



11^e FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DU FILM DE LA ROCHE-SUR-YON



DOSSIER PÉDAGOGIQUE
NIVEAU D'EXPLOITATION À PARTIR DE LA SECONDE

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The filmmaker



Lance Oppenheim is a filmmaker from South Florida. His films explore the lives of people who create homes in unconventional spaces and places. Lance was a 2019 Sundance Ignite Fellow, named one of Filmmaker Magazine's 25 New Faces of Independent Film 2019, and is the youngest contributor to The New York Times Op-Docs. His films have been screened at film festivals across the world including Sundance, Rotterdam, Tribeca, True/False, and featured by the Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian.

On the interweb, his films have appeared on The New York Times (as three Op-Docs), The Atlantic, Vimeo (as six Staff Picks), NoBudget, and Short of the Week.

Lance graduated from Harvard University's Visual and Environmental Studies program in 2019. His first feature, SOME KIND OF HEAVEN, premiered at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival.

Film crew

Director : Lance Oppenheim

Editor : Lance Oppenheim, Daniel Garber

Cinematographer : David Bolen

Producer : Darren Aronofsky, Kathleen Lingo, Melissa Oppenheim, Pacho Velez, Lance Oppenheim

Composer, Sound Designer : Ari Balouziar

Synopsis

A Floridian garden of earthly delights and discontents, SOME KIND OF HEAVEN follows retirees newly arrived at the fountain of youth: America's largest retirement community, located in central Florida. At The Villages, often called the "Disneyland for Retirees," a married couple, a widow, and a bachelor search for Eden and a second bite at the apple, only to discover each of the deadly sins out on full display. From synchronized swimming to pickleball, the good life is waiting, as well as a discounted funeral package now at a new, lower price. In a transcendent debut film that puts a twist on the "long-term" relationship, director Lance Oppenheim digs below The Villages' perfect facade to explore its residents' oscillation between reinvention and recklessness, freedom and familiar safety. A film that reminds us that we all leave this Earth the way we came.

Vocabulary

Movie vocabulary :

Character : *Personnage*

Film crew : *L'équipe de tournage*

Director's statement : *Note d'intention du réalisateur*

Cinematographer : *directeur de la photographie*

Director of photography : *Chef Opérateur*

To direct : *Réaliser*

Editor : *Monteur*

To enact : *jouer une scène*

Tripod : *Trépied*

General vocabulary

The American Yesteryear : *L'américain d'antan*

To embed myself : *S'intégrer*

To get the lay of the land : *Se familiariser*

Picture-perfect grooming : *le polissage d'une image parfaite*

Sheen : *éclat*

To be drawn to something or somebody : *être attiré par*

To bear witness : *témoigner*

To shy away : *se dérober*



For most of my childhood, The Villages fascinated me. Growing up in South Florida, a few hours' drive away from the development, salacious tales from the “Disneyworld for Retirees” seeped into my local newspaper, sensationalizing the community’s “hedonistic” residents.

As my previous films have explored how people create homes in unconventional places and spaces, The Villages, a themed development designed to simulate the American yesteryear, appeared to be an ideal subject. I knew I didn't just want to observe life in The Villages from afar, I wanted to embed myself into the social fabric of the place. For nearly thirty days, I lived in a rented room in The Villages with retired rodeo clowns and tried my best at living the local lifestyle. With the help of my new hosts (who introduced me to their friends and gave me the lay of the land) I fashioned a busy daily schedule of pickleball, shuffleboard, Zumba, and acting club.

My initial interest in The Villages—its make-believe history, manically optimistic media, and picture-perfect grooming—soon shifted as I got to know residents at odds with the community's ethos. Why did some people struggle to find their place inside of this fantasy world? Despite being three generations removed and almost fifty years younger than many Villagers, I was surprised at how relatable I found many Villagers' pursuits. Their attempts to find connection, love and meaning were not so dissimilar from my own. In the popular imagination, the elderly transcend their youthful passions to lead placid lives, informed by hard-won wisdom. That may be true for some people, but that stereotype ignores the reality for most older people (especially those in this film!)—who are no less crazy, or complicated, or full of desire than anyone else. It is my hope that this film speaks to the idea that even in life's final chapters, conflicts often go unresolved, desires persist, and the search for fulfillment continues.

