

# Film Makes Us Happy

## OFFICIAL SELECTION

HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL Film Festival 2007 – World Premiere  
BOSTON INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL 2008 – Official Selection

## PRODUCTION NOTES

Format: HD Color

Aspect Ratio: 1.78:1

Sound: Stereo

Language: English

Running Time: 12:20

## PRESS & DISTRIBUTION CONTACT

Bryan Wizemann

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## SYNOPSIS

*Film Makes Us Happy* documents the last fight my wife and I will ever have about making films.

## PRESS

"From behind his own camera, the filmmaker explores how his passion for filmmaking impacts the rest of his life. With the compassionate but searing honesty of a Cassavetes film, stark realities of the life of the artist are exposed."

**-Hamptons International Film Festival**

## CAST

As herself: Sabina Burdzovic | As himself: Bryan Wizemann

## CREW

Produced, Directed & Edited by: Bryan Wizemann | Director of Photography: Mark Schwartzbard

## PRODUCER/DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

**Bryan Wizemann** is a graduate of Cornell University with a degree in philosophy and a concentration in film. Initially a writer of dramatic monologues, Bryan developed his first play *Daylight* with the dramatist Carey Harrison. His senior thesis film *Button Soup*, a dark reinterpretation of the children's story, screened at the Johnson Museum of Art and at Cinema Village New York. He wrote and directed the experimental feature film *Sense*, which screened in the 1998 IFFM at the Angelika Film Centre.

Bryan wrote and directed the full-length stage play *Losing Ground*, which was presented by Tom Noonan at the Paradise Theater in New York. The critically acclaimed play had a four-week run in the spring of 2003. He directed Rhonda Keyser in his original monologue *Looking For a Sky Blue Hat*, which was featured in the production *Mouthpieces*. In 2004 Bryan adapted, produced and directed the film version of *Losing Ground* which features its original cast and screened at the Cinequest, CineVegas, and Santa Fe film festivals. The film has been called "fascinating filmmaking that gets to the core of humanity" by *Film Threat* and is available from Netflix. Bryan's short film *The Morning Sun* screened at Rooftop Films and on the Independent Film Channel, and his pilot for the television series *Cooklyn* is currently in development. His latest short film, *Film Makes Us Happy*, documents the last fight he will ever have with his wife about making films, and premiered at the 2007 Hamptons Int'l Film Festival. His feature length screenplay *An Entire Body* was selected as one of the top three winners of the 2007 Slamdance Feature Screenplay Competition. *An Entire Body* is being produced by Barbara DeFina and will begin production in the fall of 2008.

Bryan Wizemann is the author of a collection of dramatic monologues, two stage plays, and seven screenplays. He is the director and founder of Ballast Films, an independent film production company in Brooklyn, and a member of IFP. More information on current film and television projects can be found at [www.ballastfilms.com](http://www.ballastfilms.com).



## FILMOGRAPHY

**Film Makes Us Happy** – HD, color, 12min. 20sec. Direction/Editing/Sound

Hamptons International Film Festival, East Hampton, NY 2007

**Cooklyn** – HD, color, 22min. Conception/Direction

Creation of the television pilot, Brooklyn, NY 2006

**An Entire Body** – 2hrs. Writing/Direction

One of the top three winners in the 2007 Slamdance Feature Screenplay Competition

