



65_RedRoses

In Association with Dualogue Productions and CBC Newsworld

Directed by
Nimisha Mukerji
Philip Lyall

Featuring
Eva Markvoort, Meg Moore & Kina Boyce

www.65redroses.com

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FORCE FOUR Entertainment
In association with Dialogue Productions and CBC Newsworld

Presents

65_RedRoses

A Hot Docs World Premiere that extends far beyond the big screen
Screeners and interviews available by request

A film by
Nimisha Mukerji and Philip Lyall

Toronto, ON – A true testament of the human spirit, *65_RedRoses* redefines the traditional scope of documentary film in an electronic age. This personal and touching journey takes an unflinching look into the lives of Eva Markvoort and her two online friends who are all battling Cystic Fibrosis (CF) - a fatal genetic disease affecting the lungs and digestive system.

Unable to meet in person because of the spread of infections and super bugs, the girls have become each other's lifelines through the Internet, providing unconditional love, support and understanding long after visiting hours are over. Now at a critical turning point in their lives, the film travels the distance the friends cannot go themselves, capturing the compelling and often heartbreaking realities they face, just trying to take each breath.

For 23-year-old Canadian Eva Markvoort (aka *65_RedRoses*) the clock is ticking as she waits at the top of the donor list for a double lung transplant. She has been told that she will not live more than two years if she does not receive new lungs. An aspiring artist and teacher, Eva remains unwavering in her belief that her pager will go off and she will get the call letting her know a donor has been found. With no way of knowing when or if the pager will go off, her life has been put on hold as she does everything in her power to stay healthy. But with her condition deteriorating at a rapid pace, the window of opportunity is also slowly closing.

Uncensored, uninhibited, and unbreakable, *65_RedRoses* explores what it means to be 23 years old and faced with the unknown fate of life or death.

65_RedRoses is a very personal film for directors Philip Lyall and Nimisha Mukerji. The idea for the documentary came in May 2007 when Philip and Nimisha went to visit Philip's university friend Eva Markvoort, who had Cystic Fibrosis. So captivated by Eva's personality and her will to live, they began following her story as she went through the process of getting a double lung transplant.

When shooting began, British Columbia had the lowest donor rate in the country; the team had to prepare themselves for the worst possible outcome, that Eva could die on the wait list. Not knowing when Eva's pager might go off for transplant, they moved full speed ahead with production. The result is an unflinching and emotional journey that extends far beyond the big-screen.

For more information: www.65redroses.com

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Force Four Entertainment is an award-winning production company based in Vancouver, B.C. 65 RED ROSES is the company's 29th documentary, following on the success of projects such as THE TIES THAT BIND, a co-production with the National Film Board, and ROCK AND ROLL KID, both official entries in the Vancouver Film Festival. The company's six-hour dramatic mini-series HUMAN CARGO won the coveted Peabody Award and its reality series MAKING IT BIG was nominated for a Banff Rocky Award. Force Four has produced over three hundred hours of prime time television for networks in all genres and has a busy scripted and factual production and development slate. The company is owned by President Rob Bromley, Executive Producer John Ritchie and Director of Business Affairs Gillian Lowrey.

To request screeners and to book interviews:

Lindsay Nahmiache / Jive Communications
604-889-7996 / Lindsay@jivecommunications.ca

Hot Docs World Premiere:

Thursday May 7, 7:30pm @ The Royal
Saturday May 9, 1:45pm @ The Royal
Sunday May 10, 6:30pm location (TBA)

The film came in 2nd place for the Audience Choice Award

VIFF Screenings:

Friday Oct 9, 1:45pm @ Vancity Theater
Saturday Oct. 10, 6:30pm @ Empire Granville 7 Th 2
Saturday Oct 10, 9:30pm @ Empire Granville 7 Th 1
Tuesday Oct 13, 11:00am @ Empire Granville Th7

Interviews available with:

Eva Markvoort and Directors Nimisha Mukerji and Philip Lyall

* Eva Markvoort, Nimisha Mukerji and Philip Lyall will be attending both Hot Docs screenings.

LOGLINE

65_RedRoses is a Canadian documentary that takes an unflinching look into the life of Eva Markvoort as she battles a fatal genetic disease called Cystic Fibrosis. At 23, she needs a double lung transplant to live. The film follows her journey to transplant while seeking support from her two online friends Kina and Meg.

