

Wishbone Films and International Film Circuit presents



A Film by Michael Palmieri and Donal Mosher
Featuring the Mosher Family

Winner: **2009 SILVERDOCS** Sterling Grand Jury Prize for best US Documentary Feature
Winner: **2009 DENVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Maysles Award Special Jury Prize
Winner: **2009 CINEMA EYE HONORS**, Best First Feature and Best Musical Score
2009 INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS Nominee, Best Documentary
IFP/GOTHAM AWARDS 2009 Nominee, Best Film Not Playing at a Theater Near You
5 CINEMA EYE HONORS Nominations including Best Documentary and Best Director
FILMMAKER MAGAZINE "25 New Faces of Independent Film", Summer 2009 Issue

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To download press stills please visit:

www.octobercountryfilm.com/presskit.html

OCTOBER COUNTRY

**Documentary Feature, United States, 2010,
80 minutes, 35mm / HDCAM**

Directors: Michael Palmieri and Donal Mosher
Produced by: Michael Palmieri

Director of Photography: Michael Palmieri

Editor: Michael Palmieri

Original Score: Danny Grody, Donal Mosher,
Michael Palmieri, Kenric Taylor

Supervising Sound Mixer: David C. Hughes

Website: www.octobercountryfilm.com

— synopsis —

October Country is a beautifully rendered portrait of an American family struggling for stability while haunted by the ghosts of war, teen pregnancy, foster care and child abuse. A collaboration between filmmaker Michael Palmieri and photographer and family member Donal Mosher, this vibrant and penetrating documentary examines the forces that unsettle the working poor and the violence that lurks beneath the surface of American life.

Every family has its ghosts. The Mosher family has more than most. Shot over a year from one Halloween to the next, the film creates a stunning cinematic portrait of a family who are unique but also sadly representative of the struggles of America's working class. The film was created to be both a universal story of family struggle and a socially conscious portrait of compelling, articulate individuals grappling with the forces that tear at their homes and relationships.

Combining the access only available to a family member with an intimate visual style of a filmmaker encountering the family's dynamics for the first time, the film gives a deeply personal voice to the national issues of economic instability, domestic abuse, war trauma, and sexual molestation. As the Moshers do their best to confront their ghosts, we confront the broader issues that haunt us all in the continued struggle for the American Dream.

— alternate synopsis —

Shot over the course of a year from one Halloween to the next, the film presents three generations of a working class American family in upstate New York.

The film details many of the personal trials and tribulations of the Mosher family but, on a universal level, provides an honest insight into what is often too simply described as America's obsession with violence.

The film is both a cinematic poem and a dramatic record of the impact of everything from the Vietnam War to present day economic recession on one family; the grandfather is a vet who tells no war stories but watches war movies, the grandmother an eloquent rock of support, the daughter struggling to bring up two girls of her own. One of the girls struggles to avoid abusive relationships and the other an example of natural intelligence, creativity and curiosity trying to understand the world around her.

Engrossing, rich, multi-layered and stunning to watch, this first feature leaves you feeling like you've read a seriously good book.

— directors' statement —

From the moment we saw each other's work we knew we wanted to work together, and from the moment we visited Donal's family we knew we wanted to collaborate on a film with them. Though the concept of the film was initially inspired by Donal's first-person photo work and writing about his family, as the Moshers opened up to Mike's fresh perspective and way of filming it became apparent that their daily lives should shape the material in a new way. We both felt that the strength of their voices, characters, and stories should be the focus of the film. After all, here is a family facing some of the most difficult problems of the working poor with endurance, self-awareness and ironic humor – all qualities denied their class by mainstream media.

A central idea behind October Country is that people who cannot make their voices heard begin to feel like ghosts in their own lives. When this happens they no longer feel they have the power to change their world. At a time when working class families find themselves disenfranchised and trapped by circumstances beyond their control, it is vitally important to present working class voices – voices that are neither an economic statistic nor reality TV exploitation, but create an opportunity for change for both the speaker and the audience. In a key scene, the witchy Denise stands in a cemetery, asking the unseen spirits, "Anybody want to talk to me? Can you tell me your name? Why do you stay here?" With October Country we wanted to bring the spirit of these questions to the viewer in the hopes of raising some answers.

— bios —

This is Michael Palmieri and Donal Mosher's collaborative directing debut.

