

Little Fugitive

Written and Directed by Joanna Lipper

A Frederick Zollo Production

"A moving remake...deftly directed...An assured mixture of charm and depth..."
--The Economist

"A lovely ode to childhood—and to Brooklyn"
--"L" Magazine

"A beautifully remade version... Those familiar with the 1953 film should easily embrace this film as something fresh and new, while appreciating Lipper's homage to the original. She's someone we'll be hearing more from in the future."
--Hollywoodreviews.com

*Starring Peter Dinklage, Justina Machado,
Nicolas Marti-Salgado, David Castro, Brendan Sexton III,
Lois Smith, Sophie Dahl, Austin Talynn Carpenter, Raquel Castro*

Running Time: 90 minutes

www.littlefugitive.com

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SYNOPSIS

Joey and Lenny don't realize how much they love each other. Like so many siblings, they fight and get on each other's nerves. Each brother occasionally wishes the other were dead. One day both boys are forced to discover what it might really feel like if this wish came true. The brothers emerge from the terrifying experience of having to contemplate the loss of one another with a new appreciation of the strength and depth of the powerful bond that connects them.

Filmed in present-day Brooklyn **LITTLE FUGITIVE** is the moving story of two young brothers who are latch-key kids. Their father (Peter Dinklage) is incarcerated and their mother (Justina Machado) works double shifts. Twelve-year-old Lenny (Nicolas Marti Salgado) feels overburdened with adult responsibilities and sometimes wishes his seven-year-old brother Joey (David Castro) would just disappear. On Lenny's birthday, the boys are left to their own devices and Lenny instigates a cruel prank that causes Joey to run away to Coney Island where he finds a temporary home with the local denizens. Lenny finally tracks down his lost brother and the two boys realize how deeply they love each other as they face foster care and are painfully separated by the Administration for Children's Services. In Lipper's film, modern day imagery of Coney Island is combined with archival footage dating back 100 years in the park's history. This archival footage is woven into Lipper's remake in sequences narrated by twelve-year-old Lenny, who is fascinated by the amusement park's enduring legends.

*Set in present-day Brooklyn, **LITTLE FUGITIVE** is a re-imagining of the beloved 1953 classic. Written, directed and produced by Joanna Lipper, the remake of "Little Fugitive" stars Nicolas Marti-Salgado, David Castro, Peter Dinklage, Justina Machado, Brendan Sexton III, Lois Smith, Sophie Dahl, Austin Talynn Carpenter and Raquel Castro. This film is being released by Cinema Libre Studio. Lipper's award-winning documentary film **INSIDE OUT: PORTRAITS OF CHILDREN** will appear on the **LITTLE FUGITIVE** DVD as a special bonus feature.*

See www.littlefugitive.com for more details

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

by Joanna Lipper

FROM 1953 TO 2006...

When I set out to write and direct a loosely-based remake of the beloved 1953 classic, “Little Fugitive” I was inspired by the fact that the central bold themes of the original storyline remained urgently relevant today, given the increased prevalence of single-parent families, latch key kids, and the all-too-frequent tragic incidents involving children shooting other children.

I thought it was important to bring “Little Fugitive” to a new generation of film audiences, not as a frame-by-frame remake, but as a newly conceived film set in Brooklyn in the present. My intention was to honor the emotional depth and lyricism of the original and pay homage to it, while also bringing some meaningful new elements to the timeless, incredibly moving story of two brothers having to contemplate losing each other forever, in order to realize how much they love each other.

The original film took place in a nostalgic world—--which characterized a certain idyllic perspective that in some ways was one of the defining aesthetics of the 1950's before feminism, desegregation, Vietnam and the free love era of the 1960's came and irrevocably changed America, shattering the illusion perpetuated in shows like “Leave it to Beaver” and in Norman Rockwell's paintings—the illusion of the pristine, economically-secure nuclear family and its innocent children portrayed as emblematic cornerstones of American society, masking all the turmoil that was bubbling just beneath the surface.

Despite a veneer of innocence, the original film hinted at some darkness—the unexplained absence of a father figure in the household, the presence of a gun that was accessible to children, the risk of the kids being left home alone, unsupervised, Lenny's seething rage and resentment directed towards his little brother, and his own capacity for cruelty... and then there was also the story of Coney Island and its evolution.

