



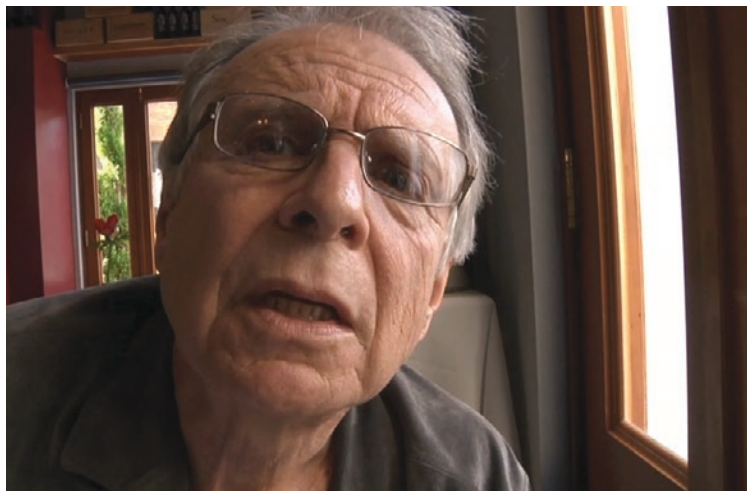
One Cut, One Life

A FILM BY LUCIA SMALL AND ED PINCUS

TRT: 107 min

Press Kit

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One Cut, One Life

A FILM BY LUCIA SMALL AND ED PINCUS

short synopsis

When seminal documentarian Ed Pincus, considered the father of first person non-fiction film, is diagnosed with a terminal illness, he and collaborator Lucia Small team up to make one last film, much to the chagrin of Jane, Ed's wife of 50 years. Told from two filmmakers' points of view, ONE CUT, ONE LIFE challenges the form of first person documentary. Ed and Lucia's unique approach to filming offers a vulnerability and intimacy rarely seen in non-fiction, questioning whether some things might be too private to be made public. The film is an intense, raw, and sometimes humorous exploration of the human condition which invites the viewer to contemplate for themselves what is important, not only at the end of life, but also during.

long synopsis

Filmmakers Lucia Small and Ed Pincus have long discussed the idea of experimenting with first person documentary form – making a film told from two points of view, each one filming the other. When Lucia loses two of her closest friends to sudden, violent deaths, and one year later learns that Ed, her former collaborator, has just been diagnosed with a terminal illness – she and Ed know this might be their last opportunity to work together.

Jane, Ed's wife of 50 years, is against the idea. She wants privacy. Sympathetic to Jane's concerns, Lucia shares a reluctance to deal publicly with the loss of friends. As the "father of first person documentary", Ed is torn too. He understands the implications of such a project. Yet filming offers a much needed creative outlet and distraction from his potential fate. When sudden loss is at your doorstep, you have no choice but to absorb the shock. What should Lucia and Ed do? The choice is not simple, but it is clear. Ed's diagnosis gives the former collaborators an opportunity to come together, heal from past wounds, and embrace and examine life in the face of death through a medium they know best – filmmaking.

The film opens in the middle of Ed's dilemma of whether or not to have a risky bone marrow transplant – the one possibility for a cure. If the operation is not successful, it could accelerate his death. But if he waits, his chances of success could get worse. Can Ed hedge his bets and buy more time to have a normal spring and summer? As Lucia struggles with trying to make the film and be present for Ed, she grapples with the loss of her two friends – Susan Woolf, a visual artist murdered by an ex lover, and Lucia's roommate, Karen Schmeer, an esteemed editor, who was killed by a hit and run driver fleeing a crime scene in Manhattan. As the story unfolds, the two filmmakers must reconcile Jane's on-again, off-again resistance to the film with their own determination to finish.

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long synopsis (continued)

Both filmmakers are aware of the more disturbing and squeamish aspects inherent in this kind of film. One of the roles of the artist is to examine the comfortable assumptions about limits, propriety and good taste, and perhaps to overthrow them. It is that aspect of nonfiction work, when both the audience and filmmaker wonder why the filmmaker is not turning off the camera but instead chooses to keep it rolling, that underlines this film.

