

Inlaws & OUTLAWS

What do you get when you fall in love?

Inlaws & Outlaws cleverly weaves together the true stories of couples and singles — both gay and straight — and all into a collective narrative that is as hilarious as it is heartbreaking.

At the top of the film, you meet real people one on one. You don't know who's gay or straight or who's with whom. As their stories unfold and stereotypes fall by the wayside, you won't care because you'll be rooting for everybody.

There's the story of two Mormon women, secretly college sweethearts until one follows the path her parents have chosen for her and marries — with her beloved serving as her bridesmaid. There's the ex-Marine who has no idea what a happy relationship looks like until he stumbles across his future partner one night at a bar. And there's the nice girl from Brooklyn who somehow always picks the guys who don't treat her right — until she finds and marries a fellow almost too good to be true.

With candor, good humor, great music and real heart, *Inlaws & Outlaws* gets past all the rhetoric to explore what we all have in common. We love. We lose. We all want to belong.

Status: Shot Summer/Fall 2004. First cut premiered at Seattle International Film Festival, June 2005. Final cut premiered with theatrical run in Seattle, June 2007.

Media: Shot on DV with 35mm transfer in mind. 101 minutes.

Production Team:

Director	Drew Emery
Executive Producer	Robert D. Lemon
Producers	Drew Emery, Larry Schlessinger & Lisa Halpern
Editors	Celia Beasley, Michael Cutts & Drew Emery
Directors of Photography	Ryan Purcell & Mark Simon
Music	Eric Lane Barnes

A Production of the True Stories Project

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WHAT THE CRITICS SAY:

“ ★★★ ½ of 4. Captures the **heart of love**... Charming and heartfelt.” John Hartl, *The Seattle Times*



“**Lovingly rendered**... a timely examination of the nature of marriage, whether straight or gay.” Ken Eisner, *Variety*

“It’s easy to see how the film could become a word-of-mouth success. Its collection of stories is accessible and **consistently absorbing**, and in a couple of cases, **devastating**.”
Robert Horton, *The Everett Herald*



“Emery’s shrewd tactic with this film is to focus on **the love that defines relationships** regardless of gender, and references the challenges facing gay marriage with subtlety rather than beating us over the head with it.”
Matthew McQuilkin, *Mo Magazine*

“It’s the kind of movie that should be shown in schools, churches and to parents to convey the importance of marriage equality. It’s also one for the gay time capsule, providing **a lasting impression of love** in an often marginalized community.”
Ken Knox, *IN LA Magazine*



“**Excellent. Intelligently done**... it’s impossible not be completely absorbed.” Herb Krohn, *Seattle Gay News*

“An **excellent documentary** about people who personify everything that is right about the phrase "I do." *NewsOK*, Oklahoma City



“A **timely, often affecting documentary** [that] investigates with subtlety and insight... a heartfelt and surprisingly tender story...”
Jason Gargano, *Cincinnati City Beat*

“An effective treatise on love... **honest and heartfelt**. What will strike you the most about what all of them have to say about love is telling: If you didn’t know which interviewees were straight and which were gay, you wouldn’t be able to tell them apart, so uniform were their feelings on the nature of love, companionship and marriage.” Michael C. Moore, *Kitsap Sun*



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WHAT OUR AUDIENCES SAY:

Our audiences, both straight and gay, have been sending us their comments and writing about us on IMDb, among other sites. The passion many have felt for the film has translated into remarkable word-of-mouth, and a devoted following of volunteers and enthusiasts — our Outlaws Posse — which has helped bring the film to countless communities across the country.

A selection:

"I laughed a lot, I cried a little, and **I walked out with hope**; I can't ask for much more than that in a movie."

"There's a **compassion** in the film that's contagious."

"What you've made is **so genuine and so important**. I don't know if I have ever described a film as being genuine before. These people and their stories included me. I felt their vulnerability, their pain, their love. I don't know if I can fully explain it just yet. I'm gushy inside, still this morning. **I feel inspired** to act in the name of gay marriage and simply to love BIG TIME."

"My son who is gay felt **so full of hope** when he left the movie, to see so many wonderful people in loving, fulfilling relationships was an **incredible feeling**. As for me as his mother I just want him to have the same opportunities as my other sons to fall in love, get married if they want and 'feel the magic.'"

"Last night was one of the **most incredible experiences** with a movie in my life! The tears flowed and flowed and flowed...this movie solidified my confidence in society."

