



A feature film
written & directed
by Ted Stenson

Events Transpiring Before, During, and After a High School Basketball Game

Press Kit
2020 • 75 mins
Canada • DCP • 16:9

Synopsis

EVENTS TRANSPIRING BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER A HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GAME

It's 1999 and the Middleview Ducks boys basketball team are about to play the most low-stakes game of their lives.

SHORT

It's 1999 and the Middleview Ducks boys basketball team are about to play the most low-stakes game of their lives.

As the team prepares for another certain loss, the dramas around the game become more of a focus than the score. Locker room conversations about existentialism, a coach's obsession with an NBA offence technique, organizing a radical theatre protest, and frantically searching for an osteoporosis-stricken canine are just some of the events that take place before, during, and after the high school basketball game.

LONG

It's 1999 and the Middleview Ducks boys basketball team are about to play the most low-stakes game of their lives.

As the team prepares for another certain loss, the high school dramas around the game become more of a focus than the score. There's the basketball team, who are anything but your stereotypical jocks. Perplexed by *The Matrix*, Joel ponders existentialism and unrelentingly tries to explain the concept to his teammates, while Corey just wants to smoke his pot in peace. This is all to the dismay of their overambitious assistant coach, Brent (Andrew Phung, *Kim's Convenience*). He is certain that a win is possible, if only the team can rally and pull off NBA coach Phil Jackson's famed Triangle Offence, a complicated technique used by the best professional basketball players.

Outside of the gymnasium, Middleview's radical theatre collective debate over what method of protest will have the most impact after their interpretation of *King Lear* is cancelled by the administration. A sit-in or something involving

nudity and blood? And Ken, a cantankerous referee, tries to balance his ref duties with caring for his soon-to-be ex-wife Karen's dog. But the osteoporosis-stricken canine is on the loose, and Ken must track her down before Karen makes his life any more difficult.

The mundane realities of high school rise to the forefront as the characters both strive to reach their ambitions and accept their inadequacies. The feature film debut from director / writer Ted Stenson, *Events Transpiring Before, During, and After a High School Basketball Game* is a funny, offbeat, and endearing unconventional take on the all-too conventional sports narrative – one that will surprise, charm, and entertain.



Synopsis

PRESS KIT

Director's Note

EVENTS TRANSPIRING BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER A HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GAME

As a passionate yet completely mediocre athlete who has played on a wide array of poorly performing sports teams I've always been attracted to writing a story about a team that simply wasn't very good.

Unlike what is usually depicted in film and television, my experience playing high school sports was largely unremarkable and certainly, for any outside viewers, not very entertaining. While I loved sports and lived to play, my teams were rarely (if ever?) involved in nail-biting games decided by buzzer beaters in which bleachers full of fans cheered us on wildly. The reality consisted more of clumsy action, humiliating defeats, and apathetic, mostly empty stands. Similarly, my fellow athletes were not swaggering, obnoxious sex gods but rather undersized, intellectually aspirant virgins. The inspiration for this film came from this discrepancy between fantasy and, at least my, reality. While I'm sure that there really are high

school sports teams that play for sold-out gymnasiums of rabid fans and high school athletes who really do take steroids and have orgies with cheerleaders, my guess is that, on the whole, high school athletics more generally resemble my own banal experience.

Events Transpiring is an attempt to debunk some of these high school myths and portray a humorous, yet mundane alternative, one in which no one gets the girl and the team really does lose the game at the end.

Ted Stenson
Writer & Director



Way To @



Director's Note

PRESS KIT



Team

EVENTS TRANSPIRING BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER A HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GAME



Ted Stenson



Nicola Waugh

Ted Stenson Writer & Director

Ted Stenson is a writer and filmmaker based in Calgary, Alberta. He graduated from the MFA Theatre program at the University of Calgary with a degree in playwriting. His plays and short films have been performed and screened at festivals across Canada and the United States. Recently, his play *The Once and Future King of Zanzibar* was staged at Pittsburgh New Works' Lab Series. In 2015, his short film *Craig, the Loneliest Man in the World, Makes a Friend, Loses a Friend, and Subsequently Learns the Value of Solitude* won Best Canadian Film at VideodrunK Toronto. He is currently developing a radio play about an animal plastic surgeon. *Events Transpiring Before, During, and After a High School Basketball Game* is his first feature film.

