

ONCE MORE LIKE RAIN MAN

"It's up to you to make a future that has you in it"



OMLR MOVIE PRESENTS "ONCE MORE LIKE RAIN MAN" WRITTEN BY BELLA ZOE MARTINEZ

BELLA ZOE MARTINEZ MATT JONES SOSIE BACON SUE ANN PIEN KRISTEN HAGAR JOE MANTEGNA

DIRECTED BY SUE ANN PIEN PRODUCED BY SUZANN ELLIS-SPURGEON MELISSA MARTINEZ-AREFFI DARREN DEAN AJ AREFFI

EDITED BY RYAN SHELSTAD & ANGELA PARKES PRODUCTION DESIGNER ALEX HUNTER COSTUME DESIGNER MIKAEL SHARAFYAN DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY KRISTY TULLY

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DIRECTOR SUE ANN PIEN

My name is Sue Ann Pien and I'm known for the show As We See It. When I was approached by Elaine Hall and Tin4 Coalition to do this project, I had already known our critically-acclaimed Amazon show did not get picked up. It was discouraging to know that a beautiful show such as As We See It could not find a lasting home in television history. I wanted that to change, because I saw how many people on the autism spectrum were able to work on set in all capacities as PAs, actors, writers, and more. Not only that, it was one of the kindest, and most heartwarming sets to be on and everyone brought their best to make Jason Katims' beautiful storytelling come to life. People were wrongly mistaken about what autism is, can be, and what potential there is for employment of our special minds and skills.

The Areffis have three children on the autism spectrum of various degrees of dependency needs and they all contributed to "Once More, Like Rain Man". Bella Zoe Martinez is our young teenage actress who wrote this script based on her own limited choices auditioning for roles in Hollywood and being pigeonholed by what the industry will write for her. As you can see, she has many talents and a full range that can continue to shine and develop, if the industry will give her chances to progress beyond the traditional roles people with disabilities get side-swept into when they hit that glass ceiling.

Suzann Ellis has two sons on the spectrum and having her mentorship, patience, and expertise to navigate us from development through completion of the film you're watching was a direct result of her personal affection and understanding of how to engage autistic talent in a way that allows them to perform at their highest potential. I certainly could not have directed a film of this scope without her powerful guidance supporting our endeavor.

And she is not alone - many industry veterans and celebrities want to create a viable future for their beloved family members. As Jason Katims said several times while on panels promoting As We See It - up to 85% of the autistic community is unemployed. That is unnecessary, and with the right teams and leaders opening the pathways, we can create a space in the entertainment industry inclusive of people on the spectrum, who are neurodiverse, and disabled to add their skill set to filmmaking teams. We just need a little extra care, attention, and effort on your part to let us in, show us how to grow, and give us a bit more mercy when we're still at our first fledgling attempts - like my directorial debut with "Once More, Like Rain Man".

And yes - we are lucky to have the unwavering support of Darren Dean, Joe Mantegna, James Ponsoldt, Tracy Reiner, Sosie Bacon, Matt Jones, Easterseals non-profit, and many more veteran talent on our short film, but we would love to enlist your partnership as well! "Once More, Like Rain Man" is a proof of concept that people with and without disabilities can create stories that matter to us - and to stop perpetuating the societal prejudices behind movies like Sia's "Music" (that there are no good autistic actors available). Please help us to continue using this short film to open doors for our community. And, as ZOE says in her final monologue, "it's up to us to make a future that has us in it" - and hopefully that "us" now includes you too!





WHAT'S THE MEANING BEHIND THE TITLE, ONCE MORE, LIKE RAIN MAN?

"...[the film Rain Man] was the first step of helping kids on the spectrum today because, without that [movie], I probably wouldn't have gotten the services my siblings and I did when we were little. I hope my short film might be the next step for people to see what I've made and what we've all made and just care about what they see because people sometimes forget that people who are autistic are people too."

~ Bella Zoe Martinez — Deadline



ABOUT THE FILM

This 15-minute comedy/drama is both deeply personal and groundbreaking.

Written by and starring autistic actress Bella Zoe Martinez, the film follows 14-year-old Zoe as she navigates a frustrating series of auditions for autistic roles—only to be told again and again that she’s “not autistic enough.”

It’s a poignant, humorous, and all-too-real reflection on the challenges of authenticity and representation in Hollywood.

THE CAST

The film features an ensemble of acclaimed actors from film and television, including:

BELLA ZOE MARTINEZ as Zoe



"...working with someone who has lived my experience the way Sue Ann has allowed me to do things and take risks I never thought I could."

Bella began acting as a form of therapy after being severely bullied in middle school due to her autism. She is best known for roles in *The Infiltrators*, *The Vanished*, and *Glory & Injustice*. "

MATT JONES as Gerry



"Usually I get cast as drug dealing losers... so getting the chance to play a good dad helping out his kid meant a lot to me."

Because that's who I really am, a good dad. So the story of an outsider in the entertainment industry trying to get people to understand who she really is, hit close to home. "



JOE MANTEGNA
(The Godfather Part III, Criminal Minds)



SOSIE BACON
(Smile, 13 Reasons Why)



SUE ANN PIEN
(As We See It)

ANDREW CARRILLO
(Black Monday, Shameless)

GLORY SIMON
(The Sinner, Chuck & Buck)



TRACY REINER
(A League of Their Own, Apollo 13)



NAIA SCHRODER
(Grimm, The Librarians)

JAMES PONSOLDT
(Shrinking, Daisy Jones & the Six)

BARRY PAPICK
(Finding Forrester, Private Parts)

