

“One In A Million” Treatment

The studies have led the network news, stating the fact that one in 150 children are diagnosed with autism. This is a startling fact taken at its face, and as a parent, shortly after counting fingers and toes, you quickly turn your concerns to less visible worries about your newly born child. With Asperger's syndrome, it takes a while before you can notice. The milestones are reached. Height and weight are average. She starts to walk and talk on time. Then one day you notice that your child is running in circles for hours, clockwise only, on end. You get out the video camera, because it's darn near the cutest thing you've ever seen. A few days later, your friends notice the running in circles, they think it's cute too. Oddly enough, the direction of her running is always clockwise in pattern. A joke is made about "What would happen if we took her to South America? Would she turn around and run counterclockwise?". She never feels pain when she bumps into walls. She's a kid, and that's just what kids do, you think to yourself. As her speech develops, you notice that she refers to herself only in third person, you might even make up a name for it, "Bob-Dole-itis". Only when she starts preschool do you start to question some of these things.

For my wife and I, our first parent teacher conference with Lucy's teachers caught us unaware. Her teacher told us she never played with the other kids. She never looked her in the eye. All of her language was quotes from television shows she had seen, or from conversations months' prior. She suggested "early intervention", and speech classes. In other words, her teachers did everything they could legally, except specifically tell us the exact words that they thought Lucy had autism - words that under the current law, teachers are not allowed to utter - the reasons for which we plan to explore. Had it not been for Jen's mother, Doris, a retired special needs teacher and administrator, who was able to translate exactly what Lucy's teachers were saying, we might not have understood - although we did have our own suspicions. That said, even with the years of close work with special needs children under her belt, Doris did not believe there was anything to Lucy possibly being autistic - Lucy is an empathetic child, and the baseline child on the autism spectrum supposedly has no empathy. Lucy was not autistic; she said, no way - no how. These words did not offer much in the way of comfort, as the more we learned about autism, the more signs we noticed Lucy had.

Lucy's pediatrician confirmed Doris' position, he did not feel Lucy was autistic - she was too happy, too giving; however out of diligence he suggested we take Lucy to a pediatric neurologist for a second opinion. The appointment we made was for early 2007, as the pediatric neurologist was booked two months out. We put our fears in the back of head, and as I imagine many parents would do if put in the similar situation, tried to forget about our concerns - operated as though our pediatrician's diagnosis was the correct one, even though self-admittedly he didn't have much in the way of expertise in autism - as I have recently found out, it's not something they teach in medical school.

Months passed, and the appointment finally arrived. We had our list of symptoms prepared, and questions narrowed. The diagnosis process was observational, with the neurologist asking us to tell him why we were concerned that Lucy might have an autism spectrum disorder. Within an hour or so, he validated our concerns - he diagnosed her with Asperger's Syndrome - the same learning disorder that we had learned about online, and of the known Autism Spectrum Disorders, most sounded like Lucy. Jen was crushed, and I was, oddly enough, relieved. It made sense of some of the questions we had. That feeling of relief was short lived however, based on the naive feeling of, if they have a name for it, they must know how to treat it. His suggested course of treatment - keep her in school, and sign her up for speech classes. That was it? That was all he could offer us? We had read of other treatment options - removing wheat and dairy from the diet, applied behavior therapy, and the fact that this disorder can be treated - maximizing the quality of life for those on the autism spectrum. Somehow speech and school just didn't sound like enough, and we were sure of one thing, we didn't want her labeled as autistic through the school system - something she would carry through her entire school years.

This feeling of not knowing what to do was only compounded by lack of available information that had to do with raising a preschooler girl with Asperger's - most of the available information is aimed at older children, and boys at that, with their symptoms being actually quite different that of girls. To put it bluntly, we felt we were up a creek without a paddle, knowing that if our intention was to help Lucy as best we possibly could as parents, we were going to have to forge our own trail. It is this feeling that I want to address with this film - what to do, and not to do after the diagnosis. A diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder in a child is hard on a marriage - up to 80% of parents of autistic children get divorced. Our particular situation is compounded by the mental illnesses my wife and I contend with, myself with bipolar disorder, my wife with depression. Taken individually, these three disorders each pose a significant challenge to a household. Together, it poses a balancing act that only a tight wire artist would dare embark upon. As a filmmaker, it makes for a set of characters that not even your best screenwriters could fathom. Sometimes there are topics that you pick as a documentarian, and then there are topics that pick you.

“One In A Million” Project Description

What is the film about?

“One In A Million” is about the filmmaker’s family - and their learning curve, reality shift to, and understanding of, their daughter, Lucy, and her autism spectrum disorder, specifically Asperger’s syndrome. While including some expert opinions, it is mostly about this chapter of Lucy’s life, which began before her diagnosis in January 2007, and continues to this day.

