



# THE SHAPE OF LIFE

*Understanding the fight against genetic disorders through Huntington's Disease*

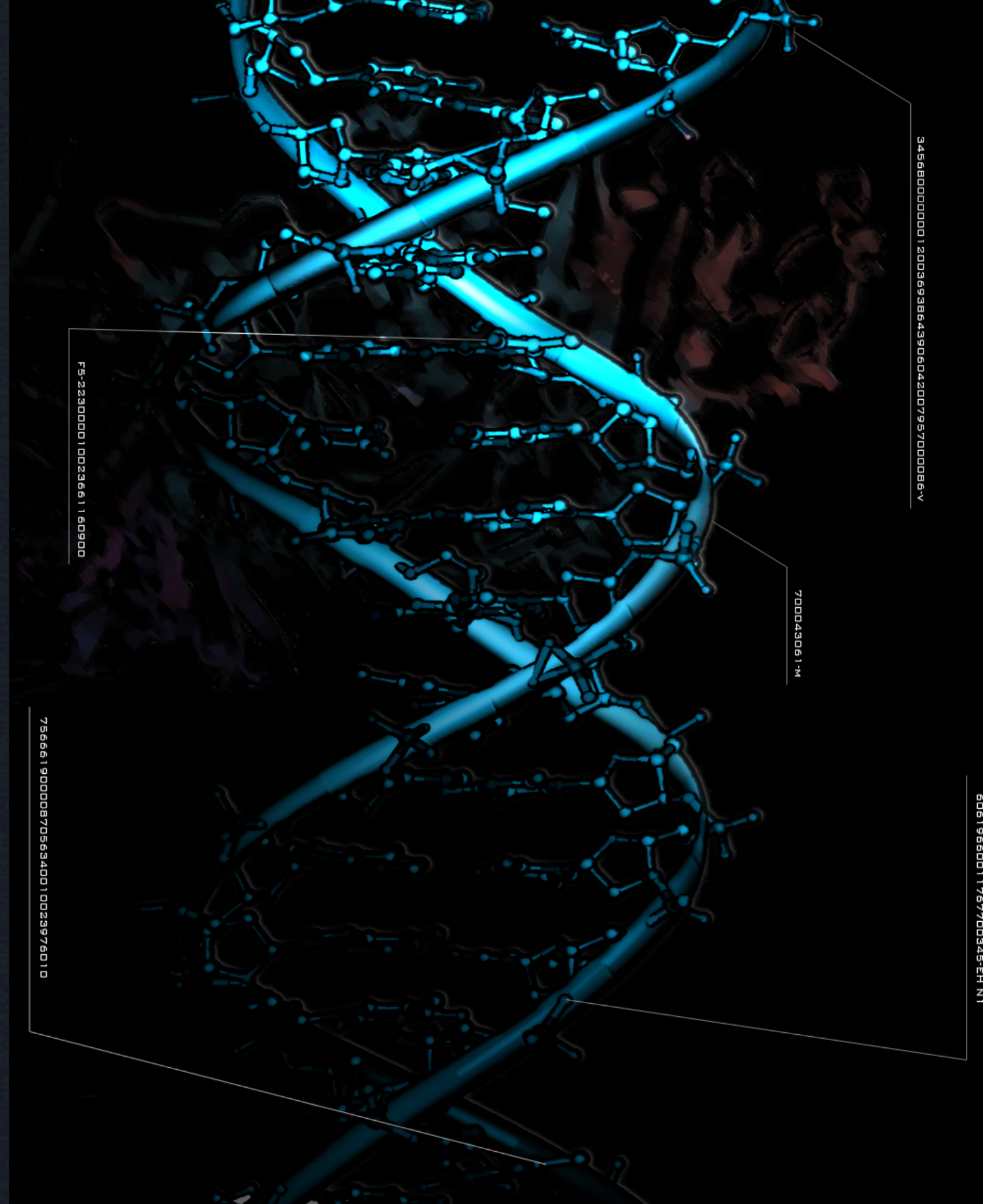


## SYNOPSIS

David, a brilliant British biologist, as he tries to cure his daughter, who appears to have developed Huntington's Disease, which David himself has transmitted to her.

With limited resources at the state university department where he works in the UK, he is persuaded by an old college friend (Lars) - even if it goes against David's principles of open source research - to go to work for probably the only organisation capable of bringing the resources that he needs to the table: a Research Center in Siena, Italy.