Set against the bucolic Vermont landscape and frenetic New York cityscape, ONE CUT, ONE LIFE interweaves current day footage with past footage of their 12-year collaboration, early film work, and old movies. It is more a story about life and cinema than a story about death. Ed and Lucia's unique approach to filming offers a vulnerability and intimacy rarely seen in non-fiction film, even within the genre of first person documentary. It is an intense, raw, and sometimes humorous exploration of the human condition which invites the viewer to contemplate for themselves what is important, not only at the end of life, but also during.

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backstory

Although many young filmmakers today may not know his name, Ed Pincus is considered a pioneer of documentary filmmaking, particularly in the first person autobiographical form. A Brooklyn street kid who eventually made his way to the Ivy League, Ed founded the MIT Film Lab in the late 60s, which became a hub of innovative and groundbreaking work and sparked a generation of critical filmmakers. Known for his innovations in film and technical contributions to the field, Ed is also the author of *Guide to Filmmaking* which evolved into *The Filmmaker's Handbook* (co-authored with Steven Ascher) – a key textbook in film studies programs nationwide. Ed made several social issue, direct cinema films, including *BLACK NATCHEZ* and *PANOLA* before embarking on his magnum opus: *DIARIES* (1971-1975), an exploration of his open marriage and life during this time. At the peak of his film career, Ed had to abruptly leave his community in Cambridge, MA and move his family to Vermont. Eventually, Ed gave up filmmaking entirely and started a commercial flower farm which he ran for the next twenty plus years before a chance meeting with Lucia compelled him to return to film.

Lucia Small, 25 years Ed's junior, is a former artist/activist turned documentary filmmaker. A Californian native, Lucia moved to Boston in the early nineties, where she worked as a producer in both fiction and non-fiction film. In late 2002, just after a successful festival run with her directorial debut *MY FATHER, THE GENIUS*, she and Ed met while on a film jury. For four days, they watched and judged films and discovered similar sensibilities despite their diverse paths and histories. Ed was excited to meet a person of a younger generation who was not afraid to venture into raw and risky places with her work. Self-taught, Lucia was excited to befriend the former teacher of several of her Boston mentors. Shortly thereafter, Ed approached Lucia with a plan – he wanted to start making films again with her. Was she in? Three years later, after several false starts, they finally combined forces to make *THE AXE IN THE ATTIC*, a film about the Diaspora of Hurricane Katrina which premiered at the New York Film Festival in 2007.

One Cut, One Life

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director's statement

It is with trepidation that I write without my collaborator and dear friend, Ed Pincus. We co-directed ONE CUT, ONE LIFE. It is our final collaboration and Ed's last film before his death in November 2013. So, do I simply cull from early writings? What if I miss something essential? As I grapple with doubts, I am reminded of something Ed would repeatedly tell me, especially when it was clear I would be finishing our film alone, "I trust you, Lucia."

Ed and I had long discussed a simple idea for a film: a personal documentary told from two separate points of view. Ours would be told from two filmmakers of different backgrounds, generations, sexes, and classes – two worlds. Seeds of this idea can be seen in our first film, THE AXE IN THE ATTIC (2007). Ed would call it "a high wire act." I was confident that the two-person concept could work because of what was going on in our lives at this time. We were both immersed in discussions of mortality, love, loss, legacy, and if ever there was a time to take the plunge and make the film, it was now.

A major strength of our collaboration was in our ability to go the distance with our differences, and even despite them. Ed's filmmaking approach is more direct, unapologetic and confident; mine focused more on details, caveats, and emotions—but always with conviction. Some of our most daring and important creative breakthroughs occurred when we pushed and pulled each other in and out of tough places. In the heat of our debates, Ed and I would laugh and acknowledge that we made each other a better filmmaker. Ed once told me that every film he had made was a comedy, and "once you understand that, you understand everything."