"There is no way you can walk away from this film without a **better understanding** of the need for marriage equality in this country. And even if you don't agree with gay marriage, the human faces Mr. Emery adds to this debate are **unforgettable**."

"The film brought me to tears, **made me laugh**, made me think, and made me want to get its message out to others. The **emotional depth** of this movie is bound to affect even the most hardened person. I plan on petitioning my church to show the film."

"It's so rare to sit in a dark theater and **feel connected** both to the 'characters' and the people sitting around you. By the end of the film, I felt I knew them all."

Inlaws & OUTLAWS

Festivals & Awards:

Seattle International Film Festival • World Premiere (original cut),
Runner Up, Best Director (Drew Emery)

Palm Springs International Film Festival • Best of Fest
deadCENTER Film Festival • Grand Jury Award

Seattle Lesbian & Gay Film Festival • Best Local Film

Other Festivals:

Ashland Independent Film Festival
Austin Gay & Lesbian Film Festival
Boise Queer as Film Festival
Connecticut Film Festival
Edmonton International Film Festival (Canadian Premiere)
Indianapolis International Film Festival
Indiefest Chicago
Jacksonville Film Festival
Martha's Vineyard Film Festival
Melbourne Queer Film Festival (Australian Premiere)
Milwaukee Gay & Lesbian Film Festival
Milwaukee International Film Festival
Rainier Independent Film Festival
Santa Fe Film Festival
Tacoma Film Festival
True/False West Film Festival

Additional Honors:

Greater Seattle Business Association • **Special Recognition Award**
for Social Change Through the Arts



Inlaws & OUTLAWS

The Inlaws & Outlaws Story

- May 2005 World Premiere of original cut at Seattle International Film Festival,** playing to **2 sold-out houses**. Drew Emery is a runner-up for Best Director.
- July 2005 Big Splashy Gala** at Cinerama, courtesy of Vulcan, Inc. The film gets the red carpet treatment to another **sold-out house** in the venerable 845-seat theatre. County Executive Ron Sims greets the crowd beforehand and jazz vocalist Felicia Loud and the Inlaws & Outlaws Band wow them afterwards.
- Sept 2005 IFP Market in New York.** The film is one of only 8 feature documentaries invited to screen at the Independent Film Project's Market in New York.
- Oct 2005 Seattle Lesbian & Gay Film Festival.** "Inlaws & Outlaws" **sells out** in advance and a second screening is added at Cinerama. The film goes on to win "**Best Local Film.**"
- Nov 2006 Santa Fe Film Festival.** The film screens twice as an official entry.
- Jan 2006 Palm Springs International Film Festival.** Enthusiastic audiences choose "Inlaws & Outlaws" as a **Best of Fest** film. It receives an encore screening.
- Feb 2006 GLEAM** (Gay & Lesbian Employees at Microsoft) hosts two special fundraiser screenings at the Broadway Performance Hall. **Another sell-out!**
- Mar 2006 Martha's Vineyard Film Festival.** The film is given one of the few coveted spots in this fiercely independent film festival.
- Apr 2006 Ashland Independent Film Festival.** Oregon's hippest fest hosts "Inlaws & Outlaws" for **four sold-out** screenings.
- Apr 2006 TRUE/FALSE West Film Festival.** This new festival embraces the film with a **sold-out** screening.
- May 2006 Ohio Hearts + Minds Tour.** Hosted by Equality Ohio, PFLAG, and several local groups, the tour serves as a pilot for the Hearts + Minds Campaign.
- June 2006 deadCENTER Film Festival.** The film wins their top prize, the **Grand Jury Award**. Local volunteers form Oklahoma Posse and bring the film back for a limited theatrical engagement to coincide with Oklahoma Pride. Subjects Pete-e Petersen and Jane Lighty are Grand Marshals.
- Sept 2006 Milwaukee Lesbian & Gay Film Festival.** Official selection.
- Oct 2006 Connecticut Film Festival.** Official selection.
- Milwaukee International Film Festival.** Official selection.

