

A Person With Memory Loss Reviews Amnesic Media Rep - Master Doc - (Sydney Zarlengo)

Watch the series on [YouTube](#), [TikTok](#), or [Instagram](#)

Month	#	Title	Review
Dec	10	Falling for Christmas	This is the Lindsay Lohan Netflix Christmas movie where she gets amnesia in a skiing accident and then finds the meaning of Christmas or whatever. Look I loved it, this movie is perfect in the exact disaster Christmas movie way one can expect from a Netflix original. What I love about this movie is that Lohan's diagnosis is a very minor concussion but then she also is in extreme pain in the hospital and also remembers nothing. But it's a minor concussion. And she has no recovery time at all. Like within 24 hours she is out here away from medical attention learning how to do chores. I also loved that she remembers lots of facts, like she knows that people come to clean her room every morning and asks about room service but then can't remember her name or what a raccoon is. Like yes, memory loss is a very funky thing where some things stay and some things go and it seems random, but it is usually linked to specific physiological processes as to why it is "random" - short term memory versus long term, where that information is stored, if it's linked with other things like it had a physical component or a smell or a song, episodic versus semantic - like for me I lost a huge chunk of my episodic memory but kept a lot of semantic, that's common for traumatic memory loss. So like I can't picture second grade at all but I remember my teacher's name and where I went to school. Her barometer for what she does and does not remember is solely plot convenience and nothing else and it's hilarious. Also her short term memory isn't affected at all which is wild because normally one memory weird is going to cause some other memory weirdness because everything is interconnected. And then when two people show up claiming to be her family she is just like "yeah okay checks out let me go home with them and leave the only life I remember behind without question" which I very much would not do for safety reasons but go off my guy. And then there's also the gay moment which truly sent me into a new dimension oh my goodness. Anyway go watch this film it's a mess I loved it
Jun	9	The Bourne Identity	Another film that makes me wish I got my memory loss in a cooler way and had a secret life to unravel like a terrifying mystery. Darn. Maybe next time. This film is very much a Matt Damon film, do with that info what you will, but I loved it. It is so clearly written by a man because the lady love interest does not have the good sense to get away from this man at all the many chances he gives her to do so but we're just going to ignore that. It's an action movie that's what we signed up for. I think they captured the overwhelm of going out into the world with recent memory loss really well, that was likely to show the tension of everything moving and whatnot, but as someone who has experienced going into new places and having to re-remind myself how everything works that level of overwhelm is really real and they portrayed that well. The idea of suddenly discovering you have crazy abilities via muscle memory after memory loss is really weird and happens to him a lot. Not saying weird as in impossible, just a thing that genuinely feels weird and has only happened to me maybe 2 or 3 times. Happens to him a lot. My biggest confusion was how absurdly confident this guy is. He became amnesic like 3 days ago, has no idea what his name is, and he just goes on stealing cars and blowing things up and traveling everywhere. Like I'm sorry but the first few months

			I was so overwhelmed and confused by things in general that I pretty much just quietly existed and observed everything to try and figure out what information I was supposed to know. And had a lot of panic attacks. So the sheer amount of confidence he exudes is absurdly over the top and really had me scratching my head but also thoroughly entertained me.
May	8	Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind	Okay somehow this film has a 92% on Rotten Tomatoes and I am wracking my brain as to why because this is one of the worst movies I have seen in a long time. Like we'll get into the memory loss aspects in a second, but the film itself was just bad. The main characters, Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet, are a couple whose relationship fell apart and decided to get their memories of each other wiped but then somehow find their way back to each other? And also some other memory wiped couples exist and it's really weird. I think that this concept could be super interesting but their execution of it was terrible, especially because none of the characters were even remotely likable. I get that you're supposed to be rooting for Kate and Jim's relationship to work out, but she is downright abusive to him and he just takes it and it's so painful to watch. And they have no chemistry. Most of the film is the process of going through and deleting his memories and trying to hold onto her which was sorta interesting? The execution of it was super weird though. And, again, if you're not rooting for the main couple to stay together you have no emotional attachment to carry you through the weirdness and the existential concepts that it gets into. From a memory loss aspect... it didn't really show the actual life after memory loss too much? The experience of feeling memories slip away and trying to hold onto them was well done, but in regards to the actual experience of existing with memory loss it didn't really go into it very much. It did definitely leave you thinking "would I have opted for a memory wipe if I could?" and some sort of existential crisis about fate and destiny, but, again, this movie confused me more than anything. Particularly as to why it's so popular. So if you've seen it do let me know what you think - I am curious!
2022			
Sep	7	Regarding Henry	I cannot get this film out of my head. It is truly the weirdest and probably worst disability rep I've ever seen. And it's a Harrison Ford film. And the movie itself, disability aside, is a disaster. So let's start with the disability stuff - after his accident they fully abused him to force him to start talking rather than give him alternative forms of communication which I take serious issue with? In fact the entire time post-brain injury he couldn't speak they were like "ooh you're choosing to be silent, interesting" and the things that are supposed to be heartbreaking make zero sense because they're like "he didn't say anything when he saw me which means he doesn't know who I am" when he hasn't spoken at all. I'm so confused. Some elements of his disability are completely accurate, including his personality change (though it feels a little tropey here, I don't think it's meant to be that way?), though they forgot to show all the negatives of being disabled so it's just weirdly like "brain damage make bad man very sweet kind man woo!" I also think his physical therapist does his job really really strangely and his recovery is weirdly fast, but that brings us to my critiques of the film itself - the balance is truly all over the place. It feels so choppy and rushed in some places and drags in others, the timeline is all over the place, the breathing and mouth noises are absurdly loud in the audio, the characters are so weird, there's some wacky backlit scenes and some random camera zooms and random cuts... And, thematically, consent doesn't exist in this film and misogyny and blatant sexual harassment is totally fine. Apparently. So

