAL CREW & CAST:**

Director/Writer	Dillon Tucker
Executive Producers	Jay Burnley, Stephan Paternot, Jeremy Walton & David Lyons
Producers	Ricky Fosheim, Dillon Tucker, Ray Lee, Allison Bryant
Cinematographer	Ricky Fosheim
Editor	Dillon Tucker
Sound Designer	Nick Jimenez
Music	Dillon Tucker
Additional Music	Caleb Veazey

Principal Cast	
Cooper	Daniel Dorr
Emily	Hope Lauren
Rachel	Landry Bender
Brandon	Jeffery A. Baker
Nora	Candice Renee
Janice	Breon Gorman
Steve	Timothy Landfield
Duke	Isaac Nippert
Tess	Devon Martinez
Rodney	Clint James

## **DIRECTOR STATEMENT:**

**Dillon Tucker - Director, Writer, Producer, Editor, Music**

Pure O is a semi-autobiographical account of my life around the time I was diagnosed with OCD while working as a counselor at a drug and alcohol rehab. It is a story about the power of human connection and how vulnerability is the greatest form of courage. There are so many stigmas around mental health, addiction and the grieving process. I even had my own stigmas to overcome. I found that the only way to tackle these things is through love, empathy and connection with other people. The more vulnerable I allowed myself to be in therapy, the more improvement I began to see. And the same was the case for clients I worked with. The film is a true ensemble piece that shows how mental health affects not only the sufferer, but also the loved ones who surround them.

I made this film to raise awareness for mental and behavioral health - specifically the misunderstood nature of OCD. The title refers to a form of OCD that revolves exclusively around cognitive themes and mental compulsions. OCD is grossly misrepresented in film and television. That is another reason why I decided to tell my story. Hopefully, undiagnosed sufferers will see this film, gain insight into their own experience and find the help they need. And people who have no idea about OCD will walk away with a better understanding.

I come from an acting background, having been an actor in LA for almost 20 years. So when it came time to cast the film I took that on myself. Fortunately, I know so many incredibly talented actors. I heard John Cassavetes once say that when he started making films he was looking for people like himself – people who were now in their 30s who had a chip on their shoulder – people who felt like Hollywood hadn't offered them the proper platform to showcase the full breath of their abilities. I cast the film keeping that in mind. I also intentionally mixed in non-actors and cast real life couples – one of which played the leads. The goal was hyperrealism, so I did this to showcase that. I wanted the audience to not have a sense of where real life stopped and the acting began.

In terms of the approach to the acting in the film, the main word for me was -- unsentimental. This was a film that I wanted to be totally grounded in naturalism. I wanted all of the actors to be suspicious of "acting" -- avoid knowing what they were doing, avoid delivering a message. And I in turn tried to create as much of a responsive world as possible for them to play in. In the spirit of that, I really wanted them to play their characters as close to themselves as possible -- drawing from their own personal experience and merely lending the names of the characters to themselves for a while.

I purposely wanted a mixture of actors and non-actors for the film. Having non-actors in the film who are real life OCD sufferers and drug rehabilitation counselors not only enhanced the world that I was trying to build, but they also became an integral resource for all of the actors on the film. Talking on-set about all of their experiences and answering all of the questions other cast members had was invaluable to everyone's

performances in the film.

The creative influences for this film were varied. I really just wanted to mine my own experiences and try to capture something as truthful as possible a la filmmakers like Mike Mills, Destin Daniel Cretton, Noah Baumbach & Derek Cianfrance. While writing and during production I was listening to the music that I was listening to during the time of my diagnosis (when the film takes place). Artists like: Bob Dylan, Bill Evans, The National, Leonard Cohen & Tom Waits. I was also reading a bunch of Bukowski's poetry.

Coupled with being a filmmaker, I am a singer-songwriter who has been writing and performing music since I was a teenager. One of the powerful things that helped me while I was undergoing treatment was music. My mother is a painter and an art therapist, so I was raised in a household where I saw and experienced the power of art therapy firsthand. That's why I decided to comprise the soundtrack for Pure O using my own songs and performances from during that period of my life. A huge part of making this film was to show other people who suffer from mental health issues that you can get better and you can succeed – that your disease does not define you. I believe in the therapeutic nature of music and I wanted Pure O to be a platform for that.

