

S&M

SHORT AND MALE

BEETHOVEN, STRAVINSKY, MAHLER, PICASSO, RODIN, ALEXANDER POPE, JOHN KEATS,

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA, HORATIO NELSON NAPOLEON AND TODD SHAW

None of these great men was taller than 5'7"

Greatness is not measured in inches... or is it?



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A New Feature Documentary
Directed by Howard Goldberg
Produced by Ina Fichman, Instinct Films

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SHORT AND MALE

SYNOPSIS

Feature Documentary
88 minutes

It's our dirty little secret – size matters. We're obsessed with height. We like our men tall, dark and handsome but at what cost?

Cultures around the world are obsessed with size: it matters, big time. Women equate height with sex appeal. Society is stuck on the belief that tall people make the best leaders.

With a touch of humour, **S&M SHORT AND MALE** examines the obstacles that short statured men face every day in life, love and work. Shot in the US, Canada, China and Europe, we speak to men from all walks of life to unearth what makes some short men bigger than others.

An Instinct Films production in association with CTV.



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SHORT AND MALE

THE FILM

S&M SHORT AND MALE is a feature documentary that reveals, for the first time, what it's truly like to be a short men and the discrimination they can face. You're probably thinking... "Are you serious?" Yes, indeed, we are.

Almost as soon as the film begins, we learn that 99% of sperm banks will only accept donors who are at least 5'11" and that the importance of a man's height to a woman changes as a function to where she is in her menstrual cycle. "Most short statured people are just resigned to their fate of second or third class citizenship," declares Joe Mangano, a heightism activist in the US.

Women are even asked to pick their ideal date from a line up of five men, and most picked #1. You guessed it; he was the tallest of the line up! Coincidence? Director Howard Goldberg—also a short male—takes it upon himself to travel from New York to Beijing, meeting short men across the globe to explore what all this means.

He meets with NOSSA – the National Organization of Short Statured Adults – and accompanies them to Time Square to distribute flyers to spread awareness about their cause. They are trying to encourage short men to join them and speak out... but it's difficult. When the documentary was filmed, NOSSA only has 27 members worldwide. These numbers may have grown, but it's still a challenge convincing others to sign up: "There's not much pride associated with [short stature]. Some people view it like... who would wanna join an organization like the National Organization of Ugly People? [...] Some people, that's how they view short stature," explains Matt Campisi, short man and president of NOSSA. Joe Mangano adds that "heightism is so pervasive that no one even notices it's there."

Joe Mangano and Matt Campisi both provide convincing arguments, but Howard still wonders... Are their stories merely two isolated events?

Howard meets Dr. Steven Landsburg, an economist at the University of Rochester, who confirms that male height is taken quite seriously, especially in the workforce. In fact, studies have shown that the average height of a Fortune 500 executive is around 6 feet (roughly 3 inches taller than the male average). "It's quite striking, the difference in wages between short and tall people," Dr. Landsburg states, "it is, averaging over a lot of research, about \$1000 per year, per inch [...] which is quite a lot. It's comparable to the sort of differences that we see on the basis of race and of gender."

S&M

SHORT AND MALE

Where does all of this come from? The IAT (Implicit Association Test) from Harvard University, an online psychological tool reveals some very unsettling answers. Just beneath the surface of our conscious minds, the vast majority of us harbour very deeply rooted negative feelings about shorter men. Even Howard himself took the test over and over... and his results remained the same – as he says “ I guess I am essentially as self-hating shrimp.

In **S&M SHORT AND MALE**, Howard takes us on a journey around the world to look at the plight and experience of short men. At times, he injects humour into some of his discoveries.

We witness Howard getting himself a pair of elevator shoes and visiting *Jimmy Au's for Men 5'8" and Under*, a fashion shop in Beverly Hills where celebrities such as Jason Alexander, Al Pacino, Dustin Hoffman and Martin Sheen get their clothes. We even get a chance to hear about actor Anthony Alessandro's experience in playing an attractive short male in a hilarious episode of *Sex in the City!*

But, we also meet boys and men of all ages who are taking some pretty drastic measures to change their situation.

