SLUMBER PARTY

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Abstract

Slumber Party is a short film about the constant struggle between expectation and reality. Over the course of one, meaningful night, Libby realizes that everything she had been waiting for was not what she expected, and that in order to start living, she needs to let her expectations, and her past, go.

Libby returns home after an unsuccessful experience as a PhD candidate at a Chicago university. She returns to participate in her childhood friend Zohar's wedding and bachelorette party, which she agrees to host. Together with Iyar, the third member of their once close-knit group, the girls get together in order to celebrate Zohar's last days of single-hood, and spend time together after a long period during which they didn't see each other. After some partying and heavy drinking, Zohar tells the girls that she decided to call off the wedding. It is revealed that Libby had a long, unfulfilled crush on Erez, Zohar's now-ex-boyfriend, also a childhood friend of the three. Zohar confronts Libby with her feelings towards the newly single Erez, urging her to finally deal with them. Libby gets a second chance, and takes it only to find out that the person she built Erez in her mind to be, is nothing like the Erez she meets. Only then, she is able to let go of this demon from her past, and step forward into the life she is living now.

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Introduction

"Just write something". This is the one answer one does not wish to receive upon seeking information in regards to the oh-so-dreadful written portion of their thesis project. Strangely, it is also the most common one. Of course, there are rules and directions and strict guidelines, yet within those constructs lie an infinite grey area of interpretations. "Just write something", they said, and every support paper I had come across while preparing to write my own was, in fact, "something" that did not resemble any of the other "somethings". Never tell a writer to "just write something". They might take you up on that. And I think I did.

A whole lot of time and effort was put into my "something". What I thought would be a researched paper, in which I lay out my thoughts, desires and contemplations of the filmmaking process, turned out to be somewhat of a diary of a mad girl. It does lay out said thoughts, desires and contemplations, yet the process I found I was describing was more personal than cinematic. Those two, in my experience, are inseparable.

I set out to write about the most personal film I have ever made, and ended up with an even more personal piece of writing. To me, that is the result of just "writing something".

Development

Before *Slumber Party*

It was a whole other film that I initially planned to do. It was called *Body Swap*, and told the story of two women, an Israeli and a Palestinian, and the mysterious, fantastic circumstances that lead to each living in the other's body. That project had several incarnations before settling into the version I presented in what now seems like such a distant memory, the grad symposium. A couple of days after giving my presentation, I was on my way to Israel to start pre-production.

I spent four months there, developing my script and starting the pre-production process: hiring a producer, went on location hunts and held auditions. The scope of production gradually got bigger and bigger. Never before did I direct anything of that magnitude, but I was still thrilled and excited to be doing so for the first time. The amount of work required to prepare for the shoot led me to the inevitable decision to postpone filming. I was planning towards a summer shoot, but plans are one thing, and reality is a whole other. The day I landed in Israel in July 2014, the first rocket was intercepted over the skies of Tel Aviv. War broke.

Without getting into the political aspects of Operation Protective Edge, I cannot deny the fact that it happened. I firmly believe that on both sides of the conflict, I was one of the people who was affected the least. Nevertheless, I couldn't take on the responsibility of filming, mostly outdoors, during a time of war. And even if I could, not a single person with whom I was looking to collaborate with would be able to do so. Productions were put on halt all across the country, and mine was no different.

And I broke down. The realization that I would have to postpone production once

more led me to entirely question my filmmaking skills. I thought that if I was unable to make that film, I was probably incapable to make any film. I failed, and I was ready to let go of the degree I had spent the previous two years working towards.

After wallowing for quite some time, I realized that the only way to get past this sense of utter failure was to make another film. Any film. It only made sense: I had a crew, I had a cast, and I had gear. I had a dresser full of previously shelved scripts and all I needed to do was pick one, preferably one that can be shot indoors, and within a 30-second fast-paced-walking-distance to a shelter.

Throughout this time of feeling incompetent, I was relieved to receive nothing but support from my supervisor Tereza. She was extremely sensitive to the situation and realized that the choices I would or would not make would be crucial to my work. She was open to every possibility, and made sure I knew she would keep supporting me, no matter what.