- Oct 2006 Queer As Film Festival, Boise Idaho.** Official selection.
- Jan 2007 Robert D. Lemon as Executive Producer.** After seeing the movie at his local church, Bob falls in love with the stories profiled and becomes an Executive Producer of the film by generously underwriting the completion and release of the film – all, in memory of his late wife, Mary Lou Lemon, a champion of gay and lesbian rights in Oklahoma and Texas.
- Feb 2007 GSBA Campaign Kick-Off.** “Inlaws & Outlaws” celebrates the launch of their GSBA-sponsored Campaign with an evening hosted by comedian Peggy Platt. A **sold-out** showing of the film is followed by a ‘non-auction’ raising over \$18,000 towards the Hearts + Minds Campaign.
- Mar 2007 Special Recognition Award.** “Inlaws & Outlaws” and director, Drew Emery are awarded a Special Recognition Award for social change through the arts by the Greater Seattle Business Association (GSBA).
- May 2007 Sneak Preview, West Hollywood.** Two-week sneak preview run at Laemmle Sunset 5.
- Jun 2007 Final Cut Premiere, Seattle.** Following a gala event at the Cinerama, Seattle, the final cut of the film enjoys a **two-week release** at AMC Uptown, Seattle. Due to popular demand, the run is **extended by an extra week**.
- Jun 2007 Seattle Pride Parade.** Stars of the film, Chuck Lazenby, Pete-e Petersen & Jane Lighty are invited to lead the Seattle Pride Parade as Grand Marshals.
- Jun 2007 Hearts + Minds Campaign Launches in WA state.** “Inlaws & Outlaws” launches its Washington state Hearts + Minds tour, with dozens of screenings from Port Townsend to Bellingham, Vancouver and Tri-Cities.
- Jul 2007 National Hearts + Minds Campaign Launches.** The Hearts + Minds Campaign is launched nationwide, kicking off with screenings in Sedona, AZ and a tour of Indiana.
- Sep 2007** The film is officially released on DVD and available exclusively through the Hearts + Minds Campaign — and organizations hosting our screenings.
- Oct 2007 Edmonton International Film Festival.** Official Selection & Canadian Premiere.
- Austin Gay & Lesbian Film Festival.** Official Selection. Kicks off our Texas Outlaws Tour in several communities all over the state.
- Tacoma Film Festival.** Official Selection.
- Seven Straight Nights.** Four cities nationwide include “Inlaws & Outlaws” in their all-night vigils for equal rights, including one screening at the State Capitol in Raleigh, North Carolina.
- PFLAG National Convention.** Invited to screen at the Nat’l Convention and introduced by keynote speaker Bishop Gene Robinson.
- Mar 2007 Melbourne Queer Film Festival.** Official selection; Australian premiere.

The Seattle Times



June 26, 2007

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The things we do to ensure "Our Love is Here to Stay"

By John Hartl

Special to The Seattle Times

If homosexuality is a choice (as a certain nominee for U.S. surgeon general contends), it's news to the Northwest couples interviewed in Drew Emery's charming and heartfelt documentary "Inlaws & Outlaws."

As they talk about their experiences on Whidbey Island, in Volunteer Park and in Mukilteo, one theme comes through loud and clear: the spontaneous passion and "the magic" they feel or felt for their partners. No one seems to have chosen which sex to pursue, though they've often felt pressured or thwarted by people and institutions telling them what to choose.

In the words of one 40-ish man who is "tired of being onstage," acting is sadly but inevitably a part of being gay. Pretending to be heterosexual is sometimes necessary for survival, yet at some point the people Emery rounded up have said enough is enough. They're out of the closet here, and they're not shy about it.

In the opening sequence, children and teenagers are asked what marriage means to them; their responses are startling, candid, surprisingly witty. The talking-heads format is briefly interrupted as Seattle jazz and soul singer Felicia Loud smoothly performs standards appropriate to the mood of each sequence: "Our Love is Here to Stay," "I'll Never Fall in Love Again," "Everybody Hurts."



TRUE STORIES PROJECT

Heather Andersen and Leslie Christian are featured in "Inlaws & Outlaws."

Movie review ★★★★★

"Inlaws & Outlaws," a documentary directed by Drew Emery. 99 minutes. Not rated; for mature audiences (includes discussions of sexual relations). Uptown.

Movie review ★★★★★

Showtimes

"Inlaws & Outlaws," a documentary directed by Drew Emery. 99 minutes. Not rated; for mature audiences (includes discussions of sexual relations). Uptown.

The movie also includes heterosexuals talking about their love lives. It gradually shifts its focus and becomes less about sexual orientation than it is about the difficulties and rewards of becoming a committed couple. There's no mistaking the joy and shared memories of these couples — or the anguish that some (especially a devoted Mormon lesbian pair) have experienced.

