Press Book

‘If you wana talk to me, then shut your fu**in mouth’

www.shutuplittlemanfilm.com
**SYNOPSIS**

When two friends tape-recorded the fights of their violently noisy neighbours, they accidentally created one of the world's first 'viral' pop-culture sensations. Exploring the blurred boundaries between privacy, art and exploitation, Shut Up Little Man! An Audio Misadventure is a darkly hilarious modern fable.

**LONGER SYNOPSIS**

The most important audio recording released in the nineties wasn't a collection of songs by a self-tortured alternative star. The most important recording released in the grunge era was entitled SHUT UP LITTLE MAN! It was a covert audio recording of two older drunken men living in a small flat in San Francisco, who spent their available free time yelling, screaming, hitting and generally abusing each other.

The phenomenon began in 1987 when Eddie and Mitch (two young punks from the Midwest), moved next door to Peter Haskett (a flamboyant gay man), and Raymond Huffman (a raging homophobe). This ultimate odd-couple hated each other with raging abandon, and through the paper-thin walls their alcohol-fuelled rants terrorised Eddie and Mitch. Fearing for their lives they began to tape record evidence of the insane goings on from next door.

In recording Pete and Ray's unique dialogue, the boys accidentally created one of the world's first 'viral' pop-culture sensations. Their tapes went on to inspire a cult following, spawning sell-out CD's, comic artworks by Dan Clowes (Ghostworld), stage-plays, music from the likes of Devo and a Hollywood feeding frenzy. For the newly famous Eddie and Mitchell, this would be a life-changing experience that would see them ingested into the belly and fired out the orifice of the pop culture beast.

Exploring the blurring boundaries between privacy, art and exploitation, Shut Up Little Man! An Audio Misadventure is a darkly hilarious story.
INTERVIEW WITH

MATTHEW BATE

WRITER / DIRECTOR

EDITOR: Matt, how did you first cross across the SULM recordings? I collect records and used to hang around a friend's older guy called Ron, who was the store's self-appointed sage of all music trivia, used to corner me and tell me his ear off about obscure music history. One day he grabbed my record bag and wrote SHUT UP LITTLE MAN on the cover and told me to go home and listen to these bizarre recordings of two old guys fighting. This was the genesis of my obsession with telling the Shut Up Little Man! (SULM) story.

EDITOR: What first attracted you to the recordings? The recordings themselves are unlike anything I had ever heard. They are a guilty pleasure, hilarious, horrifying and addictive. They have an absurdist Beckett quality, a glimpse into the darkest corners of human relationships. Because it's purely audio, listening to it forces you to imagine what Peter and Raymond looked like, what the apartment was like and what their circumstances were. So many questions arise like why is an obviously gay man living with a raging homophobe? Who recorded this stuff and how did they get out alive? And how is this even legal? These mysteries were seductive.

EDITOR: What else attracted you to this story? My intention making Shut Up Little Man! An Audio Misadventure was to tell a dark and hilarious story about the grey areas between love and hate, art and exploitation. These kinds of dichotomies fuel my work. At the film's heart is this bizarre inter-apartment relationship; on one side Eddie and Ilitch two best friends starting out in life, and next door two old men Peter and Raymond, who hate each other and are drinking and fighting to death. Connecting them is this illicit audio recording that would make them all cult celebrities, one pair embracing that notoriety and the other ignorant of it.

INTERVIEW WITH

SOPHIE HYDE

PRODUCER

EDITOR: Have you worked with Matt (writer/director of SULM) for a long time, but we only started working together during the making of this film. We were both in a workshop called FilmLab [ED: www.safilmlab.com.au], a low budget feature film initiative by the South Australian Film Corporation designed to develop and fund feature films by first time feature directors with strong creative teams. We were part of the first intake of four teams, Matt working on SULM [ED: with then Producer, now Executive Producer Julie Ryan] and me working as a producer/director on a feature drama project S2 Tuesdays with Bryan [ED: Producer, Cinematographer, Editor] and writer, Matthew Cormack.

EDITOR: So you all clicked at FilmLab. We all worked really closely in the Lab. We enjoyed each other’s film ideas and processes. We all drove together to the workshops everyday, giving us a chance to talk, push and question each other’s work.

EDITOR: What do you talk about in those drives each day? When Matt started talking about SULM during that time I was struck by his very own connections to the project. He had been obsessed with the subject of SULM is a natural choice for Matt. He holds a particular interest in pop culture and its idea of obsession and as such was clearly drawn to the material and the subsequent story. But more than this there are also burning questions in Matt's mind, still in their infancy at the time. Why would these two men who hated each other live in the same apartment? What is the subject of human interaction and the way we build relationships? What is my ethical position in relation to this?

EDITOR: How does this come out in the film, then? The project suits Matt's storytelling style perfectly, two he developed his skills as a documentary writer/director he has always looked for unique stories told in unique ways.