Michael Palmieri: Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Editor

Michael began directing film and television in 2001. He has directed over twenty music videos for such artists as Beck, The Strokes, Belle and Sebastian, The New Pornographers, The Foo Fighters, and The Bravery. His commercial work includes spots for Converse, Coke, MAC Cosmetics, and ESPN. Other notable collaborators include the political cartoonist and journalist Garry Trudeau of Doonesbury, fine artists Tauba Auerbach and Adrian Paci, cinematographer Christopher Doyle, and the Academy award winning documentary filmmakers Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman. An adjunct professor of film and video at California College of the Arts in San Francisco, he now resides in Portland, Oregon. A wide selection of his work can be found at michaelpalmieri.com

Donal Mosher: Director, Writer

Donal Mosher is a photographer, writer, and musician. His photo documentary work inspired the film "October Country". Portions of the project have been shown in Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco's SF Camerawork as well as online at the Marjorie Wood Gallery. His fiction and non-fiction writings have appeared in SF Camerawork, Instant City, Satellite, Frozen Tears, and Life As We Show It - Writing On Film. Donal is also a principle subject of Robert Arnold's documentary film "Key of G," which focuses on life and work with a severely disabled young man. Selections of his writings and photographic work can be found at ghostype.blogspot.com and donalmosher.com

— characters —

Dottie – The matriarch of the Moshers. Her dedication keeps the family from falling apart. She is the mother of Donna, grandmother to Daneal and Desi, and Foster-mother to Chris.

Don – The patriarch of the Moshers. A former policeman and a Vietnam veteran, he now wrestles with PTSD that alienates him from his family, especially his sister Denise.

Denise – Don's estranged sister. Lonely and over medicated, she practices Wicca and believes she is in contact with the local spirits of the dead.

Donna – Don and Dottie's daughter. Her past relationships with abusive men sent destructive ripples through the entire family. She is the mother to Daneal and Desi.

Daneal – Donna's oldest daughter. Following in her mother's footsteps, she is a young mother caught in a custody battle with the abusive father of her daughter Ruby.

Desi – Donna's youngest child. At age 11 she is discontented, sharp-witted, and remarkably aware of her circumstances and cycles of behavior around her. She may be the one character that escapes.

Ruby – Daneal's 2-year-old daughter.

Chris – Don and Dottie's foster son. Struggling with a long history of broken homes, foster care, and criminal behavior, his position in the family is a volatile one for Don and Dottie.

— A Note on the Mohawk Valley Region —

Upstate NY gave the world séances, Kodak cameras, and Remington rifles. Considered one of the oldest and most haunted areas of the state, the Mohawk valley is the site of colonial massacres, Revolutionary War battles and home of the Remington Arms factory which remains the center of its income and a major employer. It is officially the northernmost boundary of Appalachia – a fact that can be seen in the region's hard, wild beauty, as well as its poverty, unemployment, and high rates of broken homes and teen pregnancy. Besides being the home of the Mosher family for generations, the Mohawk Valley's long economically tragic and ghost ridden history shaped the film's concepts of social and metaphorical hauntings that plague the family and others like them.

— credits —

Directors

Michael Palmieri and Donal Mosher

Producer

Michael Palmieri

Director of Photography

Michael Palmieri

Editor

Michael Palmieri

Color Correction

Michael Palmieri

Original Score

Danny Grody, Donal Mosher, Michael Palmieri, Kenric Taylor

Supervising Sound Mixer

David C. Hughes

Additional Sound Recording and Mixing

Michael Palmieri

Additional Musical Recording

Seth Lorinczi

Digital to Film Transfer

Alpha Cine

Dubbing Services

GRS Systems, NY

Digital Arts, NY

Titles and Poster Design

Idiot or Genius, Portland, OR

Sales Agent

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Distribution

International Film Circuit

With Gratitude

Garry Trudeau

Mark Elijah Rosenberg

Rob Epstein

Moana Palmieri

— festival awards —

Winner: SILVERDOCS 2009, Sterling Grand Jury Prize for best US Documentary Feature

Winner: DOC LISBOA 2009, Best First Feature

Winner: STARZ/DENVER I'NTL 2009, Special Jury Prize, Maysles Brothers Award

Winner: MONTREAL RIDM 2009, Best Editor

Winner: ENTREVUES BELFORT 2009, Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary

Winner: BELFAST 2010, Maysles Brothers Documentary Feature Competition

— industry awards —

Winner: Cinema Eye Honors 2010, Best First Feature

Winner: Cinema Eye Honors 2010, Best Musical Score

Nominee: 2009 Independent Spirit Awards Nominee, Best Documentary

Nominee: 2009 IFP/Gotham Awards Nominee, Best Film Not Playing at a Theater Near You