**The Morning Sun** – HD, color, 5min. 30sec. Writing/Direction

Rooftop Films, Brooklyn, NY August 2007

Independent Film Channel, Fall 2006

Winner IFC Media Lab Best of July 2006

**Losing Ground** – DVCam, color, 1hr. 30min. Writing/Production/Direction.

Santa Fe Film Festival, Santa Fe, NM 2005

CineVegas Film Festival, Las Vegas, NV 2005

Cinequest Film Festival, San Jose, CA 2005

**Sense** – 16mm, color, 1hr. 25min. Writing/Direction/Cinematography/Editing

IFFM, Angelika Film Center, New York, NY 1998

**Button Soup** – 16mm, b&w sepia, 14min. Writing/Direction/Cinematography/Editing

Cinema Village Theater, New York City, NY 1996

Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Ithaca, NY 1996

## AUTHORSHIP

**The Odyssey**

Screenplay – 2007

**An Entire Body**

Screenplay – 2005

**Losing Ground**

Stage Play/Screenplay – 2003

**The Weakest Fish**

Screenplay – 2001

**Sense**

Screenplay – 1997

**Daylight**

Stage Play – 1995

**Genuine Bricks**

Screenplay – 1994



## DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY BIOGRAPHY

**Mark Schwartzbard** studied film at Ithaca College, where his junior year film was a Regional Finalist in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Student Academy Awards. His cinematography credits include six narrative feature films (most recently **Wonderwall**, a drama shot on the streets of the Bronx, and **Sex and Breakfast** starring Macaulay Culkin) three documentary features, and a healthy pile of shorts (most recently the internet phenomenon **FCU with Bill Murray**).

His documentary work has taken him to Israel, England, Holland, Italy, Romania, Mexico, and Hungary, as well as up down and back and forth across America. He's worked with every film format from Super-8 to VistaVision, and nearly every video and HD format from Pixelvision to the Arri D20. And he loves them all equally.

Several films he's shot for himself have played and won awards at film festivals around the country, and his experimental films have been screened at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, DC and the Walters Gallery in Baltimore. In 2004 he was honored for Artistic Achievement in Cinematography by the International Cinematographers Guild, Local 600.

When not shooting, Mark has worked extensively as a camera assistant, where he's gotten the chance to learn from some of the giants. Highlights include Woody Allen's **Hollywood Ending**, and Martin Scorsese's **The Departed**, as well as **Little Children**, **Rent**, **Hitch**, **Pollock**, and, the most fun of all, **Borat**, which led to work as a camera operator on director Larry Charles' next two projects, notably the increasingly anticipated **Religulous** with Bill Maher. He also went through a period of working, at one time or another, on many of the episodic TV shows filmed on the East Coast, including **Ed**, **Sex In the City**, **Third Watch**, **The \$treet**, **Hack**, **The Wire**, **Philly**, and just about all of the **Law & Order** franchises. He also has a vague memory of working on a pile of music videos for artists he can't remember, except for Bon Jovi, and on dozens and dozens and dozens of commercials he'd mostly rather forget.



## **PRAISE FOR WIZEMANN'S FEATURE FILM *LOSING GROUND***

"A fine, stark, totally uncompromised drama."

Matt Zoller Seitz, *NYPres*

"...a stunning array of drama and performances worthy of Eugene O'Neill. —With sobering patience and insight, Wizemann's story examines the lives of characters rendered complex and all too human."

Fernando F. Croce, *Cinequest*

"...the downbeat ensemble drama impresses with its gritty realism, low-key dramatic focus and honed performances. ...Mercifully, script refrains from spelling out the pathos already quite evident in the setting and the characters' faces. A few terse back stories emerge but, more often, dialogue is credibly focused on strained pleasantries, leaving tragedy easy to read. Performers, all retained from the original stage production, are uniformly excellent. Their absorbing turns and discreet direction keep the bleak tale from growing too uneventful or monotonous."

Dennis Harvey, *Variety*

(Four Stars) "Losing Ground makes its greatest connection in knowing us just as much as we know these characters. It is fascinating filmmaking that gets to the core of humanity, scrapes out even the most bottommost parts of it, and holds it up to examine it."

Rory L. Aronsky, *FILM THREAT*

"You think you already know its handful of losers in a place where time and life itself seems to have stopped. And maybe you do. But they get to you anyway in their unitalicized, cumulative way. Both mood piece and ensemble piece, the film is a sad exhalation of life -- or what passes for it -- among the rudderless...in measured, note-perfect performances."