MEDIUM SYNOPSIS

65_RedRoses is a Canadian documentary that takes an unflinching look into the life of Eva Markvoort as she battles a fatal genetic disease called Cystic Fibrosis (CF). At 23, Eva needs a double lung transplant to live. Unable to be around other patients with the same disease, Eva turns to the internet where she forms a strong connection with two American girls in different stages of CF. As the film follows Eva on her journey to getting new lungs, we witness how her online friendship with Meg and Kina withstands the tests of both time and distance.

LONG SYNOPSIS

65_RedRoses is a high impact Canadian documentary shot on HD. The film takes an unflinching look into the lives of Eva Markvoort and her two online friends who are all battling Cystic Fibrosis (CF) - a fatal genetic disease affecting the lungs and digestive system. Unable to meet in person because of the spread of infections and super bugs, the girls have become each other's lifelines through the internet, providing unconditional love, support and understanding long after visiting hours are over. Now at a critical turning point in their lives, the film will travel the distance the friends cannot go themselves, capturing the compelling and often heartbreaking realities they face, just trying to take each breath.

For 23-year-old Canadian Eva Markvoort (aka 65_RedRoses) the clock is ticking as she waits at the top of the donor list for a double lung transplant. She has been told that she will not live more than two years if she does not receive new lungs. An aspiring artist and teacher, Eva remains unwavering in her belief that her pager will go off and she will get the call letting her know a donor has been found. With no way of knowing when or if the pager will go off, her life has been put on hold as she does everything in her power to stay healthy. But with her condition deteriorating at a rapid pace, the window of opportunity is also slowly closing.

Finding herself more in the hospital than at home, Eva begins searching for a creative outlet to direct her fears and anxieties. Unable to seek comfort in other CF patients, Eva began searching online. Joining a network for CF'ers, Eva created an online name called 65_RedRoses. CF children usually can't

pronounce Cystic Fibrosis so they learn to say '65 Roses' instead. Eva added red because it's her favorite color, thus becoming '65_RedRoses'. While for most people the internet is just another way of staying connected, for Eva and her online community it is the only way to form friendships with people who truly understand what it means to be living and dying with CF.

Out of the thousands of online CF patients, Eva found two American girls who she really connected with. Based out of Portland, Oregon, 19-year-old Meg Moore (online name 'Megmucus') smokes pot, drinks alcohol and generally screws off her medication. She lives life to the fullest and sees no point in taking responsibility for her health when she knows she only has half the time to enjoy it. Meg has no plans to have a double lung transplant, believing she does not have the strength to go through the process. Estranged from her family, Meg looks to Eva for support while Eva tries to inspire Meg to re-think transplant, which is her only hope for the future.

Across the continent in Erie, Pennsylvania, Kina Boyce (online name 'Spirit_of_Kina') is battling chronic rejection from her double lung transplant. Kina's body is rejecting her new lungs, and she worries that she may have to receive another transplant. Eva writes to her regularly, asking for guidance on how to prepare herself for transplant and how to deal with the problems after. Watching Kina go through rejection, Eva learns that transplant is not a cure for Cystic Fibrosis. It means trading one disease for another, but for both girls it's their only shot at a longer life.

Uncensored, uninhibited, and unbreakable, Eva and her friends aren't just 'sick girls', but young women who are falling in love for the first time, discovering their passions and trying to make their mark on the world. The undeniable strength, courage, and sheer will power possessed by individuals battling this disease has the power to move those beyond the CF community. Eva's future depends on the kindness of strangers, who can give her the gift of life by becoming a donor. Following her journey from waiting for transplant through to surgery, Eva ultimately hopes to bring all three friends together following her recovery. After transplant, she will no longer have to worry about spreading bugs between other CF patients because her new lungs will be clear of infection. While it will be Eva's first time meeting Meg and Kina face to face, their bond has already withstood the tests of both time and distance.

