

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ for “THAT WAY MADNESS LIES...”

A Sandra Luckow Film

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When did you find out your brother was ill? How did you find out?

In 2009, at the age of 46, Duanne started taking an obsessive interest in conspiracy theories, The New World Order, the presumed prediction of the end of the world according to the Mayan calendar. He talked a lot about getting off the grid and was trying to convince my parents to purchase gold. But it wasn't until he stormed the US Canadian Boarder with the intention of finding and marrying a woman from the internet whom he had never met. It was his first verifiable psychotic break. One is not considered mentally ill, despite the behavior and symptoms until one is diagnosed with a mental illness. Its like saying your cancer doesn't exist until the moment your doctor tells you that you have it. My brother was someone who never went to the doctor, so I am quite certain there is a big gap between when his illness started and when I found out about it.

What made you decide to make this film?

When my brother was involuntarily committed to the Oregon State Hospital the last thing on my mind was my profession, let alone making a film about us or this subject matter. Before he was committed the first time we had a conversation where he expressed that he didn't know who to believe or trust about what was happening. I suggested he use his new iPhone to record when he was unsure so he could review it later or show it to someone he trusted. I did not know he was recording as much as he did. At the hospital, his phone was taken away because he had been recording inside the hospital. He asked me to retrieve the phone and look at the videos. I was shaken and devastated by what I saw: first-person, unfiltered psychosis, not a portrayal or interpretation of psychosis. It was shocking and scary and confusing. I took the footage to the psychology department at Yale School of Medicine and talked with Dr. Larry Davidson. He convinced me to continue filming to give context to Duanne's footage because it was so rare a glimpse and so valuable to understanding this illness.

Was there anything about making this film you found enjoyable or rewarding?

I love the filmmaking process and particularly the high stakes nature of making a direct-cinema type of documentary. I don't particularly like all of the tasks that are necessary to begin or finish a film like fundraising and trying to get distribution. And, after making Belly Talkers, a road-trip about ventriloquism, I

had sworn off making films I was in. But I have found that the filmmaker is subservient to the story she is telling, and she is obligated to serve the story. What was rewarding was that I knew that regardless of what happened to me, to Duanne, to my parents in the course of this film, it was important work. I credit the film and my commitment to it in helping me survive this ordeal. Each time, and there were many of these times, I was overwhelmed, too exhausted, exasperated, scared, confused, frustrated, depressed and angry, I would think, "this is really unbearable and bad for me, but it is really good and necessary for the film. And it was fun and joyful put together the pieces of what a talented, wacky and wonderful existence we shared. I love when viewers marvel at our creative eccentricities that were, for me a "normal" part of growing up.

How did your parents feel about you making this film?

They were so caught up in watching their son degenerate that they did not give it much thought at first. Then they thought that it might be a tool to keep him engaged and connected to us. It was very very hard for them remain open particularly in moments when they were distressed, vulnerable and confused. But our family turns to "doing" something, anything, in moments of stress. I believe that it allowed them not to feel so out-of-control about this illness. They loved telling me what they thought I should be filming and when to cut. In March of 2012 when I had to go to court to get permission to sell the house, I brought one of my talented Yale students, Richard Miron, to do some shooting. You could see how much my parents enjoyed Richard and fawned over him. It made me realize how much pain they were in over Duanne and how much they missed their

Will you show Duanne this film?

If Duanne expresses a desire to see the film, of course, I will show it to him. I know that if he were well, he would be celebrating this film with me. It is an honest and accurate account of our journey. Before he even gave me the footage, he had posted many of the clips on Facebook, wanting the world to see what he was experiencing. Of course, his perception of what that was is a very different interpretation from most people, but the desire for it to be seen is the same.

Do you think it is ethical that you showed your brother like this?

I do not have any ethical qualms about how my brother is portrayed because I know he made his own footage to be seen and I know his behavior is caused by a brain disease over which he has no agency. I don't even think ethics is the issue here, but rather shame and stigma. The truth is that this disease is unpleasant, base, vulgar and messy and it is hard not to look away, not to flinch,

but if I did, if I shied away in anyway, I feel I would be further stigmatizing the illness and my brother.

Have you made plans for a wider release of the film?

We are just beginning to roll out the film. We will begin with applying to festivals and if it does well there may be interest from distributors. I see this film having a very active outreach participation. I hope it is an agent for change because the truth of the matter is that we spend \$200 billion dollars a year in this country by ignoring severe mental illness. Our mental health system and policies are deplorable and contradictory. But in the film world distribution is a very complicated, shape-shifting landscape. I need to find a distribution with the insight, intelligence, sensitivity and foresight of my executive producers who saw the potential in this story.

Have you worked with any mental health professionals on this film?

I have consulted with friends and colleagues in the mental health profession. They have been helpful, but their help is frustratingly limited by contradicting laws and policies. I have found the people working in the trenches of mental health — the first responders, the emergency room doctors to be valiant heroes in handcuffs. I had the opportunity to meet the cops that go to talk to Duanne at my parents' house. They were professional and creatively masterful in their handling of the situation, and it was, at best, a precarious situation. I burst into tears when I met them. Their kindness was beyond their job description.

What is it you hope to achieve with this film?

“That Way Madness Lies... is meaningless if it is not a tool for change, for understanding of the illness and the toxic ravages of stigma. Duanne was born on the very day that President Kennedy signed a new vision of mental health into law but it was never properly fulfilled as he was assimilated three weeks later in Dallas. The film shows the realized potential of a talented man ravaged not only by an illness but by a system that lays waste on the afflicted, and those who love him

Knowing what you know about the journey of this film would you make again?

Of course hindsight is 20/20 and there is a lot I wish I could have done differently, but that does not mean it would have been better. I see the question as two separate issues: one is the film and the other is my handling of the issues illuminated in the film. I don't think I had much of a choice or agency in the

latter. I was pulled in so many directions that my choices were reactionary, but in terms of making the film — I could not have been more fortunate. People came out of the woodwork to support the film. My end-credits, for me are one of the best parts of the film; those who gave what they could to make it happen. I had a post-production dream-team starting with my editor Anne Alvergue who dealt not only with hours of footage but my PTSD of the situation. I got to work with people with whom I have dreamed of working, like composer Michael Bacon and supervising editor Toby Shimin. I had the most insightful notes of my professional life from Abigail Disney who sat with me in my office and scene-by-scene gave me my voice. I think it is impossible to make another film like this in one's life-time. I certainly do not welcome such tragedy and heartache in my life again, but to collaborate and work with people who have so elevated my vision and work, it is a no-brainer.

Where is Duanne now?

As of this writing, as far as I know, he is still cycling through the criminal justice system and the streets, refusing to believe he has a mental health issue. In the words of a respected mental health professional, he is in the process of dying with his rights on.