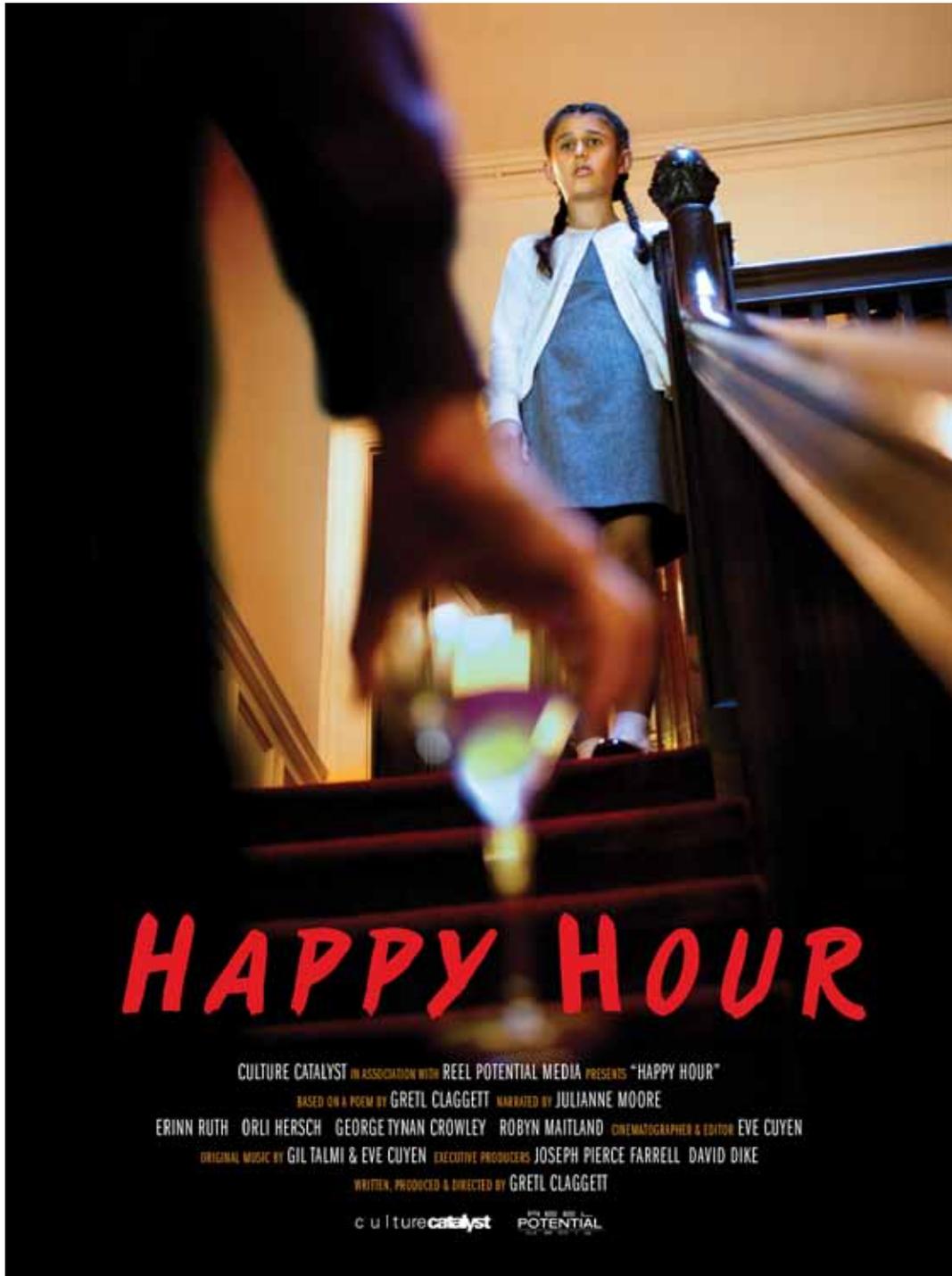


PRESS KIT



HAPPY HOUR

CULTURE CATALYST IN ASSOCIATION WITH REEL POTENTIAL MEDIA PRESENTS "HAPPY HOUR"

BASED ON A POEM BY GRETL CLAGGETT NARRATED BY JULIANNE MOORE

ERINN RUTH ORLI HERSCH GEORGE TYNAN CROWLEY ROBYN MAITLAND CINEMATOGRAPHER & EDITOR EVE CUYEN

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY GIL TALMI & EVE CUYEN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JOSEPH PIERCE FARRELL DAVID DIKE

WRITTEN, PRODUCED & DIRECTED BY GRETL CLAGGETT

culture **catalyst** REEL POTENTIAL

CONTACT

culture **catalyst**

Gretl Claggett Writer, Producer, Director

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Logline

When a woman meets her boyfriend for a romantic night out, a martini triggers childhood memories that threaten her ability to trust and love.