He often asks "what's different about that?" and it's this that marks his own vision, a desire for originality of voice, opinion and style.

EDITOR: So, how did you come to get involved in SHUT UP LITTLE MAN! as Producer? When the Lab finished, we decided to change our business structure and all work together, so the new Closer Productions was formed (Bryan Mason and Sophie Hyde joined with Matthew Bate as co-directors of the company). Eventually, within the company, we took on the producing of SULM.

EDITOR: Tell me a bit more about how that all worked. Closer is a unique company in that the three co-directors are not focused exclusively on Producing. In fact, it’s our secondary or third of fourth pursuit. We all direct films, Bryan shoots and edits, Matt and I both write, but Bryan and I have always produced our own work alongside other producers and so taking on SULM felt like a natural decision. Creatively we were already deeply engaged in the development of the story and style and running the company meant that the logistics of equipment, personnel and pre-production were already leading. Producing within a company like this is therefore a collaborative thing, we all take pieces of the puzzle based on what we are good at. We also engaged co-Producer Julie Byrne, who has managed the shoots in Australia and the US (ED: on sets in Australia and on location across the UK) and chased and secured the rights to the music. It's been a dynamic working process and the team are strong and close.

EDITOR: So how was the experience of making the film? For all of us working on the film, watching Matt's constant grappling with his own questions, fuelled by wanting to understand more pieces of the story, has been endlessly entertaining. It's instigated many heated debates and conversations about our own positions, the value of art, the idea of documentation and documentary filmmaking and questioning about the way we accept and can also laugh at the misfortune of others. It's very important to me to have as Closer first feature and the debut project for our new team.
"When we flew from Australia to San Francisco we left on a Friday morning and arrived on Friday morning. I was nervous, excited, jet-lagged and thinking about the film and what was going to happen. On the first night I couldn't sleep at all. On the second night I thought I'm so exhausted that I'm going to drop when my head hits the pillow. No dice. By the third night of sleeplessness I was completely strung out. By the fourth I was a shell of a human being.

We'd visited a liquor store that day called O'Looney's, owned by a guy called Muhammad O'Looney. It was the store that Pete and Ray used to buy their booze from. I'd bought a souvenir bottle of Royal Gate Vodka - Peter Haskett's drink of choice. It comes in a fake plastic 'glass' bottle, and to call this shit paint stripper is paying it too much respect. But I was going insane and needed self medicating. I was running on pure adrenalin in the day then walking the ceilings at night. Desperate for sleep and finding a half bottle of warm orange juice in my backpack I looked at my souvenir Royal Gate and decided to make the ultimate sacrifice to my liver and (more importantly) to my mantelpiece-collection of 'filmy arcana'. I made myself a half litre Peter Haskett's screwdriver and drank it. There's something about the Shut Up Little Man 'thing' where everyone who comes into its atmosphere ends up becoming Pete and Ray. I was stuck in a tiny room in San Francisco at 3am, drunk on the cheapest booze known to man, brain sozzled, staring at shit American TV. Before falling unconscious I remember thinking this is the greatest research I could have done, I'm literally staring out of the eyeballs of Pete & Ray.

ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz...

"We edited SULM in the studio at the back of our house in Adelaide, South Australia [Ed: Cinematographer/Editor Bryan and producer Sophie are partners], so even if I was working at our other office, I'd come home to the rants of Peter and Ray, to the amused or enraged tones of our interviewees, the music of DEVO and the strange edit heads of Matt and Bryan. Our house was awash with everyone working, filming, animating, cutting. Guido, our dog, and Audrey, our daughter became part of the pack."

"With such a mammoth undertaking to organize this all the way from Australia the schedule in the US was a finely tuned jigsaw puzzle that shifted and slid on a daily basis across six US cities - San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Chicago, Detroit and LA - and within the confines of a 4 week shoot period. With busy notables like Bob Mothersbaugh of DEVO, the film director Mike Mitchell (who was in the midst of his publicity campaign around the release of Shrek 3D) and the comic artists Ivan Brunetti and Daniel Clowes (who returned from a European tour just in time!) this was no small feat. But all fell into place beautifully in the end, indeed, it felt rather a blessed shoot overall (despite the odd mishap like a blown rental car tyre on the first day in thick Seattle traffic!)."
Edward Guerriero was born in Dayton, Ohio in 1964. From 1978 to 1982 he was a member of the punk band, The Tyrants, who released their DIY single “Hard to Get / Attitude” in 1980. As Eddie Lee Sausage, he was the lead singer for the absurdist heavy metal band Metal Blister in Madison, Wisconsin. Eddie was a founding member of CUSP (the Collective of Urban Space Poaching), an experimental street performance group, and was the editor of their theoretical journal between 1986 and 1996. In San Francisco Eddie (along with Mitchell D.) taped the Shut Up Little Man recordings, widely considered to be a classic of the audio verite and field recording genres. Edward continues to perform music with the electro-acoustic duo Infinite Article and the free improvisational ensemble Yuan. Edward owns and operates Oblivion Books, a rare bookstore in Seattle, where he resides with his wife, Elizabeth Wood, and their daughter Aria Grace Nur.

