[Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates" \o "Template:Use mdy dates) [Template:Infobox film](/wiki/Template:Infobox_film) ***Unfriended*** is a 2014 American [found footage](/wiki/Found_footage_(pseudo-documentary)) [supernatural horror film](/wiki/Supernatural_horror_film) directed by Russo-Georgian director [Levan Gabriadze](/wiki/Levan_Gabriadze),[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3) written by Nelson Greaves, exec-produced by [Jason Blum](/wiki/Jason_Blum), co-produced by Adam Sidman, and produced by [Timur Bekmambetov](/wiki/Timur_Bekmambetov) and Greaves.

The film premiered at the [Fantasia Festival](/wiki/Fantasia_Festival) on July 20, 2014, and at [SXSW](/wiki/SXSW) on March 13, 2015. It received a theatrical release on April 17, 2015. The film, which is told entirely through a high school student's [Macbook](/wiki/Macbook) screen,[[4]](#cite_note-4) stars [Shelley Hennig](/wiki/Shelley_Hennig) as one of several friends who find themselves terrorized online by an anonymous person.[[5]](#cite_note-5) The film received mixed to positive reviews from critics and has grossed $64 million against a $1 million budget.

A sequel to the film has been greenlit and is in development.

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## Plot[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

In Fresno, California, high school student Laura Barns is relentlessly bullied and harassed after a video of her drunk at a party is uploaded to YouTube without her consent, causing her to [take her own life](/wiki/Suicide).

A year later, her closest friend, Blaire Lily, views a video of Laura's suicide on [LiveLeak](/wiki/LiveLeak). It shows her standing on what appears to be her school's basketball court, shooting herself with a gun. Blaire is contacted over [Skype](/wiki/Skype) by her boyfriend Mitch Roussel. The two are suddenly joined by their classmates Jess Felton, Ken Smith, and Adam Sewell. During their conversation, they notice a user dubbed "billie227" in their chat, who was not invited by any of the participants.

After several unsuccessful attempts to get rid of the stranger, the five suspect that a classmate named Val Rommel is messing with them. After they invite Val to their chat, Jess's [Facebook](/wiki/Facebook) page is suddenly updated with photos of Val drinking and smoking marijuana at a party. Val berates Jess and demands that she delete them, but Jess proclaims her innocence. Jess manages to delete the photos, but they reappear on Adam's account. After repeated threats from Billie, Val calls [911](/wiki/9-1-1) to report [online abuse](/wiki/Cyberbullying) and then signs off.

The five soon discover that "billie227" is linked to Laura's [Instagram](/wiki/Instagram) account. Blaire is sent a link that reveals a screenshot of Laura messaging Val for her to remove the humiliating video and asking for friendship, only for Val to reject her by telling her to kill herself. Val is suddenly brought back into the chat, shown sitting motionless in her laundry room next to an open bottle of bleach. Val crashes to the floor as the police arrive. At first, the friends believe she just experienced a [seizure](/wiki/Seizure), but after researching the codes that the policemen relay to each other, they learn that Val died and the police are ruling it as a suicide.

Eventually, Ken uses anti-virus software to seemingly remove Billie from the chat. When Adam tries to call the police, he is warned by a mysterious voice against hanging up. Billie resurfaces with a camera view from across Ken's room. Ken walks over to the camera and freezes in horror before his webcam cuts off. Shortly after, it reconnects to show him being attacked by an unseen force and then mangling his hand in a blender, before using the blades to slit his own throat. Billie then displays the video that caused Laura's eventual suicide; titled "Leaky Laura", it shows a drunk and barely conscious Laura laying face-down behind a trailer, covered in her own menstrual blood and excrement.

Billie forces the remaining four friends to play a game of [Never Have I Ever](/wiki/Never_Have_I_Ever), stating that the loser of the game will die. All four friends are forced to reveal dark secrets which put them at odds with each other: Jess spread a rumour that Blaire had an eating disorder; Blaire crashed Jess' mother's car while drunk; Mitch kissed Laura soon before her death and reported Adam to the police for selling [marijuana](/wiki/Marijuana); Jess stole $800 from Adam; and Adam offered to trade Jess' life for his own. Adam, enraged, uses the game to force Blaire to reveal that she has had sex with him behind Mitch's back on two occasions; Billie uploads a [YouTube](/wiki/YouTube) video as proof. Mitch retaliates by forcing Adam to reveal that he [date-raped](/wiki/Date_rape) a classmate named Ashley Dane at a party and then forced her to get an abortion after she became pregnant.

Blaire and Adam suddenly receive messages from their printers. Worried that they are still lying behind his back, Mitch furiously demands that Blaire reveal her note to him and threatens to leave if she doesn't. In a moment of panic and high stress, Blaire shows her message: "If you reveal this note, Adam will die." Under Billie's thrall, Adam kills himself by shooting himself in the face; as he collapses, his camera reveals his note: "If you reveal this note, Blaire will die."