These elements were developed in the remake.

Morris Engel died of cancer, leaving me with so many vibrant memories of his stories, his enthusiasm and his encouragement. I will always be extremely grateful that Morris took a leap of faith and gave me the chance to use his gem as an inspiration to create something new, a work that can open up a valuable dialogue about so many significant questions and themes that shed light on the plights of children at risk, on the process and history of independent filmmaking, and on the passing of the baton from one generation to another.

CONEY ISLAND: THE VANISHED WORLD OF LILLIPUTIA

Producer Fred Zollo came on board and with his expertise and experience, he was instrumental in helping me develop my vision. It was during conversations with Fred that I began to clearly see how the treasure trove of archival footage shot at Coney Island could be used as a window into the history of the amusement park's ups and downs at the mercy of fires, various urban policies and aggressive developers. Snippets of archival footage layered under Lenny's voiceover showed Coney Island at the height of its magic, before 1911, and juxtaposed the amusement park then with the park of the 1950's depicted in the original, and the very different Coney Island of today.

Joey, the young boy in the film, dreams of rebuilding Lilliputia, the miniature village that once housed three hundred Little People. This dream is indicative of his father's wish to recapture the lost innocence, magic and nostalgia of the beloved amusement park in all its former glory. This wish is communicated to Joey through the stories his father tells him during visiting hours at jail. Joey imagines Lilliputia as a safe haven where he and his father might have fit in and been accepted, unlike in the real world where he feels they are seen as misfits who don't belong.

While making the film I consulted with Brooklyn Borough historian Ron Schweiger, and also with Coney Island's expert historian, Charles Denson, author of "Coney Island: Lost and Found." Both men remembered the original "Little Fugitive" and were supportive of my efforts to breathe new life and a new vision into one of their favorite stories. Their perspectives on Coney Island were invaluable.

THE CHILDREN

I set out to make a film about children who confront serious issues with grace, dignity, wisdom, wonder and resilience—while somehow managing to maintain their integrity amidst the confusion, conflict and complexity of the adult world. After spending four years making a documentary and writing a book about six teenage mothers and their children (*Growing Up Fast*, Picador, 2003) I emerged with a sense of a milieu that could ground the contemporary world of the children in "Little Fugitive." I had witnessed firsthand, the plights of young single mothers addressing the issue of their sons' and daughters' fathers being incarcerated. Shocked to find that nearly two million children in America have at least one parent behind bars, I decided that the mystery of the absent father in the original film would be replaced by the presence of Sam, the incarcerated father of the boys, played by Peter Dinklage. In *The True Cost of Prison*, Eric Schlosser asserts that,

Children who grow up with a parent behind bars are far more likely than other kids to wind up in prison one day.... The failure of most inmates to rejoin society permanently, combined with the prospective failure of so many of their children, raises the specter of a growing, thriving criminal underclass in America. A prison sentence for one person may punish a family for generations.

In many ways my remake of *Little Fugitive* evolved into the story of two young boys who long to transcend this fate.

PRODUCTION TEAM

JOANNA LIPPER – DIRECTOR/WRITER/ PRODUCER

Joanna Lipper is an author and filmmaker. She runs Sea Wall Entertainment, a company dedicated to the research, development and production of books and films. Ms. Lipper's debut feature film, *Little Fugitive* will be released by Cinema Libre Studio in September 2008.

Lipper's first documentary, *Inside Out: Portraits of Children* premiered on the Sundance Channel, screened in the MoMA New Documentaries Series and received the Hollywood Discovery Award. This film will be included as a special bonus feature on the *Little Fugitive* DVD.

Ms. Lipper's second documentary, *Growing Up Fast* was distinguished by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as one of the outstanding short documentaries of 1999 and is available via leading educational distributor, Films for the Humanities and Sciences. This film focused on teen mothers and was the inspiration for her acclaimed book, *Growing Up Fast*. Its release marked the beginning of her involvement in grassroots activism and educational outreach efforts in the arena of teen pregnancy and parenthood prevention.