Jane, Ed's wife of 50 years, did not initially support this project. In fact, her on-again, off-again resistance to the film evolved into one of its main story-lines. Throughout the process of making ONE CUT, ONE LIFE, Ed and I talked at length about what the project meant for Jane and we even considered shelving the film. He and I both understood the stakes. In a grant application we co-wrote in 2012, we said, "There are disturbing and squeamish aspects inherent in this choice. It is challenging and delicate territory." Yet, we would also talk about what the film meant to us, to our collaboration, to our respective bodies of work, and to the form of first person non-fiction film. What could be learned from this tension? We agreed that, "part of the role of the autobiographical filmmaker is to challenge the comfortable assumptions about limits of propriety and good taste, and perhaps to overthrow them."

Rather than slowing us down, Ed's illness created a flurry of creative work, as well as the impetus to delve into difficult emotional territory. We wrote, "When he is filming, he easily immerses himself into something productive, something that extends his creative life. Making another film offers a much-needed crucial distance from his potential fate."

[continued]

director's statement (continued)

As Ed's condition deteriorated, he and I were literally racing against time. What if Ed died before we finished? Ed and Jane daily navigated the endless doctor appointments and progression of his disease while he and I experimented with new film strategies. Quickly, we decided to focus our writing efforts primarily on Ed's voice-over. We recorded ad lib sessions while driving in the car. It was not a typical way to work. But, nothing could be typical. Ed would even joke, "Will I die on budget?"

For me, ONE CUT, ONE LIFE is the third and final film in a trilogy: a woman's exploration of first-person documentary. I have long upheld the notion of the personal being political. It is why I have chosen to work in this form. As a feminist filmmaker, I feel it is essential to examine the power dynamic between male and female voice and the alternating resonance among viewers. I am also interested in exploring the tension and bias around women's roles –married with children vs. single without, older vs. younger, different classes, etc. Moreover, this film has offered me a unique chance to not only honor the memory of two close friends who were tragically killed but also to bear witness to the traumatic realities of violence against women. Ultimately, ONE CUT, ONE LIFE has allowed me to pay homage to Ed Pincus, a dear friend and colleague, and his significant role in documentary history.

It is difficult for me to speak to what this film meant to Ed. While working together, he would periodically stress that it was a way for him to focus on his love of filmmaking and living life. He would correct me when I called him "the grandfather of personal doc". "First person non-fiction," he would smile, "father not grandfather." "This film," Ed told me, "is the culmination of my life's work." Perhaps, his explanation of the Aikido term, which became the title of the film, communicates his thoughts best:

"There is this notion in Japanese swordsmanship called 'one cut, one life'.. Everything could be the last time. Everything counts. Everything has meaning. When you've trained a long time, your mind disappears. There's something dissociative and it gets in your body. I have lost a lot of that because of my illness, but there's still the notion of extension, of having all your meaning in your movements."

One Cut, One Life

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creative team

ED PINCUS (co-director, producer) began filmmaking in 1964, developing a direct cinema approach to filming social and political problems. He has credits as producer, director, and cinematographer on all of his films, and was cinematographer on many additional films throughout his career. Pincus' filmmaking was always on the technical cutting edge—e.g., the early use of color in natural light situations and the development of single-person filming techniques. A recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship (1972) and several grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, he started and developed the MIT film section where he influenced a generation of filmmakers. Pincus was Visiting Filmmaker at Minneapolis College of Art and Design and Visiting Filmmaker for three years at Harvard University. He authored the highly acclaimed book *Guide to Filmmaking* (1968); and co-authored *The Filmmaker's Handbook* (1984, 1999, 2013) with Steven Ascher. In the early '80s, after abruptly retiring from filmmaking due to threats on his life, Pincus moved his family to Vermont where he eventually built a successful commercial flower farm. Twenty years later, in 2005, Pincus returned to filmmaking to collaborate with Lucia Small on *THE AXE IN THE ATTIC* (2007), about the Diaspora of Hurricane Katrina and the role of witness.