On his journey into this new world he discovers that his potentially life-saving research is simultaneously being used as part of a top-secret development for military-grade biological weapons.



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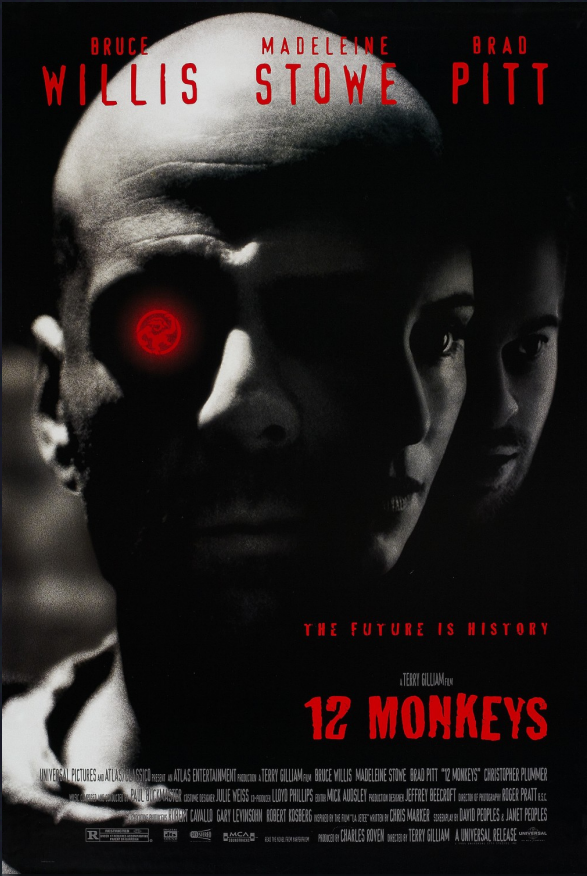
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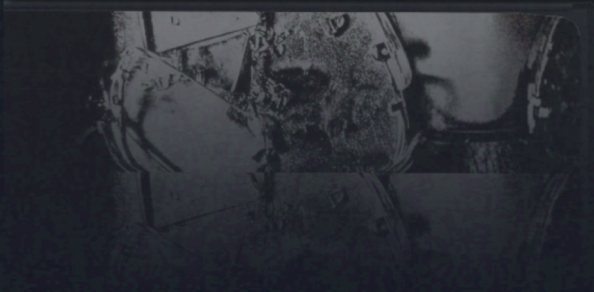
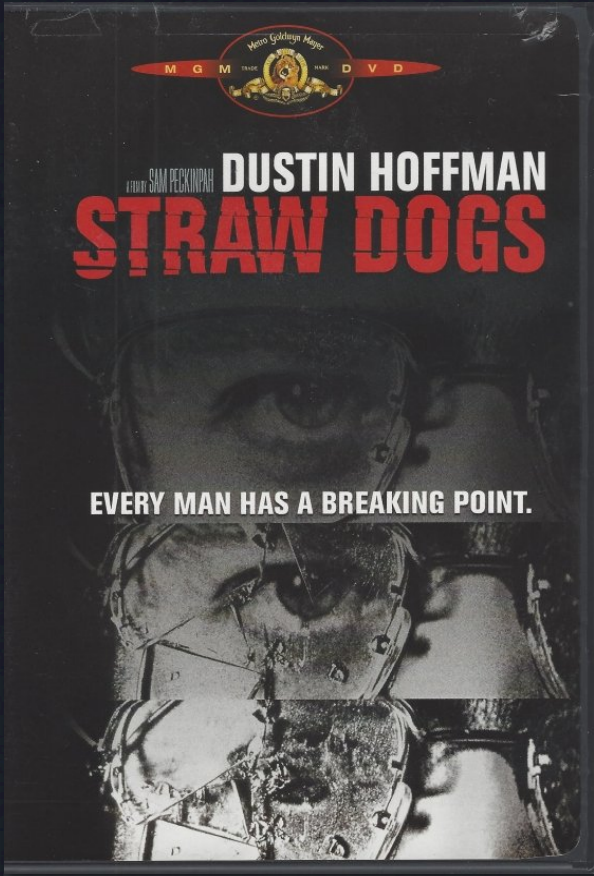
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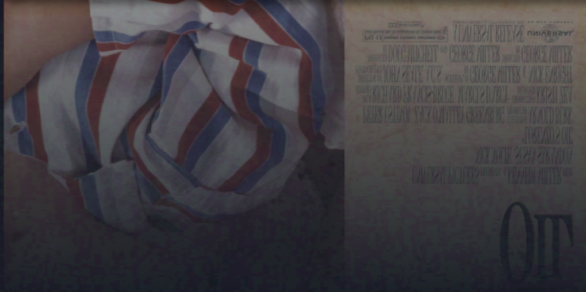
SHOW CROSS