I got it in my head that I really needed to deliver. "I'll make a film", I thought, "and then I'll figure out what to do with it". I initially set out to make a film that would help me explore and develop the depths and boundaries of my cinematic skills, but then found myself making one just for the sake of making it. Little did I know that it would turn out to be my most personal work to date.

Slumber Party: The Origin Story

Slumber Party was a script I first started writing during my undergraduate studies. Back then it was still called *Bachelorette Party*, and I had stopped working on it once the movie *Bridesmaids* (which was given the Hebrew title *Bachelorette Party*) came out, and made me think I could never make something as hilarious and wonderful. Still, I never

forgot about it. I even discussed it with Professor Hoffman when I was debating which project I should choose as my thesis film.

In its original version, *Party* had six friends, and the whole film took place in and on their way to a cabin they intended to spend a weekend in. It was written in the tradition of reunion films, with *The Big Chill* (Kasdan, 1983), *Peter's Friends* (Branagh, 1992) and *Return of the Secaucus Seven* (Sayles, 1979) in mind.

My long-standing appreciation and fascination with reunion films played a major role in my decision to write that film, but my inspiration and my biggest draw to this project was the fact that I was part of a group of friends I had no idea why I was still friends with.

During my previous visit to Israel, the one that was dedicated to *Body Swap*, my sense of estrangement from the people I grew up with was at its peak. I was spending time with the people who had known me forever, and hating every second of it. I could not make it through an evening of diaper and wedding talks with them without flooding my circulatory system with alcohol. I felt like they didn't understand me, or the life choices I had made, and even worse, they didn't even try. But then my movie went in the dumps, and I started thinking that they are the ones who have it all figured out, and I'm the one who got everything wrong. Why can't I just settle down with someone and only worry about whether I should take his last name or add it to my own using a hyphen?

This was the initial point of view I took when I started converting *Bachelorette Party* into *Slumber Party*. I made Libby my main character, a girl in her late twenties who had neglected her personal life in chase of an academic career. She chose to do it in another country, where none of her so-called loser friends could find out that actually, she

isn't doing very well. Opposite to Libby is Zohar, a self-confident person with very realistic expectations from life, and Iyar, who already fulfilled every expectation she had and doesn't feel anything is missing.

The Writing Process

For the task of revising the old *Bachelorette Party* script and writing one I could actually shoot a few weeks later, I recruited my close friend Sivan Davidov, whom I also collaborated with on the writing of *Body Swap*.

Sivan and I grew up a couple of towns apart, but never met until we got to university. We soon learned that we had a pretty similar upbringing. The places we grew up were not only 10 minutes away, but had a lot in common in terms of character. It is hard to find a Canadian equivalent to this type of municipal entity, the Moshav. Located in central Israel, the Moshavs we grew up in resemble suburbs more than anything else. The houses, the backyards, and the socio-economic status of the residents are what these places are known for today, but there are still hints of the old co-operative and agriculture-based principles on which they were founded. What were once fields, groves or even chicken coops are now the grounds for small "housing units", and Sivan and I both know people who to this day live in one in their parents' backyard. We decided to give Libby one, and set the entire film in it.

Characters

Libby

Libby is the film's leading character, but in no way is she a heroine. She is dealing with dilemmas that I am very familiar with. Residing in one place while longing for another is a state I believe I am bound to live in no matter where I end up spending my life. Libby is a person who is very good at walking the clearly marked paths of life, but had always feared paving a road of her own.

She has been in love with Erez since they were both just kids, and held on to that feeling long after her best friend and him became a couple. Many works of fiction deal with the concept of "the one that got away", but in Libby's case, Erez was not just the one that got away, he was the only one. Libby is immensely caught up with what could have been, she never even bothered looking for somebody else. She created an image of him that was so perfect, she was rarely concerned with the fact that they will never be together.

In a sense, Erez is also an embodiment of Libby's emotions towards the place she had left, be it Israel, the Moshav, or her previous life. Her illusion does not correlate with reality; it is always better. Coming back for Zohar's bachelorette party, which becomes her own little celebration of independence, forces her to narrow the gap between the life she created in her head and the life that she is missing out on.

