

Official Selection
NewFilmmakers
Los Angeles

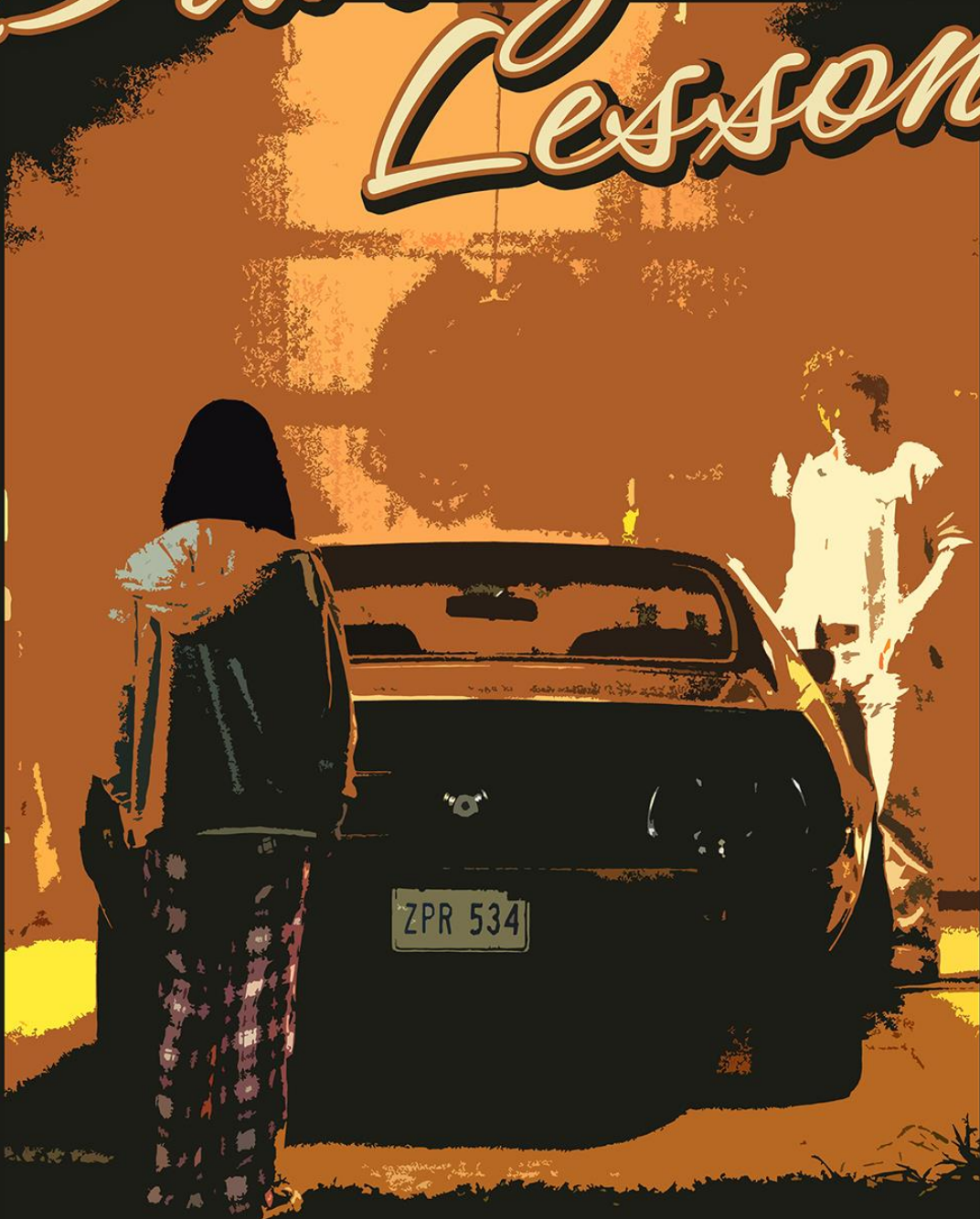
CLEVELAND
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL SELECTION

Official Selection
**WOODS
HOLE**
FILM FESTIVAL
2026

OFFICIAL
SELECTION
2025
THE FEMALE EYE FILM FESTIVAL

DWF NY
2026 OFFICIAL SELECTION

Driving Lesson



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SYNOPSIS

On a summer night in the 1990s, a 12-year-old is forced to get behind the wheel of her father's beloved muscle car because he's too drunk to pick her little sister up. As the driving lesson unfolds, this brooding preteen overcomes the chaos sitting in the passenger seat, puts the pedal to the metal, and ultimately, flips the parent-child dynamic on its head.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Driving Lesson is based on a memory. Yes, my parents really did get too drunk to pick my little sister up from her friend's house. (If I remember correctly, they just flat out forgot about her.) And yes, my dad had the bright idea that I should drive his pristine classic car to pick her up despite my being underage. It's not that this event marked me particularly - this was par for the course in our house - it simply serves as a backdrop to examine a family, in all its drama and all its comedy, living in a rural suburb in the 1990s.

This film is an ode to an era - not only in the lighting, the cars, the music, the lack of cell phones - but in the fact that everything is real. We dragged a '73 Mustang down a country road with a 13-year-old behind the wheel so that the audience would feel the authenticity of the environment and the anxiety of a preteen learning how to drive for the first time with very little support from the adult beside her.

As a filmmaker, I aim to quash outdated tropes, especially those involving women. I want the audience to go on a cathartic journey with a young female protagonist who is strong and capable and not afraid to Fast and Furious it up. She's not the victim; she's the hero.

I'm also a proponent of finding comedy within tragedy. I'm inviting an audience to laugh at a child being abused, even if it's uncomfortable, because I'm not interested in a "pity party".

With all the darkness in life, laughter is the light that reminds us we're all in it together.

- Gillian Gordon





DIRECTOR BIO

Gillian Gordon is a Canadian filmmaker based in Toronto. She is a graduate of Simon Fraser University's film program and has more than a decade of production experience with credits on a variety of acclaimed films and series, including *The Shape of Water* (2017), *Sex/Life* (2021-2023) and *Priscilla* (2023).

In 2023, she began a new chapter in her career, co-founding the production company Uphill Pictures and taking the leap into directing with the very personal and ambitious short film, *Driving Lesson*, which has been an official selection at multiple international film festivals.

Gillian is currently prepping her next short film, writing a genre-bending psychological thriller feature and developing a female-centered comedy series with the support of Ontario Creates.

CREDITS + SPECS

CAST

The Daughter: Daniella Chudnovsky

The Dad: Sean Connolly Affleck

The Little Sister: Penny Cervini

CREW

Writer/Director: Gillian Gordon

Producers: Jonathan Laflamme, Gillian Gordon

Director of Photography: Christina Ienna

Production Designer: Mercedes Coyle

Costume Designer: Chelsea Graham

Editor: Gretchen Schroeder

Casting Director: Chandler Boriska

SPECS

Genre: Dramey

Completion: 2025

Country of Origin: Canada

Runtime: 17 minutes, 07 seconds

Filming Location: Toronto, Canada

Language: English

Resolution: 4K

Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1

Audio Mix: Dolby 5.1



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