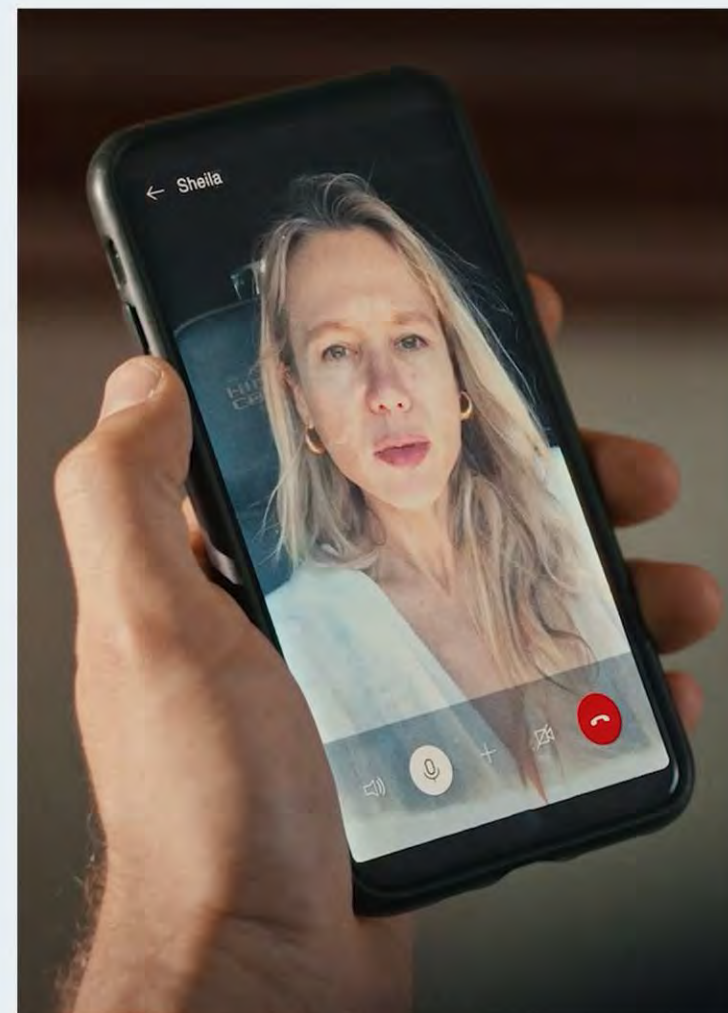
JAMES PAXTON
(Twisters, How I Met Your Father)



CARL WEINTRAUB
(Days of Our Lives, Air Force One)

VELLA LOVELL
(Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, Animal Control)

SCOTT KRINSKY
(Tangerine, Transformers: Dark of the Moon)



KRISTEN HAGER
(Suits: L.A., Chicago Med)

THE MONTAGE



ALEX PLANK



JENÉE LAMARQUE

CARLY FAHEY



ANNIE KARSTENS



DANIELLE PEREZ



CYNTHIA CATANIA

CASTING & HIRING: INCLUSION IN STORY & IN PRACTICE

Once More, Like Rain Man is a powerful act of visibility and truth-telling. This is not just a film about an autistic girl. It's a film by autistic creators. We didn't just talk about representation—we lived it.

More than 40% of our cast and crew are either neurodiverse or living with a disability — including performers, creatives, and crew members in key roles throughout the production.

For everyone involved, it was essential to cast neurodivergent and disabled actors not only in roles that reflect their lived experiences

— but also in roles that had nothing to do with their disability.

Among the most recognizable neurodiverse or differently-abled actors featured in the film are:



ALEX PLANK
(Ezra, Horsegirls)



DANIELLE PEREZ
(Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse,
Curb Your Enthusiasm)



TAL ANDERSON
(Atypical, The Pitt)



PRODUCER SUZANN ELLIS



VETERAN PRODUCER AND PRESIDENT OF BEACON PICTURES
(The Hurricane, Galaxy Quest)

PRODUCER DARREN DEAN



OSCAR®-NOMINATED PRODUCER
(Tangerine, The Florida Project)

**PRODUCERS MELISSA MARTINEZ-AREFFI
ANDREW AREFFI**



PRODUCERS
(Glory & Injustice, Demption)

THE MONTAGE

A STORY TOLD IN COSTUME



MIKAEL SHARAFYAN (Enchanted, Proof Sheet)

Working on "Once More, Like Rain Man" was an exciting experience and marked my second collaboration with the exceptionally talented Bella Zoe Martinez. On one day, Bella had 14 costume changes, in three locations, including the memorable "Tomato" costume - a playful homage to "Tootsie".

We also dressed a large background cast, and one of the standout moments was a cameo by the legendary Joe Mantegna, who loved the custom suit I designed for him so much that production gifted it to him. The set was fun, energetic, and ran smoothly from start to finish.



WHAT ABOUT THE SONG: “DISTANT GOODBYES”?

Written by Bella and produced by Cynthia Catania, the original song captures the emotional core of the film.

According to Bella, “The song was just something I was writing while I was having one of those tough life moments. I think it captures the pain Zoe and Gerry are going through and it was really cool how Cynthia was able to weave the melody throughout the entire film.”

AWARDS & FESTIVAL LAURELS



PRESS & INDUSTRY QUOTES

“Martinez’s script and performance... sparkle with humor.” — Optism

“A short film that addresses Hollywood’s damaging stereotypes...” — Crip Life UK

“Pien’s work... brings a nuanced perspective to the portrayal of neurodiversity on screen.”
— ABILITY Magazine

“We wanted to show that autistic people are not a monolith. We’re not all the same. We have different personalities, different ways of communicating, different ways of expressing ourselves.” — Bella Zoe Martinez, via Deadline

UPCOMING SHOWINGS

 San Francisco, CA – July 11-17, 2025 – The Roxie Theater

 Los Angeles, CA – Sept 12-18, 2025 – Laemmle Monica Film Center

CONTACT

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