Short Synopsis

When a woman meets her boyfriend for a romantic night out, a martini triggers childhood memories of sexual abuse by a family friend. She boldly faces the girl she was and the secret that's threatened her ability to trust and love.

Based on a poem, narrated by Julianne Moore.



“Olives bobbing like bloodshot eyes.”

General Information

Official Website

www.happyhourfilm.com

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/HappyHourShortFilm>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/HappyHourFilm>

IMDb

www.imdb.com/title/tt3014624/

Technical Information

Running Time: 13 minutes 55 seconds

Format: HD, Canon EOS 5D Mark II

Aspect Ratio: 16:9 (Letterbox 2.35:1)

Sound: Dolby 5.1 & LTRT

Genres: Drama/Romance/Neo-Noir/Social Issue

Language: English

Completion Date: September 2013

Country of Production: USA

Production Company: Culture Catalyst

(in association with Reel Potential Media)

EARLY PRAISE

"*Happy Hour* has a mission — to start conversations that can save children — but it's also a powerful drama. A wider audience awaits." – Jesse Kornbluth, HeadButler.com

Happy Hour

When women laugh at jokes they don't find funny
and men tell stories only half-true, I recall how,

at his house, my parents and their friends welcomed in the weekends.
How they'd sit by by the fireplace wishing

the flame's ribbons could tie up life's loose ends. How they'd never
see him lead me from the room and up the stairs,

martini in hand. Olives bobbing like bloodshot eyes. After, cleanup:
a monogrammed handkerchief, the quick zip of pants, he'd

slip a silver dollar into my pocket — *Good girl.*





Writer/Director's Statement

I wrote the poem “Happy Hour” — on which the film is based — more than a decade ago when I was deep in the labyrinth of recovery, after one of my parents’ best friends, whom I called “Uncle,” sexually abused me from before I could speak until I was 16.

Today’s headlines trumpet these crimes, yet the approach the media takes often keeps us stuck in horror and trauma. One in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before turning 18. This translates into roughly 40 million adult survivors in the U.S. alone.

I’m a statistic. But I’m also a human being. And it’s through the very human ability to tell a story — to go beyond statistics and show just how these cycles of abuse play out — that transformation becomes possible. With its potential to reach millions, film can play a powerful role.

The hardest and most rewarding part of crafting any poem is successfully capturing a whole world in a handful of words. So when I decided to turn my nine-line lyric into a film, I gave myself a similar challenge: to convey the depth and nuances of a feature-length script in less than 15 minutes.

My team and I made *Happy Hour* to help in some small way to dispel fear and shame; forge a better understanding of complicity plus the psychological aftermath most survivors face even in adulthood; give those who’ve suffered abuse hope that they can create fulfilling lives; and inspire people to learn about prevention so that more children can grow up safe.



KEY PRODUCTION TEAM



GRETL CLAGGETT **Writer, Producer, Director**

Gretl holds MFAs in poetry, creative nonfiction and acting, respectively from Sarah Lawrence College, Goucher College and Western Illinois University. As an actress, she performed at New York theaters such as Playwrights Horizons, Circle in the Square, Soho Rep, La MaMa and HERE, and also at many regional theaters including Actors Theater of Louisville. Her collection *MONSOON SOLO: Voices Once Submerged* (WordTech Editions, 2012) — in which the poem “Happy Hour” appears — won a National Forward Literature Award and was named a Winning Finalist for an International Book Award plus a ForeWord Reviews Book of the Year Award. Her articles have been featured in *The Daily Beast*, *The Good Men Project*, *Head Butler*, *The Nervous Breakdown* and *She Writes*.

Gretl founded Culture Catalyst to create transmedia projects — films, public service announcements, books, workshops and “live” experiences — to shift and uplift consciousness. She teaches memoir writing and is currently working on a novel and a feature-length script.