What will it look like?

While there will be some sit-down static interviews, and footage of other parents and experts, it will mostly consist of run and gun documentary footage of Lucy, her parents, her relatives, her teachers, her therapists, and her classmates – and Lucy’s interaction with each of those different social environments. It will also include footage shot directly from Lucy’s perspective.

How will you do it?

The film will be shot on HD1080i/P-24F/P for 90% of the footage, using both the Canon XH-A1, and Canon HV20, with which Lucy will be using to shoot her own footage to add to the film. The remaining 10% of the film will come from archival 24P video footage, photos, and documents. The film will be deliverable not only in 1080P/24P High Definition, such as Blu-Ray disc, but any format sized below that as well, including SD-DVD, streaming, and iPod/iPhone video, as examples.

Where did the idea come from?

As parents of a pre school age daughter with a diagnosis of Asperger’s syndrome, we noticed as stunning lack of available information on the subject. Therefore as a filmmaker, I am seeking to fill that void, to add one more voice to the tapestry of the discussion on autism spectrum disorders. My desire is also to counterbalance to those documentaries on the subject that seek to rely solely on shock value, and instead make a movie that focuses on hope.

Why should you be the one to make it?

I am an experienced professional documentarian, having shot behind the scenes, for two years, on Richard Linklater’s animated film of Philip K. Dick’s, “A Scanner Darkly”. At the same time, I filmed and animated my own feature length rotoscoped documentary “Doolittle Raiders”, about the events surrounding the 2004 election, including well before, and the aftermath. My plans for “One In A Million” are to screen the film in 1080P/24P High Definition, with great sound, encoded in Dolby Digital. The film will have a wall-to-wall soundtrack that will hopefully eliminate the need for a narration track, as I believe in immersive documentary storytelling.

Who will see it?

The first target audience will be those who are in our shoes, having a pre school daughter with Asperger's, but little in the way of information to go on. Next expansion of that subset is the autism community at large; including parents, and those with autism spectrum disorders themselves. Next expansion is anyone with professional interest in the subject, including doctors, therapists, pharmaceutical companies, teachers - including professors, politicians, and activists. A further expansion is to the world community at large, it is an aim of mine to contribute to the tapestry of the larger discussion on autism spectrum disorders, and it is my intention to educate, entertain, and enlighten – in that order.

How will they see it?

The film will be toured across the country, and screened in 1080P / Dolby Digital, at non-theatrical locations (coffeehouses, bars, rooftops, art galleries, larger conference rooms, etc.) in conjunction with Autism Awareness Month, April 2009 - before, through, and after the month - with the intention of covering much of the continental United States, in person, to be available for Q & A. The film will also be sold online, in a variety of formats, including DVD, downloadable/streaming, and eventually on Blu-Ray Disc, along with merchandise (T-Shirts, Bumper Stickers, Posters). At each of the tour locations, viewers will be able to securely order, on-demand, DVD copies of the film, and/or tour merchandise, via online sales available at the site.

How will you finance it?

It will be financed through a combination of in-kind donations, including my own company, Rembrandt Machine, in the way of gear, donation of payment for time spent, and most of all, through the financial kindness of “Aspie Angels” – those who with their money are making it possible for this powerful message to reach it's full potential. So far “Aspie Angels” have raised \$30K for the film. At minimum, \$35K more is needed to see it through to completion, including advertising, marketing, and overall distribution. Any surplus raised above \$35K will be used for more distribution budget, and small salaries for a skeleton staff.

Why should I fund it?

You should consider being an “Aspie Angel” if you support the notion of spreading the message about autism spectrum disorders, through a film about a pre-school girl with Asperger's Syndrome – which aims to educate, entertain, and enlighten. Any level of financial participation makes you eligible to be an “Aspie Angel” – from small gifts, to large gifts, to monthly subscriptions.

How will the funds be used?

The funds will be used in three ways – the largest amount of funds will be used toward the cash needs for distribution (\$28,500), and the remainder of the 35K will be put towards a 10% completion contingency fund (\$6,500).

PROSPECTUS: What can an Aspie Angel (aka Benefactor) expect as their return?