			anyway if you want to be WILDLY entertained by a terribly all over the place movie where Harrison Ford tries to pretend he's disabled by acting like a literal three year old, I highly highly recommend this movie. It's delightful. Not that it's supposed to be? But I thought it was hilarious
Sep	6	The Vow	I think the first thing to be said here is that this film is based on a true story. So in the sense of accuracy, it's all there, we're not going to talk about that. What we are going to talk about is how after watching 6 memory loss movies in a row, they are all the same story about someone forgetting someone or something important and then the important person being seen as an everyday hero for making basic accommodations, insert cute love story here, the end. And those narratives are real and they are important, and as an amnesic I kinda love the happily ever after, but also when you watch a bunch of these back to back you realize that they're all the same and it's really annoying. I would love to see more focus on the person experiencing the memory loss and how they're feeling in these situations rather than on the caretakers who are losing everything because of this as if the amnesic isn't also losing everything? And also why is the amnesic always a woman and never a man? I will say one thing I really enjoyed about this movie was how she returned to what she remembered and ended up naturally following a very similar same life path and even though she lost her sense of self she regained that sense of self as the same person she was before without realizing it. It made me think a lot about how when I got sick it kinda pushed me back a few years in self development but I ended up catching up identically to where I was the second time around, just with new knowledge of the world. Super trippy. Anyway, really good movie though, I really liked it a lot, these are pretty much just nitpicky media analysis things, you should go check it out.
Aug	5	The Long Kiss Goodnight	According to the internet, this is a memory loss movie. And I guess technically it is because the protagonist has amnesia? But she has it, like, in the way that she used to do secret illegal job and the bad people tried to kill her off but she ended up surviving and not remembering anything from her previous life and then settles down and becomes a happy suburban mom who wants to figure out what her past is but then her past comes to try to kill her way? Also it doesn't seem like she sustained a brain injury at the time of her accident or whatever, which means the only way she could have amnesia like this is if that event was super super traumatic, but also the memories would come back to her more often than in the case of direct brain damage which doesn't serve the plot in the way they wanted it to? So I'm going to assume they meant brain damage but didn't want to have a visibly disabled lead. Probably. I did like how she suddenly found herself kick butt at some skills and used that to help her figure out memories because I relate to that, and I love how she's a functional human being who jokes about memory loss and wants to know more about it but it doesn't totally take over her life either. But also she seemed really mean? The whole movie was very shooty stabby yelly and I don't like movies like that because that's not compelling and also those are typically the ones where there are no good characters so you have no one to root for and that's sad. It did kinda make me wish I had some really cool secret life pre-memory loss though so if you have any dramatic ideas for what Sydney could've done for the first 18 years of their life before they became too threatening to keep around, let me know.
Aug	4	Memento	Going to be honest, I didn't finish this movie because the main character was just so painfully hyper

