

New Film From Tom and Tamara Balsamides ?A Ticking Time Bomb? Debuts At NJ Flim Festival At Rutgers, October 2, 2016 7pm

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Montvale, NJ Filmmaker Tom Balsamides Spotlights Wife's Battle With Lyme Disease

Tom Balsamides, an award-winning filmmaker, and his wife Tamara Balsamides, artist and writer, have created a indie film documenting the beginning awareness of Lyme Disease up until today when the Lyme Disease community has faced and is still facing ignorance, discrimination and medical neglect from the established health care system.

Contracted by a bite from a common tick, Lyme is both deadly and debilitating. Lyme Disease creates problems for the health care system due to the inaccuracy of testing and the lack of research dollars devoted to studying, treating and curing the infection. The problem is explained and explored by both doctors and patients alike in this new film.

Tamara Balsamides herself has been suffering with Lyme for many years and this prompted her husband Tom to create this film with Tamara as co-producer. Tamara has this to say regarding her difficult journey with Lyme: "Lyme disease is a disaster of epic proportions; it has evolved into an epidemic in the northern United States of America. For instance, the number of new cases yearly eclipses the number of new cases of AIDS and breast cancer.

"In many cases, this disease begins with one misdiagnosis after another, causing years of stress and fear; I was misdiagnosed for twenty years. Because the problem is not addressed, the disease is given years to burrow into almost every organ, creating a multi-systemic disease which studies have proven is more debilitating than congestive heart failure.

"Coupled with the fact that testing for Lyme disease is only forty percent effective and the fact that most doctors who treat this disease do not take insurance, Lyme disease cripples families financially. Therefore,

people suffering from Lyme disease find themselves in a situation where they are extremely ill, while also being ridiculed and misunderstood by friends and society in general.

Due to this immense lack of social support, it makes sense that Lyme disease is the leading cause of suicide in all chronic illnesses. When will we learn??

These words directly from the co-producer Ms. Balsamides, brilliantly illuminate the issue. Well-researched and creatively presented, "A Ticking Time Bomb" is an extraordinary look into the lives of those affected by Lyme as well as their families.

As he witnessed his wife's pain, Tom Balsamides decided to use his cinematic talents to share her journey. The film, "A Ticking Time Bomb," incorporates Tamara's search for answers, as well as interviews with others facing the disease and experts who weigh in on what some call "a very smart bug". A relative of syphilis, but a much more complex structure, Lyme is difficult to diagnose and difficult to treat due to misdiagnosis.

According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health (NIH) "Lyme disease, or borreliosis, is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected blacklegged deer tick."

As stated on the NIH website, "Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne infectious disease in the United States with state health departments reporting 27,203 confirmed cases and 9,104 probable cases of Lyme disease to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2013."

Balsamides said the most frustrating aspect of her journey was encountering a healthcare system that was not prepared to deal with the real threat of Lyme disease and failed to make available the level of testing needed to diagnose the disease early enough to prevent its long-term and catastrophic effects.

Adding to the complexity of the disease, the NIH states that 2 to 5 percent of those bitten by a tick run the risk of co-infection since one tick can carry several infections such as: Lyme borreliosis, anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and *B. miyamotoi* infection.

After much research and countless doctor visits and tests, the Balsamides finally found IGeneX, Inc., based in California, that offered testing sensitive enough to accurately diagnose the disease.

"We are all victims when it comes to Lyme disease and we must be willing to take the matter into our own hands by fighting back against faulty testing and the general misunderstanding of this disease," says Tom Balsamides.

Balsamides, who has been making films for a decade said he hopes the film will inspire audience members to take action. "I hope that viewers will become involved in exposing the cover-up, promoting education about this epidemic, and increase funding for research," he said.

In 2011, Balsamides produced and directed "The Hunting Season," which was awarded Best Feature Film at the IFQ Film Festival in Hollywood. Both the film and actor Michael Sorvino, were nominated for a People's Choice Award at the Hoboken International Film Festival.

Balsamides said he "is most interested in reaching people emotionally and inviting them to think and feel in a different way."

"When they leave my movies I want them to say, 'Wow, what just happened? That was amazing.' " he said. "I want to be able to touch people in a way they haven't been touched before."

"A Ticking Time Bomb" has been accepted into the New Jersey Film Festival and will be screened during the evening block of films on Sunday, Oct. 2, beginning at 7 p.m. in Voorhees Hall, Room #105, 71 Hamilton St./College Avenue Campus, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

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Producer / Director (Award Winning)

"A Ticking Time Bomb"

Producer/Director.. Recently Accepted into the New Jersey Film Festival

Feature Film "The Hunting Season" Awarded Best Feature (Producer / Director)

?Early Release? Short Award (Winning Best Short) Producer/Director/Writer

?The Extra Hour? Short Film (Experimental) Producer/Director/Writer

For more information about the NJ Film Festival, visit: <http://www.njfilmfest.com/>

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Jersey Film Festival

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