MEETS



MEETS





TIM DAISH: CONFIRMED

## DAVID

### MAIN CHARACTER

David, 35s, a top-level genetic biologist from the UK. Tall, slim, weathered with stress. Much of the strength of his scientific research come from his ability to try things that other scientists won't touch and his obsessive drive to sacrifice everything else in his life in the pursuit of scientific understanding.

His drive and choice of scientific niche comes from his experience of watching his mother slowly deteriorate from a rare genetic disease. His pursuit of success in the laboratory has caused him to negate his daughter and his relationship with her mother.

His scientific brilliance tends towards arrogance and single minded stubbornness. Shunning emotional engagement with friends or family, he is a high-functioning alcoholic with a tendency for fly-by-night night hook ups with girls from the local bars.





KIERA MORGAN: CONTACTED

## ELENA

Elena, 30s, is a high-energy independent woman and single mother, proud of her achievements and yet requires affirmation and feels the need to be desired.

She is getting to the end of her ability to wait around for David to finish his research, and dedicates most of her time looking after the vineyard and estate that was left to her by her parents, where she lives with her daughter, Nora and runs a hostel/residency for young tech developers.





PIETRO RAGUSA: CONTACTED

## LARS

Lars, 50s, is a genetic biologist and ex-tutor of David. More interested in prestige and personal power than in social and medical advances that scientific discoveries in the genetic field can bring.

He feigns friendship with David, but in reality is a master manipulator searching to obtain unmeasured power in the biological weapons industry.





CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER: UNDER CONSIDERATION

## SVENSSON

Svensson, 80s, an elegant, austere and menacing presence. Entering the final years of his life, and suffering from tremors, he is doing everything in his power to discover the secrets of reversing ageing and cheating death itself.

He is the head of a powerful group of financiers who have invested millions in the pursuit of this scientific research.





JAY NATELLE: CONFIRMED

## DIGBY

Digby, 70's, elegant and aristocratic in appearance. He is a professor of genetics at the University of Cambridge. He appears severe but paternal towards David, and seems to help him when he discovers Nora's illness. Actually Digby is a double-agent who can't stand David's success and is loathsome to Lars, perhaps to consolidate his position of prestige that he feels threatened by his pupil.

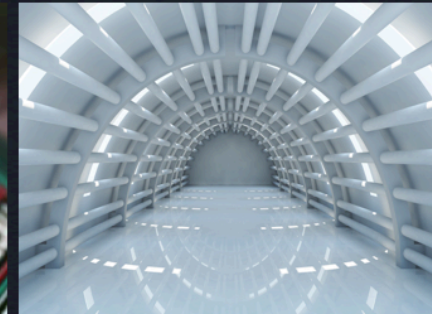
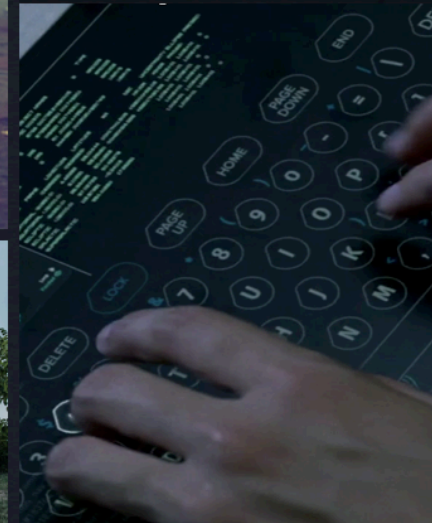
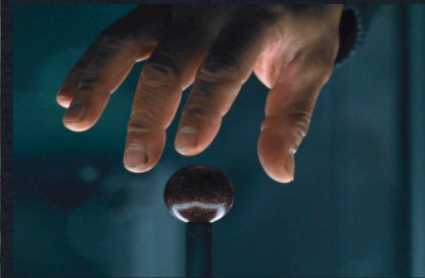




## MISE EN SCENE

Thematically, the story plays with the contrast between tradition and technological progress, and the two principal locations reflect this: the architecture of the Research Centre dates from the 19th Century, but is involved with cutting-edge genetic discoveries that could simultaneously provide the cure or the destruction of society; meanwhile, Elena's estate, in many ways the picture-perfect example of countryside living in a farm-vineyard environment - is home to an 'extended family' of 'digital nomads': tech programmers and entrepreneurs - and Elena employs new technology methods to maintain the farm (drones, programmed crop-spraying etc).

