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# FIRST DATE

A film by Manuel Crosby & Darren Knapp

103 minutes, USA

**Official Selection:**

2021 Sundance Film Festival – World Premiere

<http://www.magnetreleasing.com/firstdate/>

## FINAL PRESS NOTES

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## **SYNOPSIS**

Shy highschooler Mike finally summons the courage to ask out his badass neighbor Kelsey, only to realize he's missing a key element for a successful date - the car. Panicked and low on cash, he's conned into buying a beat up '65 Chrysler. Mike's plan to win over Kelsey soon turns into a surreal misadventure when they are inexplicably targeted by a pair of cops, a criminal gang, and a vengeful cat lady. A night fueled by desire, bullets, and burning rubber makes any other first date seem like a walk in the park. In this perfectly executed throwback thrill ride, directing duo Manuel Crosby and Darren Knapp deftly weave together elements of dark comedy, teen romance, shoot 'em up action and classic coming-of-age story, creating a truly entertaining ride that never misses a beat. This refreshing mix of tones, coupled with a break-out performance from Tyson Brown as Mike, make **FIRST DATE** a truly outstanding first feature.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Movie night at Darren's. A long-standing tradition, where friends gather together to break out old favorites, new discoveries, and the ones we've been hearing about forever but were just waiting for Blu-ray to see them at their best. Projector, surround sound, the works. Might as well be church.

With all due respect to the classics of old, and the titans of film history, our sermons circa 2017 tended to go the way of Robert, Kevin, Quentin, Joel and Ethan, among others. We'd reminisce about a bygone, yet recent time- a time when these indie rebels, and many others, started shooting their breakout films. And you felt that... that electricity on the screen. Y'know?

"Why don't they make 'em like this anymore?" we wondered.

Don't get us wrong- we both love modern movies. Dramas, blockbusters, superheroes, you name it. But, whatever happened to fun, suspenseful, ensemble-driven films that had scale but also felt kinda... odd? Could movies be made today that felt like that?

We weren't sure. But, we figured we could always go shoot one. Why the hell not?

We wanted to make an independent flick, the kind that had a certain kinship to many of our favorites from the 90s and early 2000s, but that still felt exciting and fresh. Something with youthful energy, but also with bite to it. Something that could mix comedy, suspense, romance and violence while feeling like a natural blend. Kinda like mixing all the different sodas at the soda fountain. You're not supposed to do it but damn, it's a sugar rush. Something that would allow us to play with special effects and spotlight a unique ensemble cast. And also something that we would have seen when we were just getting into filmmaking, and been *stoked* about.

Furthermore, why not make it homespun? *First Date* is shot in Valley Springs, the town we both grew up in, a generation apart in age (and where Darren still lives). Almost the entire cast and crew

consists of individuals from the greater Sacramento and Valley Springs regions. We knew our local area was full of talent- so why not highlight them? We both felt that screen presence and chemistry amounted to more than an IMDB star rating. Let's give everyone their shot!

We didn't have a studio to help us make this movie. Besides, who was gonna fund two NorCal indie filmmakers with no features under their belt? What would they say about the script? "Sierra Mist was fine, why did they put fucking Dr. Pepper in here?"

Who knows what would have been said? (Not us, cause we didn't wait to find out.) Call it determination, call it foolishness or call it not being prepared- we simply started filming. We figured if we could put a few self-funded scenes together, we could use those to start generating further budget investments, and then pull off the bigger scenes. (Fortunately for us, it worked out exactly that way, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this director's statement!)

The end result? A movie with layers for those searching for them- but also a thrilling ride for those who want entertainment. The characters and story within have deeply personal meanings for us, but we also hope that viewers will take away their own meanings from them too. The highest honor for us would be that this movie ends up on the shelf of a fellow genre cinephile, having their own movie night with friends, and saying "Have you heard of First Date? ..... Oh, you GOTTA check this one out!"

Enjoy,  
Manuel & Darren

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

### **Manuel Crosby - Director**

Growing up in Valley Springs, California, Manuel Crosby discovered filmmaking around age twelve and has since written, directed, shot, edited, and produced numerous projects, including the short western film DEAD MAN'S LOCKET (2017) and the thrillers PRECAUTION (2014) and BROADCAST (2012). While volunteering at Calaveras County Public Access TV during college summer vacation, he became friends with Darren Knapp. The two have been making movies with mutual friends ever since. He currently resides in Northern California.

### **Darren Knapp - Director**

Darren Knapp is an independent filmmaker of 22 years. He has made several short films with credits including Cinematography, Editing, Writing, Directing and Producing. Over the years he has collaborated with his sister Brenda Norris and long-time friends Lucky McKee, Kevin Ford, James Miller, Manuel Crosby and musician/composer James Lockett. Among some of their collaborations are SWITCHES (2002) LIVING BY THE GUN (feature length, 2013) THE MISSING (2014), BROADCAST (2012), PRECAUTION (2014) and DEAD MAN'S LOCKET (2017).

