

AWARENESS

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WILL THERE BE A REVOLUTION?

**CAN A MOVIE STOP YOU
FROM RELIVING THE DRAMAS
OF YOUR CHILDHOOD?**

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Bret Carr's REVOLUTION

Begins Today!

By Donna Strong

There is a reason an independent film, from a director you have never heard of, yet, is on the cover of this issue of Awareness Magazine. It is because Bret Carr is more than just a feisty filmmaker, and his film is more than just a movie.

Bret Carr is manifestation personified. His film, REVOLUTION, which is set to debut on April 28th, has overcome enormous odds, having shot and reshot, won festivals and gone back into additional production for ten years. Bret has tapped into a huge reservoir of creative fire to make this brilliant piece.

Bret's passion burns bright, he has used the pain of his past and raised it to much higher reaches, to set others on fire with the ability to transform their lives. He is teaching others much about healing. REVOLUTION is more than the amazing story of "Lou Benedetti's" transformation from homophobic, street-fighting stutterer into a compassionate and powerful communicator. By following the psychological near-death experience of his character LOU, audiences identify with Carr's Oscar-caliber performance and come out having had their own awakening. Carr says LOU allows people to experience that "life is a story . . . which can be changed. Imagine we all had that power before our patterns even started." REVOLUTION may allow many to set their own creative life force free and become authentic about their feelings, while letting go of the chains of their own trauma dramas.

Gripping and wrenching to watch, REVOLUTION is also heartwarming. While LOU, as the every man character, shows us the heart is battered by the conflict it endures, this film achieves a high purpose to show that, in the end it will triumph. Like the co-writer's last film The Deer Hunter, it will liberate others from the war within their own hearts.

Bret has set up the Foundation for Conscious Humanity to serve different organizations requesting screenings of the film. It is a wonderful tool for healers, coaches, and really anyone who is running a betterment organization. And, Bret's FOUNDATION FOR CONSCIOUS HUMANITY provides free equipment for them to screen the film.

Both captivating and compelling, REVOLUTION has already attracted a notable amount of attention, having won honors at twelve international film festivals, including a jury prize at our own Local Malibu Film Festival.

Gay Hendricks, author of the bestseller "Conscious Loving and Lasting Love," wrote "The first 30 minutes of REVOLUTION, I thought, boy this is going to polarize some people, after 60 minutes was over I wanted to call everyone I know and invite them over for the end. When the film was over, I tried to find the director, because I wanted to get copies to hand deliver to all of my closest friends."

"You have made an INTENSE FILM, and your performance is extraordinary," Jane Fonda wrote to Bret. What The Bleep director, Will Arntz, also sent Bret an unsolicited email which endorsed the film with "You have to watch it!" Even Colin Cowie, Oprah's life-style guru, sent an email blast to his entire fan base urging them to watch the film during its April 28 release, "REVOLUTION is a profoundly impactful and touching story."

Awareness: Bret, your film is raw and riveting! Thank you for taking the time to do this interview for our Relationship issue, I am sure you are very busy these days.

Bret: When I heard Awareness wanted to do a cover feature on REVOLUTION, which is playing at the Sunset Laemmle 5, I thought, “Great! Another chance for people to discover the LOU in REVOLUTION. However when I realized it was the Relationship issue, I was forced to recall the very personal reasons I made the movie.

Relationships(!) are the reason I made this film. I know that my entire life, I have repeated the dramas of my childhood in my relationships — attracting women who reminded me of my upbringing in an alcoholic home. But it wasn’t until I really got to know these women that the recognition settled. Inevitably, my romantic would explode in a fierce battle to change the ending to my childhood story.

So why share this in the Relationship issue? For years I lived hand-to-mouth on the streets and couches of Hollywood, hoping my ideas would find me love. In 1992 I finally hit rock bottom. I was so hollow that I was able to finally look all the way through myself.

Wrenching tears and screaming “Why?” I didn’t even have the energy for my normal medication — my love and sex addiction. I was crying into clenched fists unable to get off the floor of my bedroom, after another lover had left me.

Immobilized by abandonment, I realized that I needed help. This abandonment issue had infected every area of my life. If someone had dared to leave me hanging, I started trouble with them so that ending the relationship would be my idea, terrified they would not come back.

I was always broke, not only because of my protective mechanism, but because being at that “zero” place was where I was constantly ready to be rescued by a present-day parent figure representing the one that was absent when I grew up.

So, not knowing any of this, I went to a class called grief recovery. Then I went to love and sex addicts anonymous. Then I tried Louise Hay. Yes, I was a Hollywood cliché, looking for affirmation from studio executives as daddies I never had. Even worse, for a love addict, I’d just directed an hour-long show for Playboy, and was in the gutter of my life.

