

Inflo Films

Presents

PATHWAYS

Written & Directed by Dusty Mancinelli

Starring
Vince Barrese

(2011, 12 mins, Canada)

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LOGLINE

While walking through a forest on his way home from being bullied at school, Marco stumbles across an unconscious man with a gun and briefcase. Thinking that the man is dead and that there might be something valuable inside the case, Marco begins to pry the man's fingers off the handle. Little does Marco know – he will soon be forced to defend himself.

SYNOPSIS

Marco (Vince Barrese), who is constantly being bullied at school, finds it difficult to confide in his parents and is unable to express his frustration. One morning Marco fakes being sick so that he can avoid the inevitable, but his mother (Deborah Verginella) sees through his act and lectures him on the importance of an education and, with the help of his father (Tony Porfilio), she pressures him to go to school. At the end of the school day, the bully (Conor Campaigne) who has been after Marco finds him and beats him up. On his way home, Marco decides to cut through a forest and stumbles upon an unconscious man (Graham Gauthier) with a gun and a case. Marco studies the bloodied Man for quite some time and comes to the conclusion that the man is dead. Marco notices that the Man has a silver case clenched in his hand and thinks that there might be something valuable inside. Marco begins to pry the Man's fingers off of the case, but the Man wakes up and lunges for his gun. In a moment of sheer desperation, Marco is forced to defend himself...

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Pathways is a coming of age story that asks the question does violence beget violence and does everyone have a breaking point? It explores the cyclical nature of violence and how easily transferable it can become.

Pathways attempts to show how aggression can be fostered and suppressed under the right circumstances, and how without a proper and healthy outlet, our aggression can quickly manifest itself into violent and unspeakable acts. Troubled youth who are victims of violent acts need to have a healthy emotional environment where they can safely express their frustrations and get proper guidance on how to deal with these situations. Unfortunately, children and teenagers are surrounded by daily forms of social and family pressures that can often inhibit their ability to feel comfortable expressing themselves freely. Consequently, in these situations, troubled youth are suppressing their emotions every time they become a victim of violence. The more and more these kids suppress their emotions, the more likely it is that these emotions will express themselves as violent behaviors, causing them to lash out on others. This can become a vicious cycle that propagates violence.

It is my hope that ***Pathways*** inspires an internal dialogue with the audience, challenging their perceptions of the nature of violence, and hopefully encouraging a discussion of how to go about change and creating healthier environments for youth to feel comfortable expressing themselves.

Although audiences may find some of the content in ***Pathways*** to be gruesome and graphic, violence is never used in an exploitative way. Rather, I am using graphic scenes to critically demonstrate how violence can be passed on from one person to the next.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Pathways was independently financed by writer/director/producer Dusty Mancinelli and producer Harry Cherniak. As with most short filmmakers, Mancinelli and Cherniak were always short on cash and faced many challenges. “From having to find a boy who was right for the part and could speak Italian, to planning all of the special effects and prosthetics and finding a location that would provide a forest, fields, roads, train tracks and shelter, making **Pathways** was definitely an adventure,” explains Director Dusty Mancinelli.

Do you speak Italian?

While it wasn't easy finding a Canadian boy of Italian heritage who could speak Italian and act like a pro, after a grueling and thorough search, Mancinelli and Cherniak found exactly what they were looking for in Vince Barrese. Mancinelli explains, “we searched far and wide, seeing many kids, but none of them felt right. I even enlisted my mom, dad, siblings and cousins, getting them to call any family and friends they could think of who knew a boy who spoke Italian. But then, after weeks and weeks of coming up short, in came Vince, and right away we knew that we had our guy.”

This of course, raises the question: why Italian? While writing the script, Mancinelli recalls that setting the opening scene in Italian just felt right. “**Pathways** isn't based on a true story, but at the same time it's a very personal story to me. I was a runt while growing up, and I was constantly picked on and bullied, except unlike Marco, my bully wasn't one of my classmates, it was someone even worse: my brother. My brother was only 4 years older than me, but he had a growth-spurt early, and was 6 feet tall at the humble age of 12. He would pick on me and beat me up, not realizing at the time how terrified I was of him. He knew how to push my buttons, and definitely tested my patience and was able to provoke a side of physical aggression in me that I never even knew existed. Being raised with a strong Italian upbringing, setting the opening scene in Italian allowed me to connect with Marco's character. Funny enough, my brother and I are best friends now – so it goes!”