The most moving episodes involve long-term relationships. One man planned suicide when his lover of 50 years died, but a welcoming congregation at an Everett church renewed his spirit. Some couples generate such mutual respect and playfulness on-camera that it's easy to see why they've been together for decades.

Emery finished shooting "Inlaws & Outlaws" a couple of years ago, when he held the premiere at the Seattle International Film Festival. Since then, he's taken the \$120,000 production around the country, showing it at churches in Ohio, Indiana and Oklahoma, and whittling away at it until it's about 10 minutes shorter.

It's a tighter film now, with fewer musical jokes (the ironic use of "A Man and a Woman" is no longer part of the soundtrack), yet nothing essential seems to be missing. As Emery puts it, it's not just "preaching to the choir" but "accessible to anybody."

John Hartl: johnhartl@yahoo.com



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Wed., Jun. 22, 2005

Inlaws & Outlaws

(Docu)

A True Stories Project production. (International sales: True Stories, Seattle.) Produced by Larry Schlesinger, Lisa Halpern, Drew Emery. Directed, written by Drew Emery.

With: Chuck Lazenby, Heather Anderson, Leslie Christian, John Gliessman, Frank Chaffee, Dana Tolman, Tammy Snow, Enid and Virgil Wright.

By **KEN EISNER**

Currently heated discussion of gay marriage makes the cool-headed "Inlaws and Outlaws" a timely examination of the nature of marriage, whether straight or gay. Lovingly rendered talking-heads effort puts emphasis on basic tenets on basic human connection, not on sexual orientation or social attitudes. Film will make ideal pubcasting material, and a fine educational tool in non-fundamentalist school districts.

Pic starts with beautifully shot snippets of kids saying perceptive things about what the future holds for them, relationship-wise. It then moves on to grown-ups, who recall how they met, and sometimes married, significant others of both sexes. Helmer Drew Emery cleverly assembles the chats so that it takes a while to realize some participants are talking about each other. Highlights include an older woman who married a man with her lover as a bridesmaid, and an articulate ex-marine who only found himself after leaving Vietnam . . .

Read the full article at:

<http://www.variety.com/story.asp?l=story&r=VE1117927464&c=31>

Camera (color, DigiBeta), Ryan Purcell, Mark Simon; editor, Celia Beasley, Emery, Joe Rettenmaier; music, Eric Lane Barnes; sound (Dolby), Steve Jones. Reviewed at Seattle Film Festival (Refracting Reality), June 12, 2005. Running time: 109 MIN.

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'Love is human, not gay or straight' in 'Inlaws & Outlaws'

June 21, 2007

By [ATHIMA CHANSANCHAI](#) P-I REPORTER

For 50 years, Chuck Lazenby lived with the love of his life.

They were homeowners with a knack for renovating fixer-uppers. They lived in many houses throughout Seattle, but they called one house in Magnolia home for 24 years.

They were private people whose idea of a night out was a quiet dinner party at one of their friends' houses. They lived together as a couple with ups and downs as any other, but they never moved out or gave into temptations that might have driven them away from each other.

They stayed together until Lazenby's true love, David Asplund, died in 1999.



Chuck Lazenby and his partner, David Asplund (in the framed picture), kept their relationship secret for 50 years. Lazenby received the American flag after a screening of "Inlaws & Outlaws," which features their relationship. Although Asplund served in World War II, the military would not give the flag to Lazenby after Asplund's death because a domestic partner could not receive the same benefits as a family member.

(June 21, 2007) Credit: Karen Ducey/Seattle Post-Intelligencer

"He was the one and only. Sometimes that doesn't happen to people," said Lazenby, 75, who was born and raised on First Hill. "This isn't just 50 years of greatness. There were times we didn't think we could hold it together, other people entering our lives trying to

split it up. It was a mess sometimes, but we always seemed to resolve the problems."

They may never have held a marriage certificate -- even if it had been possible in their time, they both remained closeted for the entire course of their relationship -- but for all practical purposes Lazenby and Asplund were a committed, loving couple.

Lazenby cooked and cleaned. Asplund made their yard the envy of the neighbors.

They met when Lazenby was 18 and Asplund 26. With his matinee-idol looks, Lazenby drew a fair number of admirers as he waited tables in Seattle. It was late 1948 and he noticed one regular customer more than the others. He knew when he received a big tip from the admirer that the attraction was mutual. A few months later they moved to an apartment above a tavern, across from the Paramount Theatre. They shared a Murphy bed.

