

DECEMBER

treatment by MAE MANN



Hello!

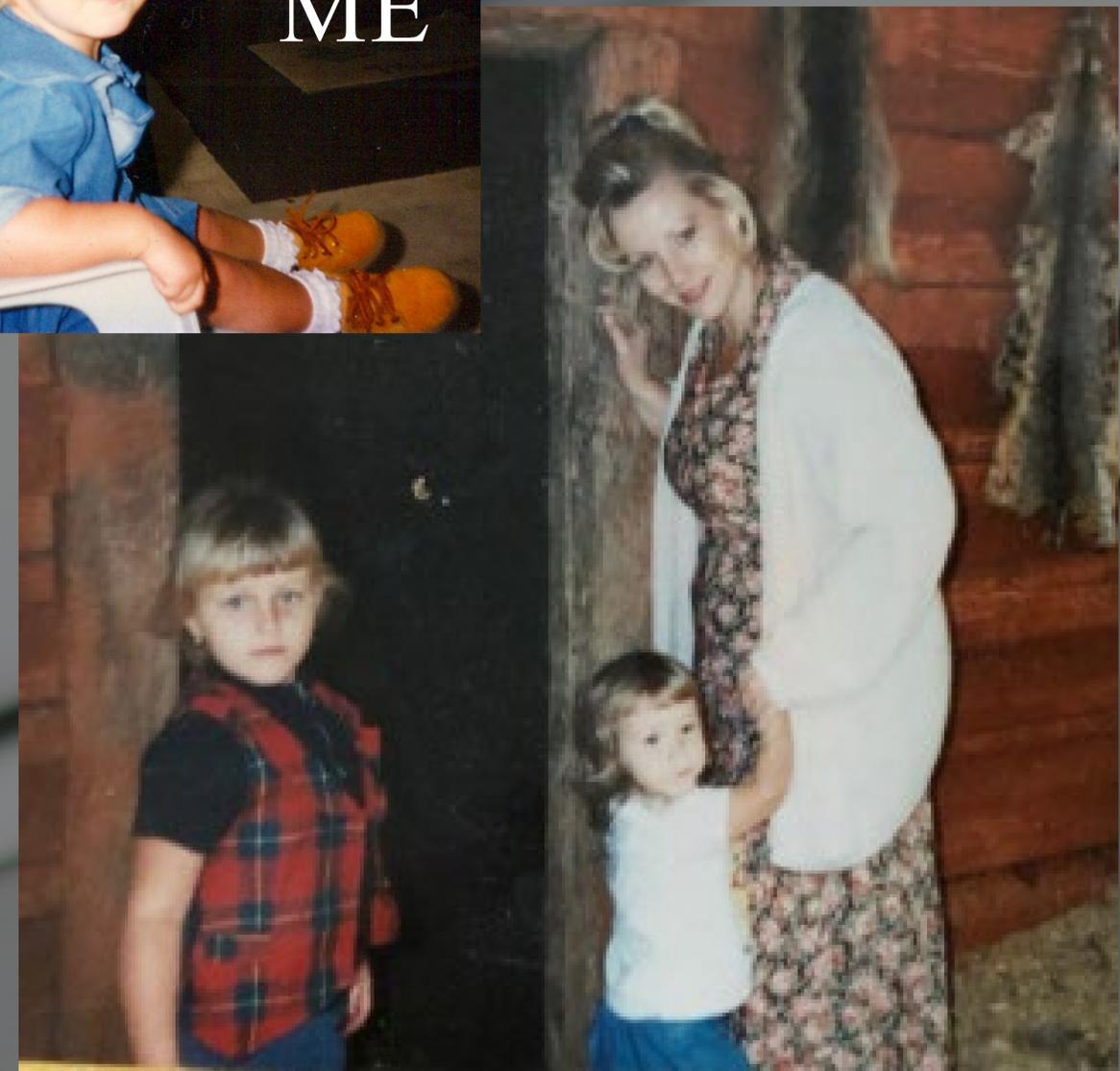
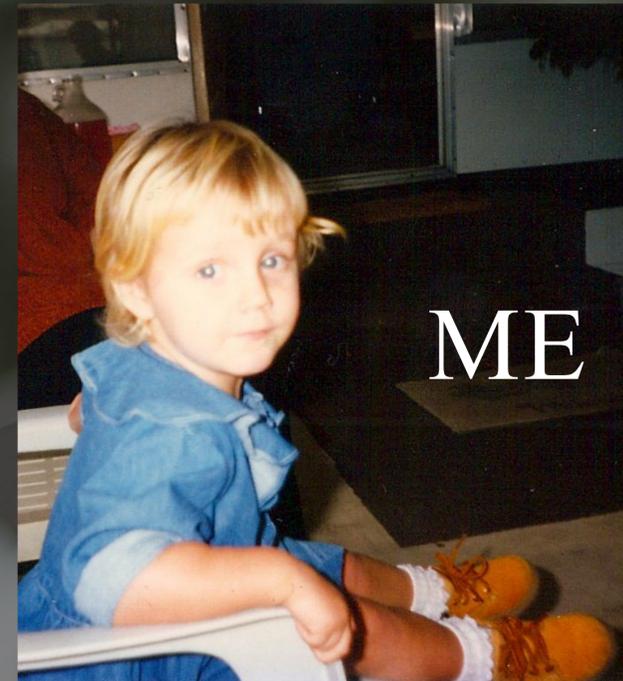
Thank you for taking the time to read through this treatment. DECEMBER is based on my real story, a story of a young girl afraid of who she is.