Nicola Waugh Producer

Nicola is an independent producer, film programmer and communications expert based in Calgary. She has worked with film festivals and artist run centres across Canada, including the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers (CSIF), the \$100 Film Festival, Calgary Underground Film Festival, Calgary Cinematheque, Regent Park Film Festival, and Reel Asian Film Festival. She is currently producing a documentary about Japanese Gardens for CBC, airing in fall 2020.

Kevin Dong Producer

Kevin Dong is an independent producer and editor based in Calgary. He has worked as a producer on the Storyhive animated short *The Legend*



Kevin Dong

of the Bunny Phantom, and as a DIT and assistant editor on the features *Circle of Steel* and *Man Running*. In 2017, he received the AFA Young Artist Prize, nominated by filmmaker Gary Burns. In addition to production work, he is also the Programming Coordinator at Calgary Cinematheque.

Brenda Lieberman Executive Producer

Brenda is the Festival Director, Co-Founder and Programmer for the Calgary Underground Film Festival (2004), and Lead Features Programmer for the Calgary International Film Festival (2007). In addition she has film production experience, a member of IATSE 212, and has been involved with several other start-up festivals. She participates on industry juries and panels internationally. In 2009 Brenda was awarded Avenue magazine's Top 40

Under 40, and in 2018 was awarded Distinguished Alumni from MacEwan University's Arts and Cultural Management program.

Gillian McKercher Executive Producer

With roots in analogue experimental film, Gillian chose to dedicate herself to cinema after leaving a career as an engineer. She directed the feature film, *Circle of Steel*, which won an Audience Award at the 2018 Calgary International Film Festival. Her broadcast work includes multiple music videos, documentaries and the webseries, *The Calgary Collection*. Gillian won a Young Artist Prize from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and most recently was a 2019 director resident of the Canadian Film Centre's Directors' Lab, where she developed her second feature film.



Brenda Lieberman



Gillian McKercher

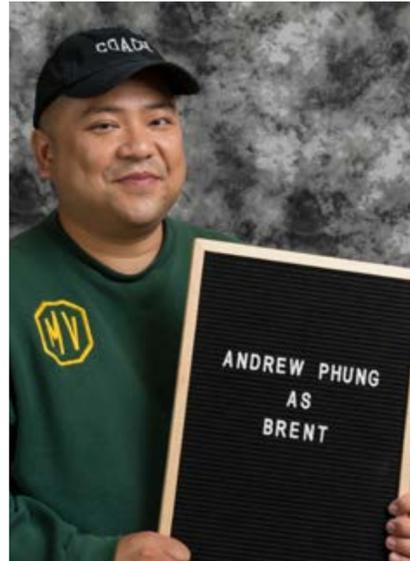
PRESS KIT

FOR THE PRESS KIT

Team

Cast

EVENTS TRANSPIRING BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER A HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GAME



Andrew Phung

Andrew Phung Coach Brent

Andrew Phung is an award winning actor, writer, and emcee. He joined the Loose Moose Theatre Company at the age of 16 to study improvisational comedy, and has emerged as one of Canada's top comedic talents. Andrew currently stars on the hit CBC television series *Kim's Convenience*, where he's won back to back Canadian Screen Awards (2017 and 2018) in the category of Best Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series, and AMPA award (2018) for Best Performance by an Alberta Actor. His recent television and film credits include *The Beaverton*, *Little Italy*, and *Wynonna Earp*. He can also be heard on CBC Radio as a regular contributor to *Now or Never*, *The Debaters*, and *Because News*.

Benjamin Arthurs Joel

Benjamin unassumingly began his acting vocation at age 11 with the role of Tiny Tim in Theater Calgary's production of *A Christmas Carol*. Blissful years of *Christmas Carol*, background work, one liners, and a few seasons dubbing over *CardFight; Vanguard* later; it was Central Memorial's PVA program providing real learning experiences such as Meisner and Improv workshops with professionals that formed Benjamin's true respect and focus for the arts as a whole. Currently attending AUArts for a BFA in Drawing, Benjamin's focus is to broaden his perspective on the arts and find new opportunities for collaboration of ideas. *Events Transpiring Before, During, and After a High School Basketball Game* is his film debut.