PRODUCTION NOTES

65_RedRoses is a very personal film for collaborators Philip Lyall and Nimisha Mukerji. The actual documentary idea came in May 2007 when both of us went to visit Philip's university friend Eva Markvoort, who had a fatal genetic disease called Cystic Fibrosis. We were so captivated by Eva's personality and her will to live that we decided to begin following her story as she went through the process of getting a double lung transplant. When we began shooting British Columbia had the lowest donor rate in the country, so we had to prepare ourselves for the worst possible outcome: that Eva could die on the wait list.

Not knowing when Eva's pager might go off for transplant, we moved full speed ahead with production. We began shooting without funding because we had the full support of Eva's entire medical team, headed by her transplant surgeon Dr. John Yee. He guaranteed us unlimited access to the hospitals and surgery rooms, should Eva get the call.

As we began to learn more about Eva's situation, she told us that she was not permitted to be around other Cystic Fibrosis patients due to the threat of infection. If she caught a super bug from another CF friend it would prevent her from getting a transplant. With no other options, Eva turned to the internet. Through an online community she finally found two other young women battling the disease. In this forum, the online friends were helping each other through some of the most difficult moments of their lives.. We realized that our film was not simply about a girl with Cystic Fibrosis, it was also a story about the unlikely friendship between Eva, Meg and Kina.

We still can't believe that we captured the moment that Eva's pager went off for transplant! It was something we had always dreamed about, but never expected to catch on film. Our greatest hope for this documentary is that when people watch it, they feel compelled to register to be an organ donor. We have witnessed first hand the difference it can make in a life. Eva would not be here if it wasn't for her donor, and we are grateful every day that she got the second chance at life she deserved.

**Q&A with Nimisha Mukerji and Philip Lyall
Directors, 65_RedRoses**

This was a huge project to undertake – in scope, subject matter and time. What inspired you to take it on?

Firstly, Eva, the main subject of the film was a friend of ours. It was difficult to watch someone so young and beautiful fighting for their life. Eva's such a strong person and has so much passion inside her. She strongly believed that if more people were aware about organ donation, and knew about stories like hers, she wouldn't have to be waiting so long for transplant. When we started talking about doing a documentary, she really understood the importance of giving us full access to her life both in the hospital and at home. She trusted us and wanted to be a part of the film, and her circumstances were so incredibly compelling, we knew that we had to tell her story.

After our first few meetings she started opening up to us about how she wasn't able to be around other CF patients because of the fear of spreading infections to one another. She talked about how she had found on the internet a social network where people could post and chat about coping with the disease, in an uncensored forum. After we got a chance to speak with Meg and Kina, Eva's closest online friends, we knew had something really original and different. Having these subjects added a new component to the film – it was no longer just a "sick girl story." It was also a film about friendship.

What kind of response have you had to the film so far?

It's been incredible! The film is premiering at Toronto's Hot Docs Festival, which was always a dream for us. And it's amazing how much buzz has been generated through the internet. We have had people from all over the world message us about how they have been moved by just the trailer. CF patients from the US and as far away as Scotland have asked us how they can see the film. It's really important to them because there haven't been a lot of films about CF.

In creating this documentary, you took your subject matter to heart in the way you treated it. Can you talk a little about the process of putting the film together?

There are three characters in the film, and while we always knew Eva's journey would be the driving force and central arc, we wanted to also explore the lives of Meg and Kina. Early on in development we began to talk about how to make the online world visually dynamic and exciting, since it is the only place where the friends are able to connect with each other for the first half of the film. The animation, especially in the opening sequence, helped us to establish the importance of the online community, and later on became a great way of

smoothly transitioning between each storyline.

What were the primary challenges of production?

We had no proper funding for the first 6 months of shooting. Our Director of Photography donated his services for free because he believed in the project. With Eva we were constantly worried that her pager would go off, and an even greater concern was that she might not receive a transplant in time to save her life. When we began shooting, British Columbia had one of the lowest donor rates in the country so we were scared that the film would be a documentation of her final decline in health. We had discussed with her family before production certain possible outcomes, and they had agreed to let us keep filming without restrictions, even if Eva passed away. As is the case with documentary, you can't control how things will turn out, so in many ways we adopted Eva's philosophy about staying positive about the future. No matter what, we all knew we wanted the message of the film to be one of hope.

What have you learned while making this film? Both about the issue and the people involved.