Artistic Approach

Nearing my final year of college, I became drawn to learning more about American - and deeply Floridian - notions of what life after life looked like, especially amidst the landscape of a fantasy-world. I wanted the film's visual language to reflect that setting, and I worked with cinematographer David Bolen to achieve a look somewhere between a Larry Sultan photograph and the Technicolor sheen found in a Douglas Sirk melodrama. We wanted the camera to have firmly fixed images that would mirror the controlled, manicured Villages tableau. Yet, in doing so, our approach made it difficult to fade in the background like a fly-on-the-wall.

Filming almost exclusively on a tripod over the course of 18 months, our methods made the process of constructing the film's narrative more legible to our subjects. Rather than “stealing” moments through hours of fly-on-the-wall observation, we invited Anne, Reggie, Barbara, and Dennis into our process. We didn't shy away from asking difficult questions, and instead described our intentions and detailed what we found interesting in their stories. As a result, they became partners in telling their stories, allowing our camera to bear witness to their everyday struggles.

Knowing what the lens of the production was, our subjects treated their appearance in the film as a performance – one in which they were enacting difficult moments from their everyday lives. Without the straightforwardness born throughout this rigorous process, the truth and humanity would likely not have emerged.

I feel extremely fortunate to have met and worked with Anne & Reggie, Barbara, and Dennis. It is through their courageous dedication to this film, and the vulnerability, bravado, and longing they allowed us to capture, that such a portrait of growing older was made possible.

At first glance, **Anne and Reggie Kincer** appear to be a quintessential Villages couple.

Anne spends her time socializing and playing pickleball. Reggie, skeptical of his wife's cookie-cutter lifestyle, finds his own solace in tai chi and Eastern spiritualism. Though the Kincers have different interests, they've struck a fragile balance since moving to The Villages. As the couple's 47th wedding anniversary approaches, a troubling development threatens to derail their marriage: Reggie's increasingly eccentric spiritual practices have led to reckless drug use and hallucinogenic episodes. Anne blames these troubling “breaks with reality” on The Villages. Tensions rise as Reggie runs afoul of the law, and Anne is left questioning her devotion to their marriage.

Dennis Dean lives out of a baby-blue van that he illegally parks on The Villages' property. An 81-year-old nomad on the run from legal trouble in California, he spends his days hustling wealthy widows into handing over the keys to their homes and his nights evading security guards. After a run-in with Villages police, Dennis learns that the authorities intend to expel him and his van from the premises. He grows increasingly desperate for housing, funds, and friendship. He calls dozens of acquaintances and begs for assistance. No one bites. As Dennis hits rock bottom, contemplating death, a blessing from an eccentric evangelical pastor pulls him back from the brink. He decides to make one final call to Nancy, his ex-lover of last resort. Miraculously, she offers him a place to stay. For a moment, Dennis finds paradise in The Villages. But can a perennial bachelor ever really settle down?

Ten years ago, **Barbara Lochiatto** and her husband, Paul, moved to The Villages with dreams of living out their golden years in a “magical, beautiful place.” But things haven't worked out that way: recently widowed, Barbara yearns to move back to Boston, her hometown, but lacks the money to do so. Debilitated by grief, still working full time at a rehabilitation center to make ends meet, Barbara struggles to fit into the relentlessly upbeat Villages atmosphere. When an unexpected heart-to-heart with her manicurist motivates Barbara to get out and meet people, she explores The Villages' offerings: bowling leagues, acting classes, and even the singles club. Still, she can't seem to shake her funk—that is, until she finds herself with Lynn, a dashing golf cart salesman. At long last, Barbara catches a glimpse of what life in The Villages ought to be. But will it last?

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