MITCH DEPREY (aka MITCHELL D)

Mitch Deprey was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin in 1963. He attended the University of Wisconsin from 1983 to 1987 where he majored in Spanish & sociology. In 1985, Mitch spent a year in Madrid, Spain studying at the Universidad de Madrid Complutense. In September of 1987 he moved to San Francisco and into the Pepto Bismol Palace where Mitch (along with Eddie Lee Sausage) recorded the notorious neighbors, Peter & Ray, which resulted in the contagious Shut Up Little Man recordings. He lived in the San Francisco bay area for 16 years where he was employed as a child care counselor, a case manager for both developmentally disabled and geriatric populations, a certified arborist and finally as an operations manager for a plaster company – all bilingual positions. In 1991, he spent a year in Peru living a dream of visiting every Inca archaeological site he was able. In 2003 Mitch returned to Wisconsin where he resides with his wife, Bari, and 2 children, Caleb, age 14, and Ariel, age 11. Mitch now works as a multi-line agent for an insurance company.

RAYMOND HUFFMAN (aka LITTLE MAN)

Raymond Huffman was born in Nebraska in 1931. At the age of 14, Ray was deputized by the Lincoln Sheriff’s Department. Ray worked for some time in the aeronautics industry, repairing airplane wings and eventually settled in the San Francisco Bay Area. He was promoted to Head Janitor at The Spaulding Residential Hotel in 1978, where he met Peter Haskett and consequently moved into the Steiner St apartment together. Ray died in 1992.

PETER HASKETT (aka QUEER COCKSUCKER)

Peter Haskett was born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1928 and grew up in central California. The son of a policeman, Peter grew up thinking his teenage mother was his sister and his grandmother his mother. Peter served briefly in the Army before graduating from Northwestern University with a degree in advertising and journalism and worked for several ad companies up until the 60s. As legend has it, Peter worked on the J.F.K election campaign and was so affected by the President’s assassination that he took to drink. Peter was living in a hotel when he met Ray, who was the janitor in the building before they moved into the Steiner St apartment together. Peter died in 1996.
Mike Mitchell has directed live action features such as the Annie Award-nominated *SHREK FOREVER AFTER*, *SKY HIGH*, and *BIGALOW: MALE GIGALO* and is currently directing *ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS 3: CHIPRECKED*. Mitchell’s other animation work includes writing for “The Ren and Stimpy Show” and *Nickelodeon’s SpongeBob Squarepants*. He has also storyboarded commercials and music videos for filmmakers such as Spike Jonze and received awards for his work, including the 1999 Spirit of Slamdance Award for his short film, “herd,” and the Sundance Film Festival’s 1993 Best of Fest Award for his animated short “Frannie’s Christmas.” Mitchell lives with his wife and two children in Los Angeles.
TOP FIVE QUOTES

We conducted a survey with our production team and asked them what their top 5 quotes were.

Here are the results fellow c**ksuckers!

5. “I can kill you from a sitting position.”
   - Raymond Huffman

4. “Sally-June! Abigail-Mae! This is just too MUCH.”
   - Peter Haskett


   - Peter Haskett

And the winner...

1. “If you wanna talk to me then SHUT YOUR FU**KEN’ MOUTH!” - Raymond Huffman

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PETER AND RAYMOND QUIZ
(Answers below)

Q1: Where did PETER want Ray to go and live?

Q2: What is the name of the DEVO side project band track that samples Pete and Ray?

Q3: Who is the SHREK 3D Director responsible for creating the Peter and Raymond Puppets?

Q4: How many times was Raymond allegedly wounded in the war?

Q5: What famously ‘decent’ TV show does Ray want to watch? AND what Queer shit is Pete watching at the time?

Q6: What small furry animal does Pete accuse Ray of sounding like?

Q7: What charges are Ray going to bring against Peter?

Q8: Name three girls names that Pete assigns to Ray.

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DRUNKEN!
CRAZED!
OPENING
THE ALL-
ENCOMPASSING
VOID OF OUR
EMPTY SOULS!
YOU’VE HEARD THE TAPES NOW READ THE DIALOGUE... A WORD FOR WORD
TRANSCRIPTION OF THE CLASSIC... DON’T CALL ME GOODNIGHT

R: good. Goodbye you fucking queer motherfucker! The last...
The best thing that can happen to me, according to my doctors, is for
me to say ‘goodbye, you cocksucker!’ and never see you again. I’ll be so fucking
glad when you’re gone. Cos I despise fucking... punks like you.