Special Effects

Special effects played a major role in **Pathways**, with blood effects, realistic prosthetics and injury makeup being required throughout the film. Working with special effects on a limited budget is not easy. Mancinelli explains, “given our limited budget, to ensure that all of the effects would come off without a hitch, I had to spend a great deal of time with Chris Nash, our special effects guy, doing tests in advance of filming. Normally, these types of tests are done in a studio with lights and a camera, but because of our lack of funds, most of our testing was done in Chris's bathtub.” All of the prep certainly

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helped” adds Cherniak, “but even with all of the planning, we still ended up having to shoot all of the special effects sequences twice!”

Mancinelli explains, “When Chris and I approached the last scene that had the biggest special effects, we naively thought we could pull off a poor man’s version of Gaspar Noé’s **Irreversible** (an incredibly gruesome film), thinking we could shoot the entire scene in a sequence of shots, and seamlessly cut them together in post. Unfortunately, this didn’t quite work as planned, and after completing a rough cut of the film, we had to re-envision how to re-shoot that scene.”

Choreographing kids

Working with a group of energetic kids is hard enough on it’s own, but then foolishly trying to maneuver them on camera without a proper choreographer was a lesson Mancinelli and Cherniak will never forget.

Mancinelli explains, “early on, Maya Bankovic (our DP) and I knew that we wanted to shoot the film as much as possible from Marco’s perspective so that the audience could connect more with his story. When it came down to choreographing the fight scenes, we had this idea to strap a bunch of pillows to the camera in such a way that we could actually have Conor Campaigne, who played the bully, punch us as hard as he could. This was a great idea, but trying to wrangle all those kids was stressful! Luckily, my sister and Cameron Tisi (our Production Coordinator) were there to help, and we got all the shots we wanted.”

Rain, rain, go away...

As if working with children, special effects, a foreign language, many locations and a limited budget wasn’t enough, the production team also had to deal with the challenge of shooting in the unexpected rain. It wasn’t easy, as the majority of the film takes place outside. Cherniak explains, “although you always try to plan for the worst, there’s only so much you can do to make sure that people are comfortable when filming in the rain. Though we put up tarps in the forest, given our budget, the most we could rely on were umbrellas and garbage bags when filming in the fields and on the roads! The local neighbors must have thought we were nuts: imagine a crew of seven people wrapped head to toe in garbage bags, following a bloody man down a side road with a camera and microphone!”

Mancinelli recalls, “I was also very concerned about ensuring that everything would match up. The rain was stop and go, and so this was actually exceptionally difficult to pull off. At one point, Maya and I looked at each other, and we both realized we just had to keep shooting and worry about it later in post.”

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Family Support

Family played a very important part in getting ***Pathways*** shot. Cherniak explains, “there aren’t many locations where you can film a variety of forest, road and field scenes and have a nearby kitchen and washroom – thankfully, my grandparents were quick to volunteer their farm!” The 100-acre farm, near Creemore, Ontario, provided everything that the filmmakers were looking for. Not only was it great for filming, but it also provided a place for the crew to sleep after the long days of filming.

While Cherniak’s mother, Jill, had already volunteered to cook for the hungry cast and crew, with the farm set as the primary location, cooking became a multi-generational affair. The cast and crew’s favourite meal was, by far, the traditional brisket dinner, which was prepared by Jill and her mother, Cherniak’s grandmother, Judy.

Mancinelli’s family was also very much in on the act. While Mancinelli’s brother, Michael, was able to provide the location for the first scene (his in-law’s kitchen!), his sister, Marci, worked for free as the film’s 1st Assistant Director!

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THE PRODUCTION COMPANY

Inflo Films

Founded in 2004 by partners Harry Cherniak and Dusty Mancinelli, Inflo Films is a Toronto-based independent film production company. Its goal is to make thought provoking, engaging and commercially successful films. The filmmakers see short films as an exciting platform from which they can develop their craft as filmmakers, build strong relationships within the film industry and prepare themselves to create well-crafted feature length films.

In 2006, Inflo produced the well-received short comedy *Death to Charlie!*, which was picked up by Ouat! Media. In 2007, it released its next short, the quirky satire *P.U.R.E.*, which has won several awards and has played at more than a dozen film festivals across the U.S. and Canada including the Cinéfest Sudbury International Film Festival, the Whistler International Film Festival and the Washington DC Independent Film Festival. In 2009, Inflo's short film *Soap* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, screened at the Palm Springs International ShortFest and the LA Short Fest and was sold to the CBC. Inflo's most recent short, ***Pathways***, will have its world premiere at this year's Toronto International Film Festival.