Ms. Lipper holds a B.A from Harvard in Literature and Film, and an M.Sc in Psychoanalytic Developmental Psychology from University College London and The Anna Freud Centre. She is currently a fellow at the Woodhull Institute for Ethical Leadership. From September 2008 to June 2009 Ms. Lipper will be a fellow in residence at the W.E.B Du Bois Institute at Harvard University where she will be developing the feature film *A Girl From Zanzibar*, based on the novel by Roger King. Ms. Lipper's public appearances include lectures on a range of issues relating to psychology, sociology and film.

For more info, please visit: www.joannalipper.com

FREDERICK ZOLLO – PRODUCER

Mr. Zollo began his career in the theater. To date, his Broadway plays have earned a total of sixty-four Tony nominations. Himself a four time Tony Award winner (*Angels in America: Millenium Approaches* and *Perestroika* by Tony Kushner, the Howard Davies revival of Noel Coward's *Private Lives* and Edward Albee's *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?*), Mr. Zollo serves on the Board of Governors of the League of Theater Owners and Producers. Fred Zollo's four major studio films (*Quiz Show*, *Mississippi Burning*, *Ghosts of Mississippi*, *The Paper*) have received a total of fourteen Academy Award nominations. Films made for television include *In the Gloaming* and *Lansky*.

VINCENT MAGGIO – PRODUCER

Vince Maggio began his film career as an assistant director. *Little Fugitive* is the first feature film he was involved in as a line producer.

CATHRINE STICKNEY STECK – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Cathrine Stickney Steck is an entrepreneur and philanthropist, dedicated to political causes, education, and social policy. She is an equity partner in Joanna Lipper's company Sea Wall Entertainment, where she is actively involved in helping to select and develop future feature film projects. She lives in New York City with her two children.

RICHARD SANDS – DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Rick Sands worked as a gaffer and then as a visual effects cinematographer for 20 years. Then he met artist and photographer, Gregory Crewdson, and became his director of photography. Together they began a collaboration that has lasted over seven years. Rick also shoots commercials and does special effects cinematography.

BARRINGTON PHELOUNG – COMPOSER

Barrington Pheloung is a composer, conductor and performer of international renown. Barrington has an immense catalogue behind him that includes fifty-two ballet scores for many dance companies worldwide, concertos for numerous instruments, scores for film, television, radio, and theatre. Barrington has also composed for new media, writing for multiple platforms of computer entertainment. His film scores include *Shopgirl*, *Hillary and Jackie*, Anthony Minghella's *Truly Madly Deeply*, and the hit British television series *Inspector Morse*. Mr. Pheloung composed the scores for both Ms. Lipper's documentaries. *Little Fugitive* is their third collaboration.

KEITH REAMER – EDITOR

Keith Reamer has edited more than 25 films including the critically acclaimed Sundance winner *Three Seasons*, *Songcatcher*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*, and *The Ballad of Little Jo*.

JEANNE DUPONT – COSTUME DESIGNER

Jeanne Dupont was the assistant costume designer on *Ali* and *One True Thing* amongst others. She was the costume designer on *The Station Agent*.

PAUL AVERY – PRODUCTION DESIGNER

MARY ENGEL – CO-PRODUCER

Mary Engel is the director of The Orkin-Engel Film and Photo Archive, which can be viewed at www.orkinphoto.com. She made an award-winning documentary about her late mother, entitled *Ruth Orkin: Frames of Life*.

MAJOR CAST

Nicolas Marti-Salgado (Lenny) is of Mexican and Cuban American descent. He began his acting career at age five. His credits include a guest role in *Law and Order: SVU*, a key role in *Bless the Child* a Paramount film, as well as numerous voiceovers, commercials and projects for both Spanish and English speaking audiences. His interests include international martial arts, snowboarding, basketball, track, and having fun in general.

David Castro (Joey) has appeared in several feature films including *Where God Left His Shoes*, *27 Dresses*, *Bella* and *A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints*. He lives in Long Island with his parents and his sister Raquel.