### **Brandon Kraus - Producer**

Brandon Kraus is an actor/producer known for, "13 REASONS WHY", AMERICAN FIGHTER (2019) and FIRST DATE (2021). Brandon's business experience includes being a financial analyst for BlackRock and real estate broker and investor. With a keen attention to the finances and strong interpersonal skills, he has provided production with leadership and business execution from the pre-production stage to distribution/festivals. Brandon's primary responsibilities on FIRST DATE includes raising capital, day-to-day production management, budgeting, contract negotiation, and distribution.

### **Lucky McKee - Producer**

Lucky McKee is an award-winning producer, screenwriter, director, and novelist best known for work directing the cult hit MAY (2002), the schoolgirl chiller THE WOODS (2006), and the notorious 2011 Sundance shocker, THE WOMAN. Lucky oversees FIRST DATE'S post-production team in El Paso, Texas and will be introducing the film to multiple distributors as well as facilitating showings at the larger film festivals.

### **Charles Horak - Producer**

Charles Horak is a fifth generation El Pasoan. He is the director of the monthly film screening series, The Film Salon, and host of the long-running radio program, On Film, which airs weekly on KTEP 88.5FM. He is a member of the Broadcast Film Critics Association and a past board member of the Texas Archive of the Moving Image. Most recently, Horak has built a film collective specializing in film production and post-production work in West Texas, and he is currently a producer on several feature films, including Kevin Ford's documentary THE PUSHBACK (2020 SXSW), Zach Passero's hand-animated THE WEIRD KIDS (2020) and a new psychological horror film from writer/director Lucky McKee.

## ABOUT THE CAST

### **Tyson Brown - Mike**

Tyson Brown's fascination with acting began in high school in Georgia, inspired by watching his favorite characters come to life on screen. He knew that he would one day be in front of a camera too. A few years later, Brown moved to Sacramento, California, and started acting in short films with local filmmakers. Brown's breakout role as Mike in this year's *FIRST DATE* will be his first time acting in a feature film.

### **Shelby Duclos - Kelsey**

Shelby Duclos' passion for acting started at a young age. In elementary school, she took a media class where she learned how to operate a camera and the rest is history. Duclos would film, direct and act in her own homemade movies on an old school camcorder and star in her small town's production of *Annie* as Annie, feeding her desires to act and make short films well into her high school years. To continue to work on her craft, Shelby joined the high school drama club for 2 out of her 4 years landing astounding roles like "girl with umbrella." She knew then that theater acting, as beautiful as it is, just wasn't for her. Duclos' passion for acting never stopped, however it wouldn't be until her mid-twenties that she decided to stop ignoring the fire inside of her to act and she finally took a TV/Film acting class at Sacramento's local acting studio, Studio 24. Since day 1 of acting class, Shelby's heart was set on wanting to act. She worked on various Sacramento/ Bay Area student projects and would ultimately land her first big role as Kelsey in her first feature film, *FIRST DATE*, debuting in 2021.

## CREDITS

Written, Directed and Produced by Manuel Crosby and Darren Knapp

Produced by Brandon Kraus

Produced by Lucky McKee and Charles Horak

Cinematography by Manuel Crosby

Music Composed by Noah Lowdermilk, Kevin Kentera, and Manuel Crosby

Additional Music by Mads Heldtberg

Edited by Zach Passero and Manuel Crosby

Sound Design by Andrew Smetek

First Assistant Director Brandon Kraus

Second Assistant Director Josh Fesler, LK

Executive Producers Brandon Kraus, Manuel Crosby, Dara Bazzano, Rob Longwell, LK  
Christian Milner

Associate Producers Darren Knapp, Harold & Carol Crosby, Carol Knapp,  
Paul Duclos, Cameron Samimi, Elijah Korobkin

### CAST

Tyson Brown as Mike  
Shelby Duclos as Kelsey  
Jesse Janzen as The Captain  
Nicole Berry as Sergeant Davis  
Samuel Ademola as Deputy Duchovny  
Ryan Quinn Adams as Vince  
Angela Barber as Ricky  
Dave Reimer as Shannon  
Jake Howard as Donnie  
Samantha Laurenti as Mikaylah  
Scott Noble as Dennis