Isra Abdelrahim Claire

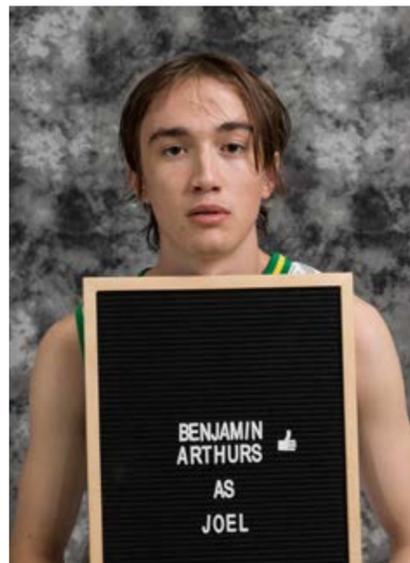
Isra makes her film debut with *Events Transpiring Before, During, and After a High School Basketball Game*. Isra began acting in high school and was heavily involved in the drama department, playing the role of Ophelia (*Hamlet*, 2018) in her grade 10 year and pursuing acting ever since. She is passionate about the performing arts and volunteering in her community. As an avid volunteer, she is often public speaking in community and political spaces.

Paul Cowling Mr. Davidson

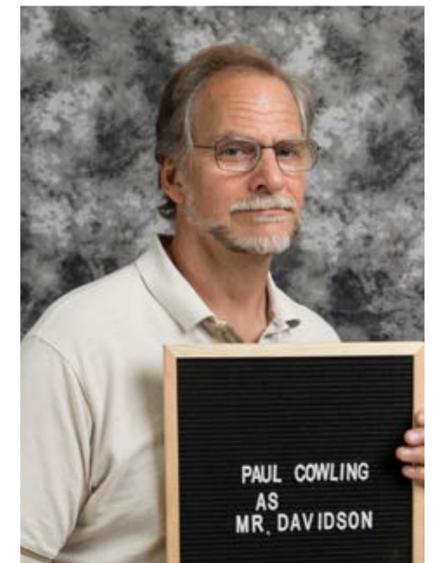
Paul is an actor currently based in Calgary, Alberta. A native of that city, he has performed in theatres throughout Canada from Vancouver to PEI, in such roles as John Wilkes Booth in Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins*, Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, to MacBeth in Shakespeare's great play. Paul has also done his fair share of film and television, from such shows as the original *McGyver*, *North of 60*, *Wynonna Earp*, and *Arrow*.



Isra Abdelrahim



Benjamin Arthurs



Paul Cowling





Q&A

With Writer & Director Ted Stenson

What was the inspiration for this project?

I have always wanted to tell a story about a sports team that was terrible. I played on a lot of terrible teams growing up and I've never seen anything that really depicts both the humiliation and humor of that experience. There is something very funny, and kind of tragic, about a bunch of un-athletic kids playing sports, especially when they are coached by over-enthusiastic adults. My memories of playing sports are much more about the people I played with and the places

I played. I don't really remember the "dramatic" moments (because there weren't any?). I do remember all of the awkward, ungainly kids I played with and the embarrassing enthusiasm of some of the coaches and the feeling of disbelief during particularly pathetic losses. It was these experiences that inspired the film.

What filmmakers are you most influenced by?

At the time of developing this project I was extremely influenced by Roy Andersson. He is a Swedish filmmaker who is famous for his dry humor and use of static vignettes. While Andersson's style is much more absurd and less linear than what I envisioned for *Events Transpiring*, I hoped to convey the same feeling of humorous, yet almost painful, banality. I was also influenced, perhaps more literally, by Michael Haneke's film *71 Fragments of a Chronology of*



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of Chance. Similar to Andersson's work, Haneke's film is comprised mostly of static, seemingly disconnected scenes. Ultimately, these storylines collide and give shape to what has come before. It was while watching this film that I had the inspiration for *Events Transpiring*. Although *71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance* is deeply unfunny and much more political, I envisioned using its basic framework as a structure for a funny, largely apolitical high school sports film.

How did you draw on your high school experience when writing and directing this film?

I played basketball, football, and volleyball in high school at Queen Elizabeth, which is actually where we shot the film. Perhaps my school

was somewhat unique but the "jocks" at my school were not the stereotypically cool, promiscuous drunks you see in movies. Most of the people I played sports with were either really religious or really nerdy. None of us had cache because we were athletes. The "vibe" in the locker room was both tame and pretentious. I can distinctly remember arguing about Camus' *The Stranger* before a basketball game. Although the fact of my teammates being mild-mannered nerds and gentle bible thumpers may have been a bit of an anomaly, or simply my perception, but I have always found it funny and somewhat charming. Sports films are one of the most clichéd genres in film. Teams are either corporate-backed powerhouses or a sad-sack rag-tag band of misfits. With this film I wanted to show a different, much less sensationalistic, side of high school sports.