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THE FILMMAKERS

Dusty Mancinelli | Writer, Director, Producer

Dusty Mancinelli is a Toronto-based writer, director and producer. While he was in film school, Mancinelli's short film *P.U.R.E.* won the award for Best Narrative at the Student Shorts Film Festival in Toronto. Since film school, Mancinelli has established himself as an innovative filmmaker and photographer.

In 2009, Mancinelli wrote and directed the short film *Soap*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and aired nationally on the CBC. Recently, he finished post-production on his short film ***Pathways***, which he wrote, directed and produced and will have its world premiere at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival. In addition to making his own films, Mancinelli was the second unit Director on Dilip Mehta's *Cooking with Stella*, which was shot in New Delhi, India and premiered as a Gala Presentation at the 2009 Toronto International Film Festival.

When not making films, Mancinelli has continued to build his reputation as a photographer. In addition to running his own photoblog, Mancinelli did all of the promotional stills and behind the scenes footage for Deepa Mehta's 2008 film, *Heaven on Earth*, and her current feature film adaptation of Salman Rushdie's Booker prize-winning novel *Midnight's Children*. Mancinelli is currently working as a freelancer for Hamilton-Mehta Productions Inc., a Canadian production company founded by Producer David Hamilton and Academy Award nominated Director Deepa Mehta. Mancinelli holds an Honours BFA with Distinction in Film Production from York University.

Harry Cherniak | Producer

Harry Cherniak is a Toronto-based producer and corporate lawyer. In addition to producing Inflo Film's short films *Soap* and ***Pathways***, over the past few years Cherniak has worked in Los Angeles and Toronto as an assistant and then business affairs Consultant to Nicholas Tabarrok, President of Darius Films and one of Variety's 2009 "10 Producers to Watch". Additionally, this will be Cherniak's fifth TIFF working as a publicist with Star PR.

Cherniak recently completed his term as a Student-at-Law at a major Canadian law firm and will return in the fall as an associate in the corporate law department. Cherniak holds a Juris Doctorate from the University of Toronto, an MSc with Distinction from the London School of Economics and a BA in Honours Business Administration with Distinction from the University of Western Ontario's Richard Ivey School of Business.

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Maya Bankovic | Director of Photography

Maya Bankovic is a Toronto-based Cinematographer. Her diverse body of work ranges from unobtrusive and emotionally sensitive in the documentary realm to vibrant and bold in her narrative and commercial work. Recent credits include the documentaries *Three Walls* (Hot Docs '11) and *Deadman* (TIFF '09), as well as the short film *Soap* (TIFF '09) and the Bravo!FACT dance film *Slip*, for which she won the 2010 Kodak Award for Best Cinematography at the Canadian Film Centre's Worldwide Short Film Festival. Her work has screened at over 100 film festivals internationally, and her documentary and commercial work has aired on major networks across Canada.

She holds a BFA in Film Production from York University where she graduated with Distinction in her study of cinematography. Maya is currently an Associate member of the Canadian Society of Cinematographers.

Stephanie Atkinson | Costume Designer

Stephanie Atkinson is a film and theatre designer specializing in costume design. She has designed the costumes for all of Inflo Film's recent shorts, including the complicated '80s wear required for *Soap*. Upcoming theatre projects include a puppet performance at Theatre Passe Mureille and teaching a marionette design/construction workshop at the annual Puppets Up! Festival in Almonte, Ontario. In addition to film and theatre work, Stephanie owns and manages a glass bead jewelry company, Bauble Box. Stephanie holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from York University.

Donlands and Mortimer (D+M) | Featured Music

D+M has taken their time to craft a one-of-a-kind sound. After four years of captivating Toronto audiences with their rich, emotional and spellbinding live performances, D+M will be releasing their long-awaited debut full-length album later this year.

This is the second Inflo Films short to which D+M have contributed music; they also provided music for *Soap*. Last year, D+M's music was featured in a nation-wide advertising campaign for *Molson 67*.

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CAST

Marco Vince Barrese
Man Graham Gauthier
Rose Deborah Verginella
Joseph Tony Porfilio
Bully Conor Campaigne

CREW

Writer, Director, Producer Dusty Mancinelli
Producer Harry Cherniak
Director of Photography Maya Bankovic
Music Michael J. Sinclair
Special Effects Chris Nash
Sound Recordist Adam Clark
Sound Mixer Matt Chan
Hair and Makeup Amanda Sousa
Costume Designer Stephanie Atkinson
Production Coordinator Cameron Tisi
1st Assistant Director Marci Mancinelli
Gaffer Jason McKendry
Catering/Craft Jill Cherniak

“Lie to Rest”

Arranged and Performed by Donlands & Mortimer
Words & Music by Carmen Elle

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