Much consideration will be given to the look of the film itself, and the look will reflect the themes of the story: sometimes painting-like (Ref: Greenaway), sometimes hard (ref: Trainspotting), sometimes emotional (ref: A Single Man, Tom Ford). One of the principal ways to achieve this result will be the use of 1960s Cooke Speed Panchro lenses, which will give an organically soft look to the film, countering the detailed, hyper-real look of digital cinema.





## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

There are three main reasons that have pushed this project forward

1) **The importance of scientific research, particularly in the fields of genetics** and biology, and the necessity that its funding and results are not locked in to the needs special private interests.

This has importance in regard to political agendas and governance, academic institutions and public opinion.

There are innumerable examples throughout society and all communication media as to how much society is interested in these themes particularly in regard to general science, but also genetics **and the fight to understand currently “incurable” diseases.**

2) The **impact that rare genetic diseases such as Huntington's Disease have on families, friends and communities, and to weave this into a story that is not “about” a rare genetic disease but one that keeps it, respectfully, as integral to the plot.** An adjunct to this comes in terms of the wider impact that research into rare genetic diseases can have on understanding of genetics and the use of gene editing for wider society.

3) The desire to develop a film in the **dramatic thriller genre that also deals with some of the “hotter” issues of our time,** in the story, whilst employing some more experimental techniques in the telling and the aesthetic: a classic narrative story arc with an exciting and surprising mix of ingredients to render a compelling artistic work.



## JUSTIFICATION OF IDEAS IN RELATION TO GENRE

The dramatic thriller genre, with elements of sci-fi, is well-suited to the theme of genetic editing, insofar as it allows both scientific-technical and also 'human impact' elements, and the relationship between scientific advancement and questions of ethics, amalgamating all of this inside a suspense and mosaic narrative. Suspense and mosaic narrative gives pathos to the themes of illness, cure, and the unsettling uses that unscrupulous people can have for scientific discoveries.

In this way it is possible to underline the archetypal counterpoint that has always gone hand in hand with scientific progress and the way that it is discussed and perceived in the public arena: on the one hand the necessity of scientific advancements as a source of wellbeing and of evolution, and on the other hand the threat that these same advancements can pose to society.

It is not by chance that the history of novels and cinema is diffuse with stories with these themes (science and ethics, progress and threat, the fight against disease and ageing and the attempt to become immortal), and also those that refer to the artificial manipulation of evolution by human beings, in terms of biology, psychology and society. Frankenstein, The Fly, 12 Monkey, and more recently, Gattaca, Ex Machina and the TV series The Outer Limits are just a few of the examples of films that are thematically close to THE SHAPE OF LIFE.





## HELP US MAKE THIS MOVIE, SUPPORT THIS PROJET

HD has been discriminated for too long, it's time to spread the knowledge as wider as possible

For the very firts time, non only HD but also paediatric HD is part of an international movie

A lot of education is still needed on the relation between science and ethics

A more aware and informed environment will finally make it easier for patients and for patients organizations to make their voces heard

HD is respectfully in the story as a key part of the plot



## WHAT YOU CAN DO AS AN HD ORGANIZATION

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Spread the word on your website, newsletter  
and social media

Send a supporting letter to the director  
[pantaleone@moonlifefilm.com](mailto:pantaleone@moonlifefilm.com)

Sign a partnership agreement

Advertise the crowdfunding campaign on  
kickstarter (Sep/Dec 2020)

Make a donation on the kickstarter platform

## WHAT YOU CAN DO AS AN INDIVIDUAL

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Spread the work to your network and  
contacts

Make a donation on the kickstarter  
platform



# THE SHAPE OF LIFE

*Understanding the fight against genetic disorders through Huntington's Disease*

**Production:** Moon Life Film Srl

**Director:** Pantaleone A. Megna

**Writers:** T. Daish, P. A. Megna, D. Sivilli.

**Cinematography:** Daniele Ciprì (Contacted)

**Language:** English

**Runtime:** 110 min.

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Partner

Soon on

**KICKSTARTER**