EVE CUYEN **Cinematographer, Editor, Sound Designer**

Eve is an artist and lover of all things film, with award-winning movies to her credit. Her work has been projected in film festivals throughout the United States and Europe. Credits include *The Investigator*, *Foreign Letters*, *Living River*, *Our Hawaii*, *Bear City*, *And Then Came Love*, *Kali Ma*, *Zheng He* for History International and *The Sublet*, a feature comedy, to name a few. *Happy Hour* has been the most heartfelt experience in Eve’s filmmaking career.



GIL TALMI **Original Music**

Gil is a film composer with a focus on socially conscious projects. His music can be heard in a variety of award-winning films such as the upcoming *Savannah*, starring James Caviezel and Sam Shepard, and the Peabody award-winning documentaries *Between The Folds* and *Who Killed Chea Vichea*, as well as *New Year Baby*, winner of the Amnesty International Movies That Matter Award. Gil feels grateful to contribute to *Happy Hour* and its important message.

KEY CAST



ERINN RUTH (Woman) is a New York City based actor with a background in visual arts — having been classically trained in several cities, as well as abroad. She’s worked in theatre and film at companies such as SoHo ThinkTank, the Irish Repertory Theatre and International Theatre Arts Institute. Film and television credits include *As the World Turns*, *The Wolf* and *Black Box*, which had its premiere at Cannes International Film Festival. Erinn most recently appeared in a music video for recording artist Erica Glyn’s “The Animal.” She’s also an associate member of the American Laboratory Theatre.

Erinn is grateful for the very brave and generous spirit in which this film was made.



ORLI HERSCH (Girl) age 12, began her career on *Sesame Street* and has appeared on *Royal Pains*, *Law and Order Criminal Intent* and other TV shows. She performed with the New York City opera in *Così fan tutte*. Her first feature film was *The Beaver*, directed by Jodie Foster.

Orli is most proud to tell Gretl Claggett’s story in *Happy Hour*.



GEORGE TYNAN CROWLEY (Pedophile “Uncle”) is an award-winning actor/playwright/director and a proud friend and supporter of filmmaker Gretl Claggett.

New York theatre acting credits include *Nikolai and the Others* at Lincoln Center, his one-man *Old Man and the Sea* for Wynn Handman’s American Place Theatre, *Sounding* at HERE Arts Center and Prospero in Harlem Shakespeare Theatre’s *Tempest*. He’s performed at many regional theatres, including the Asolo, the Studio Theatre in DC, Florida Studio Theatre and Philadelphia’s Wilma Theater, where he played Oscar Wilde in the East Coast premiere of Tom Stoppard’s *The Invention of Love*. His work in Esther Bell’s films *Exist* and *Godass* was seen on the Sundance Channel. His play *Cleopatra Backstage* is currently being produced as a film.

George holds an MFA in Directing from the Yale School of Drama.



ROBYN MAITLAND (Complicit “Aunt”) trains with Michael Howard, NYC, and has degrees from the University of Utah and LAMDA. Recent New York and regional theatre credits include Queen Margaret in *Richard III*, 4th Street Theatre; Soothsayer in *Julius Caesar* (Alvin Epstein, Director) at Elm Shakespeare in New Haven, CT; and Liz in *Present Laughter*, Bernstein in *November* and Hope/Glory in *Almost, Maine* — all at TheatreWorks. She can be seen in the upcoming horror film *Old 37* (release date: 2013).

Robyn is extremely proud to be involved with Gretl Claggett and *Happy Hour*.



SEAN CULLEN (Father) has appeared in several feature films — including the Academy-Award-nominated *Michael Clayton*, *Revolutionary Road* and *Cop Out* — and has guest-starred on several TV series (recurring this fall on HBO’s *Boardwalk Empire*). A graduate of the Yale School of Drama, he’s appeared in four Broadway productions (*Golden Boy* and Tony-winner *South Pacific*, most recently, for director Bartlett Sher and Lincoln Center Theater); and at nearly twenty of America’s leading regional theatres, such as BAM, Williamstown Theatre Festival and Hartford Stage.

Sean is also a playwright and songwriter. His first play, *Safe Home*, received critical praise and three extensions in its New York premiere. *The New York Times* called him “a master of the dialogue of the rapidly changing emotion.”

Longtime friends with Gretl Claggett, he had the pleasure of knowing her father upon whom his role is loosely based.



NORAH MARLER (Mother) is a model, actor and author of several successful women’s self-help books.

A graduate of Georgian Court University with a BA in Psychology, Norah works with various nonprofit organizations, advocating for women’s health, wellness and safety. She believes in the film’s mission to help prevent sexual abuse by using the power of art to start conversations and inspire action.



