

# “A GLORIOUS RIDE DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE”

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*Anthony has identified his purpose and hit the ground running Alexis Colette. It truly is a mercurial artistic statement.*

I spent the weekend with *Alexis Colette* and her friends, and I found myself wanting MORE of those promised and delivered, "True and distorted events." I've always wished I could visit the minds of Walt Disney, Federico Fellini, and Leonardo da Vinci, and now I add Anthony Johnson. However, I don't want to see Anthony's mind merely; I want to roll around that world(s) and inside his imagination for a while. Face it; Anthony W. Johnson got "that thing." Where others say aloud, "How does he think of this stuff? Who thinks like that? What does this all mean?" Well, Thank God, you Do think like that! What a treat! You must feel like a culturally hip Lewis Carroll, and I can only shout, "This is an E-ticket! Keep your hands inside the rails at all times, and thank you, Anthony, for the glorious ride down this rabbit hole! So, if you'll accept, I offer my thoughts on the new and improved *Alexis Colette*.

The author of this work, Anthony W. Johnson, is undoubtedly not shy nor timid. In the first minute of this movie, he addresses the most existential questions that have eternally plagued mankind. What is Life? Who is God? And Where is Truth?

Inside the esoteric trimmings of this piece, I find myself having to stop reading the script to ponder and ingest the fantastic scope of his words and images while urging myself to read more, faster, so my imagination won't be left behind.

Undeniably, Intellectually, this film is fueled by Anthony Johnson's soul, which he willingly shares. I feel like I'm in the presence of an artistic genius. The screenplay is a light dusting of magic, teetering on the edge of answering those eternal questions of Life, God, and Truth, while inviting me to join the many others; inside "the in-between." Ah, but here's "the rub." I'm only on page 5.

Thank you for sending Colette to soothe and direct me. She tells me it's a good time to outline the basics defining my situation within this screenplay. It's soothing. I now recognize this is the character who will guide me safely through this experience. She lets me know I should keep a diary; that's "exactly" what I'll do. Like an LSD trip, it's good to have a guide while tripping when you are subsequently stretching and expanding reality and offering up a brand new, unused consciousness.

Anthony Johnson's visions, dreams, and enigmatic characters present a beautiful yet grotesque view of the world (which I love). Individuals burdened by guilt, isolation, and emotional hunger make the futile search for personal salvation. The ideal that we all are fractured personalities, perceptions, thoughts, and experiences rolled into one bag of a mind and boy are creatively woven throughout this esoteric and erotic homage to Film Noir.

I read it twice, the first time to discover it and the second time to experience it. The homoerotic fetish horror genre that Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk have mastered don't even come close to this, and they've won award after award for dabbling within the subject matter.

Still, I'd love to hear what Ryan Murphy would say about Alexis Colette. I'm sure he'd be intrigued., but, regardless, you are drawn to it. Once you understand the basics, you can't help but feel something for it. So, it goes with Alexis Colette. Alexis Colette is not a movie. It is an experience paying homage to the criterion of a genuine Art Film. If asked to compress the Alexis Colette experience to a few words, I'd call it "Intellectually promiscuous burgeoning at the speed of life."

From the dark, veiled fervor of the Director informing me, "a song whispered in an ear can save ones' life," to the sublime yet twisted rules of the popular game "Truth or Scare... Wanna Play?" This script's emotional and psychological imprint is obtusely in my face, while the intent masquerades surreptitiously as seductive and wildly entertaining.





# “A MILLION LITTLE TERRORS...”



After only reading the screenplay, there is no way I would attempt to explain what this film will look like because I'd be wrong. In the depths of my soul, I know it will be unbelievably phenomenal, crazily compelling, and beautiful to watch. I find myself wanting to go right now to see it. Let's suppose the screenplay's pacing, tempo, message, and images stay true to themselves. Let's assume they jump off the page onto the screen in their exquisitely gnarled, contorted, and depraved natural ways. *Alexis Colette* will need to open with a psychiatric warning, "All viewers are subject to participation." The Director has personally ushered you in, "Please, have a seat. You may not want to look. You can't help but see. And trust me, you'll never forget.

*Alexis Colette* prescribes anamorphic mental health as the *destination*, and once you, the willing invisible participant, arrive at the Eloise Asylum, you will want to stay and flee. You will watch but hide your eyes, all the while subscribing to an unbelievable fascination and nervousness to experience this staccato trepidation. It's a trip! Yes, the characters are flawed. Ever meet any true artist who wasn't? Yes, the egos are inflated and simultaneously fractured—tools of distraction and survival. You will physically feel that the world is collapsing all around, yet you know it is not. You'll be tempted to experience the collapse underneath your resilient and solid footing just to see, to feel, and to recognize your personal survival, as well as the characters on the screen. The wavering distinction between sanity and insanity is conspicuous.

Anthony has identified his purpose and hit the ground running *Alexis Colette*. It truly is a mercurial artistic statement. As a child, I don't know if you had a thermometer with liquid mercury in the glass tubing, but if you did. If you ever broke it open to experience mercury's fundamental properties, it was a big liquid silvery blob that, when disturbed, broke into a million little silvery balls. Each time one little ball met another, it would join together until all the little balls had joined as they once were, returning to the big liquid silvery blob. That is what Anthony created in *Alexis Colette*. A million little terrors and dreams and suspicions when disturbed, but when integrated, they unite into one big, shiny, beautiful mystery. Not only has Anthony W. Johnson choreographed the passionate blended styles of dance, but he has choreographed every shot in this film. What would seem to exhaust any other artist seems to fly from his imagination onto the page with ease. Each shot tells a story. This is the goal of every painter. Paint a scene that succinctly yet beautifully tells a story. Every shot in this film does that intrinsically and begets every shot a masterpiece. These shots seamlessly hold *Alexis Colette* together. It is the "Best in the World" (BTW up to page 35). I love the ghost audience clapping in silence; their silence is the loudest sound.