In Chicago, Howard spends time with Graham, a 3'5" seven year old boy whose parents made the difficult decision of giving him shots of growth hormone everyday. His mother expresses that “the fact that the FDA has approved this, it's putting more pressure on us as parents. Gosh, society thinks that he's not going to be tall enough and they are even saying that he should be treated for this! I mean, there it is, right in your face, that it's not okay.”

When we hear 19 year old Akash Shukla's story, we see how far some men are willing to go. Two years ago, he decided to undergo limb lengthening surgery with his family's full support. In excerpts from the family's home movies that they shot throughout this arduous process of surgery and then recovery, we witness firsthand both the physical and emotional pain. Some might say, it is an awful lot to go through for a 2.5 inch increase in height. But to Akash, it was worth it.

These stories make Howard wonder – when are we going to stop dealing with the victims of the bias and deal with the bias itself?

Jiang Tao, a law student in Beijing, did exactly that. In China, height matters so much that want ads include height requirements. When Jiang Tao was declined to for an ideal job at the People's Bank of China because he was 3

S&M **SHORT AND MALE**

centimetres too short, he decided to fight back. He sued the Chinese government for unequal treatment of its citizens... and won.

Is the world ready to deal with height discrimination in the same way that it has dealt with race, gender and sexual discrimination? **S&M SHORT AND MALE** asks this pertinent question as it provides a voice to short men across the globe and encourages them to tell their stories.

NOSSA - National Organization of Short Statured Adults

<http://www.nossaonline.org/>

<http://heightism.blogspot.com/>

IAT – Implicit Association Test

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/research/>

S&M

SHORT AND MALE

THE CHARACTERS



Lawyer by day, stand up comic by night, **Tom Rubin** is 37 years old and 5'3". Successful, good looking and funny, Tom should be a great catch among women. The only problem is – his height. *"There's a fetish for shit. But not for short men. There's a midget fetish. I'm too tall for that. I were three feet tall, I'd get more action. I'm a foot too tall and six inches too short. I'm in the tallness no man's land."*



At a combined height of 10 feet 8 inches, **Stuart** and **Stephen Seltzer** are twin dentists sharing a very successful practice in Montreal. For Stephen, one of the hardest things about being short and being a twin is that you are constantly reminded of your own short stature by seeing your twin in relation to others.



Joe Mangano is one of the most outspoken height activists in the United States today. He has been writing articles about heightism, and making radio and television appearances for the past five years. Unfortunately, heightism is still not taken seriously. *"The big problem is it goes on and it is not recognized and because we are not looked at as a group you can't even talk about it - you call a black man a nigger - you're in trouble - you call a short person a shrimp and people laugh."*



Matt Campisi used to be a cop until height issues got in his way. He is now President of NOSSA, the National Organization of Short Statured Adults. People often laugh at him, telling him that everybody has problems, and that this isn't a real issue. *"It isn't all in our heads... there have been so many studies that prove there is real discrimination against short people in our society. People don't even realise they're doing it."*

S&M

SHORT AND MALE



Akash Shukla had limb lengthening surgery. The process involves breaking bones in the shin area, growing new bone, and slowly stretching muscles and tissues over the course of months. After a painful year spent mostly in bed or in a wheel chair, he is 2.5 inches taller.



Graham Faeh is seven years old. As far as the doctors know, he's perfectly normal, and perfectly healthy. But his projected adult height is only 5 feet tall. His parents have decided to give him growth hormone; a decision that has been highly controversial and emotional for them. However, they say that if they could give Graham an advantage in any way, they would. *"There's a lot in life that is measured by height. It's his professional life, it's getting into a car, it's the day-to-day, it's everything."*



Jiang Tao sued the People's Bank of Chengdu for height discrimination in their hiring practices. He made Chinese legal history in 2002 when the court agreed to hear his case. It was the first time that the concept of equality was debated in a Chinese court of law. Jiang Tao is 165 cm tall.



THE TEAM

HOWARD GOLDBERG (director/editor)

Howard Goldberg has been editing, directing and writing documentary and fiction films for the last twenty years. As a director and editor, he is known for his unique vision; his ability to create works that are both stylish and accessible to a wide audience.