Zohar

In contrast to Libby, Zohar always prefers taking the road less traveled. She acts on her desires, even at the cost of hurting her best friend or breaking the heart of her ex-fiancé. Her confident, sometimes provocative character allows her to wholeheartedly (and quite literally) push Libby into Erez's arms.

In some ways, Zohar can be perceived as the villain in this movie. She did, after all, get together with the one guy her best friend ever showed any interest in. Eventually, she tries not only to make amends, but also takes responsibility and steps up as the best friend she knew she was. Yet, even by the end of the film, it is clear that Libby doesn't entirely trust her.

One of the notes I received in regards to the character of Zohar was that she should have been the lead in this film. I understand that—her character is multi-layered in a more obvious way, and her actions are more extravagant than Libby's. I am glad Zohar resonates with the viewers, but I do believe this note relies more on the fact that Zohar is just a bigger, louder, person. While she is capable of calling the man she was about to marry and then shove the phone in her best friend's face, that little moment when Libby grabs Erez's arm and asks him to wait is an act far more courageous.

Iyar

Iyar is the mother figure of the group, as well as the mother of a small child. While Zohar and Libby are challenging social constructs, Iyar leads a pretty conformist life and is happy with it. She is somewhat of a guide to her friends, helping them get to the truth within their battles.

Unfortunately, Iyar is the least developed character in the film. I intended her to have more facets, yet the short film format made them hard to achieve. I realize this might reflect poorly on the film as a whole, yet I still see her as a classic supporting character: she supports the leads in finding and realizing their wills.

Erez

Erez, too, is a supporting character. The inspiration for his character was drawn from an unpredictable source: one of the first documentaries I saw, *My Sister* (Rosenheimer, 2000). One of the characters in said film is the sisters' mother, who isn't seen until the very end of the movie. Her daughters describe her as an abusive monster,

but when she is finally revealed, we see this old, wrinkled, hunchbacked lady. It is almost inconceivable that this tiny woman made her daughters' lives so miserable. When writing Erez, I thought of that effect, and wished to recreate it. I wanted to make him absurd, I wanted the viewers to see this guy and ask, "him?"

Another aspect of making Erez so disappointing is that I wanted to steer clear of the "two girls fighting over a guy" narrative. Erez is a vessel; he's a vehicle that carries Libby from one stage of her life to the next.

Themes

Female Friendships

The female friendship is a subject that occupies most of my mind. I deal with it in almost everything I set out to do, and *Slumber Party* was not going to be any different. In my personal life, I'm still trying to figure out this complicated concept. As the first (and at the time, only) sentence written by *Girls* character Hannah Horvath in her potential book of essays reads, "A friendship between college girls is grander and more dramatic than any romance".

My initial thought of female friendships and their representations (or lack thereof) in popular culture, is that I want to see more of them. As a writer and filmmaker, I want to dive into the complexities of it. I decided to have it portrayed in the film in a raw, exposed, and not always fully processed manner.

Expectations vs. Reality

In a way, almost every movie deals with this primary conflict. In *Slumber Party* it coincides with the notion of taking responsibility, another theme that guides the film. Libby's expectations are continuously shattered when her friends force her to face the reality of her life, and this is what leads her to eventually take action, and responsibility, of her life.

Casting

This was probably was one of the most amazing parts of the filmmaking process. Since these characters are different than the ones in *Body Swap*, I did have to make some casting adjustments. The responses I got from actresses who read the script were unanimously positive, and the most enthusiastic I had ever gotten. I realized that everything I've been reading about the lack of female leads was true. Every single actress I reached out to was eager to take part, in spite of the difficult conditions. That was the first time I learned that this story touches people, and the first time I dared to think it might have some significance.

Liran Korotkin — Libby

Liran was my first choice for Libby, even though I have never met her in person before. I had seen her in various productions, and she always came across as extremely diverse. Her not-quite-conventional looks made me think of her as an instant leading lady, the type of woman the camera just cannot ignore.

