

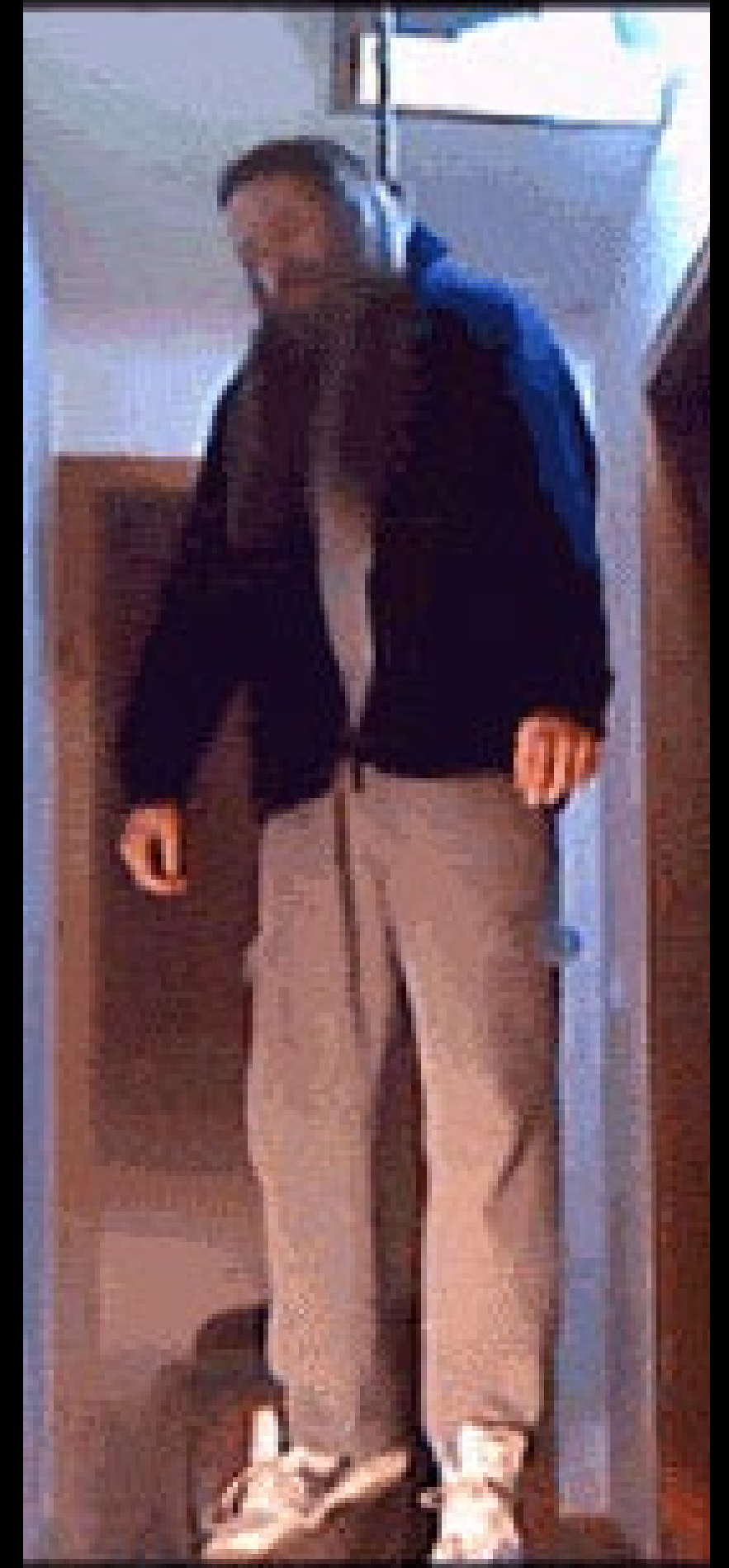
Comedy is Easy, Dying is Hard



Donny



Donny
is a dark comedy about
George Bruce,
a frustrated comedian who
wants to end his life.



When his suicide takes a strange turn and **his spirit possesses a ventriloquist puppet,** he goes on a journey to free his soul from that purgatory and discovers his family, his value, and his path to redemption.



THEMES AND CONCEPTS

George commits suicide because of his enormous self-loathing. But now he is something he despised even more, a ventriloquist dummy.

He must figure out how to get out of this thing and continue ending his life.

To his further dismay, he is stuck with a needy, talentless ventriloquist whom he detests. This amateur is his only path to freeing himself from this world.

Ultimately, he will need to learn that he can redeem himself. He can atone for those he discarded in life. And he can still love himself.

It's never too late for redemption.



THE TRANSFORMATION

After George commits suicide, he believes he is experiencing an out-of-body experience that must be typical of dying. He waits for his soul to float upwards. He looks around the room. Cracks some jokes about his former body. He feels great and is enjoying the moment, until he sees movement in a mirror and realizes he is the puppet.

He screams for help. A person rushes in and sees the dangling corpse – and the talking puppet. The sight of a talking doll causes the person to have a heart attack and drop dead.

A second person rushes in. Sees both the dangling stiff and the other body on the floor. The puppet tries to explain, but the second person also suffers a panic attack and drops dead.

When a third person arrives, the puppet keeps his trap shut.

He doesn't want to hurt anyone, but he does need help.