My focus was so low that I found myself in another fight, that was really with myself, and just fresh out of a weekend in jail. My producer, Matt Devlin, being either brilliant or Hollywood, suggested I take an acting class to get out of my head. It was a gentle and smart suggestion after all, as I would probably have scoffed at therapy. So, while riding out my probation, during this terrible but brilliantly light-filled time, I was about to create the most important relationship I would ever have: with myself.

We did something called psychodrama in class, acting out a past hurt with both perspectives, in this case, we played the role of both mother and son. It was very difficult to do, but after being put through the paces several times, the memories became more clear and the emotion more full.

After class though, my buddy Tom and I started playing with the exercise with our eyes closed, and developed quick ways to get to the meat of the scenes from our childhood. Replaying them over and over, we burned out circuits wired into our heads for a lifetime.

I literally went back to really early times that weren’t even in my memory, and whether they were real or not didn’t matter because this acting exercise worked to create an emotional release! I went from anguish to irony and lifted myself, with Tom’s help, out of a total manic depression.

The heavy replay of emotions though also gave an immediate catharsis to lift myself in only an hour, instead of a month, out of my still-repeating manic depressive slides: Depressions resulting from abandonment scenarios with girls whose identity was based mostly on their sexuality (no one said it was easy to break an addiction) Though this phenomenon is not limited to people from alcoholic homes, we live in an entire culture taught through the sound bites of advertisers that sex is supposed to be commodified and sold in return for love.

After having done hundreds of hours of these exercises, and refining them down, I was able to engage friends and get them to see in thirty seconds how they try to change the ending to their childhoods by reliving those same relationships today. Trying to get the love that was not there as a kid was a game that we all play. What a lousy racket that is. REVOLUTION was born from this realization.

Awareness: In the movie, LOU has unresolved issues with his father. As a creative work drawn from personal experience, I think we would like to know what real life experience you drew from to make this movie. As the filmmaker, the lead character, and a member of the creative script team, you've got your 'creative flesh' deeply into this work about overcoming traumas that haunt our lives.

Bret: The story is a metaphor for the most powerful moment of my life: a lifetime of highs and lows and cyclical abandonment issues stemming from growing up in an alcoholic home with screaming, and what amounted to terror for a little kid. The stuttering boxer is simply a metaphor for the repeating patterns in people's lives. Mine was attracting very dramatic women into my life and having no resource for seeing my own pattern.

We chose a man who stuttered in order to get the sympathy he couldn't get from his father. This was simply a tool to tell the story in as powerful a way as we, the writers, could muster. Quinn and I wanted to deal more with the violence in the world — the war in people's hearts that gets projected onto society — than with the abandonment and romantic issues.

We are all merely spirits who throw ourselves into bodies to play a game. The game is to remember our true nature and to figure a way back out. We have a small idea that the body, which naturally accumulates loss and trauma, can be overcome. But, we forget how. So, the more baggage we're carrying around, the more we look forward to crisis, which is the mechanism that breaks you down, reminding you how to reconnect with your spirit. Which is why our dramas repeat, louder and bigger until we surrender.

So, the two ways out of the body are:

- A) Allow random crisis to explode in your life, until you just drop dead of all the emotional traumas that you have accumulated, and all the people you have not forgiven.
- B) You can get into the ring with your past, and fight the enemy face-to-face.

Now, there are probably many ways to do this: fifty years of yoga and meditation, or you can come see REVOLUTION. Okay this is a plug. But the film does seem to create some magic. It is just a story yes, but it is hung on the acting exercise. And on a mythological journey — the same one Christ went through and Rocky went through.

We all do — facing our fears against our greatest enemy — ourselves and the limitations of our bodies to deal with pain, whether it is emotional or physical. When you go into the theater, and you buy into this guy LOU, the stuttering boxer, you go on his trip.

Awareness: Yes. The reason LOU is so potent, is that people really see themselves and their struggles in him, the character that embodies the core of your message.

Bret: I went to my USC writing mentor and said, hey if you can put this little acting exercise into a scene like the Russian Roulette scene that made your Deer Hunter story so powerful, and if you can create a structure to get people to be invested in a guy like me who transforms after a lot of pain, then we will have something.

At first Quinn {Redeker} told me I couldn't afford him, but eventually he relented when seeing the results of our experiments. Together we created LOU, a violent, extreme-stutterer who transforms into a great, powerful communicator. That is the compelling thing about LOU's journey. It is one we all have to face sometime in our life — that moment when you decide between becoming your parent or having to lose the very behavior that allowed you to survive growing up at their hands. How can you do that?