Liran studied at one of the most prestigious drama schools in the country, but when I came in to meet with her the first thing she told me was "I don't act anymore". Like many others, she had given up due to the lack of stability and the daunting auditions, yet she loved the script and wanted to participate in the making of this film, while waiting to hear back from the several medical schools she had applied to during the previous months. Something about her choice to let go of her acting career in order to pursue a more normative lifestyle reminded me of Libby. I am pretty sure that same thing also struck a chord with her.

During filming, I learned that was true. Liran was not only a delight to work with,

but also the actress I expected her to be. She has a vital presence with which she captures the frame. Her monologue is, to me, one of the strongest parts of the film, and when I sat at the monitor, I couldn't believe that the words that came out of her mouth were words I had written.

Heli Hardy — Zohar

Heli is one of my closest friends, and was initially considered for a role in *Body Swap*. A lot of Zohar's free-spiritedness exists in her, even though she is more contemplative in her personality. She naturally slid into the role of this loud, impulsive girl, and perhaps even enjoyed it. She turned out to be great at being this person you might ask yourself why you're still friends with, only to make it undoubtedly clear at the end.

Yasmin Lavie — Iyar

Yasmin was the last one to join the cast, under almost unbelievable circumstances. The original actress had to cancel at the last minute, and I, who was set on making this film no matter what, decided I'd find an actress even if it happened on the first day of shooting. When she showed up for a reading, I found out she brought an entirely different tone to the role than her predecessor.

During my previous directorial endeavours, I believed in giving actors the freedom to bring their own unique voice. On my other short, *Teammate*, I worked mostly with children, so my guidance was stricter, but when working with adults, I learned that their creative freedom only contributes to my own. I decided to go with what Yasmin brought to the role, despite having minor difficulties to adjust to the Iyar's change from a more

gentle character to a stiffer one.

Yona Rozenkier — Erez

As opposed to the female roles, nobody wanted to play Erez. I hate to be presumptuous, but it appeared that young male actors did not want to play this pathetic character, because they had more opportunities at playing stronger ones. The search for Erez, for just that single scene he is in, was long and frustrating.

My friend Yona stepped up, and despite some difficulties of understanding the character initially, he found a way to get through to him. Erez is the embodiment of a fear a lot of us share: being exposed as a fraud. That was the notion that led Yona and I in creating the character and the scene.

Visual Language

Cinematography

The hardest part for me in the directing process is being able to convey my visual vision to my collaborators. I find myself using ambiguous terms such as "clean" or "sterile", and "happy" or "colourful". It is all very clear to me, but unfortunately it still isn't possible to screen a film directly from my brain. Below are some of the films I used as references.

Your Sister's Sister (Shelton, 2011)

This is one of my all-time favourite films, and I always assumed the first feature-length film I would someday direct would have similar settings. The lion's share of the film is set in one location, and it features three main characters. Although *Sister*'s cabin was much larger then the unit I filmed in, I still wanted to emulate the same sense of captivity.

Placing the characters in some sort of close quarters with nowhere else to go is a cinematic convention, as we know the characters are about to deal with the issues between them, and I wanted the audience to expect that. The use of hand-held camera style was also borrowed from this same movie. Not only did it make set-ups go a whole lot faster, it also let me, in a way, place the viewer in there, with the girls.

Baghead (Duplass Brothers, 2008)

The second film I used as a reference was *Baghead*, directed by Joe Duplass together with his brother Mark (who also stars in it, as well as in *Your Sister's Sister*). It

is no coincidence that I drew inspiration from two films that are affiliated with the Mumblecore movement. *Baghdad* may be a film that plays with cross-genre elements, but the use of horror is purely there to heighten the drama within. The eerie atmosphere and the density of the social encounter was what I too was going for: I wanted to convey the notion that the characters in my film were not always keen about being in this slumber party, but they also felt they had no choice.

"Beach House" *(Girls,* **Season 3, Episode 7***)*

Another piece that is set mostly in one location, *Beach House* is what is commonly referred to as a "bottle episode". Over the course of one weekend, the girls open several cans of worms, but they also have a lot of fun. Even though my "fun" montage came out entirely different than I had originally planned, this episode of *Girls* was a direct influence, as was the entire series.