Pincus' early films include: *BLACK NATCHEZ* (1967), a documentary that follows the aftermath of a car bombing in a Southern town during the Civil Rights movement; *PANOLA* (1965), a portrait of a wino, alleged police informant, and follower of Malcolm X; *ONE STEP AWAY* (1967), an intimate portrait of a hippie commune in California during the Summer of Love; *LIFE AND OTHER ANXIETIES* (1977) co-directed with Steven Ascher, part personal documentary and part experiment in the mode of cinema verité; and *DIARIES: 1971-1976* (1981) an intimate portrait about his own family, friends, and (open) marriage. Inspired, in part, by the effects of women's liberation, *DIARIES* is considered the seminal film in defining the possibilities of what came to be called "personal documentary". *Le Monde*, in a front-page review, called *DIARIES*, "an epic work that redefines an art, forcing us to rethink what we thought we knew about the Cinema".

In 2007, *THE AXE IN THE ATTIC* premiered at the New York Film Festival and screened at various festivals, including Cinema du Reel, Torino Film Festival, and Full Frame Documentary Film Festival. A few years later, when Pincus was diagnosed with Parkinson's, he and Small began discussing possible film topics. But, it was not until late 2011, shortly after Pincus was diagnosed with MDS, (a precursor to Acute Myeloid Leukemia), when the former collaborators decided to make *ONE CUT, ONE LIFE*. Small and Pincus were able to complete most of the film together before his death on November 5, 2013.

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creative team (continued)

LUCIA SMALL (co-director, editor, producer) is a 20-year veteran independent filmmaker. In 2005, she teamed up with seminal documentarian Ed Pincus to co-direct, edit and produce *THE AXE IN THE ATTIC* (2007), a story about the Diaspora of Hurricane Katrina and the role of witness. The film had its world premiere at the New York Film Festival and screened at various festivals worldwide, including the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, Cinema du Reel, Torino Film Festival, and Full Frame Documentary Film Festival. Distributed by Cinema Guild and IndiePix, *THE AXE IN THE ATTIC* was broadcast on the Documentary Channel.

Small's directorial debut *MY FATHER, THE GENIUS* (2002), about her visionary architect father, garnered several top festival awards, including the Grand Jury Prizes for Best Documentary and Best Editing (edited by Karen Schmeer) at the Slamdance Film Festival, and a First Appearances nomination at International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA). Distributed by C.S. Associates and New Yorker Films, *MY FATHER, THE GENIUS* was broadcast internationally and domestically showcased on the Sundance Channel.

Small's early film experience includes working in both narrative and non-fiction form. She produced several independent projects for ITVS, American Public Television, and PBS. Credits include: Katrina Brown's *TRACES OF THE TRADE*, Laurel Chiten's *THE JEW IN THE LOTUS*, Beth Harrington's *THE BLINKING MADONNA AND OTHER MIRACLES*, Maureen Foley's *AMERICAN WAKE*, Steven Kijak's *NEVER MET PICASSO*, and John Junkerman's *THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER OF SONG*. When Small is not directing and editing her own work, she edits documentary films, including Bruce Twickler's *BROADSIDE* (2009) and Lyda Kuth's directorial debut *LOVE AND OTHER ANXIETIES* (2011).

Supported by the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program and the LEF Foundation, *ONE CUT, ONE LIFE* (2014) was invited in 2013 as a work-in-progress to IFP's Independent Feature Market and the Sundance Institute's Documentary and Story Edit Labs. Small and Pincus were able to complete most of the film before his passing in November 2013. She finished the film in April 2014 for its world premiere at the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival.