In LOU's case, how do you overcome a lifetime stutter in two weeks? More importantly, how can you show it on-screen? Who has ever captured that private battle in a movie? Because if it can be done, then there is something that may save people a lot of pain if they could apply the same tools LOU learns on his journey. The same tools I picked up, and feel a responsibility to share.

Awareness: REVOLUTION is compelling and I am wondering what it felt like to make this piece. What was the drive and the passion? Talk about how it felt to make it...

Bret: The joy of driving this raw character, my own personal mirror, LOU, to the point where he knows that he has to relive his greatest trauma, with his dead father yet, again and again, not in therapy, which he doesn't believe in, but actually in the street, in a fight with strangers who want to hurt him; using their anger to help him psycho dramatize the very thing that causes him to stutter — THAT IS THE RIDE I HAD TO TAKE THE AUDIENCE ON!

I am so impassioned this film can be of service that I do not want you to think this is about a movie or an actor, because it is not. I created it to be an experience. Something that could be shared, so that people could not only get out of their own repeating loop, but when seeing the defining moment of their life, in that darkness would be their calling. By seeing the defining moment of their life, perhaps they could reverse their negative patterns and use them as a calling to help others.

That is why I thought the story was perfect for the guy who wrote the Russian roulette scene in The Deer Hunter. Quinn showed us how it would take a killer confronting his own darkest nature to learn the power of life — letting a helpless animal live. So, in my film, LOU's choice is a suicidal one also, whether to let the helpless animal in him take priority over the killer.

This may seem very deep, and I guess it is, but it extends pervasively into all areas of our lives. I gave a keynote address at LOHAS several years ago to 500 of the top green company CEO's in the world, taking them through the 30-second exercise that LOU goes through. The owner of Boston Tea, shared in front of the audience how he went back to being five years old when his mom had made him tea after his father stormed out. I asked the audience if they thought his profits and employee loyalty would soar if he shared that story. I asked if he made a line of "Mother's Tea Bags" and stuck on the back sayings only mom would say to her kids, would that take his company and life to the next level . . . The room roared in support. Each of us has a unique and special calling to be of service.

You can already see the shift in society occurring. Around every street corner is a healer, a yoga teacher, and a coach. Bravo, let them all have a vehicle through LOU to dialogue about the moment that started it all. Reliving and catharting that core trauma, which for some may even go back to birth, was the most powerful moment of my life. Transformation came within just a few hours from manic depression to freedom! I may not have been a stuttering boxer, but I was certainly someone with instantaneously triggered funks that resulted in street fights, and a life of lost opportunities, and loneliness.

I had no other choice but to make REVOLUTION and share this potential to revolutionize a life. And then to have that verified by Oscar-winning talent, only affirmed that the potential REVOLUTION has to touch lives.

I am incredibly passionate about what choices this will give the audience who walks out of a screening. We saw it in our work-in-progress screening when a woman came up to me and told me she went through a quasi debugging with LOU during the movie. She came to terms with something she hadn't thought of in twenty years, but that had emotionally crippled her. And she wanted to bring her son to another screening so that he would understand, through LOU, what had happened with her abusive mother twenty years ago. So they could laugh together. That is the power of this film, and why I can't wait to have you see it in theaters. Oh, and I want to leave you with one question: What is your stutter?

Awareness: Bret, I grew up in Ohio and loved hearing that a prison warden in Cincinnati (a very Republican, conservative domain) has been activated by seeing the film. Hurrah! This is real social activism and feels like it will open the door to deep transformation.

Bret: Thank you, Donna. That Ohio story is one of my very best affirmations to keep trucking. Those moments are what helped me make it through the ten years it took. It was a great testimonial from the warden of the Cincinnati Teen Felony Correctional Facility. He walked out of the theater so moved that he wanted to screen the film for his inmates.

Only two months after Dennis Johnson, Warden of Cincinnati's Hillcrest Facility, saw the film, he had gotten approval from State Judge Ripps. This is the first film ever allowed to be screened inside that facility. By the way, we are GIVING AWAY ALL OF OUR PROFITS to THE FOUNDATION FOR CONSCIOUS HUMANITY so Youth at Risk, and other groups unable to access Conscious Cinema can see these films.

Awareness: How do you feel now that the film is complete?

Bret: The film is far from complete — because art only exists if people see it. So, when this is on Oprah, when it has toured every prison, halfway house, and school in the country, when every angry single mother, and frightened child sees it, when every parent who might do anything less than love his kid fully the next day, then I will have completed this film and fulfilled its purpose for having been made.

REVOLUTION opens April 28th at the Laemmle Sunset 5 theater in Hollywood for one week only, and at The Village East, 181 2nd Avenue, in New York City, NY on May 12.

www.REVOLUTIONmovie.com

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