One of the first ideas I pitched Roee Keren, the cinematographer, was usage of long, slow takes. I believe they provide much of the captivity feeling I keep referring to, but they also challenge the actors and push them further than a conventional shot/reverse shot oriented filming. The notion of being filmed all the time brings out more of the emotions, perhaps because they feel as if under a microscope. Unfortunately, long takes did not always abide with the dialogue. Some of it was intended to be a fast-paced, quick banter that would only benefit from matching filming and editing. We settled on something in between, but I ended up preferring longer takes to the shorter ones whenever I could.

The party montage was where we took a different approach. We wanted it to stand

out, but not only because it was more fun, but also due to the realization that this part was largely fake. The girls are laughing and dancing, while underneath lie explosives waiting to go off.

The driving sequence was mostly intended to establish the environment in which the story takes place. I realize that the nuances and subtleties of the Moshav life don't mean much to the Canadian viewer, yet the exteriors charge the film with context that might not be necessary, but it does contribute to those who know it.

Set Design and Wardrobe

The most important element of the design process was creating a homely atmosphere. I wanted it to look like Libby left the place as if she were going away for a weekend, not possibly for good. It magnified the sense that in a way, she never left, and that she lives her life in two places without being able to commit to either of them. Yet, it still had to be clear that the place is unoccupied. The apartment's design is rather old-fashioned and tells a lot about Libby and where she is from. It's not always visible, but the place is covered with political stickers from the nineties (a time when we all thought peace was just around the corner), as well as with memorabilia from India, a destination largely popular with young Israelis. These, again, come to emphasize Libby's inability to let go of her past.

My notes for wardrobe derived from a similar notion: I wanted the girls to feel at home. None of them are dressed as if they are going out to a party, but as if each has walked a couple of steps to her best friend's house.

The colour pink is intended to juxtapose with that said homely environment. Libby brought all the props with her from The States, and each one of them is another cover-up for her true feelings regarding the upcoming wedding. As the plot progresses, the pink starts losing its sparkle, and the layers of Libby's defense are peeled as the mess takes control of the room.

I'd hate to say that the apartment is "another character" in the film, but it does play a role in it. Libby learns that she needs to give up the apartment in order to let go of her past. The apartment is a safety net, and she is only willing to let it go once she begins to trust her friend again. Zohar is moving in, and originally I shot a scene where they sign a

lease. This was a nod to the "unwritten code" the Libby talks about, the one Zohar broke. This time the code is written and the lease is actually a binding contract of friendship. Unfortunately, that scene did not convey what I initially intended and was cut from the film.

Working With Actors

When I was in high school, I shot a short film for a class. In one scene, one of the actors walked into a room where a surprise party for him was held. His co-star yelled "surprise!", but by take four or five, the lead actor wasn't surprised anymore. Then, in what 18-year-old me thought was brilliant, I told the surprising actor to put on a mask for the following take. When his co-star walked in, he was suddenly surprised.

The reason I'm mentioning this decade-old occurrence is that it captures what became one of my methods. I strongly believe that preparation might end up as useless when we get to the set. Even though I don't really believe in it, I had rehearsed with the actors. I felt that was expected of me, I wasn't confident enough to tell them I didn't think we needed it. I can't say I regret doing so, but there is a part of me that still thinks the film could have benefited from the actresses meeting each other for the first time on camera. A lot of magic happens during those first times, those first takes. I learned it early on, and I believe in it more and more as I go along.

One director who turned the "no rehearsal" rule into a method is John Sayles. I had the privilege of attending one of his master classes, in which he mentioned that he knows that if he didn't get what he wanted by the third take, he probably wasn't going to get it. Something clicked when he said that, it concisely expressed what I always thought but attributed to my short attention span and lack of patience. Following the "third take rule" is not always possible, but what I took away from it was that if something doesn't work by take 3, measures need to be taken.