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A FILM BY LUCIA SMALL AND ED PINCUS

creative team

MARY KERR (producer) is a media arts professional who has been working in the fields of film festival programming, documentary producing, and arts administration for more than 15 years. Currently, she is Manager of Creative Capital's Professional Development Program, which creates workshops designed to teach artists the tools and strategies to transform their careers. Prior to Creative Capital, she was the Executive Director of The Flaherty, producer of the annual Robert Flaherty Film Seminar, which encourages filmmakers and other artists to explore the potential of the moving image.

She began her media arts career as a film programmer, programming for the Sundance, Los Angeles, Gen Art, and Maryland Film Festivals, and in 2003, became Director of Programming for the SILVERDOCS: AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival. She has served on funding panels for the NEA, NYSCA, ITVS, POV, Tribeca Gucci Fund; juries for the Ashland, Full Frame, Sarasota, US Comedy Arts, and Nordisk Panorama Film Festivals; and sits on the board of New York Film Video Council. She holds a B.S. in Journalism from University of Maryland and currently lives in Brooklyn, NY.

DANIELLE MORGAN (associate editor, assistant producer), an award-winning filmmaker, began her career by creating experimental narrative films on super8, editing in camera or with a splicer and tape. She went on to earn a masters degree in film at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts where she was awarded a Graduate Assistant position in Editing and a Hollywood Foreign Press Award for her thesis film, DEADBEAT. A post-production professional living in Brooklyn, Danielle has collaborated with numerous award-winning filmmakers and organizations including Lynn Shelton, Guy Maddin, Laura Poitras, Killer films and Lincoln Center. She is currently working with her wife, actor/writer Katherine E. Scharhon, on their first feature, RULES FOR DROWNING.

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reviews and comments

“A meta-exploration of their collaboration itself, complex and intimate...No-holds-barred first-person filmmaking.”

–Tom Roston, *New York Times*

“The psychological intensity and the harrowing honesty of Ingmar Bergman’s masterpieces.”

–Gerald Peary, *Arts Fuse*

“Embraces all the joy, messiness, creativity, and tragedy of their friendship with almost unbearable intimacy and an aesthetic clarity.” –Ty Burr and Peter Keough, *Boston Globe*

“Profound honesty.” – Ziyad Saadi, *Indiewire*

“An intense, intimate, inescapable experience. You suffer, you laugh at the ironies, suddenly you’re being gut-punched, and just as suddenly you find yourself smiling again.”

– Peter Davis, Director of “Hearts and Minds”

“An extraordinary film. Unflinching, beautiful, and deeply intimate, this is a film you will never forget.”

–Robb Moss, Director of “Secrecy”

“Not to be missed. Personal documentaries don’t get more breathtakingly honest or courageous.”

–Doug Block, Director of “112 Weddings”

“This is why I go to the movies, to experience humanity in a way that is both authentic and illuminating. This film is not about death; it’s about being reminded of how to live.”

– Brandon Isaacson, *Northeastern University Film Enthusiast Club*

“Embracing and uncompromising...an unconventional love story.”

– Sadie Tillery, *Senior Programmer at Full Frame Documentary Film Festival*

One Cut, One Life

A FILM BY LUCIA SMALL AND ED PINCUS

credits

Directed, Written, and Produced by

Lucia Small

Ed Pincus

Camera

Ed Pincus

Lucia Small

Producer

Mary Kerr

Executive Producer

Neal Baer

Editor

Lucia Small

Composer

P. Andrew Willis

Associate Editor and Assistant Producer

Danielle Morgan

Assistant Editor

Shane Hofeldt

Additional Camera

Jane Pincus

David Sampliner

Linda Morgenstern

Garret Savage

Karen Schmeer

Edit and Story Advisors

Mary Lampson

Linda Morgenstern

Robb Moss

Laure Sullivan

Sabrina Zanella-Foresi

One Cut, One Life

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special thanks (in order of appearance)