The relationship was the stabilizing force in Lazenby's life. "When I cooled my heels I knew it was for real," he said. "I was the wild one. I was ready to be grounded."

Their union outlasted the many multiple marriages of Lazenby's siblings and endured sickness, temptation and the stress of keeping their love a secret from both families. Lazenby felt the loss of his lifemate as acutely as anyone who has ever lost the love of his or her life, feeling it as the ending of his own life, almost.

Which is no big revelation to Drew Emery.

"Love is human, not gay or straight," said Emery, director of "Inlaws & Outlaws," his first feature-length documentary, which premiered at the Seattle International Film Festival two years ago. It has made the circuit of film festivals around the country, as well as at specially requested events in churches and on college campuses in America's heartland.

It finally is making its cinematic run in his hometown, at Queen Anne's Uptown Cinema through June 28.

"The idea of gay marriage being different," said Emery, "... it's not. We get married for love. That's never said in the whole (same-sex marriage) debate. It's bull. Nobody has said the real reasons, that people have romantic ideals and they want someone to spend their life with."

Marriage, the film explicitly declares, is something not to be entered into lightly. Period.

One half of one couple in the film, Laramie Holliman, could be any girl who has ever thought long and hard about the perfect wedding. She's girly, she's giddy, she's absolutely besotted by her beloved and fixated on the trappings of the ceremony. It just so happens her life partner is another bride. Together, Laramie and Aubree Holliman are the most "traditional" couple in the documentary.

But even in this film, people marry because they're following a script written by the expectations of their families and society. One couple is a pair of women raised as Latter Day Saints who fell in love in high school. But one of them felt obliged to marry a man -- to appease her family and to try to live the life of a good Mormon girl. She did, with her

lover serving as her maid of honor -- a real, heartbreaking version of "My Best Friend's Wedding."

The marriage ended in misery, the two women finally stopped fighting their mutual attraction, and they found happiness and fulfillment together.

Jane Abbott Lighty, 71, also followed the script and married a man. It lasted two years. Her wife, Pete-e Petersen, 79, never got that far but not for lack of trying. Many men tried to take her hand in marriage.



Jane Abbott Lighty, left, and Pete-e Petersen recently celebrated their 30th anniversary. "What we really want is to have people view us the way they do anybody else," Lighty said. "We are all just people. We all need love. Our love is just as legitimate as any other relationship." (June 21, 2007) Credit: Karen Ducey/Seattle Post-Intelligencer

"I kept giving back the ring," she said, explaining how she turned down no less than four proposals. "I like men, but when it comes to love I'm wired a little differently."

For her, love was about finding someone who made her feel Magic! (yes, with a capital M and exclamation point). On Jan. 13, 1977, in the Old Town part of Sacramento, she found it on a blind date with a knockout with whom she talked about everything and anything until the restaurant closed. She helped keep the woman from losing her footing on the cobblestones outside and ended up in an embrace, lips locked.

They recently celebrated their 30th anniversary by taking the first all-gay transatlantic cruise on the Queen Mary.



After all their years together, Lighty and Petersen were wed in October 2005. (June 21, 2007)

"I do wish every couple in the world had what we have," said Petersen, a University of Washington graduate who lives with Lighty in a dream house in West Seattle across from Alki Beach. "We have such a wonderful understanding of each other and deep, abiding love."

Both are health professionals who ended up as nurse consultants in Washington state a little more than 20 years ago. Neither could conceive of a life without the other.

"What we really want is to have people view us the way they do anybody else, as the person next door," Lighty said. "We are all just people. We have these hopes, fears, dreams. We all need love. Our love is just as legitimate as any other relationship. There's no big difference."

They've raised a child, Betsy, the daughter of Petersen's sister. (Betsy has married -- a husband -- and has kids of her own.) They owned a home in Magnolia for 10 years, they've worked to bring better health to all kinds of people and they've volunteered with their community -- most recently with the Seattle Men's Chorus and helping to found the Women's Chorus.

Lighty and Petersen decided after all their time together they would get married, and did, in October 2005 with the blessings of the pastor where the Women's Chorus rehearsed, Seattle First Baptist Church.

It was a decision not entered into lightly.

"What I did learn was that gay people are very intentional," Emery said. "No gay person is going to get married unless they really, really think about it." He added with a laugh, "We don't make mistakes."

Lazenby wouldn't take back a day from his time with the leading man in his life, but making the film brought back strong feelings.