I let my actresses know that the dialogue was merely a suggestion. I didn't want them to focus on memorizing lines; I wanted them to understand what their characters are

saying. That was what I focused on during rehearsals, and that was what I focused on while filming. If an actress has trouble with one of her lines, it's not because she can't remember it; it's usually because she doesn't fully understand why her character is saying what she is saying. That was when I used some improvisational techniques.

During my time in Toronto, I've fulfilled a life-long dream and took classes at the Second City. Many of my comedic and cinematic idols had improvisation background, and I owed it to myself to go down a similar road. I learned that improv is a viable tool in both writing and directing, yet I am still a huge supporter of the written word and my preference, for both stage and screen, will always be scripted work. I did find though that it provided me with great means to work with my actors (none of whom had a thorough improv background). I used some improv exercises when I felt the actresses needed a change of pace, and even though they didn't always work, when they did the results were better than I had initially hoped for.

Dealing With Post-Production Depression

Once filming wrapped, I suffered from a non-clinical condition I like to call Post-Production depression. After talking with fellow filmmakers, I learned this condition is more common than I had initially thought, and yet, it hit me hard, and I am still recovering.

It took a very long time for me to gather the strength to watch materials. I kept postponing it, not wanting to deal with what I dreaded was going to be an epic failure. I kept myself busy with work, under the never-untrue excuse that "I need money", when in fact it was a mere distraction from what I was really afraid to deal with. I did, eventually, find the inner energy to start post-production on the project, but still, I got the shivers whenever I sat down and opened the project on Adobe Premiere.

What was I so scared of? I was afraid of finding out I needed to do re-shoots; afraid that everything I let slide on set would be deemed "unslideable"; afraid that shots wouldn't gather into scenes and that scenes wouldn't gather into a film. But mostly, I was scared I made a bad film. The thought that the one thing I put all this energy, effort and money into, would turn into a pile of useless video files paralyzed me. "If you don't have a movie", I thought, "it can't be a bad one". And so I kept on repressing.

I sunk deeper and deeper into depression, all along knowing I was sabotaging my degree and my future, but mostly, throwing away my present. I gained weight. I drank. I couldn't go to sleep without taking a pill. Couldn't wake up without taking another one. The hard drive on which the materials were saved became my kryptonite, and whenever I came close to it, I felt I was losing the last shreds of motivation I might still have.

Throughout this time I kept my appearance together. I made it seem as if everything

was okay and that the film was going to be ready any minute and it was going to be the most amazing thing that ever happened. When I did share my feelings with other people, they just blew me off with useless motivational quotes, not fully understanding the severity of my situation. Even though I was never medically diagnosed with depression (unless you count those late-night WebMD searches), everyone's lack of ability to understand, or believe me, was pretty much textbook. Other than that, depression still counts as a "first-world problem", and knowing that made me feel even worse. "The privileged white girl can't finish her short film? Boo-hoo." I was alone. I hated my film and myself and no one knew.

I wish I could describe a wake-up call, this singled-out event that made me get over this and start working. But there wasn't one. I don't know if I can even call it editing, but little by little, I started looking at shots and putting the ones I liked on a timeline. And each time I went to do it, it felt like I was doing it for the first time. I had trouble going near a computer, I had trouble starting the editing software, I had trouble opening the project's file. Sometimes a day would pass between each shift, sometimes a month. And it didn't get any easier as I got along.

The first cut I screened was disastrous. The subtitles didn't sync and Tereza and Barbara had to sit through a film in a language they did not understand, while I was trying to simultaneously translate. They both showed great patience and understanding, and gave very useful notes in spite of the fact they could not understand the film in its entirety.

And again, I was unable to come near it. Things took a turn for the worse when I learned one of my neighbours was stalking me. One dreadful night I found him shining a

flashlight into my apartment. The next day there was a letter under my door, written by a mentally ill individual, where he confessed to having suicidal thoughts and also that he had been watching me. The police got involved, but even their involvement did not make me feel any safer. I spent a few nights at friends' houses, and then decided to go home. Ironically, the place I left war-torn was where I once again felt safe. At first I thought the stalker incident would help put things in perspective (it could have gone down a lot worse), but it ended up making me feel more lost and made the film seem pointless.