In 2004, Howard directed the documentary **Being Dorothy** that premiered at Hot Docs. It went on to be nominated for an IDA Award, Best Feature Documentary.

Howard's student film **Trendsetters** premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in the early 80's. Howard went on to direct a series of short films (documentary and drama) for the series **Videotour**. One of these films, **Metropolis** was nominated for two Prix Gemaux: best short film and best editing. In 1988, his short, **Meet Chagall**, garnered prizes from the New York Art Directors' Club and the Montreal Publicity Club (Coq Bronze). A few years later, Howard directed **Moise**, which received accolades at several international festivals and also got 2 Gemaux nominations.

Howard has also been honoured for his work as an editor. In 1995, he won the Best Editing Award for **Longshots** at Hot Docs. In 1998, he won Best Editing at the Musique Plus annual awards. Howard also shared a Gemini for Best Writing in a Documentary Series for his work writing and editing the three part documentary series **The Cola Conquest**. He recently won a Gemini Award for his editing of the film **How William Shatner Changed the World**. Howard has edited many award-winning documentary films including Helene Klodwasky's **Undying Love**, **Towards a Promised Land** and **She Got Game**. He is currently editing **The Mall**, a new film by Helene Klodawsky.

Howard has two new projects in development: a documentary about Men and their cars and a feature doc **The Whole Tooth...nothing but the tooth**.

INA FICHMAN, Instinct Films (producer)

Instinct Films is a Montreal-based company dedicated to producing quality film and television productions. Instinct works with some of Canada's finest creators: writers, directors, "ideas people" in developing projects that are both innovative and have a wide audience appeal. We welcome co-production and collaborate with partners worldwide.

Veteran producer/executive producer Ina Fichman helms the company. For over twenty years, Ina has been producing award-winning documentary and fiction films. Ina's recently produced the alternative dramatic feature **Family Motel**. In competition at FIPA in France, shown at festivals in Canada, this intimate film directed by Helene Klodawsky was selected to be part of the Canadian Front program at MoMa in NYC. Ina was also one of the producers of **Six Days in June** (in co-prod. with Alma Films/Point du Jour) directed by Ilan Ziv that was shown on SRC, PBS, ARTE, SBS, RAI and theatrically released in New York and Los Angeles and **That's Poker** which was broadcast on CBC, Canal D and ARTE. Instinct is currently in post-production with **The Mall** and the documentary **It's a Boy**. Ina producing the feature

S&M

SHORT AND MALE

documentary **The Investigation: Jews and Money, the myth**, directed by Lewis Cohen, in co-production with PDJ in association with Vision TV, Canal D, ARTE/ZDF and SBS.

In 2003, Ina won the Gemini Award: Best History Program for the feature documentary **Undying Love**. Other documentaries to her credit include the IDA nominated feature documentary film **Being Dorothy, Black Coffee, Okanada, Longshots** (Chris Award, Columbus, Hot Docs: Best Editing); **The Last Trip** (Hot Docs: Certificate of Merit, Gemini nominee, Chalmers nominee, Chris Award); and the history series **Towards a Promised Land** (New York Festivals: Silver, Hot Docs nominee, Banff TV Festival nominee). Ina also co-executive produced/produced the docusoap **Firestation**.

Instinct also produces awarding-winning youth television, including **My Brand New Life/Je Vie Ta Vie** and **La Quête**. We are currently in production with a new series **Active-toi**.

Our development slate includes the documentary series **Citizens or Strangers** (Josh Freed and Jon Kalina), the documentaries **SpaceRace 2**, a co-production with DLI Productions, **The Whole Tooth**, and the feature film **Danny, King of the Basement**.

GERMAN GUTIERREZ (director of photography)

German Gutierrez was born in Bogota, Colombia and has lived and worked in Canada for the past twenty years as a cameraman and director. He has photographed and directed TV programs for Radio-Canada and documentaries for the National Film Board of Canada, as well as for many privately owned film companies both in Canada and abroad. German has filmed in over 50 countries, including war zones (Cambodia, Sarajevo, Rwanda, El Salvador) and remote and extreme landscapes (the Amazon, Népal, Guinea Bissau, the Canadian North).