Growing up queer in the south made me feel an immense amount of guilt and pressure to be someone I'm not, often trying to bury who I was by any means necessary. I was so desperate to be 'normal', I felt the only way to do so was to smother every ounce of queer inside of me and assimilate into the southern culture around me.

When I was 9, my father took me hunting and I killed a small deer that stood terrified in front of us because I felt I had no other choice. I thought going into the woods with my father would cure me, but instead, it became one of the worst, most vivid memories of my life.

I hope by making this film and continuing to tell stories like this, that LGBTQ+ youth will soon grow up with the freedom to be unapologetically themselves. That kids will grow up knowing they are perfect exactly the way they are, and they don't need to feel shame or guilt in their identity.

MAE



THE STORY

Our story is centered around MOE - a young girl struggling with her sense of self. Who am I, why am I like this? The film opens with Moe and her best friend CHARLOTTE laying out in the grass looking up at the starry night sky, asking that exact question.

Charlotte points out Orion's Belt and tells Moe of a story her mother passed down to her, of the deer in the stars, and how looking up should make us feel free.

"I don't think I feel free" Moe responds, not even fully understanding why she feels that way.

That night, the two share a bed in a small camper. Being so close to Charlotte makes Moe uncomfortable, she can't help but notice how beautiful she is in the glow of the moonlight.

Early the next morning, the two girls and their fathers are walking through the woods - both men have rifles strapped to their backs.

Moe's ultimate battle comes at an unlikely time - when a young deer sprints across the road and her father hands her his gun.



SCRIPT

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

It's a cold December night. Bright, plump stars shine through a thin layer of wispy clouds.

There are 2-3 RV camper trailers set up where the forest meets a hilly grass clearing. MOE, a quiet, contemplative 17 year old is laying in the grass with her best friend CHARLOTTE - whose dark brown hair is loose and entangled in the grass beneath them.

The longer MOE looks up, the more restless her thoughts become.

MOE

Do you ever just wonder, why?

CHARLOTTE laughs, not meaning to make light of MOE's moment, and turns to look at MOE - who keeps her eyes locked on the stars.

CHARLOTTE

You mean about all this?

MOE

Well, yeah.

CHARLOTTE sits in the weight of the question for a moment.

CHARLOTTE

I guess I just think about how.

MOE doesn't respond, resigning to her overwhelming thoughts. CHARLOTTE feels the shift, something's off. She points up at three glowing stars in the sky: Orion's Belt.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

You see that, those three bright ones?

MOE nods.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

That's the deer constellation...

Moe can't help but look down at Charlotte as she speaks, her dark brown eyes shimmering in the moonlight.

PAGE 1

SCRIPT

MOE fakes a smile and slips down the tiny walkway to the bed she's sharing with CHARLOTTE who is already tucked in.

CHARLOTTE
You get the wall.

MOE
Okay.

She places her things in her bag and climbs up the ladder and into the loft bunk.

