

A PRIVATE LIFE

FRANCE (2025) 107 minutes

Director: Rebecca Zlotowski

Cast: Jodie Foster (Lilian)
Daniel Auteuil (Gabriel)
Virginie Efira (Paula)



Screening 4th November 2026 at Swindon Arts Centre

A therapist goes looking for clues when she suspects the sudden death of a patient may be not be suicide.

Reviews



"Foster plays Lilian Steiner, an American psychiatrist living in Paris who, we quickly surmise, has been doing this work for a long time, perhaps too long. She barely seems to listen to her patients' woes, allowing her ever-present Dictaphone to do the work for her, and her emotions are regimented to such a degree that she is brusque and distant even around her own family.

Lilian needs a jolt to rouse her from this apathy, and when the jolt comes it's violent. The death of her longtime patient Paula (Virginie Efira) is a shock to the system, and this resolutely unemotional professional suddenly finds tears streaming uncontrollably from her eyes. Did she miss the signs? Could she have done more to help Paula? To satisfy her own curiosity, and perhaps to assuage a sense of responsibility, Lilian turns amateur sleuth.

It's hard to know how seriously we're meant to be taking all of this. At times, *A Private Life* probes potentially rich psychological territory, touching on a suppressed memory from Lilian's childhood and suggesting complex feelings about her Jewish identity, but the film doesn't explore any of this. Instead, it veers away from darkness to play as an elegant caper."

Philip Concannon, BFI

"Rebecca Zlotowski serves up a genial, preposterous psychological mystery caper: the tale of an American psychoanalyst in Paris, watchably played by Jodie Foster in elegant French, who suspects that a patient who reportedly committed suicide was actually murdered. Zlotowski is perhaps channelling Hitchcock or De Palma, or even late-period Woody Allen – or maybe Zlotowski has, like so many of us, fallen under the comedy spell of *Only Murders in the Building* on TV and fancied the idea of bringing its vibe to Paris and transforming the mood – slightly – into something more serious."

Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

Film Facts

- Jodie Foster is the first American actress to receive a nomination a Lumiere Award for best actress.
- This film is Foster's first solo lead role entirely in French.

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