

Mulholland Drive™s The Nurse, The Math, The Meds: Drug Calculations Using Dimensional Analysis

David Lynch's iconic 2001 film has a fascinating history. Take a look back.

There are few films quite as beloved—or as baffling—as David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*.

After being praised as the best film of the 21st century in a BBC critics poll in 2016, *Mulholland Drive* took the top spot on the *Best of the Decade* lists from Film Comment, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association (LAFCA), *Reverse Shot*, and *IndieWire*. Now, ahead of its 20th anniversary on Oct. 19, it's time to uncover many of the mysteries behind the haunting 2001 film.

The plot seems simple enough: a young woman, played by Laura Harring, has amnesia following a car crash in the Hollywood Hills. Naomi Watts is her naive roommate, an aspiring actress. But that premise—just like the vehicle careening off the twisting, paved *Mulholland Drive*—eventually falls by the wayside, giving way to a debate over gender identity, the porous nature of reality, and the personal ramifications of fame.

Like a lot of critics who adore the movie, none of us got it the first time. Los Angeles Times film critic Justin Chang, who managed the LAFCA *Best of the Decade* poll, previously told *IndieWire*. "Any person who says they did is lying."

Even Lynch apparently let the story lead the way. "I started asking him questions," star Justin Theroux explained as part of the *IndieWire Awards Spotlight* in 2021. "When I finished a question, [Lynch would say], 'You know, I don't know, buddy. But let's find out.' He wasn't being cute or cheeky or evasive; he genuinely didn't know. He's like, 'I don't know.' It's like you're on an escalator into a cloud with him, you never know where the escalator lets off."

Two decades later, it's time to see just exactly how that *escalator* came to be. Here are nine surprising details about *Mulholland Drive* that even diehard fans might not know.

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