The taming of Jones is brutally conspicuous. Uncomfortable, but like absorbing the remains of a devastating car crash, you have to look.

The pace of *Alexis Colette* is like riding a rollercoaster. The audience experiences the slow click, click, click chug, click, chug of the car nearing the rails' apex then pausing. The audience holds their collective breath. We don't know what to expect, but we know to expect something very different from this teetering point. Suddenly everything collapses, and the audience is in free fall, terrified, delighted, titillated, and hysterical. Without warning, a rapid swing to the right. Hold on. We're dizzy—another unexpected drop and sharp left. Don't! Stop! Don't! Elides into Don't stop! Don't stop! Don't Stop! We're astonished, loving the danger, then suddenly, cradled into a well-timed slowing. We catch our breath, and soon again, we're on the click, click, chug. Click, chug. We're going back up, and it all begins again. Intensity grows and magnifies by the images we see. I'm trying to survive this ride and probably need to close my eyes, but I can't. I have to watch. Repeatedly, that's the pace of this entire movie. *Alexis Colette* is tense, gloriously unnerving, and completely satisfying. You'll break a sweat.

All of the characters are complex, frightful, repulsive, sexy, innocent, and driven. Although they appear to be split or multiple personalities, simultaneously, they are all quite integrated and ambitious with a singleness of purpose. Everything is juxtaposed. And I do mean everything.

The film's demands are ambitious, but with a technically talented DP, having a master's in erotic fantasy, the rewards will be sublime and sumptuously formidable. The editor or editors (and there may be several) will have the most formidable job. Upon completion of this film, they'll either win an Oscar or wear a straitjacket. More realistically, they'll accept their Oscar while wearing their straight jacket.

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when disturbed, but when integrated, they unite into  
one big, shiny, beautiful mystery.*





# DALI AND BUÑUEL



## NOLA ROEPER BIOGRAPHY

Nola worked with the Late legendary director Ulli Lommel. The Warhol / Lommel years spawned several features, including Cocaine Cowboys (1979) and Blank Generation (1980), directed by Lommel, and feature Warhol in an acting role. A comedic actress in the 70's, she co-starred during the golden age of television with Dean Martin, Zsa Zsa Gabor, and John Belushi. Director Jim Burrows told her she was too big a personality for T.V. He recommended Broadway and cast her in "Last of the Red Hot Lovers." They opened at Arlington Park, Chicago. The theatre was next to a Thoroughbred Racetrack. While performing in Chicago, she met and ran away with a jockey and followed him to Lexington, Kentucky. They started a horse farm called Paris Hills and began a thoroughbred breeding operation. Ms. Roeper became famous for her organization of Kentucky Derby parties hosted by worldwide horse owners. She orchestrated a novel party held in a field where orchestras played; wood nymphs served gourmet food, and cocktails were delivered to guests by nude Lady Godiva on horseback. The party was such a success it is still a yearly event attended by Hollywood celebrities, European royalty, and dignitaries from around the globe. It has also morphed into a charity event for American Cancer Council and is one of their more prominent contributors. Through the 1980's she was the morning radio personality on WNEW radio. Her popularity soared, and she found herself the daily T.V. host of WPIX's "Best Talk in Town." In 2003, Ms. Roeper started furniture in- and export in a warehouse in L.A. with Christian Behm. Together they began developing an event party for Disney at the Biltmore estate. Morgan Freeman hosted the event. The pool was transformed into an arctic setting, with five floating icebergs and four 3-D monitors, looping penguin images, floating shark shadows, and managed to have Sea World loan them live penguins. The show resulted in the solidification of Roeper&Behm Productions, a prime address for significant celebrity events. From 2004 to 2010, Roeper&Behm also co-produced 21 highly successful Lionsgate Studio feature films made by Ulli Lommel through Hollywood Action House.

*Alexis Colette* is not a passive movie. It is a commitment. Like everything else, if you take the time and invest your senses, all of them, you're promised an exhilarating experience. If you don't, you'll suffer the consequences resulting in my earlier fears. You'll tragically get left behind running after "Butterflies and Hurricanes"(as a daughter of the South, I'm well versed in these). On page 70.

The black-white sequences' stylization has such power as a giant exclamation point, along with the battle between the red vs. blue diaries to the beginning of the flashbacks. Truth vs. Power, neither wins. The song "Hate," with its gritty guitar solo and the reminiscence of castanet clicking Flamenco dancers synchronizes the heartbeat of someone losing their cruel heart, is captivating.

Anthony has a vision and a style and a point of view that is novel, nouveau and unheard, and more importantly, never before seen. Dali and Buñuel would be jealous. I don't expect plebeians to understand him, but I certainly expect cinema visionaries and aficionados to be attracted to his art and to get his platform and vision. Andy Warhol was my cousin. He never had the innovative idyllic crescendo that Anthony possesses. Too bad Andy never met Anthony W. Johnson. I believe he would've worshipped at his shrine. Anthony is one of a kind.

*Alexis Colette* is a work of artistic imagination!

**Nola Roeper**