We both have learned that organ donation is so important, and that it doesn't just affect old people. There are lots of young people waiting for a second chance at life. The problem is that there just aren't enough people signed up to be donors. We've also learned how incredibly strong and resilient Cystic Fibrosis patients can be. Watching people who fight every day just to breathe really put things into perspective. We both definitely don't take our health for granted; we've come to see it as a gift.

What do you hope the audience will take away from the film?

After viewing the film, we'd really like for them to run to their computers and sign up to be an organ donor if they aren't already one. As documentary filmmakers, we want our audience to feel like they're getting to see a really intimate portrait of someone's life. You want them to feel connected emotionally with the subjects and the story. Basically you want people to leave the theatre saying "I've never seen anything like that before."

Where does the title come from?

The title 65_RedRoses came from the online name that Eva chose when she became a member of the Cystic Fibrosis social network on the internet. When kids are little and can't pronounce Cystic Fibrosis they are often taught to say "65 Roses" instead. Since Eva's favorite color is red she decided to call herself "65_RedRoses."

What's next for you? Do you have another project in the works?

Nimisha Mukerji is in development on a documentary called "The Coconuts" about second generation South Asians wanting to make it as mainstream artists outside of Bollywood. She is also directing a project which documents the plight of a young Bhutanese refugee who is relocated to Canada.

Philip Lyall is in the middle of developing a one-hour documentary based on Douglas Coupland's City of Glass for Bravo. He is also in development on a feature documentary about America's funniest and eccentric brother and sister entertainer's Amy and David Sedaris. It's aptly called "The Sedaris"

ABOUT THE SUBJECTS

23-year old Vancouver resident **EVA MARKVOORT** (aka “65_RedRoses”) is an aspiring artist and writer in Canada, but these days she finds herself a full-time patient at St. Paul’s hospital. Diagnosed at age one with the fatal genetic disease Cystic Fibrosis (CF), Eva’s health has finally declined to the point where she can no longer take care of herself. Forced to quit work, leave school and move back home, she’s told that without a double lung transplant she has less than two years to live. Until a donor is been found, she must carry a pager with her at all times, alternating between staying in the hospital and at home.

The perfect patient, Eva listens to her doctors, takes all her medications and endures a routine of painful procedures, but still she continues to grow weaker by the day. She knows that even if her pager does go off for transplant, she may not make it to recovery, but this is a risk she’s willing to take. She refuses to lose hope and becomes a source of inspiration for her network of online friends who also have CF. Considered an “older sister” to “Spirit_of_Kina,” and “megmucus”, Eva is determined to defy the odds and get a second chance at life.

19-year old American **MEG MOORE** (aka “megmucus”) is a wild child from Portland, Oregon. She loves Ozzy Osbourne and is living with an aged rocker in his 40s named Marko, who is also her boyfriend. But while Meg tries to deny her disease to everyone, including herself, she continues to suffer from many of the symptoms characteristic of CF. She has difficulty breathing, and constantly coughs up mucus. Meg’s health is rapidly declining but she refuses to be compliant with her medications and hospital stays. She rejects the idea of getting a double lung transplant, and because of her history of self-destructive behavior, is not even a candidate for the surgery. While she looks up to her friend “65_RedRoses,” who is the only source of real support in her life, Meg is hell bent on living and dying on her own terms.

21-year old **KINA BOYCE** (aka “Spirit_of_Kina”) understands that having a transplant means living on borrowed time. Kina received new lungs in October 2006, but she is now fighting rejection and infection. No stranger to pain as a transplant recipient, Kina likes to take control of her body, experimenting with tattoos and piercing. Living in a trailer with her family in Eerie, Pennsylvania, she wants to be independent, but constantly has to worry about her health. She’s also worried about “65_RedRoses,” since she knows how hard it is to go through transplant and survive the surgery. Through the internet she keeps track of what’s going on in the life of “65_RedRoses,” and prays that her friend’s pager goes off in time.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

NIMISHA MUKERJI

Nimisha Mukerji is a filmmaker from Vancouver, British Columbia whose passion is documentary film. While completing her Undergraduate Degree in English Literature Nimisha was accepted into the renowned Film Production Program at UBC. For her graduating project, she wrote and directed the short black comedy "Scattering Eden," which went on to screen at the Toronto Film Festival's Student Showcase and win the 2007 Leo Award for Best Student Production. Immediately after graduation the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television selected Nimisha for their National Apprenticeship Training Program, a mentorship that enabled her to work closely with Academy Award winning director John Zaritsky, veteran documentary producer Terence McKeown and Oscar nominated filmmaker David Paperny.