"At first I couldn't talk to anybody on the phone because I'd break down," he said. But working with Emery on a previous lesbian/gay intergenerational documentary and doing "Inlaws & Outlaws" helped him.

"This has really been a healing process," he said. "Now I think I'm doing this for David, too."

Lighty, Petersen and Lazenby are scheduled to be the celebrity grand marshals at Sunday's Pride Parade.

"I don't think he (Lazenby) knows he's the hero of this film," Emery said. "People don't think they'll identify with him, but he goes on the biggest journey. You just want to hug this guy, not because he's a victim but because he's a survivor and he's not bitter. His heart is as intact as it ever was."

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seemagazine.com

Issue #722: September 27, 2007

Film Festival Reviews (Edmonton International Film Festival)

INLAWS & OUTLAWS

City Centre 9: Thu, Oct 4 (9:15pm) ★★★★★ ½

It's no small feat to direct a documentary about marriage without succumbing to sentimentality or cynicism, but with *Inlaws & Outlaws* Drew Emery has done just that. He lets his dozens of subjects tell their stories, revealing only gradually, and with perfect pacing, which ones are straight, which are gay, and which of them ended up together. These are love stories so compelling, about couples so charming, it's a joy to learn how they each—some at great cost and through terrible obstacles—came together. (Even the one divorce story is touching and hopeful.)

Felicia Loud's cabaret-style musical interludes, and children's takes on marriage, same-sex unions and divorce playfully and poignantly frame each thematic segment. Emery could be accused, I suppose, of presenting heterosexual marriage unfairly; the straight couples come off a bit feeble in the passion department compared to the gay ones. Still, this optimistic, heartwarming film ultimately celebrates all manner of couples lucky and headstrong enough to nurture their love over a lifetime.

NAOMI LEWIS

'Inlaws & Outlaws' Looks at Marriage

June 15, 2007 By Robert Horton, Herald Movie Critic

Marriage is the subject of "Inlaws & Outlaws," a locally made documentary that includes gay people in the conversation. The movie tells the stories of a few straight marriages, some gay unions, and a couple of mixed-up gay-straight marriages (most of these are people from the Puget Sound area).

The film premiered at the 2005 Seattle International Film Festival, but has been re-edited since that time, and gets its first regular run this week. Its unorthodox distribution history has also included screenings at churches in the Midwest.

It's easy to see how the film could become a word-of-mouth success. Its collection of stories is accessible and consistently absorbing, and in a couple of cases, devastating.

Easily the most involving narratives come from the oldest interviewees in the movie. There's one pair of sprightly elderly women, Pete-e Peterson and Jane Lighty, both Greatest Generation members who never quite met Mr. Right.

Their separate descriptions of the moment they met - when they both experienced the uncanny sensation of having just found the person they were destined to meet - is one of the most charming arguments for the undeniability of true love (whatever its forms) I think I've ever heard.

Even more intense is the testimony of Chuck Lazenby, who talks about having lived for 50 years with his lifelong partner, another man. He conveys a mix of disbelief and resignation about the clandestine ways he and his partner had to keep themselves secret for all those decades.

The end of Lazenby's tale is so touching it probably shouldn't be given away here, but suffice it to say that his story alone is the kind of thing that could change, or at least soften, a lot of people's minds about homosexuality and marriage.

Director Drew Emery doesn't beat the drum on behalf of gay marriage, if that is indeed his goal; he lets the stories unreel, cutting back and forth between the various testimonies. Every now and then a nightclub chanteuse appears, singing love songs that comment on the vagaries of romance.

Simply allowing people to speak of their experiences, and then letting those experiences echo with the voices of others, is a powerful documentary tool. Here, it makes the most human kind of picture.

