

## = Obvious Child =

Obvious Child is a 2014 American romantic comedy film written and directed by Gillian Robespierre in her directorial debut . The film stars Jenny Slate , Jake Lacy , Gaby Hoffmann and David Cross . The story follows Donna ( Slate ) , a stand @-@ up comedian , who has a drunken one @-@ night stand with a man named Max ( Lacy ) after breaking up with her boyfriend . She subsequently finds out she is pregnant and decides to have an abortion .

Obvious Child originated as a 2009 short film which was written by Robespierre , Anna Bean and Karen Maine , and also starred Slate in the main role . By making the film , Robespierre hoped to remove the stigma surrounding abortion and to correct what she perceived as a misrepresentation of unplanned pregnancy in earlier films . She finished the feature @-@ length script in 2012 . The film was financed through various production companies and filmmaking grants and it was shot in New York in 2013 .

The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival on January 17 , 2014 , and was released in theaters on June 6 , 2014 . It grossed US \$ 3 @. @ 3 million and was well received by critics . David Edelstein , Mick LaSalle and Dana Stevens praised the film 's portrayal of abortion , while A. O. Scott and Ty Burr highlighted its realism and humor . The film won numerous accolades , including two awards from the National Board of Review and two Independent Spirit Award nominations .

## = = Plot = =

After performing a set at her regular comedy club , Donna Stern ( Jenny Slate ) is dumped in the bathroom by her boyfriend , Ryan ( Paul Briganti ) , who confesses he is leaving her for one of her friends . Donna tailspins into a wave of depression and later drunkenly delivers a terrible set in which she insults her ex @-@ boyfriend . Later that night , at the bar , she meets Max ( Jake Lacy ) , who is there with clients but who missed her set . Donna and Max have an instant connection and they end up having sex . In the morning Donna leaves Max 's apartment without saying goodbye .

Several weeks after their one @-@ night stand , Donna discovers that she is pregnant . Donna visits a Planned Parenthood clinic to schedule an abortion and discovers the only dates available are her mother 's birthday and Valentine 's Day ; she picks Valentine 's Day .

Max tracks Donna down at the bookstore where she works and they have the first of several awkward conversations . Donna then runs into Max when he stops by her mother 's apartment to return a book to her mother , Nancy ( Polly Draper ) , who is a former professor of his . They have lunch together where Donna is prepared to tell Max about her pregnancy and impending abortion until he makes a comment about how he wants to be a grandfather someday . He comes to Donna 's comedy show , but she leaves with another man , Sam ( David Cross ) . She has an awkward evening with Sam and quickly leaves . After her terrible night , Donna visits her mother to talk about her upcoming abortion . Her mother comforts her by telling her that she too had an abortion before Donna was conceived .

After pushing Max away , Donna finally invites him to the club to see her perform . When he arrives she performs a set , speaking about how she is pregnant and planning to have an abortion . Max leaves , but on the day of Donna 's abortion , he arrives at her home with flowers and asks if he can accompany her to her procedure . While at the clinic he tells her he supports her , and that when he said that he wanted to be a grandfather , he meant sometime far in the future . The two agree that this is one of the nicest Valentine 's Days they have ever had . After the abortion , Max takes Donna to his home where he makes her tea , and then they watch *Gone with the Wind* together .

## = = Cast = =

Jenny Slate as Donna Stern , a comedian who works at a bookstore  
Jake Lacy as Max , the object of Donna 's one @-@ night stand  
Gaby Hoffmann as Nellie , Donna 's roommate and best friend  
David Cross as Sam , a comedian and friend of Donna 's

Gabe Liedman as Joey , Donna and Nellie 's friend , who is also a comedian  
Richard Kind as Jacob Stern , Donna 's father  
Polly Draper as Nancy Stern , Donna 's mother  
Paul Briganti as Ryan , Donna 's ex @-@ boyfriend  
Cindy Cheung as Dr. Bernard , a physician at the Planned Parenthood clinic  
Stephen Singer as Gene , owner of the bookstore at which Donna works

= = Production = =

Obvious Child originated as a short film of the same name about an unemployed woman who decides to terminate her pregnancy resulting from a one @-@ night stand , which was written by Gillian Robespierre , Anna Bean and Karen Maine . Robespierre said that the story was spawned from her frustration with what she perceived as a " misrepresentation of women on screen when it came to unplanned pregnancy " , in films such as Juno ( 2007 ) , Knocked Up ( 2007 ) and Waitress ( 2007 ) . Robespierre , Bean and Maine , feeling " disenchanted with the representation of young women 's experience with becoming pregnant " , wanted to make a film that destigmatized an abortion by featuring a woman who terminates a pregnancy without regretting her decision . Jenny Slate was cast as the lead after Robespierre and Bean saw Slate performing stand @-@ up comedy . The short was produced in 2009 and released on the video @-@ sharing website Vimeo , where it was watched by 40 @,@ 000 people .

Inspired by the responses to the short film , Robespierre decided to expand the story into a feature film , and wrote an extended screenplay with Karen Maine and Elisabeth Holm . Although the writers wanted to " stick as close ... as possible " to the original story and characters , they changed the lead character 's profession to stand @-@ up comedy . The film 's stand @-@ up scenes were written by Robespierre , who tried to emulate Jenny Slate 's style of comedy , and were revised by Slate and Gabe Liedman , another comedian , who also volunteered their own material . The script was written over an 18 @-@ month period before Robespierre and Holm began to seek financiers to fund the film 's production ; they started sending the script to potential financiers in November 2012 . It was financed through a variety of sources , including the production companies Animal Kingdom Films , Rooks Nest Entertainment , Sundial Pictures and Votiv Films , as well as grants from Rooftop Films , the Tribeca Film Institute and the San Francisco Film Society .

