



ONE STEP BACK - PRESS NOTES

TRT 78 MINS | NOT RATED | USA | ENGLISH | COLOR

Press Contact :

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

The documentary *One Step Back: The Rock & Roll Odyssey of Splooge* follows four small town working class guys with a big dream. The members of the New Jersey rock band *Splooge* have spent 20 years creating all original music in anticipation of a breakthrough that has yet to materialize. When a promoter offers them a chance to go on tour in Ireland, their commitment to this dream will be tested in the most unexpected of ways.

LONG SYNOPSIS

What is the price of a big dream? This is the question the members of the rock & roll band *Splooge* must confront as they approach their fortieth birthdays and find themselves still playing bars and block parties.

Determined to create their own original music despite the greater financial rewards of being a cover band, they have hit a dead end after more than a decade of putting their lives on hold in anticipation of their big breakthrough.

That is, until a concert promoter hears their new music and offers them a chance to go on a tour in Ireland. Will this prove to be the opportunity they've been waiting for or will they continue to remain one step back of the elusive brass ring?

A documentary that was filmed over 14 years, *One Step Back* is a picaresque adventure full of heart, humor and unforgettable characters. A true story that is a testament to the power of music and proof that a dream can sometimes be realized in the most unexpected of ways.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

The documentary 'One Step Back' was born out of a chance meeting director Peter Ventrella had in the summer of 2003. A screenwriter and director living in Los Angeles, Ventrella was back in his hometown of Westfield, New Jersey when he ran into Drew Koski whom he had not seen since their days singing together in the Westfield-based Saint Paul's church choir almost thirty years earlier. Koski told Ventrella he played drums for a local all-original music band called *Splooge* and recommended he see them in concert that weekend.

Seeing them live, Ventrella was struck by the band's whimsical nature and self-effacing humor onstage but also recognized in their music and lyrics, a story of four people expressing the struggles of their daily lives through their songs

After spending some time with the band members, he learned that the band members were all contending with the possibility that their passion may ultimately have to take a back seat to the priorities of their regular lives.

Ventrella realized the real-life story of four guys still chasing their rock & roll dreams as they approached their fortieth birthdays and struggling with whether to continue their quest had the potential to be a humorous story about the iconic American garage band but also a potent documentary about how dreams have the power to both motivate and inhibit the process of finding one's path in life.

Ventrella notes, "I wasn't necessarily concerned about whether they would hit it big as a band while I was filming, but instead, I recognized that this could be a story about dreams that may go unfulfilled and how the band members dealt with that. It is a universal conflict to which most people could relate.

EMOTIONAL ACCESS

In the winter of 2003, filming began as the band went into the studio to record new music for an upcoming album. Ventrella also spent time shooting each of them in their daily lives and jobs; Mike Novy operating his construction business, Tommy Diaz bartending at local establishments like The Jolly Trolley and 16 Prospect, Drew Koski running his landscape business and Jeff Phillips at the music rehearsal studio he owned in Kenilworth.

Additional layers to the story began to reveal themselves as Ventrella met their friends and families. Learning the intimate details of their lives, he began to see how the band's connection to each other and their dedication to creating music helped them overcome personal tragedies and hardships.

The Splooge band members were giving Ventrella complete access to their lives, much more so than famous musicians might who are invested in protecting their brand or status. This emotional openness proved to be one of the most compelling aspects of the story that was being captured.

A HOMETOWN STORY

Another attraction for director Ventrella, was returning to his hometown of Westfield to shoot the documentary. It became an opportunity for him to revisit a place he knew growing up and also see it through new eyes. In that sense, Central Jersey (the New Jersey section of the film was shot in Westfield, Mountainside, Plainfield, Kenilworth, Garwood and Cranford) became a character in the film; a safe haven for the band members but also a place they needed to break away from in order to get their music to a wider audience.