I came back to Canada with a newer cut, and when I met with Tereza the first thing she asked upon seeing me was, "where is the torment?" "It's still there", I reassured her. She recognized my distress and encouraged me to finish the film. Even at times when we weren't working directly on my thesis, my conversations with Tereza always gave me hope. When she asked me why I didn't come sooner, or more often, I said I was scared. Scared that I wasn't living up to anyone's expectations, scared that I had failed, and scared to face reality. I put my entire life on hold, exactly like my main character. Unlike Libby, the reality I had in my mind was worse than the one I ended up confronting. Piece by piece, little by little, I ended up with a film. And one I kind of like.

The Editing Process

The first thing I set my mind to when approaching the film's editing was recognizing its strengths and weaknesses. I felt I had compelling characters, but that the narrative was not always clear. I am still not entirely sure that it is.

The film was dialogue-based to begin with, but all the lines I had written suddenly sounded like too much talking. One of the first steps I took, and this process actually started during filming, was to cut everything that wasn't crucial. It mostly hurt Iyar's character, who lost almost every single one of her characteristics. This loss was made up for with a smoother flow in storytelling.

Understanding that the film's strength lies in its intensity, I wanted to tighten things even more. Following the advice of my committee members, I added more and more close-ups and reaction shots, glances and silences. I tried to make the characters as identifiable as possible, hoping that viewers can see themselves reflected in them.

Plot-wise, I stayed pretty close to the script, other than one major change, suggested by Tereza. Originally, Zohar tells her friends about cancelling the wedding right off the top. Tereza suggested revealing this at a later time, after the girls had their little party. This brings in an element of surprise, as well as helping establish the close relationship between the three.

One of the things I feel the film is lacking is atmosphere shots. I see it as a failure of mine both as a filmmaker and as a film viewer. They are meant to be unnoticeable but give the film its rhythm, and as a result I tend to not notice them, and apparently not shoot them as well. Their absence, I felt, sometimes dictated the editing process, and I can't have that happen again.

Final Thoughts

"Comedy should relate directly to me or it's not funny."

- *Anonymous*

I never thought I'd open the last chapter, or any chapter, really, of my thesis paper with a quote I found written in a bathroom stall. This is by no means a way of disrespecting the academic establishment, but these are words I read more times than any book or article, when I saw them each time I went to Toronto's Comedy Bar.

A few months before I shot *Slumber Party*, I started doing stand-up comedy. I went up on stages and told jokes, and sometimes got paid to do so. Though I neglected this newfound passion of mine during the painful post-production process I described in length, the art of comedy became my number one interest.

Many comedians view stand-up comedy as the "purest" of art forms, since it essentially boils down to the comic and his or her audience, with only a microphone used to transmit the sound of their words. I can't say I agree with this entirely, because every joke is being workshopped and re-written countless times, yet the stage is still a safe space to work that. It is completely acceptable to get on stage with a work-in-progress. I don't think I ever felt as exposed as I feel when I'm performing (well, except for maybe in this paper, which I would never gotten the courage to write if I hadn't already poured my soul on stage).

The first thing you learn in stand-up comedy is that not everyone is going to like you. It's a hard realization for a lifelong pleaser as myself, but I'm glad to have discovered it this late, rather than never.

Not everybody is going to like my film, and that's okay. But I hope that the ones

that do, do so because everything that I wrote in this paper made it across to them.

Reading this paper, it might appear as if I am trying to make excuses for why this film came out the way it is. Why it isn't good, or good enough. Yes, if I had to do it all again, I would've done it differently. I have taken the wrong turn almost every step of the way, and I have made mistakes I might otherwise have avoided.

At the moment, my perspective of the making of *Slumber Party* is highly personal. I cannot recount any of its aspects without going back to how they made, and still make me feel. I can only assume that I need to obtain some distance from the process as well as from the final result to be able to judge it on a professional level. But then again, if I intend to create personal work, it is inevitable that contemplating its making will be just as personal.

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