George/Donny



George had a semi successful comedy career. He played in many comedy clubs throughout the country and even was featured on a few TV shows. Most of this happened in his early 30s. Unfortunately, he lived to 67. Due to his perceived failures, he genuinely despised his life.

So, he killed himself. But his soul is now in a puppet. **He goes on a journey of discovery about his life and learns HE MUST MAKE AMENDS for the mistakes he made so his soul can move on.**



Lewis Black



Billy Crystal



Brian Cranston



Chevy Chase



Paul Reiser

Vinnie

Vinnie is a bit of a lost soul himself. Raised by a single mom, he never knew his father and never developed much confidence. His closest friends were his dolls. His struggle for acceptance led him to ventriloquism. As hard as he tries, he is GOD-AWFUL. **But with George's soul in his puppet, life is about to change for the better.**

The power he suddenly has over George is seductive, and destructive. It goes to his head. When his self worth drops, he finds himself similarly suicidal. Vinnie is also on a journey to learn to love himself.



Bo Burnham



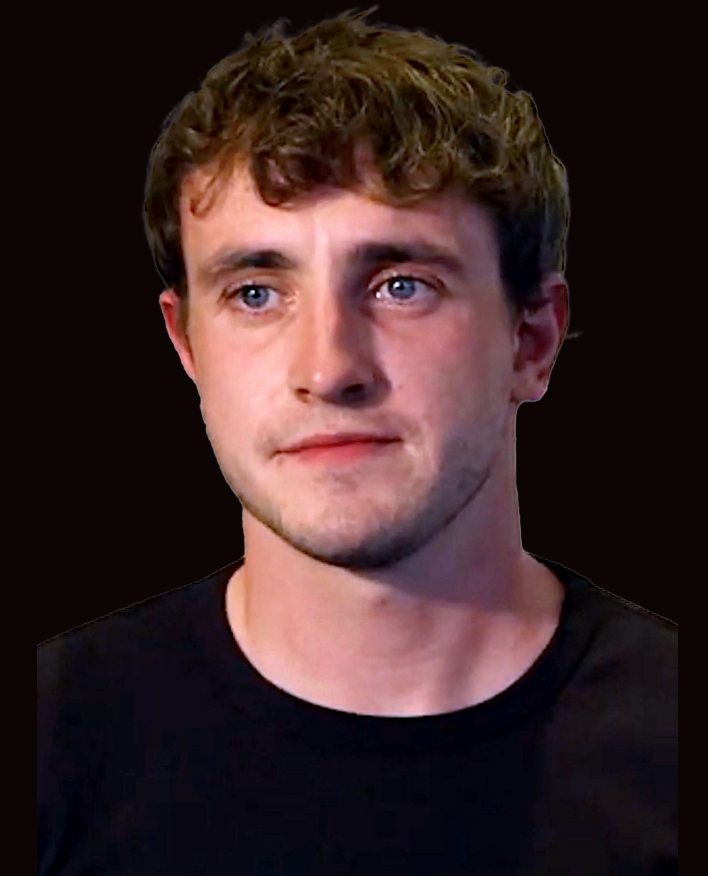
Daniel Radcliffe



Kieren Culkin



Michael Cera



Paul Mescal

Franny

Comedy groupie, Franny, falls for Vinnie. Well, she falls for him because of his jokes, and all the good ones are George's. So maybe she fell for George.

She finds herself in the middle of a comedy team feud ...with two lost souls she must help save.
Her big heart and courage to overcome fears of her own help her discover her own self-worth.



Abigail Breslin



Daisy
Edgar-Jones



Haley Lu
Richardson



Lauren Lapkus



Rachel Brosnahan

Tone

DONNY is a dark comedy with heart.

The supernatural event in the story is singular. Otherwise, the world is the same as ours.

But no one can know about the supernatural situation – just like the personal secrets we all keep.

George handles the discovery of his supernatural torture with the same wry cynicism of Phil Connors in Groundhog Day.

The film takes dark subjects like suicide and lifelong family grudges seriously as it playfully toys with their stubborn absurdity.

The humor emerges from painfully awkward moments created by vitriolic relationships.



SETTING

The setting is lower middle-class suburbia.

It's placed in Wisconsin for the cold unwelcoming gray skies of late autumn and winter. These working-class characters struggle to survive in a post- American Dream acceptance.



RELATIONSHIPS

The characters are bound together by necessity.

George/Donny needs Vinnie, and later Franny, as a caretaker to physically carry him through his journey.

Vinnie needs George as the brains behind his suddenly successful comedy act.

But more importantly, they discover they are pulled together for a deeper reason...

because they are father and son.



REASONS FOR WRITING DONNY

My father was an enormously talented musician,
blessed with a divine singing voice that melted listeners instantly.

As a child I was enamored by my dad's singing and wanted to be just like him. This may have come from my need to connect with him. His music career seemed far more important to him than I did.

Even with his divine gift, he never succeeded as a musician. He struggled internally against self-worth. This only distanced him from me further. He left the family, emotionally first, then physically.

He let himself go. Gave up on life. And any relationship with his son.

In April 2020, he died.

DONNY is my fantasy of him realizing his mistakes. Realizing my need for his neglected love and guidance. Maybe he would have an epiphany after his death.

Maybe he'd somehow come back and correct it.

COMPARABLES



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