ZACHARY LE VEY (Woman’s Boyfriend) Conception in Florida followed by a nomadic existence has shaped a hopeless dreamer attempting to communicate epic truths while selfishly escaping into the world of character, pacifying an insatiable curiosity through the exploration of humanity and the endless facets of soul. Film credits include *Rockaway*, *Cinephilia* and, most recently, *John and Claudia*.

Zachary feels privileged to be part of such a poignant, relevant work and is profoundly inspired by its courageous author.



FAQs

with Filmmaker
Gretl Claggett

How did you approach adapting the poem for film and why is there so little dialogue?

The poem quickly transports readers from an ordinary present moment to an unexpected past offense, breaking silence and speaking the unspeakable. I wanted the screenplay to work in much the same way, so I created silence by having characters talk only if absolutely necessary. Each line of dialogue contains one of the poem's key words or phrases; they act as subconscious triggers, driving the film to its climax when the poem — the memory of what happened — is spoken in its entirety.



Does the child playing the “Girl” understand what’s portrayed in the film? How did you talk to her about such a tough, taboo subject?

We were incredibly blessed to find Orli Hersch. She was 11 years old at the time. After her first on-camera audition, she peered up at me: “Gretl, may I ask you a question?” “Sure,” I replied. She softly inquired, “How did it stop?” That’s when cinematographer Eve Cuyen almost dropped her camera. I took a breath, then answered Orli’s question directly and honestly — sensing we’d found our “Girl.” This was confirmed at callbacks when, during one of the improvisations, she brought me to tears and George Tynan Crowley — already cast as the Pedophile “Uncle” — “almost fell out of his chair” (his words).

Orli is a gifted actress, wise beyond her years. Even so, my priority was to keep the scenes and set impeccably safe for her. Before shooting, we had a number of discussions and rehearsals. I showed Orli photos of myself as a girl, answering each of her questions, following her lead. Nothing was off limits. Through the process, we developed a code. For instance, whenever I needed her to express the look and feeling of dissociation, I’d ask her to become an American Girl doll: body limp, eyes vacant.



What influenced your casting and developing the role of the Pedophile “Uncle”?

“Never cast a son-of-a-bitch as a son-of-a-bitch,” one of my favorite directors used to say. So I followed his advice and asked George Tynan Crowley to play the Pedophile “Uncle.” George is a versatile, courageous actor. More importantly, though, he has a big heart, gentle spirit and playful sense of humor — and I knew I could trust him to be sensitive and appropriate when working with a child on such intense material.

I wanted the “Uncle” in a short span of screen time to come across as a complex human being, not just a villain or “monster.” He commits heinous crimes behind closed doors, but in public — as is the case with many perpetrators — he’s charming: a good husband and a generous, upstanding citizen in his tight-knit, middle class community.

At one point early in the rehearsal process, George ran into Orli and her mother Marni on the street. He shared that I’d put him in touch with a few psychologists to do research; that he was watching documentaries and reading a lot on the subject matter, nervous about playing this kind of man — *could he pull it off?* On he went until Orli interrupted him: “All that’s fine, George. But our job is to fulfill Gretl’s vision so that people understand how these terrible things happen.” As he later told me, “From the mouths of babes...”

While George and I had many conversations about my real “Uncle,” I encouraged us both — and all the actors — to free ourselves from the constraints of biography in order to make the most powerful choices possible for the world of the film.



How much of your true story is in this film?

The film is based on the poem and true events, but it’s not a documentary or docudrama. It’s a narrative short, informed and infused in numerous ways by my experiences. Here are a few examples:

- We embroidered the monogrammed handkerchief used by the Pedophile “Uncle” in the film with the actual initials of my parents’ best friend, whom I called “Uncle.”
- The silver-dollar necklace that the Complicit “Aunt” wears in the film is mine — given to me by my “Uncle” years ago as a gift.
- I bought the Girl’s doll for the film — a Vintage Hasbro “Little Miss No Name” — on eBay. When I was little, I had one (and didn’t find her at all creepy ... at the time).



What’s the significance of the “Aunt’s” silver-dollar necklace?

Grooming is a process by which a perpetrator lures a young victim into a sexual relationship and then maintains that relationship in secrecy.

The “Uncle” grooms the Girl in the film by slipping her silver dollars — one of the ways my “Uncle”

groomed me in real life. But to get away with these crimes, perpetrators don't just groom their young victims; they also groom the parents, friends and their own spouses.