I also feel that being a musician really helped me when it came to editing. The feel for rhythm, pacing, dynamism – all that stuff. It all felt very similar to making music. Between that and having been a writer for so long, it was a pretty effortless transition into the editing room. Editing feels like writing, just with a finite number of choices versus infinite possibilities.

My lead actor Daniel Dorr and I both went to The American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and when the time came I thought of Daniel. He has the right mixture of what I needed to make the part work. I needed someone who was able to portray a true duality. On one hand, Cooper is broken and flawed, but he is also charismatic and self-confident. I really needed an actor who could pull off doing all of those things well. I knew that he could deliver on the charisma and that he was willing to be all-in and dig deep for all of the emotional vulnerability that Cooper required. I was confident he was the right person for the part. I'm happy that I chose him and grateful that he took the journey with me, because he delivered in spades and brought such an authentic depth and humanity to his performance.

My main creative collaborator Ricky Fosheim, who produced and shot the film, and I have been friends since we were twelve years old, and creative collaborators on various projects for the last 20 years. Ricky is an insanely talented DP. We worked intimately together throughout the entire process. We liked the idea of lighting the interior night scenes with a single practical - especially everything in the apartment. We wanted to find the least we can do to light a scene and let the characters exist within the room -- light the room not the actors. Let them move where they move. Don't clean them up. Light the space and let them fill it. We also wanted to use mixed light as

much as possible. Mixing natural light and practicals in our daytime interiors. We utilized a “frame within the frame approach” on Cooper as much as possible – to enhance the sense that he is isolated and separated from the world around him. Especially in wides.

Pure O is about mental health, and yet so much more. It tackles a litany of universal issues we all face – grief, coming-of-age, loss, addiction, intrapersonal growth, redemption and the power of social connection. I hope the audience walks away feeling closer to others and also themselves. OCD thoughts are just normal thoughts that get misinterpreted. There is an opportunity with this film to show the world what OCD really looks like. To show those who suffer that receiving an OCD diagnosis doesn't mean your life is over. And to show everyone else that we all need the help of other people.

**- Dillon Tucker**

## **SELECT PRESS QUOTES:**

PURE O is an early contender for film of the year...as touching as it is informative.

**-The HoloFiles**

There are a few films in a lifetime that you feel make you a better person having watched it. Pure O from Dillon Tucker is one of those films.

**-Signal Horizon**

A refreshing take on both mental illness and addiction, with both subjects addressed with an honesty and unashamed attitude that is inspiring and effective.

**-AIPT News**

Pure O is raw and emotional, refusing to hold back, leaving audiences reeling from the emotional impact.

**-Elements of Madness**

The storytelling is vulnerable, honest, and remarkably, it feels real.

**-Script Magazine**

An extraordinarily grounded and vulnerable performance from lead actor Daniel Dorr.

**-Pop-Culturalist**

One of the most poignant and optimistic films I have ever seen.

**-Signal Horizon**

Pure O provides a deeply personal and accurate chronicle of living with OCD like few, if any, films and television shows have done before.

**-The Holo Files**

## FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES:

### **Dillon Tucker (Director, Writer, Producer, Editor, Music):**

Dillon Tucker is a SoCal multi-hyphenate. His feature directorial debut PURE O was nominated for the grand jury award at SXSW 2023. The film is set to be released worldwide by Good Deed Entertainment. He co-wrote and starred in Gina Cassavetes' directorial debut LOVE & SKIN. Tucker also co-wrote and starred in the features UNEASY LIES THE MIND and THAT SIDE OF A SHADOW, both of which were distributed worldwide by Gravitass Ventures. An alumni of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, Tucker was awarded the Charles Jehlenger Award for best actor. In addition to filmmaking, Tucker is an accomplished singer-songwriter having released six studio albums. He loves smoky scotch, New Hollywood cinema and believes Bob Dylan is a deity in human form.