Leah Finity as Darla  
Shari Schweigler as Thelma  
Graham Green as Roger  
Josh Fesler as Brett  
Brandon Kraus as Chet  
Greg Jones as Ross  
Todd Goble as Tony  
Sara Garcia as Tasha  
Desalene Jones as Kelsey's Mom  
Darrell P. Miller as Kelsey's Dad  
NJ Brown as Mike's Dad  
Keldamuzik as Mike's Mom  
Renée Sprouse as Janice  
Grid Margraf as The Boss  
Robert Joseph Miller as These Aren't Just Trash Bags  
Shane Maus as Hammer Time  
Terry Morgan as Industrial Hardware  
Sean McIntire as Fuck Em I'm Leavin'  
Pedro Lara as The One Guy Who's Actually Working  
Ron Zuchella as Blue Shirt  
Brittany Reitz as Confused Car Girl  
Bri Larson as Nurse  
Robin Vance as Truck Driver  
Lori Nielsen as Diner Owner/Waitress  
Drake Morehouse as Paramedic 1  
Micheal Stockton as Paramedic 2  
Chris Rhodes as Paramedic 3  
Jessica Belshe as Pinup Model

Bowling Alley Extras LK  
Ian Robertson David Brookshire Parth Solanki Giovanni Salas

Bystanders

Daniel Walker

Gloria Sabala Randy Liming

Nicholas Macias Ian Robertson Joseph Pucilowski Rayne Moreno

Line Producer Brandon Kraus Sprott Woods

Unit Production Manager Brandon Kraus

Camera Assistants Ian Robertson Matt Couto  
LK

Hunter Reusche Graham Green

Camera Operators Manuel Crosby Darren Knapp

On Set Sound Recordists Andrew Hobgood Darren Knapp

Ian Robertson Randy Nundlall Jordan Sachs

Joe Barnett

LK

Andrew Smetek

Gaffer Cody Martin

Electric LK

Key Grip

Rylon Bird Grips

Andrew Hobgood Francisco Acosta Josh Fesler

LK

Ian Robertson Matt Couto Jordan Sachs Garrett Sachs Pedro Lara Wesley Dotson Hunter

Reusche

Equipment

Ryan Quinn Adams, RAAD House Films Ed Lark Calaveras County Public Access  
Television

Hair and Makeup Michelle Cochran Brandon Kraus Josh Fesler Shelby Duclos Darren  
Knapp

Fresh Fade Consultant Pedro Lara

Wardrobe LK

Property Masters Cheryl McIntire TC Morgan

Props/Vehicles Brandon Kraus John DeMasters Wesley Dotson Dara Bazzano Tanner  
Williams

Jim Miller Rusty McGee Adam Sturgeon

Pinup Photo by Mitzi & Co. Photography

Prop Car Ad Website by Larry Anderson

Vehicle Rental - cop car- One Take Stunts

Additional Casting by Graham Green

Production Insurance  
Charlotte Brown, McGee & Theilen Insurance Brokers

Production Assistants Josh Fesler Joseph Pucilowski Bri Larson

Shelby Wesner

Special FX Supervisor LK

Special FX Assistants Josh Fesler Parth Solanki

Cat Wranglers Kim Gleason Carol Crosby

Locations

Rick & Julie Varain Sarah Lunsford Harold & Carol Crosby Megan & Tony Mabanag  
Kim & Stacey Gleason Dave Silva  
Brook Silva  
Rosie Vega  
Kevin Smith Kevin Johnson

John Swift

David & Gina Hesseltine Don & Donny Holsworth Creekside Health Facility Valley  
Springs Variety Store Robert DeMarco

Top Quality Insulation & Fireplaces Jackson Rancheria Casino Resort

Stunt Coordinator Terry Morgan

Stunt Double “Thelma” Susan McGarry

Martial Arts Instructor, Fight Choreographer Phil Weaver

Assistant Fight Choreographer Justin Dorland

Armorer ISS Props

Stunt Drivers LK Brandon Kraus

Set Photographer Garrett Sachs

BTS Videographers Ed Lark Garrett Sachs Josh Fesler

Catering

LK

Carol Knapp Jenny Baxter Sarah Lunsford Joan Lark Brenda Norris

Debbie Knapp Hobgood

Post-Production Supervisors Charles Horak  
Lucky McKee

Digital Color Timing Cheeky Monkey Post

Digital Colorist Ryan J. Orozco

Visual Effects and Titles ZP Studios

VFX Artist Zach Passero

Re-Recording Mixer Andrew Smetek

Foley Artist Kristen McLeod

## SONGS

### SUGARTANK

Written by Jammes Lockett Performed by Thrillharmonik

Published by Pied Piper Lorre Musesick (ASCAP)

### BAR NONE

Written by Jammes Lockett Performed by Thrillharmonik

Published by Pied Piper Lorre Musesick (ASCAP)