- 1) A film about a rarely heard topic in autism, a preschool girl with Asperger's, will get completed, and be shown to the much of the continental United States in person, and worldwide online & via DVD, and eventually Blu-Ray, with their name in credits at the end. 20% of the post manufacturing or other costs, post minimal sales threshold, proceeds from the film will go directly to the autism education group, Autism One, whom you can explore further at www.autismone.org. Those gifting \$50 or more will get a complimentary copy of any format of the film (DVD, Online, Blu-Ray once available) of their choosing.
- 2) In addition to helping this group, your contribution will be towards expanding the dialogue further on autism, and Asperger's specifically, to people who may not be as aware of the day to day life of a person, especially a child, with an ASD.
- 3) Annually, an altruism statement will be provided, showing how much has been gifted to Autism One through the film and it's merchandise as a collective, and by you personally. It will also include an accurate projection of how many people have seen the film, including totals of how much merchandise sold – a numerical value demonstrating the reach of the film.
- 4) The gift from the film of 20% to Autism One, including DVD's, merchandise, downloads, and ticket sales, will begin immediately upon proceed collection of funds from the film, and the gift shall be totaled after manufacturing costs, and dependent upon meeting a certain threshold of sales per month (DVD's – 5).
- 5) For example, an Aspie Angel putting \$10,000 towards the film shall expect that a DVD sale of \$15 shall yield, granted at least five DVD's are sold that month, and after manufacturing cost (\$5 per DVD sold) shall yield a collective Aspie Angel gift of \$2 towards Autism One.
- 6) Personally, that Aspie Angel will have contributed 20 cents from the sale of that one DVD. Doesn't sound like much, but if 500 discs are sold, that's \$100, from that Aspie Angel alone, and collectively \$1000 from all Aspie Angels.
- 7) The remainder from the example sale will go back to the film companies, in order to continue advertising and marketing the film, and paying salaries towards a skeleton staff, who may be needed to carry out the duties and furthering of the message and reach of the film.
- 8) An Aspie Angel's gift shall be non-tax deductible, nor will it be refundable, or given with any form of expectation of financial gain/loss, or return of the original gift. This is not an investment, in the legal sense of the word, it is a gift towards a film, "One In A Million", that aims to educate, entertain, and enlighten. An Aspie Angel, or benefactor to the film, will have dividends that will be measurable by the amount donated to Autism One, and the reach of the message of the film.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	"One In A Million" BUDGET DETAIL								
2	PRE-PRODUCTION		Units	Rate Per	Days/Wks	Total	Cash	In-Kind	Vendor
3	Director/Producer		1	\$250/week	n/a	\$3,000.00		\$3,000.00	Rembrandt Machine
4	TOTAL PRE-PRODUCTION					\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00	
5	PRODUCTION		Units	Rate Per	Days/Wks	Total	Cash	In-Kind	Vendor
7	Director/Producer		1	\$250/week	20 weeks	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00	Rembrandt Machine
8	Director Of Photography/Gaffer		1	\$250/week	20 weeks	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00	Rembrandt Machine
9	Sound Records/Boom Operator		1	\$250/week	20 weeks	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00	Rembrandt Machine
10	Canon XH-A1 Camera Package		1	\$3,300/per	n/a	\$3,300.00		\$3,300.00	Rembrandt Machine
11	Canon HV20 Camera Package		1	\$1,000/per	n/a	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	Rembrandt Machine
12	Sound Package		1	\$1,000/per	n/a	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	Rembrandt Machine
13	Lighting Package		1	\$1,000/per	n/a	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	Rembrandt Machine
14	Accessories		1	\$2,000/per	n/a	\$2,000.00		\$2,000.00	Rembrandt Machine
15	Panasonic AY-DVM63PQ		100	\$3/per	n/a	\$300.00	\$300.00		Pro Tape
16	Expendables					\$250.00	\$250.00		Various
17	Shipping					\$250.00	\$250.00		Various
18	Petty Cash					\$250.00	\$250.00		n/a
19	TOTAL PRODUCTION					\$24,350.00	\$1,050.00	\$23,300.00	
20	POST-PRODUCTION		Units	Rate Per	Days/Wks	Total	Cash	In-Kind	Vendor
21	MacBook Pro		1	\$2,000/per	n/a	\$2,500.00		\$2,500.00	Rembrandt Machine
22	Final Cut Studio Upgrade		1	\$500/per	n/a	\$500.00		\$500.00	Rembrandt Machine*
23	Final Cut Studio Upgrade		1	\$100/per	n/a	\$100.00		\$100.00	Rembrandt Machine*
24	Roxio Toast With HD Plug In		1	\$400/per	n/a	\$400.00		\$400.00	Rembrandt Machine*
25	DV Filmmaker		1	\$100/per	n/a	\$100.00		\$100.00	Rembrandt Machine*
26	Instant HD		1	\$400/per	n/a	\$400.00		\$400.00	Rembrandt Machine*
27	2 MB RAM		1	\$125/per	n/a	\$125.00		\$125.00	Rembrandt Machine
28	EZ-Quest 320 GB Hard Drive		1	\$125/per	n/a	\$125.00		\$125.00	Rembrandt Machine
29	Composers / Soundtrack		1	\$100/Song	20 Songs	\$2,000.00		\$2,000.00	TBA Various*
30	Logging / Capture		1	\$250/week	5 weeks	\$1,250.00		\$1,250.00	Rembrandt Machine
31	Editor		1	\$250/week	5 weeks	\$1,250.00		\$1,250.00	Rembrandt Machine
32	Sound Editor		1	\$250/week	5 weeks	\$1,250.00		\$1,250.00	Rembrandt Machine
33	Mastering/DVD/Blu-Ray Encoding		1	\$250/week	5 weeks	\$1,250.00		\$1,250.00	Rembrandt Machine
34	TOTAL POST-PRODUCTION					\$10,765.00	\$0.00	\$10,765.00	
35	DISTRIBUTION		Units	Rate Per	Days/Wks	Total	Cash	In-Kind	Vendor
36	Director/Projectionist		1	\$250/per week	7 weeks	\$1,750.00		\$1,750.00	Rembrandt Machine
37	A/V Assistant/On-Site Online Sales/BTS Camera		1	\$250/per week	7 weeks	\$1,750.00		\$1,750.00	Rembrandt Machine
39	Pre-Release DVD Copies		100	\$5/per	n/a	\$500.00	\$500.00		Customflex
40	i080P/24P Projection Package		1	\$500/per	n/a	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00	Rembrandt Machine*
41	Web Designer		1	\$2K/per job	n/a	\$2,000.00		\$2,000.00	Rembrandt Machine*
42	Online & Brick/Mortar Advertising		1	\$1K/week	6 weeks	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00		Various
43	Viral & Local Marketing		1	\$1K/week	6 weeks	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00		Various
44	Use/Wear On Personal Car For Business		1	\$5,000/total	n/a	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00	Rembrandt Machine
45	Merchandise Samples		20	\$1,000/total	n/a	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	Rembrandt Machine*
46	Fully Loaded iPod		1	\$1,000/total	n/a	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	Rembrandt Machine*
47	Gas		150	\$40/fillup	n/a	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00		Various
48	Hotel Room		1	\$100/per night	30 nights	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00		Various - Hotels.com
49	Petty Cash		2	\$100/per day	30 days	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00		Various
50	TOTAL DISTRIBUTION					\$45,000.00	\$27,500.00	\$17,500.00	
51	DOCUMENTARY Income Summary								
52	<i>Expenses</i>		<i>Cash</i>	<i>In-Kind</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Days/Wks</i>			
54	pre-prod./admin.		\$0.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	n/a			
55	production		\$1,050.00	\$23,300.00	\$24,350.00	20 weeks			
56	post-prod.		\$0.00	\$10,765.00	\$10,765.00	20 weeks			
57	distribution		\$28,500.00	\$16,500.00	\$44,000.00	40 days			
58	<i>Total Cash plus</i>		\$29,550.00						
59	<i>Total In-Kind equals</i>		\$53,565.00						
61	Total Expenses		\$83,115.00						
62	<i>Total Contingency (10%) equals</i>		\$8,311.50						
63	Final Expenses		\$91,426.50						
64	<i>Total Cash plus</i>		\$29,550.00						
65	<i>Total Contingency (10%) equals</i>		\$8,311.50						
66	<i>Subtotal Cash</i>		\$37,861.50						
68	<i>Difference In-Kind equals*</i>		\$2,866.00						
69	Final Cash To Be Raised		\$35,000.00						