FEATURE FILM
REVIEW

Inlaws & OUTLAWS

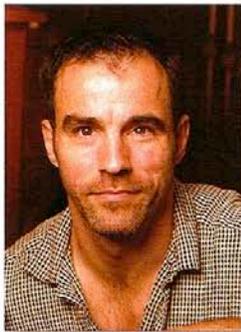
Reviewed by Matthew McQuilkin

Directing: A-
Writing: A-
Cinematography: B
Editing: A
Overall: A-

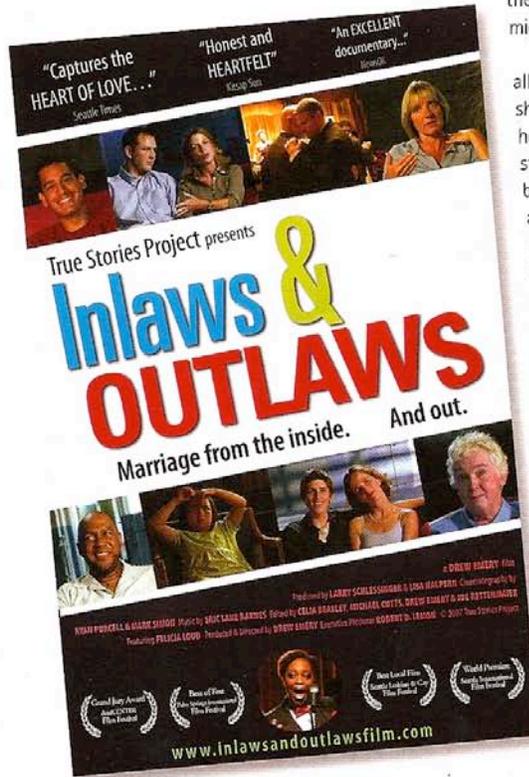
One thing made immediately clear as you begin watching *Inlaws & Outlaws*, director Drew Emery's documentary about marriage that acts locally but thinks universally, is that it was made on a shoestring budget. What proves amazing is the final product—and, ultimately, the impact—Emery produces with such limited means.

Filed entirely in Seattle, interviewing only local Seattle subjects, *Inlaws & Outlaws* presents a modern portrait of attitudes regarding love and marriage that could have been made virtually anywhere in the country. This is not the kind of "local film" that appeals only to locals. In fact, as it has run the festival circuit, it has already made a huge impact elsewhere in the country, in places like Ohio and Oklahoma, where independent grassroots organizing has popularized the film through word of mouth.

All the attention is well deserved. Emery's shrewd tactic with this film is to focus on the love that defines relationships regardless of gender, and reference the challenges facing gay marriage with subtlety rather than beating us over the head with it. In fact, after a charming introduction featuring children sharing their innocent thoughts on marriage, the vast majority of the film simply samples a select group of couples – and, in



Director Drew Emery



some cases, single people – who share the stories of their relationships.

We see young people, old people, white people, people of color, gay people, and several straight people too. This is a particularly key element in the skillful job done by a team of four different editors: by interweaving the stories of the gay people and gay couples with those of their straight counterparts, we are subjected to firsthand demonstrations of the universality of how the dynamics of most relationships work.

Some stories are funny, some are romantic, some are heartbreaking, and some offer a glimpse of how even straight couples can face the challenges of ultra-conservative oppressions (having a child out of wedlock in defiance of parental pressures, for example).

All of this would have been perfectly suitable for a documentary about how love is love no matter who gives or receives it, but the greatest impact doesn't come until the last several minutes of the film, when Emery finally brings up the specific subject of same-sex marriage. People of all sexual orientations begin to share opinions that suddenly become

far more varied than the universal themes of loving relationships might have otherwise suggested.

But it is mercifully brief, with all of about three straight people shown exhibiting any level of homophobia, and after all the stories that had been shared before it, that only heightens and focuses the level of impact when the politics of the issue is finally broached. The subtlety of the message is the film's greatest asset. When an elderly man shares his story of his deceased partner of fifty years being denied the veteran's right to a flag on his grave, simply because the man is not recognized as a relative with the authority to authorize it, your heart truly breaks for him. And that's all that's needed. This is the kind of film with great potential to sway anyone sitting on the fence regarding this issue.

Inlaws & Outlaws also includes some lovely

music, several recognizable covers performed by local singer Felicia Loud, shown singing in a nightclub first in a tuxedo and later in an evening gown. Although she's clearly a great performer, the scenes are somewhat awkwardly shot and don't tend to blend as seamlessly into the rest of the film's narrative as the rest of the scenes do. Cinematographer Ryan Purcell is clearly more suited to shooting conventional documentary footage than anything approximating a music video.

This is just a minor quibble, though, and admittedly Felicia Loud adds a great deal of personality to the film as whole. In the end, it's the pure and genuine love between people captured on screen that is going to stay with you long after the credits roll.

Inlaws & Outlaws will be showing at Cinrama on June 14th at 8:00 PM as a benefit to Three Dollar Bill Cinema, and then will be playing from June 15–28 at Uptown Theatre in Queen Anne. Tickets to the premiere are just \$10 and are on sale now at Ticket Window (206) 325.6500.