P: [quietly in bg] you’ve already said that, so goodnight.

R: goodnight, punk. You punk cocksucker.
I’ll be glad when you’re dead! Or gone, or something.

P: [quietly in bg] goodnight!

R: cos you ain’t a human being!

P: [quietly in bg] goodnight!

R: you ain’t a human being, you fucking-

P: [quietly in bg] goodnight!

R: don’t call me ‘goodnight’, you cocksucker!

P: I am saying, why do you keep screeching?

R: SHUT YER FUCKING MOUTH!

P: all it does is wake everybody up. All I’m saying is-

R: THEN SHUT YER FUCKING MOUTH, you fucking piece of shit!
THEN SHUT YER FUCKING MOUTH! Shut yer fucking mouth, you cocksucker.
MATTHEW BATE  
WRITER / DIRECTOR

Matthew Bate creates documentaries dealing with obsessive people, pop-culture and outsider artists. Matt's films are marked by unique storytelling devices and an experimental visual style. His 2006 film What The Future Sounded Like, is a visually and sonically experimental exploration into the genesis of electronic music. In 2007 Matt directed the first documentary co-production between SBS Australia and Al Jazeera and in 2008 completed Connected By Light, a film about world-renowned new media artist Lynette Wallworth. His 2010 film Stunt Love about silent film stunt-pioneer director J.P McGowan and his daredevil wife Helen Holmes, is an action packed documentary set against the backdrop of the birth of Hollywood.

Recently, Matt directed The Mystery of Flying Kicks, a film exploring what relationship sneakers on telephone wires have with murder, drugs, sex and politics. The film was made entirely from contributions of imagery and phone message bank stories from the global online public. It Premiered at the 2010 SXSW Festival and was in selection at Edinburgh, CPH:DOX, Sheffield DocFest and won Best Documentary Short at 2010 Melbourne International Film Festival. Shut Up Little Man! An Audio Misadventure is Matt's debut feature film. Matt is currently developing a film about the great foot-fetish photographer Elmer Batters. Matt is a co-director of Adelaide-based Closer Productions.

BRYAN MASON  
CINEMATOGRAPHER / EDITOR / CO-PRODUCER

Bryan Mason is a multi-skilled director of Closer Productions, a film production company based in Adelaide, South Australia. An award winning editor and DOP, Bryan shot, edited and co-produced Shut Up Little Man! An Audio Misadventure. Working closely with his partner Sophie Hyde, Bryan has shot and edited a number of short films including Ok, Let's Talk About Me (2005); My Last Ten Hours With You (2007), Elephantiasis (2010) which premiered at the 2010 Melbourne Int'l Film Festival; and Necessary Games (Winner Best Experimental at 2009 Melbourne Int'l Film Festival & Brooklyn Int’l Film Festival 2010).


SOPHIE HYDE  
PRODUCER

Australian filmmaker Sophie Hyde is one of the founders and co-directors of Closer Productions, based in Adelaide, South Australia. In the past, Sophie has primarily only produced the work she’s directed but this has changed with her producing Closer’s first feature documentary Shut Up Little Man! An Audio Misadventure.

Sophie has previously produced and directed documentaries Ok, Let’s Talk About Me (2005), short drama Elephantiasis, which premiered at the 2010 Melbourne Int’l Film Festival; and Necessary Games, three short dance films with Restless Dance Theatre, that continues to screen internationally and has won Best Experimental at 2009 Melbourne Int’l Film Festival & Brooklyn Int’l Film Festival 2010, and was awarded Best Work at ReelDance Awards 2010. Her short drama, My Last Ten Hours With You (2007) has screened successfully at festivals internationally, including Uppsala and Palm Springs, and has won numerous awards.

Sophie’s next films will be as producer and co-director on the documentary Life in Movement, premiering at Adelaide Film Festival 2010, executive producing Matthew Bate’s Stunt Love, for ABC and Adelaide Film Festival, and in development on another SAFC FilmLab feature, the drama 52 Tuesdays, which will begin shooting in 2011 and continue for 52 weeks.

JULIE BYRNE  
CO-PRODUCER

Julie Byrne has worked for 20 years in the South Australian Film & Television industry variously in community television, as an independent filmmaker as writer, director and/or producer and also in a number of crew roles. In the last decade Julie was production manager on several feature films, including Paul Cox’s Innocence and Human Touch, and on the popular television drama series McLeod’s Daughters, from 2004 - 2008 and was Line Producer on the 2009 psychological thriller (set in 1922) Lucky Country. In 2010 Julie co-formed Velvet Orange with producer Vicki Sugars and they are currently developing several feature film projects, with their first feature going into production in 2011. Julie will also be producing two short films in 2011.

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