The production continued through the end of 2003 as Ventrella filmed the band members and their concerts at local music venues such as The Crossroads in Garwood and the legendary Maxwells in Hoboken.

INNOCENTS ABROAD

Just as production was about to wrap, an Irish music promoter visiting New Jersey heard Splooge playing their new music at a local venue and offered to facilitate booking them into a series of Dublin concerts. Recognizing that this could potentially be an exciting new chapter in the story, Ventrella and the band traveled to the Emerald Isle in early 2004 where he filmed them performing for eight days in both small pubs and larger iconic venues such as The Voodoo Lounge and Eamonn Doran's (where bands such as U2 and Thin Lizzy got their start).

It was here, performing for crowds who had never heard their music, that Splooge faced their ultimate test. While all sorts of challenges presented themselves during the tour, the band ultimately had an epiphany at one particular show in which they discovered a new sense of purpose and confidence. This proved to be a major turning point in the story.

Filming continued back in New Jersey for several months before finally wrapping in the late summer of 2004.

A THIRTEEN YEAR HIATUS

Returning to Los Angeles in 2004, Ventrella began a new direction in his own career producing behind-the-scenes documentaries for the DVD and Blu-ray releases of major studio films and TV shows. During this time though, he continued to stay in touch with the Splooge band members. When Ventrella

opened his own production company in 2013, he finally had the opportunity to dig into the over 150 hours of footage that had been shot and begin the process of editing it into a compelling narrative.

Working with editors Lauren Saffa (*The Beatles: Eight Days a Week, Do You Trust This Computer*) and Pam Raymer-Lea (*What Do You Do All Day?, George B*), Ventrella spent three years crafting the final film. This process included getting to know the band in an entirely new way as he and the editors honed the story.

Editor Saffa remarks, “Everyone has a dream, but not everyone has the guts to go for it. I found myself inspired by the band’s courage and humor, rooting for these guys every step of the way as I got to know and love them in the edit room.”

Editor Raymer-Lea adds, “What intrigued me was how this movie has the potential to change the way people view their lives. We all have dreams about what we'd like to accomplish but most of us never realize those dreams. What do we think of ourselves then? How do we define success then? That question is at the heart of this film.”

A MODERN DAY PERSPECTIVE

After completing the initial edit, Ventrella screened the film for documentary filmmaking colleagues in Los Angeles and was surprised by their unanimous recommendation: they wanted to see what had happened to these guys over the 13 years since the end of filming and what they were doing today.

A week-long shoot was convened in the fall of 2017 in which Ventrella captured the band members in their present day lives. Ventrella recalls, “It was a profound experience seeing where each band member’s life had taken them and hearing their thoughts on the importance of their musical aspirations almost a decade and a half later. It added a new layer to the story and provided a real emotional catharsis for me. I hope that it will do the same for viewers who watch the documentary.”

THE RELEASE

The film is being released in January as a video-on-demand rental through iTunes, Amazon Instant Video and Google Play as well as on DVD through the film's website www.OneStepBackMovie.com.

From his vantage point creating home entertainment bonus content for Hollywood studios, Ventrella has witnessed a sea change in how movies are delivered to consumers and also recognized that this evolution provided an opportunity for his own film.

"I started producing content for actor Morgan Freeman's direct to consumer streaming venture ClickStar in 2006 and have continued to this day producing bonus material for recent home entertainment releases such as Sony's *Soldado* and Lionsgate's *Blindspotting*", Ventrella says. "It is a different world now in terms of how many ways there are for you to get your film out there to people."

"Right after I shot *One Step Back* in 2004, the only opportunity to get it to audiences would've been playing some film festivals and getting picked up for distribution by a studio. Today, anyone with a TV, computer, iPad or smart phone will be able to see this movie."

Ventrella continues, "The importance of this new delivery system is that it allows a much wider variety of voices to be heard about subjects that the larger studios might not be interested in; for instance, the dreams of four working class guys from a small New Jersey town."