Billie then asks which of the three defaced Laura's grave. When Blaire warns Jess against answering said question, Billie cuts the power to all the lights in her house. Jess hides in her bathroom, while Blaire goes on [Chatroulette](/wiki/Chatroulette) and gets someone to call the police. Suddenly, the video feed disconnects after Jess is seen screaming and being thrown around the room by an unseen entity. Soon after, Blaire receives a Skype notification from Jess's account, which is a video of Jess with a curling iron shoved down her throat.

Billie privately messages Blaire on Facebook, wanting her to confess who uploaded the "Leaky Laura" video in the first place. Blaire tries to deny any involvement from her and Mitch, but she eventually reveals that Mitch was to blame. At that moment, Mitch grabs a knife and stabs himself in the eye, collapsing and disconnecting his video feed.

As Blaire breaks down in tears, Billie, who is unveiled as Laura herself, declares her appreciation for Blaire's honesty, but asks her to confess one more thing. A desperate Blaire tries to remind Laura of their friendship when she was alive, but Laura responds by uploading another video onto Blaire's account. It is the "Leaky Laura" video, yet it includes footage that shows that Blaire, who is laughing in the video, is the one who recorded it. With the truth finally revealed, the video is soon bombarded with hateful comments from those who denounce Blaire for causing Laura's suicide.

Billie then leaves Blaire alone. During a brief period of silence, her bedroom door creaks open before a pair of hands slam her laptop shut (the film shifts to a first-person perspective) before disappearing into the darkness. Seconds later, Laura's ghost violently lunges at Blaire, who screams as the screen cuts to black.

## Cast[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

* [Shelley Hennig](/wiki/Shelley_Hennig) as Blaire Lily
* Moses Jacob Storm as Mitch Roussel
* [Renee Olstead](/wiki/Renee_Olstead) as Jess Felton
* [Will Peltz](/wiki/Will_Peltz) as Adam Sewell
* [Jacob Wysocki](/wiki/Jacob_Wysocki) as Ken Smith
* [Courtney Halverson](/wiki/Courtney_Halverson) as Val Rommel
* Heather Sossaman as Laura Barns
* Mickey River as Dank Jimmy
* Cal Barnes as Rando Pauls
* Writer Nelson Greaves makes a cameo as one of Blaire's Facebook friends.

## Production[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

Gabriadze was attracted to the project (then titled *Offline*) as it focused on the theme of [bullying](/wiki/Bullying). He noted that the nature of bullying had changed since he was in school, as the Internet allowed for bullies to continue their actions even after school hours.<ref name=YM>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Production was 16 days total, including six 12-hour days of principal photography, three days of pick-ups and then a few more reshoots.<ref name=slash>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> When filming began, it mostly consisted of long takes around ten minutes in length. Shelley Hennig, who portrayed Blaire, found that this proved difficult for the energy and motivation needed from her and the other actors.[[6]](#cite_note-6) At her request, at least one full, 80-minute long take was filmed, with each actor in separate rooms with separate computers.[[7]](#cite_note-7) The film's ending was captured during one of these feature-length takes.[[7]](#cite_note-7) The film's title changed during shooting (and would also change prior to its theatrical release), as the film's crew felt that the title of *Offline* was "too general and not obvious" and that the then title of *Cybernatural* was "more to the point of what it is".[[8]](#cite_note-8) For wide release, the film was re-titled *Unfriended*.

## Release[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

*Unfriended* initially had its world premiere on July 20, 2014 at the [Fantasia Festival](/wiki/Fantasia_Festival) and screened on the film festival circuit under the title of *Cybernatural*.[[9]](#cite_note-9) A generally positive film festival reception and test screenings for the film prompted [Universal Pictures](/wiki/Universal_Studios) to pick up the film rights with the intent to give it a wide theatrical release the following year.[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11) The film's title was changed from *Cybernatural* to *Unfriended* and the film was theatrically released on April 17, 2015.[[12]](#cite_note-12) The film was screened at [Playlist Live](/wiki/Playlist_Live) on February 6, 2015[[13]](#cite_note-13) and premiered at [SXSW](/wiki/South_by_Southwest) on March 13, 2015.[[14]](#cite_note-14)