Angus	Linda Morgenstern
Jane Pincus	Dia Sokol Savage
Hospital Nurse	Rachel Shuman
Dr. David Ospina	Garret Savage
Dr. Kim Dittus	Zella Savage
Dr. Robert Soiffer	Gabriel Sampliner
Dr. David Steensma	Jasper Davenport
Dr. Turner Osler	Nina Davenport
Jane Tolmachyov	Robin Hessman
David Hancock	Lorin Wertheimer
Janet Stanwix	Leah Marino
Karen Ingle	Buster Keaton
Kerry Duston	Christine Small
David Sampliner	Joanne Small-Eggert
Paul Giamatti	Karen Schmeer
Louie	Frank Masse
Desiree Placy	Mark Bordonero
Otis from Natchez, MS	Kelly Pratt
James Jackson	William Pratt
Glen Small	Jean Langlois
Benjamin Pincus	Fred Bennett
Ruth "Sami" Pincus	Caleb Pincus
Leah Diskin	Kai Pincus
Dennis Sweeney	Heidi Albright
Darrell Reed	Captain America
Larry D. Miller	Josh Morrison
Dr. Robert Hamill	JoAnn P. Nielson
Kimberly McNeil	Julie Abeling
Alexander Perry	Caitlin Gasser
Alexis Osler	

One Cut, One Life

A FILM BY LUCIA SMALL AND ED PINCUS

additional credits

Major Support Provided by

LEF Moving Image Fund

Social Change Institute

Ed and Jane Pincus

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Lyda Kuth

Neal Baer

Cara Mertes

Barry Hershey

Sara Archambault

Kristin Feeley

Rahdi Taylor

The Pincus Family

Friends and Supporters

Ralph Arlyck

Steven Ascher and Jeanne Jordan

Tracy Atkinson

Kathy Kerr Bayhan

Joe Beirne

Andrea Bell

Doug Block

Kristen, Alexis, and Nicky Borges-Silva

Melissa Bounty

Steven Bronstein

John Cardellino

Genevieve Carmel

Gabrielle Casper

Karen Cirillo

Matt Clifford

Rebecca Richman Cohen

Paige Corologos

Glorianna Davenport

Yasmina Dedijer-Small

Vilunya Diskin

Bruce and Joan Ditzion

Mimi and Nat Donson

Maribeth and Tom Edmonds

Michael Falk

Deborah Forston and Alfred Guzzetti

Peter Frumkin

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A FILM BY LUCIA SMALL AND ED PINCUS

additional credits

Friends and Supporters (continued)

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Scott MacDonald	Christine Small	

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additional credits

Additional Thanks

Sundance Institute Documentary Edit and Story Lab Advisors

Carol Dysinger

Richard Hankin

Mary Lampson

Mary Manhardt

Ross McElwee

Jonathan Oppenheim

Fellow Participants

Aikido of Champlain Valley

Central Vermont Medical Center

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

DuArt

Fletcher Allen Health Care

Gotham Sound

Hope Lodge

IFC Center

Karen Schmeer Fellowship

Technicolor

Sesame Street

Yoga Mountain Center

DIARIES (1971-1976) courtesy of Ed Pincus

BLACK NATCHEZ courtesy of Ed Pincus and David Neuman

MY FATHER THE GENIUS courtesy of Small Angst Films

THE AXE IN THE ATTIC courtesy of Pincus and Small Films

STEAMBOAT BILL, JR. courtesy of Kino Lorber

One Cut, One Life

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additional credits

Stock footage courtesy of **Budget Films Stock Footage**

Mysteries of the Blood painting courtesy of **Jane Pincus**

Poppy artwork courtesy of **Art Hansen**

Karen Schmeer and Susan Woolf photographs courtesy of **Garret Savage, Elsa Dorfman, and Kerry Duston**

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Damon Addleman
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Musicians
Clarinet
Todd Brunel

Online Editor and Colorist
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Violin and Viola
Beth Bahia Cohen

Quality Supervisor
Kristen Clifford

Cello
Ashima Scripp

Titles
Colby Peterson

Keyboards and Percussion
P. Andrew Willis

In Memory of
Ed Pincus
Karen Schmeer
Susan Woolf