Read more of Matthew McQuilkin's reviews at <http://cinema-holic.livejournal.com>.

Friday July 1, 2005

Volume 33 Issue 26

Inlaws & Outlaws Restores Gay Cinema

by Herb Krohn

Directed by Drew Emery – US (Made in Seattle)

Running Time: 109 minutes

Rating: Excellent

Featuring Many Local Community Members

The sorry state of American Gay Cinema has for too long been a source of frustration for many in our community; typically with horrible production values, poor scripts, inane plots, bad performances and lousy direction have combined over the years to create very low expectations among LGBT filmgoers. We as a group have been so desperate to see images of our lives portrayed on the silver screen that we have tossed out the high expectations that we as a community have a reputation for in such areas as art, creativity, and style to tolerate and even embrace absolute garbage cinema as long as it was gay themed.

So it is refreshing and exciting that American Gay Cinema seems to finally be improving, at least as represented in this years Seattle International Film Festival presentations.

At the top of the list of excellent gay films is the documentary “Inlaws & Outlaws”. Even more appealing is that this film was produced locally, directed by Seattle filmmaker Drew Emery, this film focuses on the number one issue impacting our LGBT community today – Marriage! Emery tied for fourth place for Best Director in the 2005 Seattle International Film Festival Golden Space Needle Awards. More noteworthy is that it was one of only 19 films out of more than 250 presentations to be rated as a sleeper by SIFF Full Series pass holders – meaning it was screened by less than one third of voting pass holders and rated as “great” by at 55% or more of those who saw it.

In an effort to try to define and explain what makes a marriage, this film profiles individuals and couples both hetero and homo who all reside in the Puget Sound area. Although it is a talking head style of documentary, it is impossible not to become absolutely absorbed by the experiences of the subjects as they share the intimate details of their private romantic lives. Emery made this film because he wanted to produce a film that would educate and inform the audience about the complexities of this issue.

What he has really produced is a profile of human relationships, and the meaning of commitment and marriage through the perspectives of a large and diverse group of people, both children and adults. The impact of social custom effects not only the opinion of the majority of heterosexuals on the issue of gay marriage, but it has a significant

impact on Gay and Lesbian people themselves: from the male couple who were together for over fifty years and lived their entire lives together in the closet, to a Mormon lesbian woman who even though she was in love with another woman set out to find a husband and went so far as to be married in the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City to a man she didn't even love. Of course there is the couple whose marriage crumbled as one of the parties struggled with their sexual orientation, but there is also the heterosexual couple who just wanted a civil marriage who ended up with a big church wedding to please the family.

Really what Drew Emery has made is a film about love, commitment, romance, and the difficulties and struggles which nearly everyone experiences in romantic relationships. It becomes clear as we peer into such topics as dating, religion, pleasing family members, companionship, devotion, and divorce that love knows no boundaries and same sex relationships at the core are exactly identical to our heterosexual counterparts' experiences. It becomes very clear that gender is irrelevant when two humans "feel the magic" with each other.

Yet what does become ardently clear is the inequality and unfair treatment faced by those who happen to love another person of the same sex. It really strikes hard when you hear the surviving partner of the half century long relationship explain that he was denied a the American Flag by the government for the coffin of his WWII veteran lover – because he was not a recognized "member of the family" and therefore was not authorized to make such a request. He just lived with the deceased for over fifty years!!

Inlaws & Outlaws clearly demonstrates what the power of the institution, the word marriage, and the piece of paper that conveys the inherent legal rights of a family relationship, and how denial of these rights to LGBT people is a public denial of the existence of our love and dedication for each other.

While the film uses some interesting techniques including sliding frame transitions, as well as musical interludes featuring a performing group and vocals, it is the stories of the subjects and the topic that really hooks the audience. It becomes abundantly clear that while we get married or want to get married for a whole host of reasons that are important to each individual, the reality is love and commitment between two people is what makes a marriage survive and thrive regardless of the gender of the individuals involved.

Intelligently done, even including an opposite sex couple who oppose same sex marriage, their ugly bigotry and arrogance was blatantly obvious as soon as they opened their mouths in defense of limiting marriage rights.

Drew Emery's film has the potential to educate and influence public opinion on the marriage issue, and while it will be especially appreciated by the LGBT community it is not a "preach to the choir" kind of documentary. Don't miss it; you might even have a different perspective on what makes a marriage after you view this excellent locally made documentary.