CHARLOTTE
Pull the curtain.

MOE looks behind her, there's a dark blue curtain that slides around the side - she pulls it, cocooning them in. Only a sliver of golden light makes its way in.

MOE can feel her heart race as she moves over CHARLOTTE onto her side of the bed. She can feel her face turning red and quickly makes her way under the covers.

CHARLOTTE pulls the covers up over her shoulders and turns to face MOE.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
It's gonna be freezing.

MOE
Already is.

MOE lies. She pulls the covers higher up around her despite how warm and uncomfortable she feels.

CHARLOTTE
I have a few extra warmer-packs you can use.
I put them in my boots and gloves last winter. They'll help.

MOE takes a deep breath full of nerves and brushes her let-down hair out of her face. CHARLOTTE helps her and slips the rest of MOE's hair behind her ear.

MOE can feel her skin burn under CHARLOTTE's fingertips. Her eyes meet CHARLOTTE's deep gaze for a questionable second that she tries to shake away.

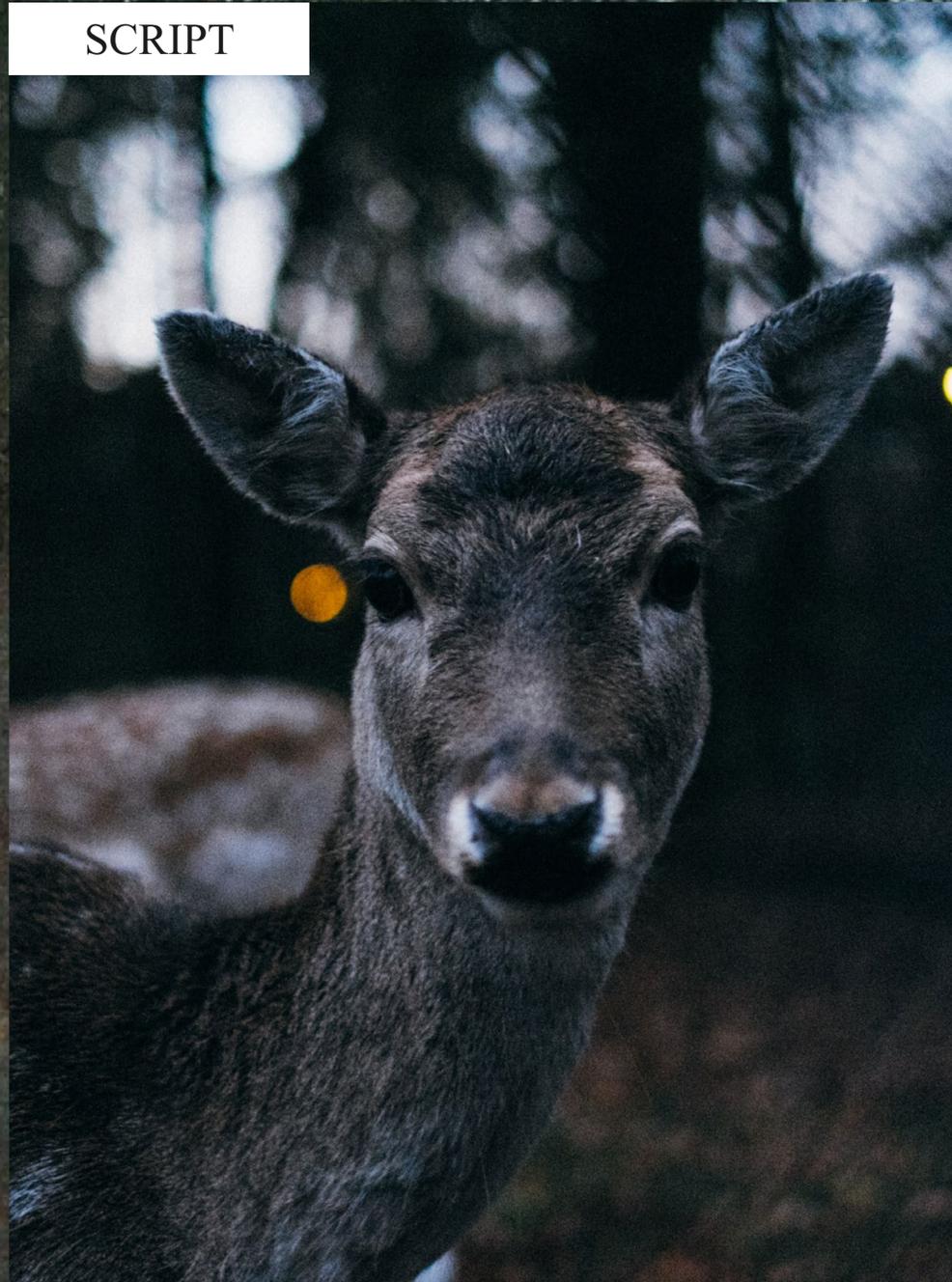
MOE
We can see the deer from here.