German has won numerous awards for his work including a Prix Gémeaux for his work on the **Insectia** series (Pixcom) and on **Amérique 500**. He has often worked as both director and director of photography. His own films often deal with political, sociological, and economic themes. His film, **La Familia Latina**, on the Latin American family won the Yorkton Film Festival's Golden Sheaf for Best Documentary.

His most recent credits include: **Romancing the Bean** (Productions La Fête/PBS), a 3-part documentary series on the history of coffee; **Martin's Inferno** (Triplex), a documentary on the discovery of the biggest stalagmite in the world, on which he worked as both director and director of photography; and **Performance** (PIXCOM), a television series on the science of sports.

NED BOUHALASSA (original music)

Ned Bouhalassa is a composer of electroacoustic music, film scores, and television scores. Born in Le Mans, France, Bouhalassa is a Canadian citizen, and has been residing in Montreal since 1967. In 1993, he began composing television soundtracks, and has been writing music for image full-time since 1997. His music has been heard in international TV series such as **Dogs with Jobs, 15/Love**, and **Back to Sherwood**, as well as in many feature films including **Jack & Ella, Sur le seuil/Evil Words, These Girls**, starring David Boreanaz, and **Le Gout des Jeunes Filles**.

S&M

SHORT AND MALE

PRODUCTION NOTES:

Interview with Director Howard Goldberg

Why did you chose “S&M SHORT AND MALE” as the title for your documentary?

Any person who mistreats short men is a bit of a sadist. Any short man who blames himself for being mistreated because of his height is a bit of a masochist.

I am aware that these statements might seem far-fetched but please read on.

Most of the time it's painful to talk about what it's like being short. It goes much further than the possibility of stirring up unpleasantly heightened memories of seeming inadequacy. Short men have been conditioned to think of their condition as something that shouldn't really matter. Since most mature members of society do not feel that they have any bias against short men, it follows that if a short man is bothered by his height, it's his own fault—it's a result of his own psychological shortcomings.

Whenever any of us shrimps complain about being short, we're belittled. We're not taken seriously. We're lucky if we're even laughed at. We've practically accepted the falsehood that to admit being short is a problem, is like confessing to a weakness of character. That's masochistic.

S&M: Short and Male, proves that short men have a legitimate beef. The prejudice against shorter men exists among all races and cultures, and it is big—according to Harvard psychologists, the prejudice against short men is as pervasive as racial prejudice. As John Kenneth Galbraith, the great (and tall) economic theorist stated: “The bias against short people is society's last acceptable prejudice.” And since we all know that prejudice of any type is unacceptable, short men should begin to speak out. As a short man (5'3.5 inches) *S&M: Short and Male* is my contribution to the cause.

How did you come up with this idea for a film?

Three years ago, at the age of 47, I had my first serious conversation with another short man about what it's like being short. He was painting the ceiling in my home and he wanted me to climb the ladder for him because he was afraid of heights. I thought that was funny, and convenient for him because he was only about 5'3". Anyway, we talked for about an hour about our experiences being short. All of the women who would have us as friends instead of lovers, all of the waiting in line to be served because you're not noticed, all of the not being able to see the screen at movies etc.

S&M

SHORT AND MALE

The experience of talking about these seeming shortcomings was cathartic and I resolved then and there to make a film about the short man in today's world.

Was it difficult to find participants for this film? How did they react to you when you approached them by the lack or abundance of response?

Most short men couldn't wait to participate in the film...Their reaction was usually "it's about time..."

How and why did you choose the tone of the film?

I hope that the film is not didactic. I hope that it entertains. I don't think that the problems short men face are morally equivalent to the problems that other minorities are facing. So, in order to get people to listen, they must be entertained into listening. I hope that that is what *Short and Male* does.

When the film is released, what kind of impact are you hoping it will have?

This film will not only entertain and educate, I hope that it will allow short men to come out of the closet in a sense. The film presents the issue of short maleness in a serious enough light so that short men don't need to feel ashamed about their own problems with height. The problems are real, and although there is a psychosocial dynamic at play, the problem by no means rests solely on the shoulders of the short man.

After making the film, did you feel more or less proud of being a short man?

I've always felt proud to be who I am. We are all dealt a certain hand and must make the best of it.



short & male