Jay Carr, *AM New York*

"—An arresting independent film about the human propensity for addiction. *Losing Ground* isn't a melodramatic anti-gambling screed. The film viscerally evokes the atmosphere of a circle of hell populated by people desperately willing themselves into blindness."

M. Faust, *ArtVoice*

"Numerous narrative strands mysteriously and gracefully intertwine, trapping these compulsive, desperate characters in their tangled web. *Losing Ground*, with its muted but potently charged minimalism, has much to convey about the ways in which the economic and emotional uncertainties of a greed culture steeped in narcissistic myth and fantasy, cripple people's lives emotionally."

Prairie Miller, *WBAI Arts Magazine*

(Four Stars) "Losing Ground, like its characters, is in no hurry to artificially define where its headed. —There's not a bad performance in the lot, each fulfilling a sadness and a greater sense of danger that comes with satisfying their craving. Cinematographer Mark Schwartzbard confines the shadows like a trap to which these people and the audience have no escape."

Erik Childress, *eFilmCritic.com*

"...dialogue with a realistic sense of desperation...his characters seem trapped under microscope slides on the screen. What makes *Losing Ground* compelling is how Wizemann subtly transcends the clichés of the addiction film. It leads us down a familiar path, but its power is in the journey, not the destination. It is well worth seeing if given the chance."

Odie Henderson, *Cinemaniac's Corner*



## **PRAISE FOR WIZEMANN'S FEATURE FILM SCRIPT *AN ENTIRE BODY***

*An Entire Body* was honored as one of the top three winners in the 2007 Slamdance Feature Screenplay Competition. Past winners include Joshua Marston's *Maria Full of Grace* and Nicole Kassell's *The Woodsman*.

"Extremely well developed ...and overall it's just a very solid and moving piece."  
Sundance Feature Film Program

"This screenplay is the real deal; emotionally truthful, engaging characters, and a very strong ending. –The last ten pages of this screenplay are as gut-wrenchingly suspenseful and emotionally involving as anything I've read for the screen...a really wonderful film, Ken Loach meets John Cassavetes. My compliments!"  
Slamdance Screenplay Competition (1st round)

"*An Entire Body* is a classic, linear and completely successful intimate drama boasting stunningly fine characterizations, right on plot development and a thoroughly satisfying (though poignant) ending. –This is a solid and emotionally compelling, good old fashioned drama, economically written and one that sticks faithfully to its story, illuminating and ultimately ennobling the resilience and persistence of human love and the human spirit in the face of crushing adversity."  
Slamdance Screenplay Competition (2nd round)

"I couldn't put it down... The story is very compelling. The dialogue is very good and distinct to each character. The structure is solid and the scenes are well paced. The characters are well drawn and unique."  
Susan Kouguell, *Su-City Pictures*

"*An Entire Body* is a sensitive and perceptive drama with an assured sense of character and structure. –The great strength in the story is its unrelenting tension. –The characters are strongly defined and multi-faceted. The story is also tightly structured, with a careful, subtle series of setups and payoffs."  
Film Independent Screenwriter's Lab

"A stunner... extremely powerful and heartbreaking without being cheap or maudlin... consistently surprising and totally uncompromising... the voices of the characters are true and distinct, it's the best script I've read in years."  
Andrew Semans , (writer/director of *All Day Long*)

"I think it's beautiful. You capture your characters so well and really paint a picture, at the same time, I am teetering on the edge with your characters, waiting for the other shoe to drop. The fact that you can keep that suspense for so long while letting the story unfold so naturally, it's truly impressive and wonderful story telling."  
Ji Choi (author of *The Shotgun Waltz*)

"Really fantastically well-done. Angela rang remarkably true to me. She is a heart-breaking character, but tough, too, and I like that you never ask for pity, never condescend to her. Rare, too, to see a movie (and I felt like I saw it, reading it), about people struggling just to get by. Also, the adoption subplot developed in very organic and anti-melodramatic ways."  
Andrew Lewis Conn (author of the novel *P*)





**FILM STILLS**



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