Both girls look out at Orion's Belt through the small window.

CHARLOTTE nestles her head into the pillow and closes her eyes.

PAGES 3/4

SCRIPT



CLOSE ON THREE DEER AS THEY DART ACROSS THE ROAD, RIGHT IN FRONT OF OUR GROUP.

CHARLES and JAY go into auto-pilot. Everything is done in a calculated, quiet manner.

CHARLES looks down the path where the deer ran - it's another dirt road, but this one is fenced and gated. Two of the three deer managed to jump the fence and run to safety, one small doe remains trapped by the gate, scared.

JAY
(to the girls, quietly) C'mon!

JAY waves the girls to him.

MOE and CHARLOTTE share a nervous glance and run towards JAY.

CHARLES turns his rifle around, he pulls the bolt back and loads the gun, then looks directly at MOE.

CHARLES
Alright, wanna get the first of the season?

He hands the rifle to her.

MOE's throat closes, she looks at her father blankly, not knowing how to tell him "no". CHARLOTTE looks at MOE in shock, they lock eyes for a moment - she sees nothing but fear in MOE.

CHARLES slaps MOE's shoulder.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
C'mon, pull it up.

MOE pulls the rifle up to her shoulder, shaking. CHARLES and JAY look at the deer and then back to MOE.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
You shot a gun before, you know what to do.

MOE clicks the safety and looks at the deer standing terrified in front of her, then pulls the trigger.

The gun kicks back.

MOE's ears ring, vision blurs - everything feels a bit surreal.

CHARLES and JAY have the biggest smiles on their faces.

JAY walks over to the deer and CHARLES takes the gun from MOE, still frozen in place.

PAGES 6/7

THEMES

Loss of Innocence
Questioning Self / Identity - LGBTQ+
Young Love / Forbidden Love
Being an Outsider / Not Belonging
Family Values and Obligations
Gender Roles



CHARACTERS

MOE - 16/17, White

Moe grew up in a strict, conservative family. Her father is a dominant presence in the household, while her mother adheres to more stereotypical gender roles. Being their only child, Moe feels pressure to hold true to their family values but often finds herself veering from her father's demanding personality and rules.

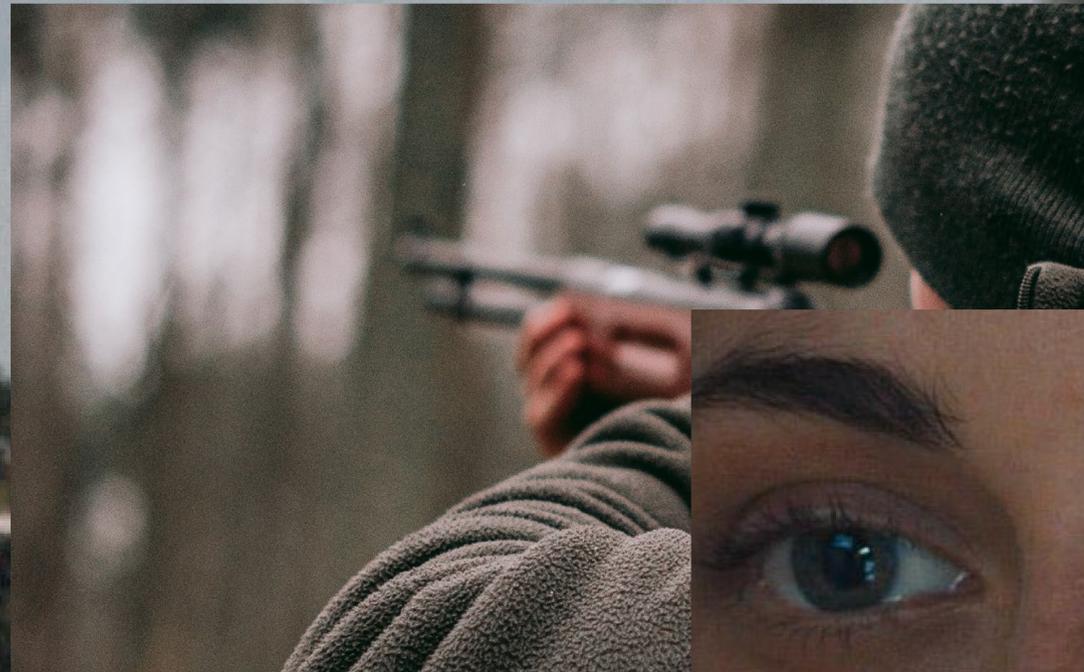
Moe is:

