

Sparker Films
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Asleep

16mm B&W print
10 minutes
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www.sparker.net/asleep

Asleep is a 10 minutes short film capturing that moment of shock after hearing a loved one has become HIV-positive. Dealing honestly and frankly with issues of responsibility, health, and relationships, it is a film that avoids the "politically correct" line about what gay men should do, and instead focuses on how HIV effects their lives.

Although there is plenty of talk about HIV and AIDS, often the discussions can start from polar extremes. But neither moralizing about conduct--whether in advance for prevention, or afterward as blame--is helpful, especially in matters of sex and intimacy. *Asleep* seeks to explore that gray zone between, and especially the emotional impact that a sexually transmitted disease can bring to relationships.

Production

An independent film project in the truest sense, *Asleep* was written in November 1999, with subsequent script tuning on-and-off over the next two months. With subject matter close to the heart, and contemporary in the filmmaker's life at the time, writing finally completed in January. Casting, done informally through friends, was accomplished with a couple of weeks of agonizing over one final casting decision. With that made in early January, by late January it was time to shoot!

Shooting

The filmmaker, and two actors flew down to the Silverlake district of Los Angeles, on what was originally going to be the only shoot. Inside of the Spencer's apartment, the footage was shot in one three-hour shoot, with an ill director. Later, after editing, and no small amount of reflection, the decision was made to film a small amount of additional footage in San Francisco. Shot in Corona Heights Park, the additional "flash back" footage helped to round out the film. That footage from late March completed original photography.

In an experiment inspired by the improved quality of the new miniDV camcorders, this was shot entirely with a new Canon GL-1 camcorder. Highly recommended, the Canon GL-1 worked extremely well, although leaving out the fluid-head tripod was, in reflection, a really bad idea...

Editing

Originally the intent was to use Adobe Premiere. Unfortunately, the MotoDV Studio firewire card didn't work terribly well with Premiere. You had to have the camcorder attached and powered on pretty much all the time, and leaving and re-entering Premiere would cause it to crash. Hmmm.

Upgrading to EditDV, however, did the trick. Reliable, with both a draft and full-resolution rendering mode, with good production quality previewing out the GL-1's S-video jack, it was possible to produce a rough cut between January 30th and February 7th.

Music

A student at CalArts School of Music beginning fall 2000, Spencer composed the entirely original score based on a reading, and with little or no access to the rough-cut, and recorded it in spare time at LA City College's music studio

CREDITS

Director/Producer/Editor/Screenwriter: Steve Parker

Often called "Sparker", he is a local San Francisco gay film artist, and Internet protocol developer. His previous works include: *Loved By You*, 4 min music video of Tom Robinson's song, 1998; *Homosapiens*, another music video project with David Holmer. *Asleep* will be his second film entirely shot, directed, edited, and produced by himself. It was also his second world premiere at the San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival.



Actor/Composer: Spencer Day

Originally from Pinetop, AZ, Spencer is currently a *LA resident*. Spencer began music study at CalArts in the fall of 2000, something he anticipated with more enthusiasm than you can imagine! Spencer free-lances doing sound tracks, and studio work. Piano and vocals are his primary interest. If you're interested in contacting Spencer about either performance or composition, contact him care of Sparker Films.



Actor: Brian McNeil

Brian is a 28-year-old who left his native Flint Michigan behind to pursue art and commitment to community in San Francisco. Presently Brian shows his commitment by volunteering with the AIDS/HIV division of the suicide hotline.



Actor: Patrick Bowers

This 34 year-old acting virgin when recruited out-of-the-blue to be in this film saw it as an opportunity to try something new, and get to know some new people, and participate in a project about subject matter he cares about. His deep, dark secret is that he manages marketing for a computer software firm. He's originally from Mount Pleasant, Michigan, which isn't a deep, dark secret.

Screenings (partial list)

June 2000, San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, San Francisco, USA.

October 2000, Western Australia Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, Perth, Australia.

November 2000, Films Arts Foundation Festival 2000, San Francisco, USA.

May 2001, MixMexico, Mexico City, Mexico.

Print information: 16mm B&W print, optical sound, 1.33 aspect ratio

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Distributor inquiries welcome.

Free videotape screeners are available upon request, and may be kept in viewing libraries.

Since the distributor requests no fee for screenings, we expect festivals to waive submission fees.

The distributor will pay shipping for the film to the festival, and will consider paying return shipping if requested.