The film was shot by cinematographer Chris Teague over 18 days in New York during April 2013 . The filmmakers were given permission by Planned Parenthood to film for a day in the organization 's New Rochelle clinic . The film was edited by Casey Brooks in Greenpoint , Brooklyn , and the score was written by Robespierre 's boyfriend .

= = Release = =

Obvious Child premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival on January 17 , 2014 . A Kickstarter campaign to help send the film to Sundance was created by the director on December 13 , 2013 , earning a total of \$ 37 @,@ 214 by January 14 , 2014 . Independent film distributor A24 Films bought the film 's North American distribution rights , while international distribution rights were purchased by The Exchange . It was released in the United States on June 6 , 2014 , and earned \$ 3 @,@ 123 @,@ 963 at the box office in 18 weeks . It also earned \$ 197 @,@ 361 and \$ 4 @,@ 093 in the United Kingdom and New Zealand respectively , making a total gross of \$ 3 @,@ 325 @,@ 417 .

Posters for the film advertised it as an " abortion comedy " . Gillian Robespierre said that she found the descriptor reductive , but also said that she was pleased that the word " abortion " was being used on the film 's poster and in headlines about the film . Writing for Entertainment Weekly , Emily Blake speculated that the film 's lack of recognition in mainstream award circles may have been due to its label as " the abortion comedy " . NBC drew criticism for requesting that the word " abortion " be removed from an online advertisement for the film ; it apologized after a petition circulated by Planned Parenthood accused the network of censorship . The film was marketed in conjunction with

the abortion @-@ rights organization NARAL Pro @-@ Choice America .

The film was released on DVD and Blu @-@ ray in North America on October 7 , 2014 . Extra features include an audio commentary with Robespierre , Elisabeth Holm and Jenny Slate , a featurette about the film 's production , a collection of extended scenes , and the original 2009 Obvious Child short film on which the feature was based .

= = Reception = =

Obvious Child was met with positive reviews from film critics . On Rotten Tomatoes , the film has a rating of 89 % , based on 145 reviews with an average rating of 7 @.@ 3 / 10 . The consensus from the website states , " Tackling a sensitive subject with maturity , honesty , and wit , Obvious Child serves as a deeply promising debut for writer @-@ director Gillian Robespierre . " On Metacritic , the film has a score of 76 out of 100 , based on 35 reviews , indicating " generally favorable reviews " .

Peter Travers described Obvious Child as " uniquely special " in Rolling Stone , while The Washington Post 's Ann Hornaday described it as " one of the most startlingly honest romantic comedies to appear onscreen in years " . Ty Burr of The Boston Globe found the characters sympathetic and realistic , and enjoyed the humor . The New York Times ' chief critic A. O. Scott praised the film for striking a balance between humor and sentimentality , writing , " It 's both funny and serious without trying too hard to be either , and by trying above all to be honest . " Peter Debruge described Jenny Slate as " wildly funny " in Variety , while Marc Mohan called her performance " endearing and real " in The Oregonian . The Hollywood Reporter 's Todd McCarthy was also impressed by Slate 's performance and opined that the supporting cast members were equally impressive .

Numerous critics praised Obvious Child for its portrayal of abortion , including Dana Stevens of Slate , who wrote that the way Donna 's abortion was portrayed was humane and politically neutral but also that the film , " for all its lightness of tone , is radical " . In a review for The Guardian , Xan Brooks described the film as " fresh and funny and really rather brave " for handling a controversial topic that other filmmakers routinely avoid . New York critic David Edelstein called Robespierre " brave enough to be ambivalent " in choosing not to include a blatant political message in the film . The San Francisco Chronicle 's Mick LaSalle similarly concluded that " If the movie has a political statement , it 's a subtle one " ; he also praised the film for treating the topic sincerely while still maintaining a humorous tone .

Conversely , Michelle Golberg suggested in a review for The Nation that the film 's popularity with critics was not due to its quality but rather its taboo subject matter : " If the ordinary drama of abortion were more regularly represented in the movies , Obvious Child wouldn 't be much more than an amusing hipster diversion . " Kate Taylor of The Globe and Mail expressed a similar sentiment and opined that many of the film 's jokes were crude and lacking in humor . USA Today 's Scott Bowles also found Obvious Child unfunny , describing the characters as " so morbid and whiny that the jokes don 't work , even as irony " . Kyle Smith , a critic for the New York Post , found the plot uninteresting and the cinematography " ugly " , and criticized Slate 's " desperate " performance .

The film was criticized by a variety of conservative and anti @-@ abortion groups and publications , including the Family Research Council , The Heritage Foundation , and the Media Research Center , through its NewsBusters blog and Cybercast News Service . In an article for The Human Life Review , Mary Rose Somarriba dismissed the film as " obvious propaganda " . Katelyn Beaty , meanwhile , who reviewed Obvious Child for Christianity Today , wrote : " While I ultimately disagree with Robespierre 's political aims , at the least she has provided a sometimes funny , often tender portrait of many ( though not all ) women who face an unplanned pregnancy . "

= = Accolades = =