### Marketing[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

In July 2014, a [teaser trailer](/wiki/Trailer_(promotion)) was released with scenes from the film. The teaser shows the original title of the film which at the time was *Cybernatural*.[[15]](#cite_note-15) On January 12, 2015, the film's first official trailer with the title *Unfriended* was released.[[16]](#cite_note-16) Shortly after, on February 6, 2015, the film was screened at [Playlist Live](/wiki/Playlist_Live), a popular convention for internet celebrities from [Vine](/wiki/Vine) and [YouTube](/wiki/YouTube).[[13]](#cite_note-13) On March 13, 2015, the day of the film's official premiere at [SXSW](/wiki/SXSW), scenes from the film were uploaded and a chat box appeared, where viewers could talk to Laura. Once she was finished talking, scenes appeared on the screen.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Images were also released.[[17]](#cite_note-17) On February 13, 2015, a campaign was launched with [Kik Messenger](/wiki/Kik_Messenger), in which Kik users could have a chat conversation with Laura.[[18]](#cite_note-18) This made use of automated responses and pre-scripted responses, while also driving users to a dedicated microsite.[[19]](#cite_note-19) On March 13, 2015, after the film's premiere at SXSW, an after-party was hosted by [Blumhouse](/wiki/Blumhouse). Exclusive [Never Have I Ever](/wiki/Never_Have_I_Ever) cards were released at [SXSW](/wiki/SXSW) later, and a *"NEVER HAVE I EVER"* section was set up on the film's official website. *Unfriended*-themed photo booths were set up as well[[20]](#cite_note-20) During production, official Facebook and Skype accounts were set up for the characters in the film, and, after the premiere at SXSW, people who attended were "friended" by the official Laura Barns Facebook account. There was also a Twitter account, which tweeted attendees of the after-party.[[21]](#cite_note-21) *Unfriended* was released on DVD and Blu-ray on August 11, 2015.[[22]](#cite_note-22)[[23]](#cite_note-23)

## Reception[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

### Box office[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

*Unfriended* has grossed $32.5 million in North America and $31.6 million in other territories, for a worldwide gross of $64.1 million against a budget of $1 million.<ref name=BoxOfficeMojo/>

In North America, the film opened simultaneously with [*Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2*](/wiki/Paul_Blart:_Mall_Cop_2) and [*Monkey Kingdom*](/wiki/Monkey_Kingdom) on April 17, 2015, across 2,739 theaters, earning $6.8 million on its opening day.[[24]](#cite_note-24) In its opening weekend, *Unfriended* earned $15.8 million, which was higher than its $12 million range projection, and finished in third place at the box office behind [*Furious 7*](/wiki/Furious_7) ($29.2 million) and fellow newcomer *Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2* ($23.8 million).[[25]](#cite_note-25) Its opening weekend is the biggest debut for an original horror movie since [*The Conjuring*](/wiki/The_Conjuring), which opened with $41.9 million in July 2013.[[26]](#cite_note-26)

### Critical reception[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

*Unfriended* received mixed to positive reviews from critics. Review aggregator website [Rotten Tomatoes](/wiki/Rotten_Tomatoes) gives the film a rating of 63%, based on 150 reviews, with an [average rating](/wiki/Weighted_arithmetic_mean) of 6/10. The site's critical consensus reads, "*Unfriended* subverts found-footage horror cliches to deliver a surprisingly scary entry in the teen slasher genre with a technological twist."[[27]](#cite_note-27) On [Metacritic](/wiki/Metacritic), the film has a score of 59 out of 100, based on 30 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".[[28]](#cite_note-28) Reception at the [Fantasia Film Festival](/wiki/Fantasia_Film_Festival) was mostly positive.[[29]](#cite_note-29)[[30]](#cite_note-30) Common praise for the film centered upon its acting and visuals,[[31]](#cite_note-31) and [*Twitch Film*](/wiki/Twitch_Film) commented that the film was an "interesting look at modern methods of communication and the ramifications of the new normal of always-on social interaction."[[32]](#cite_note-32) [*Variety*](/wiki/Variety_(magazine)) commented that while the film was "exasperating" at points, they also felt that it was clever and innovative.[[33]](#cite_note-33) [*Dread Central*](/wiki/Dread_Central) also praised the film overall, but stated that they felt that the movie's one major flaw was "the fashion in which we are trafficked to each scare- through multi-screen clicking, copying, pasting and re-sizing, basically all-around multi-tasking. It can be trying to sit through and I liken it to sitting over someone's shoulder watching them web-surf... endlessly."[[34]](#cite_note-34) It was named Most Innovative Film at the [Fantasia Film Festival](/wiki/Fantasia_Film_Festival) and received a Special Mention for Feature Film.[[35]](#cite_note-35) British film critic [Mark Kermode](/wiki/Mark_Kermode) gave the film a positive review, calling it a film which understands Skyping culture and cyber-bullying. He said, "Many people who've seen the trailer say, 'You're being stalked through the internet. Just log off.' The point is they can't because they're addicted." While on one hand admitting it was a "shrieky, teen-terrorized, slasher movie," on the other hand he said it was a film about how cyber-bullying only works if you cooperate with it.[[36]](#cite_note-36) Irish film critic Donald Clarke, writing for [*The Irish Times*](/wiki/The_Irish_Times), gave the film a very positive review, describing it as "genuinely unsettling" and praising the filmmakers' "uncanny grasp of the complicated dynamics of contemporary interaction" and how they succeeded in "[retaining] a position on the moral high ground while bloody mayhem rages around their feet".[[37]](#cite_note-37) [Brad Jones](/wiki/The_Cinema_Snob) and David Gobble gave the film a very negative review, referring to it as repetitive, irritating, unoriginal, and insufferable.[[38]](#cite_note-38)