### HIDE AND SEEK

Written by Jammes Lockett Performed by Thrillharmonik

Published by Pied Piper Lorre Musesick (ASCAP)

### I LORD

Courtesy of Art Mechanix

Courtesy of Art Mechanix

Courtesy of Art Mechanix

### SAMSARA BLUES

Written by Subra Doyle Performed by Subra Doyle

Courtesy of Subra Sonic Records

GAME SHOW THEME

Written by Andrew Stevens and Miles Olson Performed by Andrew Stevens and Miles Olson  
Courtesy of

Miles Away Studios BMI (PRO) and 1217 Records BMI (PRO)

Written by Jonathan Cacal, BJ Strahan, Jordan Abellanida, Adrien Cabrera, BJ Alvarez, Noah  
Justen Dutro Performed by Sounds of Jah Clemons, and

TELL ME WHY

Written by Jonathan Cacal, BJ Strahan, Jordan Abellanida, Adrien Cabrera, BJ Alvarez, Noah  
Clemons, and

Justen Dutro Performed by Sounds of Jah

THE SONG I NEVER WROTE

Written by Jammes Luckett Performed by Thrillharmonik

Published by Pied Piper Lorre Musesick (ASCAP)

Courtesy of Art Mechanix

TAKES A MINUTE

Written by Andrew Stevens Performed by Andrew Stevens

Courtesy of 1217 Records BMI (PRO)

YOU GOTTA HELP YOURSELF

Written by Andrew Stevens Performed by Andrew Stevens

Courtesy of 1217 Records BMI (PRO)

A COAT FOR ALL SEASONS

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Written by Noah Lowdermilk, Manuel Crosby, and Kevin Kentera Performed by Noah  
Lowdermilk, Manuel

Crosby, Subra Doyle and Kevin Kentera  
FREE AND EASY

Written by Andrew Stevens Performed by Andrew Stevens

Courtesy of 1217 Records BMI (PRO)

Special Thanks

Brian Kraus

Madison Smith

Frank Crosby

Denise Jennings

LK

Ed Lark Sarah Lunsford

Carol Norris

Jim & Bonnie Miller

Brenda Norris

Ben Strang

Peter Tran

Lucky, Vanessa, & Arthur Bear McKee Charles & Ann Horak

Raphael Gray

Kathy Mewhinney

Dean Mata

Emilia Knapp

Robin Vance and "STELLA" her Logging Truck Josh Pierson & Courtney Conklin Dan

Zampa & Shannon Sinclair

Powell Robinson

Carol Knapp

Debbie Knapp Hobgood

Derek Larsen

Brandon Morter

Noah Lowdermilk, Mallory Guyton & Olive Kevin Kentera & Danielle Thomas Ed Sait

Harold & Carol Crosby

Cassandra Thames

Pat & Cheryl McIntire  
Ron Zuchella  
Robert D. Kryzkowski  
Lisa Michelle  
Randy Nundlall, Jr.  
Rick Behler  
Anne Katherine Smith  
Roger Salter  
Jack Pickens  
Chris Rhodes  
Tony Cucchiari  
The Bazzano-Jones Family  
Siavash Farahani  
Ryan & Grace McGrady

Chelsea & Paula Cambra  
Sprott Woods  
Eric Fernandez  
Natalia Filson  
Darla Bayer  
Peter Sereno  
Craig Kessler  
Rhonda Abend  
Sharon Slater  
Carson Nugget  
Jeff Olsen

Tom & Donna Robertson  
David & Lisa Reyes  
GT at Letus35  
Cliff Edson  
Michelle Tyer  
Elizabeth Barnes  
Travis Ban  
Danny Dowden  
Cameron Edens  
Mark Campbell  
Aaron Williams  
Glenn Harris  
Save A Pet Thrift  
Film Riot  
Ryan Connolly  
IndyMogul  
Eric Beck  
Tom Antos  
Robert Rodriguez  
Peter Kuplowsky

Grant Holtmeier  
Jake Fisher  
Trent Henry  
Susan Tomasich  
Christian Blandin  
The Albert-Berry Family  
Britton Thomas  
Nathan Reedy  
Dan Gill  
Jammes Lockett  
Jeremy Hanke  
Michael Joshua DeSousa  
Ivana Bogdan  
Emmanuel & Alex Lemnah  
Shelby Wesner  
The Folks at Autozone & Ace Hardware, Valley Springs

Sheriff Rick DiBasilio & The Calaveras County Sheriff's Department Audrina Bosonetto  
TNT Airsoft & Customs  
Hannah, Fynn, & Arlo Passero  
Marina Monsisvais & Paul Ro  
Hazael Anaya  
Carlos Corral  
The McLeod Family  
Dale & Sally Smetek

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