Nominee: 2009 Cinema Eye Honors, Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography, Outstanding Achievement in Direction, Outstanding Achievement in Nonfiction Feature Filmmaking

— additional honors —

Filmmaker Magazine “25 New Faces of Independent Film”, Summer 2009 Issue

— festival screenings —

TRUE/FALSE Documentary Film Festival, February 2009, Sneak Preview
LOS ANGELES Film Festival, Documentary Competition, June 2009, World Premiere
SILVERDOCS, Documentary Competition, June 2009, East Coast Premiere

WINNER: US GRAND JURY PRIZE

LOCARNO Film Festival, Filmmakers of the Present Competition, August 2009, International Premiere
CAMDEN Film Festival, Documentary Competition, September 2009, Maine Premiere
WOODSTOCK Film Festival, Documentary Competition, October 2009, New York Premiere
STRANGER THAN FICTION Documentary film series at the IFC, October 2009, New York City Premiere
AMFEST, American Film Festival, Moscow, October 2009, Russian Premiere
FLAHERTIANA, Perm, Russia, October 2009
SAN FRANCISCO Documentary Film Festival, October 2009, San Francisco Premiere
DOC LISBOA Film Festival, Doc Competition, October 2009

WINNER: BEST FIRST FEATURE

LEIPZIG Film Festival, Documentary Competition, October 2009, German Premiere
POPOLI Documentary Festival, Florence, Documentary Competition, November 2009, Italian Premiere
SHEFFIELD Film Festival, Documentary Competition, November 2009, UK Premiere
EXGROUND Documentary Film Festival, Documentary Competition, November 2009
DENVER International Film Festival, Documentary Competition, November 2009, Colorado Premiere

WINNER: SPECIAL JURY PRIZE IN FILMMAKING

DOC SOUP Screening Series, HotDocs Program, November 2009
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART NEW YORK, Screening Series for Gotham Awards, November 2009
MONTREAL RIDM, Documentary Competition, Nov 2009, Canadian Premiere, Closing Night Film

WINNER: BEST EDITOR

MOVIES THAT MATTER, Calgary, Edmonton, November 2009
BELFORT Entrevues Film Festival, Documentary Competition, November 2009, French Premiere,

WINNER: GRAND JURY PRIZE, BEST DOCUMENTARY

UNKNOWN PLEASURES, American Independent Film Festival, Berlin, January, 2010
TROMSO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Norway, January 2010, Scandinavian Premiere
DOCPOINT, Helsinki, Finland, January, 2010, Finnish Premiere
PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, February 2010, Oregon Premiere
ONE WORLD HUMAN RIGHTS FESTIVAL, Prague, March 2010, Czech Premiere
DOC SOUP Edmonton Screening Series, Hotdocs Program, April 2010
BOSTON INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Boston, April, 2010, Massachusetts Premiere
DOKUMENTARE FILMWOCHEN, Hamburg, Germany, April 2010
DALLAS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Dallas, Texas, April 2010, Texas Premiere
BELFAST Film Festival, Documentary Competition, April 2010, Ireland Premiere

WINNER, MAYSLES DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION

EDOC, ECUADOR, International Documentary Feature Official Selection, May 2010
KRAKOW 50th International Film Festival, June 2010, Int'l Documentary Feature Competition
SOUND UNSEEN, Duluth Minnesota, Official Selection, June 2010

— U.S. Theatrical Release Screenings, 2010 —

New York City, NY: IFC Center, Feb 12 - Feb 25

Los Angeles, CA: Laemmle's Music Hall, Feb 19 - 25

Denver, CO: Starz/Denver Film Center, March 12 - 18

Seattle, WA: Northwest Film Forum, March 19 - 24

Portland, ME: Space Gallery, April 8

Portland, OR: Fox Tower, April 2 - 8

Olympia, WA: Olympia Film Society, April 10

Washington, D.C.: Avalon Theater, April 9 - 15

Portland, OR: Living Room Theaters, April 16 - 22

Boston, MA: Museum of Fine Arts, April 30 - May 6

San Francisco, CA: Roxie Theater, May 7 - 13

Hartford, CT: Real Artways, May 7 - 13

Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Cinematheque, May 21 and 22

Detroit, MI: Burton Theater, May 28 - June 3

St. Louis, MO: Webster University, May 31 - June 6

Columbus, OH: Wexner Center, June 11 and 12

Chicago, IL: Gene Siskel Film Center, June 18 - 24