Inspired by these remarkable experiences Nimisha co-founded Dialogue Productions with producing partner Philip Lyall, in addition to creating Shotglass Productions to pursue her own independent projects. Nimisha is the co-director, producer, and editor of "65_RedRoses," which is her first documentary film. She was also a recipient of Astral Media's 2009 Scholarship for Emerging Filmmakers and is currently in development on her next documentary project called "The Coconuts."

NIMISHA MUKERJI – Director/Producer
Scattering Eden (short film) – 2006
65_RedRoses (documentary feature) – 2009

PHILIP LYALL

Philip Lyall is a recent graduate of the University of British Columbia's Film Production Program where he was mentored by Academy Award winning documentary filmmaker John Zaritsky.

He is an award winning director and cinematographer whose short films have screened in numerous international festivals. "Tiny Dancer" (writer/director) was one of twelve films selected across Canada to screen at the Toronto Student Show Case. The following year his graduating film "Scattering Eden"(cinematographer) won best cinematography at the Toronto Student Showcase and the 2007 Leo Award for best Student Production. Philip co-founded Dialogue Productions Inc. "65_RedRoses" is Philip's first documentary film, which he co-directed, produced and edited.

PHILIP LYALL – Director/Producer
Tiny Dancer (short film) – 2005
65_RedRoses (documentary feature) – 2009

ROB BROMLEY (Executive Producer – Force Four Entertainment)

Rob has developed successful relationships with national and international networks and production partners on a variety of drama, lifestyle, and documentary projects. He earned his Marketing Diploma from BCIT and joined Force Four in 1990.

Rob is actively involved in the Canadian production community and is currently the Vice-Chair of the BC Branch Council of the CFTPA and is an advisor to the Canadian Film Centre. He participates at international markets, conferences, and as a presenter at various workshops and panels.

JOHN RICHIE (Producer – Force Four Entertainment)

John works with broadcasters, producers and directors to oversee the creative management of projects in all genres, from development through to delivery. He has a Bachelor of Education and a Media Diploma, and joined Force Four in 1990 after a brief teaching career and five years as a multi-media producer.

John began his television career as a writer and director, and later moved into producing before becoming an Executive Producer. His production credits include co-creating five lifestyle television series and co-producing five television movies and one dramatic mini-series. He speaks and moderates panels and is thrilled to be actively involved in mentoring emerging filmmakers.

GILLIAN LOWREY (Executive Producer – Force Four Entertainment)

Gillian has been with Force Four Entertainment since 1997. During this time she has been involved in all areas of the company, including Post Production, Production, Creative Management, Development and Business Affairs. Gillian is Director of Business Affairs, where she is involved in budgeting and financing all of the company's programming.

Gillian has a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in Psychology and History from Simon Fraser University and joined Force Four after working as a front line childcare worker for 5 years

MIKE RAE (Director of Photography)

Mike is a UBC film school grad who has been working in film and TV for the past 3 years. He is an award winning filmmaker, receiving recognition for best sound design and best short film on his first production "Merge". He was mentored by Academy Award winning director John Zaritsky and has worked on a variety of documentaries and TV shows in and around the Vancouver area. This is his debut feature length documentary as a Director of Photography.

JUSTIN COUSINEAU (Editor)

Justin Cousineau recently graduated from BCIT's Broadcast and Media Communications Television Program. His graduating project, a short

documentary “Shake Rattle & Roll, a Look Inside Vancouver’s Rockabilly Scene” (Editor/Cinematographer), won the Deluxe Vancouver Award for Television for 2008 & CBC’s Excellence in Broadcast Communications Award. Justin is a co-editor on 65_RedRoses, his first feature documentary.

BROADCASTER

65_RedRoses is set to broadcast on CBC’s The Passionate Eye.

<http://www.cbc.ca/documentaries/passionateeyeshowcase/>