Peter Dinklage (Sam) has had a prolific career on-stage and in film. He starred in the acclaimed film, *The Station Agent*, and appeared in the remake of *Lassie*. His numerous film and television credits include Michel Gondry's *Human Nature*, the John Favreau Holiday comedy, *Elf* and Sidney Lumet's courtroom drama, *Find Me Guilty*. He recently appeared onstage in a Bard Summerscape Production of *Uncle Vanya*.

Justina Machado (Natalia) is best known for her role of "Vanessa Diaz" on the hit television series *Six Feet Under*. Machado has participated in over 14 films including *She's So Lovely* directed by Nick Cassavetes (1997), *Full Frontal* (2002); *Final Destination 2* (2003), and the 2004 thriller *Torque* starring Ice Cube, and Bertrand Tavernier's film, "In The Electric Mist." Machado has also made appearances on stage. She participated in the productions of *Blade to the Heat* and *Black Butterfly* at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles.

Brendan Sexton III (Frank) made his debut in Todd Solondz's *Welcome to the Dollhouse* playing the troubled bully Brandon McCarthy, for which he was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award. He was the lead in *Hurricane Streets* and *Desert Blue* and also appeared in *Boys Don't Cry* and *Black Hawk Down* as well as the cult films *Empire Records* and *Pecker*.

Lois Smith (Social Worker) A veteran of stage and screen, Lois Smith made her film debut as the barmaid Ann in Elia Kazan's *East of Eden* (1955). In 1970, Smith won the National Society of Film Critics' Award for Best Supporting Actress for performance as Partita, Jack Nicholson's sister, in Bob Rafelson's *Five Easy Pieces*. Credits include *How to Make an American Quilt*, *The Pledge* and *Minority Report*.

Sophie Dahl (Mermaid) is a model, actress and author.

Raquel Castro (Destiny) starred about Ben Affleck in *Jersey Girl*. She had a starring role on an episode of *Law and Order SVU*. In *Little Fugitive* she plays Joey's friend and neighbor acting opposite her younger brother, David Castro, who plays the title role in *Little Fugitive*.

Austin Talynn Carpenter (Grace) is from California. She makes her feature film debut in *Little Fugitive*.

Cinema Libre Studio – Distributor of “Little Fugitive”

“Cinema Libre Studio, arguably the world's most progressive, socially aware film company.” -
Todd David Schwartz, CBS Radio

Cinema Libre Studio has changed the way independent films are made and distributed. As media consolidation increases, independently distributed films are one of the few outlets remaining for free speech, alternative views and movies with a message. The significance of independently produced and distributed films has grown exponentially as audiences clamor to see feature films and documentaries that introduce new ideas, are socially conscious and that may challenge the status-quo. We realize that there is an audience, both “art-house” and “mainstream,” that refuses to be force-fed Hollywood happy-endings. At Cinema Libre Studio, we believe that movies can make a difference. We strive to be at the forefront of the independent media movement, utilizing the mainstream tools of film distribution, reinventing distribution protocols, combining grassroots outreach with targeted marketing efforts, to produce and distribute feature films, foreign films and documentaries that do make a difference to both art-house, mainstream and home audiences.

Cinema Libre Studio is a full-service studio and distributor, overseeing multiple theatrical and DVD releases nationally to art-house theatres, major chains and video retailers every month. Cinema Libre Studio’s Home Video distribution covers major retail chains, major rental chains, online shopping sites and wholesale distributors.

Distribution Highlights:

- In 2007, we secured an Oscar® qualification for the Participant Productions film, Angels in the Dust.
- 2007 was also the year of our multi-city theatrical campaign of Desert Bayou, the film nominated for an NAACP Image Award as Best Documentary.
- We partnered with ESPN to release Through the Fire: The Sebastian Telfair Story in a limited theatrical engagement beginning in February 2006
- Among the dozen of films distributed by the company, Robert Greenwald's Outfoxed played in more than 200 theatres and was the highest grossing opening weekend in thirty years at The Quad in New York
- Uncovered: The War On Iraq played in over 100 theatres
- The Future of Food ran for five weeks in New York and has played in art-house theatres across the US and Canada including Landmark and Laemmle
- In 2005, we partnered with Netflix to distribute their acquisition of Tim Robbins' Embedded Live.