FILMMAKER BIOS

PETER VENTRELLA (DIRECTOR/PRODUCER)

Peter Ventrella co-created the syndicated television series, *PSI-Factor: Chronicles of the Paranormal* hosted by Dan Aykroyd that ran on CBS for four seasons.

For the past fourteen years he has produced behind-the-scenes documentaries for a variety of film studio home entertainment releases including 2016 Academy Award winner “Moonlight” for A24, “Manchester by the Sea” for Amazon Studios, “Sicario”, “Love & Mercy” and “The Expendables 2” for Lionsgate and “Planet of the Apes: 40 Year Evolution Edition” for Fox which was awarded the DVD Critics award for best Blu-ray disc of the year.

“One Step Back” is Peter’s first feature film.

LAUREN SAFFA (CO-EDITOR)

Lauren Saffa’s editor credits include *The Cost of Silence*, a whistleblowing film about the Deepwater Horizon disaster victims, *Do You Trust This Computer?* (dir. Chris Paine) a feature documentary about the future of Artificial Intelligence, *The Beatles: Eight Days a Week* (Dir. Ron Howard), and *Hooligan Sparrow* (Oscar Shortlist Best Documentary, Sundance Film Festival, 2016). Saffa co-produced and edited the feature documentary *Another World* about the Occupy Wall Street movement with Director Fisher Stevens (Berlin International Film Festival, 2014).

PAM RAYMER-LEA (CO-EDITOR)

Pam Raymer-Lea has been editing for 27 years. Her work includes, *Speaking Through Walls* which was directed by Anthony Edwards, (Cine Golden Eagle Award and first place in the National Education Film & Video Awards) and *Fred: A Stand-Up Comedian Who Can’t Stand Up*, directed by Ron Ward, (Best of Festival in the Eureka Film Festival and Honors in the First International Disability Film Festival in Munich, Germany). Pam has also edited 9 feature films including *George B.*, which was in competition at the Sundance Film Festival. A former counselor, Pam loves documentaries because of the positive changes they can produce in the audience and the world. “Film can reach so many more people than a one on one counseling session.”

ONE STEP BACK CREDITS

Produced and Directed by

Peter Ventrella

Editors

Lauren Saffa
Pam Raymer-Lea

Assistant Editor

Matt Rundell

Audio Post Production

Chris Colley

Additional Post Production Finishing

Zeke Pinheiro

Finishing

Matt Radecki (Different by Design)

Colorist

Luke Cahill

Director of Photography

Brett Albright

Additional Camera

Brandon Neubauer
Michael Green
Doug Black
Jacob Sarfary (Ireland)
Peter Ventrella

Production Audio

Peter Ventrella (2003/2004)
Chris Barone (2017)

Make-up

Carissa Kalaydjian (2017)

Still Photographs

Michael Koehler

R.E.M., Nirvana and Red Hot Chili Peppers photos

Courtesy of Getty Images

Legal Services

Lesley Abell

Original Music

Splodge

Additional Music

Jay Asher

ONE STEP BACK CAST

Tommy Diaz – Lead Vocals

Mike Novy – Lead Guitar

Jeff Phillips – Bass Guitar and back-up vocals

Drew Koski – Drums

Bruce Day – Former Splodge bassist

Chris Hacket - Former Splodge bassist

Richard Koski – Drew’s Father

Gloria Koski – Drew’s Mother

Gerald E. Phillips – Jeff’s Father

Holly A. Phillips – Jeff’s Mother

Anne Diaz – Tommy’s Mother

Patrick Fogarty – Independent Promoter (Ireland)