### **Ricky Fosheim (Producer, Cinematographer):**

Ricky Fosheim is the founder of Detention Films, where he has produced seven feature films. His recent credits include PURE O, which screened in competition at SXSW, and THE HEAD HUNTER, which was distributed by Vertical Entertainment and was the most downloaded horror movie on iTunes for the entire month of April 2019. Ricky also produced, directed, and shot UNEASY LIES THE MIND, the first feature film shot entirely on an iPhone, which screened at SXSW. Before producing, Ricky spent five years as a freelance cinematographer at Will Ferrell's comedy website Funny or Die, where he had the opportunity to shoot for dozens of A-list talent. He also worked as a freelance cinematographer for The Salvation Army, where he traveled the world telling stories about disaster relief, homelessness, and domestic abuse. Ricky holds two degrees, a B.A in Film Production and a B.B.A. in Business Entrepreneurship from Loyola Marymount University. He is a member of the Producers Guild of America.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

### **Daniel Dorr (Cooper):**

Daniel Dorr has made his mark on the entertainment world with his chameleon-like approach and the gift to portray a wide range of characters, from an archetypal poet (in off-Broadway's Mayakovsky and Stalin) to Mozart (in Bill & Ted: Face the Music alongside Keanu Reeves and Alex Winter), he has charmed and captivated audiences on stage and screen. Dorr will be making his SXSW debut in the leading role of Cooper in director/screenwriter Dillon Tucker's emotional, autobiographical drama Pure O, about a man battling a crippling, rare form of obsessive compulsive disorder that makes him question his very existence. His previous TV/Film work includes: IFC Films' Bar Fight!, Starz's Counterpart, Crackle's StartUp, A24's 20th Century Woman, and Columbia/Sony Pictures' Fury with Brad Pitt. On stage, he appeared in the West Coast Premiere of Finks (Rogue Machine Theatre) Viral by Mac Rogers (Bootleg Theater) Romeo & Juliet (Hollywood Fringe), As You Like it, The

Crucible, Macbeth with the Antaeus Theater Company. Daniel is a graduate of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

### **Hope Lauren (Emily):**

Hope Lauren is one of Hollywood's most versatile actors who continues to captivate audiences with her charismatic performances on screen. She stars in the upcoming drama, *Pure O*; written and directed by Dillon Tucker, which is set to premiere at SXSW.

*Pure O* is Hope's SXSW Debut, in which she portrays 'Emily', a musician struggling to support her fiancé after he is diagnosed with a rare form of OCD while wrestling with her own personal battles. Hope most recently starred in CBS/CW's highly anticipated drama series, *The Republic of Sarah* as 'Corrine', a young high school teacher caught in the crossfires of building a new country, keeping her family intact and following her heart. She can also be seen in IFC's comedy feature, *Bar Fight!* written and directed by Jim Mahoney, in which she plays a hopeful starlet caught in the middle of a romantic feud.

Other credits include Universal/Blumhouse sequel *The Forever Purge*, CW's *Supergirl*, FOX's *Fantasy Island*, ABC's *Fresh off the Boat*, *Agent Carter*, and *Last Man Standing*, MTV's *Faking It* and *Awkward*, HBO's *Togetherness*, and Morgan Dameron's directorial debut *Different Flowers*, which premiered at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival.

### **Landry Bender (Rachel):**

Landry Bender has already been working in Hollywood more than half her life. Her breakout role came in 2010, when she starred alongside Jonah Hill in 20th Century Fox, *THE SITTER*. She continued her string of comedic roles leading back to back shows on the Disney Channel as well as on Netflix's, *FULLER HOUSE*. In 2019, Landry joined Hulu's *LOOKING FOR ALASKA*, in her first ever dramatic role and followed that with the CW's, *REPUBLIC OF SARAH* last year. Her experiences working in the coming-of-age genre sparked a desire to be a part of the storytelling for her generation. *TATE, JACK & CHARLIE*, written during the pandemic is her debut screenplay. She's also co-producing a film based on the novel, *GIRL LEAST LIKELY*.

## **FILM INFORMATION:**

Country:	USA
World Premiere:	2023 SXSW Film Festival
Running Time:	118 minutes
Production Companies:	Detention Films and Ambyth West Entertainment in association with Slated and Moo Studios
Film Format / Camera:	Shot on BMPCC 6K Camera
Filming Locations:	Shot in California: Los Angeles, Venice, Topanga, Malibu, Culver City, Hollywood, Burbank, Pacific Palisades, Newport Beach, Costa Mesa, Orange, Anaheim

Social Tag: [https://www.instagram.com/pure\\_o\\_movie](https://www.instagram.com/pure_o_movie)

