

THE MOLECULE: PROJECT BRIEF

Format

Feature Film

Genre / Tone

Historical Drama / Psychological Biopic

Oppenheimer meets *A Beautiful Mind*, with the subjective visual intensity of *The Tree of Life*.

Budget / Buyer Lane

Mid budget / period prestige drama with stylized subjective visuals

Focus Features, Searchlight, FilmNation, Apple Original Films, Netflix lane

Core Hook

A Swiss chemist accidentally discovers LSD and believes he has found a tool for healing the mind, only to watch the molecule escape the laboratory into military abuse, political panic, and counterculture mythology.

One Sentence Pitch

After Albert Hofmann accidentally discovers LSD, he champions it as a breakthrough psychiatric medicine, then spends the rest of his life trying to understand whether he opened a door to healing, madness, spiritual truth, or something no scientist could ever control.

Why It's Timely

It speaks to the modern psychedelic renaissance, mental health treatment, scientific responsibility, pharmaceutical ethics, and the danger of powerful discoveries being pulled away from the people who understand them and repurposed by governments, institutions, and culture.

Main Characters

Albert Hofmann: A disciplined Swiss chemist whose accidental discovery becomes the defining burden of his life. He is not a prophet or a reckless evangelist. He is a serious scientist trying to understand what he has touched.

Anita Hofmann: Albert's wife and emotional anchor. She grounds the story outside the laboratory and gives the film its quiet human center as Albert's work becomes larger, stranger, and harder to contain.

Werner Stoll: A psychiatrist who represents the early medical promise of LSD. His work helps Albert believe the molecule might be a serious tool for understanding and treating the mind.

Ernst Jünger: A writer and intellectual presence who helps pull the molecule into philosophical and mystical territory, challenging Albert to see that LSD may not belong only to science.

The Molecule: The discovery itself functions almost like a character. It begins as a compound in a lab, then becomes medicine, weapon, sacrament, scandal, myth, and finally a mirror for whatever people bring to it.

Story Snapshot

1. In Switzerland, Albert Hofmann works as a careful laboratory chemist, searching for useful compounds with medical potential.
2. After accidentally absorbing LSD, he experiences a terrifying and beautiful rupture in perception, realizing he has discovered something unlike any ordinary drug.
3. Early psychiatric research suggests LSD may help doctors understand psychosis, trauma, consciousness, and emotional suffering, giving Albert hope that the molecule can be used responsibly.

4. The discovery escapes the clean boundaries of the laboratory. Military interest, political fear, media hysteria, and counterculture mythology transform LSD into something Albert can no longer guide.
5. As the world projects its own dreams and terrors onto LSD, Albert has to confront the central question of his life: whether discovery creates responsibility, even when control is impossible.

Ending / Final Image

In old age, Albert sits with Anita in the Swiss Alps as young hikers pass by, casually carrying the molecule into a world far beyond his laboratory. He understands that LSD was never the miracle itself. It was only a way of pointing back to the world that had always been there. The final feeling is not triumph or regret, but awe, grief, and acceptance.

Theme in One Line

A discovery can open a door, but it cannot decide who walks through it.

Positioning

It's a prestige psychological biopic about the scientist who discovered LSD and then spent a lifetime watching the world turn his molecule into medicine, weapon, religion, panic, and myth.

Materials Available

One-pager and full screenplay available upon request or through the private script library.

RYAN CLARKE

Screenwriter & Playwright | Albuquerque, NM

Dark Comedy | Satire | Character Drama | Social Thriller

Ryan Clarke is an Albuquerque-based screenwriter and playwright whose work blends dark comedy, social satire, and intimate character drama. Across a slate of 20+ feature scripts, his stories often follow deeply flawed people pushed into impossible situations, finding humor, tension, and humanity in characters who are entirely in over their heads.

His screenwriting recognition includes Grand Prize Winner, 30th Annual Fade In Awards Comedy Competition (*#FightForNoah*); Semifinalist, 30th Annual Fade In Awards Comedy Competition (*The Trencherman*); 2026 Top 10 Finalist, ISA Table Read My Screenplay at Cannes (*A Walking Shadow*); 2026 Quarterfinalist, Finish Line Script Competition (*#FightForNoah*); two-time Semifinalist, ISA Emerging Screenwriters Competition (*Flashbang* and *Ghost of the Highway*); and four additional 2026 Honorable Mentions from Finish Line (*The Finalists*, *How to Be a Human: A Musical with No Songs*, *Ghost of the Highway*, and *Dead Signals*).

As a playwright, Ryan is a three-time winner of FUSION Theatre Company's short works festival, "The SEVEN", in 2024, 2025, and 2026. The stage version of *A Walking Shadow* was also selected in 2026 for The Road Theatre Company's 17th Summer Playwrights Festival.

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