Keith Elliott – Splodge’s Dublin Contact/Ireland Tour Promoter

Ray Prunty – Owner, Mrs. O’Brien’s Kitchen

James Coady – Dublin Fan

William Siegel – Recording Engineer bookend sequence

Dan Jeram – ‘Chunky Pop With A Fizz’ Recording Engineer

Patrick O’Leary – Splodge Replacement Drummer

Patrick Connor – ‘Chunky Pop With A Fizz’ Cover Photographer

Susan Heckel – ‘Chunky Pop With A Fizz’ Cover Model

Robert Le Stefous – Robert’s Steakhouse Owner

Arlene Bauman – Block Party Hostess

Brian J. Kossler – T-Shirt Designer

Chris Blasco – College Radio DJ #1

Stefan Gina – College Radio DJ #2

Charles “Chuck D” Dashiell III – Maxwell’s and Double D’s MC

Donovan Soumas – Manager, Heritage Artist Management

Gwendolyn J. Franklin – Manager, Heritage Artist Management

Jerry Lipihitz – Jerry’s Deli Owner

Steve Di Trolio – Jerry’s Deli Patron

Jill Omura – Drew Koski’s Sister

Michael Omura – Drew’s Nephew

Dierdre Cooney – Splooge Fan at airport
Jeff Novy – Splooge Fan #2 at airport
Clarence Godwin – Splooge fan at Maxwells

MUSIC CREDITS

MAKE IT THROUGH THE DAY

Written and Performed by Splooge

WILDEBEEEST

Written and Performed by Splooge

MUNDANE LIVING

Written and Performed by Splooge

CELEBRATION

Written and Performed by Splooge

PACKIN AND CRUISIN

Written and Performed by Splooge

FOREVER

Written and Performed by Splooge

1000 X'S LOST

Written and Performed by Splooge

ALL IN A DAY

Written and Performed by Splooge

FAMILY SONG

Written and Performed by Splooge

SIMPLE FEELINGS

Written and Performed by Splooge

TICK TOCK DAY

Written and Performed by Splooge

IRISH FOLK SONG (ACOUSTIC)

Written and Performed by Splooge

AIN'T IT FUNNY

Written and Performed by Splooge

STAY AWAY

Written and Performed by Splooge

WE ARE

Written and Performed by Splooge

THE END

Written and Performed by Splooge

LION KING

Written and Performed by Splooge

BRIAN'S EYES

Written and Performed by Splooge

STAND STILL

Written and Performed by Splooge

AWICKA

Written and Performed by Splooge

RAIN SONG

Written and Performed by Splooge

ANGELS

Written and Performed by Splooge

SOFA KING

Written and Performed by Jeff Phillips

STIFFY ON THE LIFFEY

Written and Performed by Splooge

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

Performed by Splooge, Written by Buddy Guy

Publisher BMG Bumblebee (BMI) obo Mic Shau Music Company (BMI)

FOREVER, ANGELS and 1,000 X'S LOST

Mixed and mastered by

David Mambach at MacroSound in Union, N.J.

SPECIAL THANKS

Lesley Abell
Jenna Aira-Ventrella
Rick Andreola
Kevin Balog
Jillian Balog

Lynda Balog
Arlene Bauman
Tracey Birt
Neal Bradley
Samuel D. Calello
Chris and Tim Boyle (16 Prospect Wine Bar & Bistro)
Patrick Connor
Dierdre Cooney
Sharon Vuillo
Robin D'Amico
Jamie D'Amico
Chuck Daschiel
Robert DeStefanis
Dana Lynn Diaz
Clarence Godwin
Fr. Andrew Hammersley and St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Chris Hopke
Karoline Kamowski and Double D's
Rich Kubicz
David Meyer and Third Studio from the Sun
Karen E. Novy
James and Kristina Papianni
Billy Siegel
Joey Quintero
Alex Taner and The Crossroads
Todd Abramson – Maxwell's
John Vargas and Lovesexy

IN MEMORIUM

Anne Diaz
Jack Diaz
Roger Diaz
Donna Diaz
Richard Koski
Gloria K. Koski

DEDICATION

This film is dedicated to Louise and Peter Ventrella for all their help and support