There are a few meanings behind the "Aunt's" silver-dollar necklace. It symbolizes how her husband, the "Uncle," has groomed her into silence and complicity. She knows what he's doing but chooses not to stop him because it would damage her lifestyle, friendships and community status. It also points to the fact that she, too, was victimized as a child and hasn't yet healed or broken the cycle of abuse.



Why don't the parents and other adults at the party see what's happening?

That's a common question: *Why don't people notice what seems obvious in hindsight?* More than 95% of sexual abuse happens at the hands of a family member, friend or acquaintance — someone the child knows, trusts and loves. Because the nature of the betrayal is so vast and the crime so devastating, most of us never want to contemplate that it could be happening in our community, let alone within our circle of friends or family. And that's what perpetrators count on.

The "Aunt" knows and does nothing; she's *consciously* complicit. The parents and friends at the party sense something's amiss, but they're either too distracted by life's many midlife obligations, blame their discomfort on some other problem or are too afraid to trust their gut — *what if they're wrong?* And because they're fueled with alcohol, their instincts are off; so they don't see what they see or know what they know. This makes them *unconsciously* complicit.



1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before turning 18. This translates into roughly 40 million adult survivors in the US alone. Those statistics are staggering, but what can I do to make a difference?

1. Encourage friends and family to see the film, then discuss it with them. Art makes it safe to talk about uncomfortable topics — and the more we speak openly about abuse, the more conscious we all become and the less likely it can happen in the shadows.
2. Go to the Child HELP Partnership and learn about prevention:
http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/centers/community_services/psychology/partners
3. Contribute to the Child HELP Partnership — or another organization of your choice — dedicated to healing abuse survivors and keeping children safe.

CREDITS

Written & Directed by

Gretl Claggett

Cinematographer & Editor

Eve Cuyen

Original Music

Gil Talmi

Eve Cuyen

Executive Producers

Joseph (JP) Pierce Farrell

David Dike

Associate Producer

Harriet McDougal

Produced by

Gretl Claggett

Voice

Julianne Moore

CAST

Woman	Erinn Ruth
Girl	Orli Hersch
Pedophile "Uncle"	George Tynan Crowley
Complicit "Aunt"	Robyn Maitland
Father	Sean Cullen
Mother	Norah Marler
Mother's Best Friend	Kathryn Neville Browne
Grandmother	Elaine F. Liebmann
Grandfather	Edward Prostack
Woman's Boyfriend	Zachary Le Vey
Bartender	Ben Prayz
Flirting Woman at Bar	Jessica Mei Gershen
Bar Hipsters	Ryan Vincent
	Amanda Dane
	Nattacia Satie
1970s Friends	Enid Breis
	Jay Gaussoin
	Andy Horowitz

Casting by Gretl Claggett & Eve Cuyen

CREW

Casting Associate/Line Producer	Laura Carson
Line Producer	Giovanna Aguilar
1st Assistant Director	Samantha Santos
2nd Assistant Director	Megan Jeannette Smith
Sound Design & Mix	@Harlem Pictures Studio
Colorists	John Mattiuzzi & Eve Cuyen
After Effects Artist	Vanessa Pyne
Script Supervisor	Patricia Yi
Makeup Artist/Wardrobe Stylist	Angelina Scantlebury
Assistant Makeup/Wardrobe	Claire Ying-Chin Wang
Hairstylist	Kisha Marie
Assistant Camera	Christina Asencio
Gaffer	Steven Glassner
Key Grip	Mark Boucher
Best Boy	Chris Dingley
Best Boy Grip	Ryan Helfant
Prop Master, Art Department	Lance Hallowell
Designer, Art Department	Mauro Carichini
Storyboard Artist/Props	Sean Caesar
Production Assistants	Francesca Andre, Matt Davis & Michael Griffiths

“Voices Once Submerged”

Composed & Performed by Gil Talmi
Published by Thoughts In Grey Circles Publishing, BMI
Courtesy of konsonant/ REcords

“Für Elise”

Composed by Ludwig van Beethoven
Performed by Darren Thompson

“I Remember You”

Composed by Johnny Mercer & Victor Schertzinger
Performed by Jimmy Dorsey
Published by Sony ATV (ASCAP)
Courtesy of Geffen Records under license
from Universal Music Enterprises

Screenplay based on the poem “Happy Hour”

from Gretl Claggett’s *MONSOON SOLO: Voices Once Submerged*
(WordTech Editions, 2012)

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