What was the process for casting the teens in the film?

We needed a LOT of teenage actors for this film so we cast as wide a net as possible. We had a casting director who helped connect us with more experienced actors and we also put out a casting call to high schools, local theatre groups, youth film

groups... basically anywhere we thought there might be interested kids. We received a ton of really diverse submissions. Some of the kids were highly experienced but a lot had absolutely zero experience. Some of the kids were really passionate about acting while others, hilariously, seemed to view the opportunity as something good to put on a resume. We ended up casting a mix of these two groups. Amazingly, some of the kids with zero experience were the strongest and most professional. I had such a good time

What role does basketball play in your life?

I am a pretty obsessive basketball fan and player. I play in a league and, if possible, would probably play everyday. One of the best things about shooting the film was having access to a gym everyday. I played a lot of BUMP with the actors during shooting.

working with the younger actors that I genuinely entertained the thought of becoming a high school teacher – until I realized how much work that would entail...

What was your approach working with such young and fresh actors?

As many of the younger actors had very little experience, I wanted to do as much preparatory work as possible (within ACTRA limits of course). I was able to arrange a few rehearsals and some of the actors got together on their own to practice as well. Oddly, rehearsing before a shoot is apparently not that common but I was extremely grateful that we were able to. The rehearsals were really helpful. A lot of what we did was talk about our own high school experiences and find common ground. The actors, particularly the guys portraying the basketball players, gelled quickly.

As this was a novel experience for most of them, there weren't many egos or preconceptions; they all just seemed excited and enthusiastic. It also seemed to help matters that they were portraying a bad basketball team. Most of the people we cast had no experience playing sports and this seemed to create a spirit of camaraderie. Once we were on set things went quite smoothly. As with all of the actors, I tried to give them clear objectives to work towards and a clear context within which they were working. Despite a lack of experience all of the actors were almost unbelievably easy to work with.



Q&A

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Can you talk about the music selection for the film and how you went about creating the soundtrack?

The music is primarily sourced from Calgary bands from the late '90s. I found most of this music from an amazing online resource called [Calgary Cassette Preservation Society](#). Calgary Cassette Preservation Society is basically a huge archive of Calgary music from at least the '70s to present day. Calgary's art scene is pretty close knit so in most cases someone involved in the production had a connection to the bands we were interested in. The most exciting discovery for me was a band called Mozart's Rage that made a kind of Euro-Dance

technopop. I couldn't believe that people from Calgary were making this very slick, commercial-sounding pop music back then. Mozart's Rage also seemed to be, in some respects, the most obscure band we included. None of the music people we consulted had ever heard of them which, again because Calgary is so close knit, seemed very surprising. We ended up using a really diverse range of music – punk, emo, rock, Eurodance, Jann Arden – and it feels exciting to include these strange links to Calgary's past.



Stills

EVENTS TRANSPIRING BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER A HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GAME



Downloads

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Stills

PRESS KIT

Credits

Writer & Director

Ted Stenson

Producers

Kevin Dong

Nicola Waugh

Executive Producers

Gillian McKercher

Brenda Lieberman

Director of Photography

Guillaume Carlier

Editors

Guillaume Carlier

Ted Stenson

Original Music

Julianna Hindemith

First Assistant Director

Karlee McTavish

Casting

Sue Bristow

Costume Design

Ashley Allen

On Location

Sound

Alex Mitchell

Cast

Andrew Phung

Ben Arthurs

Isra Abdelrahim

Jay Morberg

Ivy Miller

Thomas Receveur

Isaiah McKirgan

Paul Cowling

Photography

Chelsea Yang-Smith

Screenings

Vancouver International Film Festival

Calgary International Film Festival

Cinéfest Sudbury

Victoria Film Festival

Cinequest (USA premiere)

Canadian Film Festival (winner, William F. White Reel
Canadian Indie award)

Atlanta Film Festival

RiverRun Film Festival (winner, Re: Vision Independent
Feature Competition, Best Ensemble)

Wood's Hole Film Festival

Chattanooga Film Festival

Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival

Richmond International Film Festival

Hell's Half Mile Film Festival

Footcandle Film Festival

1999

Credits

Screenings

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