Questioning her identity - do I like girls?

Feeling pressured to be someone she's not.

Very intelligent, but cut off from her emotions.

Actively trying to repress the feelings she has for Charlotte.



MOE

"Do you ever look up and wonder, why?"

CHARLOTTE



CHARLOTTE - 17/18, BIPOC

Charlotte is:

Moe's best friend.

Very whimsical, trying to figure herself out but isn't in a rush.

In touch with her emotions / spiritual side.

Living with her mother full-time, her parents have been divorced since she was 5.

"I think the point is to look up and feel free."

CHARLES - 50, White

Moe's father. He believes he's the 'alpha male' and that men and women have very different and very specific roles to fill in society. He demands respect from Moe and often silences her with his domineering presence.

JAY - 40-45, BIPOC

Charlotte's father - only sees her a few weekends a year. He's trying to do good for Charlotte but doesn't necessarily know how or where to start. Good friends with Charles - is much more kind than Charles, but still has predominantly misogynistic views.



CHARLES & JAY



MY FATHER

APPROACH

I want to focus on capturing intimate moments to pull the viewer into Moe's head and truly showcase her perspective. The audience needs to feel what she's feeling - towards Charlotte, her father, herself, and the deer.

I'll accomplish this with tight, detailed shots that focus on all the little things Moe picks up on. Charlotte's hair tangled in the grass, Charles's large hand gripping his rifle, Moe examining her imperfections in the mirror.

Mixing a choppy edit with elongated still shots will allow us to curate the anxious, pressured, but lovingly delicate pace the film needs. This editorial approach will also help us emphasize the importance of a single moment.

The shooting style will be cinéma vérité - I want it to feel candid and docu, focusing on the reality behind each moment.





Intimate Details

Tom Speers's film, *Boy Saint*, did an incredible job showcasing the detailed nuances of teens exploring, or more so discovering, their sexuality. I want to bring the same level of detail to *December* - the glances, the tiny moments that feel elongated and emphasized while the rest of the world remains unaware.

CASTING & PERFORMANCE

The heart of this story rests between words - in its silence and lingering glances. I'm looking for actors that are comfortable with exploring the silence, engaging with their space, and improvising small, naturalistic details - adding a bit of charm and depth to the characters.

Nuanced, natural, real.



DEEP BLUE





ROOM (password: 2021)



REEL

WORK



OCTOBER

[My name's Mae](#) - I'm a writer and director based in Brooklyn, NY.

Growing up queer in a small southern town has shaped me into an artist unafraid of exploring the road less traveled while remaining sensitive to both my audience and subjects' experiences. I tackle often overlooked themes in my work, delving into isolationism, mental illness, and identity - with an undeniable love for the underdog.

Filmmaking has always been me figuring myself out - searching for a better way to articulate who I am and what I've experienced. It's a form of catharsis.

In art and life, I strive for honesty and am committed to the craft of storytelling. I've written, directed, and edited a dynamic collection of films that have played in festivals around the world, and hold numerous accolades including two Red Dot Design Awards, College Television Award Nominations, and two Gold Addy Awards.

I'm passionate about people and telling their stories with simplicity.

email: mvnnfilm@gmail.com

THANK YOU

treatment by MAE MANN