			fixated on finding who was responsible for his memory loss and trying to get back at them for, and I quote, “taking away his ability to live” and it was really really frustrating to watch. The portrayal was excellently accurate - he was very self aware of his own memory loss which most representations don’t portray, and he was able to make things accessible for himself by following certain routines and leaving notes for himself everywhere which is precisely what I do. Also the paranoia of “am I being taken advantage of” and trying to trust your gut feeling but never knowing where that gut feeling is coming from is all too real. I do think he talked about it way too much - I know for me and most other people with memory loss, there’s a desire to talk about it out loud all the time but it’s honestly safer and smarter to just shut up about it and, if you don’t know what’s going on, state that. And he does his processing of “where am I, oh there’s this thing, it must be this, I must be here” out loud too which is strange. I will say, and this is the reason I had a hard time watching this film, all of his behaviors are very similar to how I acted in the first maybe six months after I got sick. Like these are the raw emotions that come with memory loss - the terror, the sadness, the anger, the desire to make people responsible and feeling like your life is over forever and saying way too many things out loud to try and figure out how to process that this is your reality. I’ve been there, I feel that, and frankly I think instead of hunting down his wife’s killer he should’ve gone to inpatient therapy for a little bit because he really needs time and space to reflect and work on himself so he can function a little bit less like a horse loose in a hospital. It’s not entirely majorly medically accurate, kinda similar to my issues with 50 First Dates, but it was a lot darker and more annoying so for that I would not rewatch
July	3	50 First Dates	God this movie was so good. Again, I had low expectations for it, but other than the disorder she has not existing and therefore being slightly inaccurate, this representation was incredible. The majority of the things that made me angry were meant to make the viewer angry rather than just being missteps, for example the doctor going “I mean yeah, your condition sucks, but at least you’re not like these people who have it worse than you. You should count yourself lucky”. And there’s a point where everyone’s like “aww you’re such a good partner by caring for her disabilities you’re one in a million” rather than, idk, just calling him a decent human being. Though there’s one point where he kind of pressures her into sex which I hated. Honestly I didn’t ever think I’d root for an Adam Sandler character, but he honestly is a more kind and understanding partner in the face of disability than actual partners I’ve had, and it was very clear that the only reason her condition was “disabling” and getting in the way of other people’s lives is because they couldn’t let themselves give her the autonomy she needed. And once they did, it was effectively a non-issue. And I LOVED THAT especially because she was only taken advantage of when they weren’t letting her be her own person and telling her the truth. Cause that’s what disability looks like. And speaking of that, she looks completely normal and is someone to be desired while also being super disabled and that weirdly meant a lot to me. In regards to like scientific accuracy, meh, I will say that while she may not recognize him every day, her emotions in relation to seeing him should’ve probably stayed on some level after repetition because emotions and conditioning are in a different part of the brain and also she probably could’ve found some other ways to make things accessible for herself because the brain is plastic and would change and her memory would get at least a tiny bit better over time, but I’m going to let that slide because this movie was amazing and I loved it.
July	2	Anastasia	We’re not talking about the movie. We’re talking about the musical. And this will also for sure be a video

			at some point. Basically, I saw the national tour of the show about a year and a half before the onset of my memory loss and I remember being a snobby psych student who was like “this is fake Freudian stuff, it’s not how memory loss works” annnnnnd yeah so a year and a half later when I was trying to cope with things, I returned to comfort music, mostly Disney, and found Anastasia again. And this time around, I realized that these lyricists were, no joke, inside my brain, and how the heck did they get there. Anastasia is the best representation of dissociative/trauma-induced memory loss I have ever seen - she is autonomous and kick butt and while she acknowledges that a piece of her is missing and she wants it back it doesn’t really hinder her, and I loved how her friends treated her just like any other human being but also didn’t try to pretend she didn’t have a disability. And while she does on some level get a bit taken advantage of in the story, she has so much agency that I think she could escape if she wanted to. Also the way she gets her memories back through music and random tiny little useless facts that are so easy for her to just brush off as made up is so so real and accurate. So in conclusion, Anastasia guided me through some rough times in my life and I hope to one day get the chance to play her. I’m gonna manifest it
Jun	1	Dory	Dory and I have different kinds of memory loss. Well kinda? Kinda not? Long story. Either way, she is actually one of the most accurate and positive portrayals of memory loss in the media. Yes, genuinely. Typically we see characters with memory loss as withdrawn, unreachable, and sad or angry. Which are emotions and experiences that sure are a part of memory loss, but Dory’s happy go-lucky self-aware “ooh have you seen this exciting thing I’ve gotten excited about like 4 times now but keep forgetting about” energy is the side of memory loss we don’t see enough of. Because that’s how I’ve coped with it. And while she does occasionally get lost or upset or taken advantage of, that’s a pretty small amount of the time. Overall she’s just a regular fish who happens to have a disability and it’s definitely a part of who she is and how she sees the world but it’s also not the main identifying thing about her character. And that means a whole lot more to disabled people than even we know sometimes. So thanks Disney for putting in the effort for representation. Well. Not like, all other forms of representation. But uh. In this case you did a good job. So cheers I guess