“One In A Million” - Timeline

March 2008 - May 2008: *Pre-Production, Secure Crew, Purchase Extra Gear, Implement Fundraising Plans.*

May 2008 - September 2008: *Production - All Shooting Completed (50-100 Hours Footage Or Approximately Four Months Shooting Days, Whichever Comes First).*

September 2008 – December 2008: *Post Production - Log/Capturing, Sound, Music, VFX, Rough Cut, Mid Cut(s), And Final Edit, Transfer HDV Files To Multiple Playback Formats. Set Up DVDs For Distribution.*

January 2009 – April 2009: *Prepare Website, And Purchase Gear, Finalize Travel Plans For Film Tour. Seek Other Screening Opportunities (Netflix, One Shot Theatrical, Festivals, Other).*

April 20th 2009 – May 10th 2009: *Embark On Nationwide Tour, Sell On-Site On Demand Online DVD's And Merchandise, Advertising And Marketing Plans Coincide, Sell Multiple Versions Of Film Online, As Well As Merchandise. Assistant Will Shoot Tour Documentary.*

May 11th 2009 – Forward: *Continue Advertising And Marketing, Sell Multiple Formats Of Film Online, As Well As Merchandise. Edit Tour Documentary And Submit New Version Of DVD To Be Released, As Well As Including It On Downloads.*