



presents

112 WEDDINGS



A Film by Doug Block

90' | USA | 2014 | HD

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World Premiere: Opening night of Full Frame International Film Festival
Internal Premiere: HotDocs Film Festival

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

Over the past two decades, acclaimed documentary filmmaker Doug Block (*51 Birch Street, The Kids Grow Up*) has supported his career with a side business of videotaping weddings. Long curious about how their marriages have turned out, he tracks down and interviews some of the more memorable of his 112 wedding couples - with funny, insightful and deeply moving results.



MEDIUM SYNOPSIS

For the past two decades, acclaimed documentary filmmaker Doug Block (*51 Birch Street, The Kids Grow Up*) has helped support himself by shooting weddings. Hired for his intimate documentary style, he found himself emotionally bonding with his wedding couples on their big day, only to send off their videos and never see them again. Many years and 112 weddings later, having long wondered what's become of their marriages, Block begins to track down some of his favorite couples. Juxtaposing rapturous wedding day flashbacks with remarkably candid present-day interviews, *112 WEDDINGS* explores timeless themes of love and marital commitment.

LONG SYNOPSIS

As a part-time wedding videographer hired for his intimate documentary style, filmmaker Doug Block frequently found himself standing feet away from two virtual strangers as they publicly pledged their everlasting love and fidelity to each other. He'd come away from the day with a strong sense of the couples and feeling an unusual bond, only to send them the videos a few weeks later... and never see them again.

Block long wondered what became of these couples with whom he shared such an emotional experience. Is married life what they thought it would be? Are they still together? How have they navigated the inevitable ups and downs of marriage over the long haul?

20 years and 112 weddings on, he begins to track down some of his more memorable couples to find out first-hand. 112 WEDDINGS juxtaposes rapturous wedding day flashbacks with remarkably candid present-day interviews to explore timeless themes of love and marital commitment.

ABOUT THE FILMAKERS

DOUG BLOCK (Director, Producer)



DOUG BLOCK is a New York-based documentary filmmaker who has won increasing international recognition as a master of the autobiographical film form. With a long body of highly acclaimed work as both director and producer, his films have won countless awards, screened in dozens of leading film festivals, and shown in theaters and broadcast on television throughout the world.

His most recent feature, *The Kids Grow Up* (Special Jury Prize, Silverdocs) was released theatrically by Shadow Distribution and broadcast on HBO on Fathers Day, 2011. His previous film, *51 Birch Street*, was named one of the Ten Best Films of 2006 by a number of leading critics, including A.O. Scott of the New York Times, and was selected as one of the outstanding documentaries of the year by the National Board of Review. Block also directed *The Heck With Hollywood!* (1991), the Emmy nominated *Home Page* (1999) and the multi award-winning short *The Children Next Door* (2012).

In addition to his own films, Block's credits as producer include: *Silverlake Life* (Sundance Grand Jury Prize, Peabody, Prix Italia), *Jupiter's Wife* (Sundance Special Jury Prize, Emmy), *A Walk Into the Sea: Danny Williams and the Warhol Factory* (top awards at Berlin and Tribeca), *The Edge of Dreaming* (POV) and *Resurrect Dead: The Mystery of the Toynbee Tiles* (Sundance Best Director Prize for Documentary).

Block is also the founder and co-host of The D-Word (www.d-word.com), which began as a pioneering blog for his film *Home Page*, and has evolved over the past 15 years into the web's leading network and discussion forum for documentary professionals worldwide.

Filmography:

2013 *The Children Next Door* (short)

2009 *The Kids Grow Up*

2005 *51 Birch Street*

1999 *Home Page*

1991 *The Heck with Hollywood!*

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LORI CHEATLE (Producer)



LORI CHEATLE founded Hard Working Movies, an independent production company in Brooklyn, NY, to produce director-driven feature films that tell great stories and appeal to wide audiences. Subjects range from personal documentaries to pop culture to social issues. Lori's award-winning films have screened in theaters, museums and in top film festivals as well as on HBO, PBS, Showtime, The Sundance Channel, Channel 4 UK, the BBC, ZDF/Arte, NHK, Canal+, and have been seen in over 60 countries. Films she's produced include two previous documentaries directed by Doug Block- the critically acclaimed *51 Birch Street* and *The Kids Grow Up*; Amy Hardie's *The Edge of Dreaming*, *This Land Is Your Land (Whitney Biennial)*, *Dashiell Hammett. Detective Writer.* and many others. She recently completed the feature documentary *CAPTIVATED The Trials of Pamela Smart* (HBO, Sky Atlantic) directed by Jeremiah Zagar, which premiered at Sundance 2014.

MAEVE O'BOYLE (Editor and Co-Writer)

MAEVE O'BOYLE has worked as a documentary editor predominantly in New York City over the last 12 years. Some of her credits include the Emmy-nominated *Left of the Dial* (HBO), the documentary series *Carrier*, (PBS) and *Frontline: Heat* (2009 Banff World Television Award). She traversed the United States for Guardian Films UK, editing short web pieces on the 2008 US Election, after which she edited Doug Block's feature documentary *The Kids Grow Up in 2009*. She has worked on several Irish television series, including the short film *Needle Exchange*, (RTE, IFB, Best Short Documentary - Galway Film Fleadh) and *Voices from the Grave* (Best Documentary - Irish Film and Television Awards). Her recent work includes *Frontline: Six Billion Dollar Bet*, *Cell Tower Deaths* and *Money, Power and Wall Street*. She also recently finished a short film called *The Education of Mohammad Hussein* for HBO which was shortlisted for an Academy Award. She just completed *112 Weddings* for Doug Block and is currently editing a feature documentary entitled *Do I Sound Gay?*

JON FOY (Original Music)

Jon Foy is a self-taught multi-disciplined filmmaker who specializes in editing and composing. His debut documentary *Resurrect Dead: The Mystery of the Toynbee Tiles* won him the 2011 Sundance Directing Award. He currently resides in Brooklyn, NY.

ELIZABETH J. THEIS (Associate Producer)

ELIZABETH J THEIS first picked up a video camera while growing up in her suburban coastal town of Milford, CT. She received her BA in 2004 from Marlboro College, after directing the short documentary, *Public Axis: Media Democracy in a Time of War*. From 2004 – 2007 she instructed video production courses at Betsy Ross Arts Magnet School in New Haven, CT while also working with teenage filmmakers at the Yale University Saturday Seminar program. She moved to Brooklyn in 2009 to obtain her MA in media studies at The New School. She then directed the comedy short *Killing Time with Lizzie Boredom*, which has garnered a growing Internet following. She directs music videos for emerging bands when she can, and is currently working on an adaptation of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. She also works as an assistant editor, and her credits include *CAPTIVATED: The Trials of Pamela Smart*, *Approaching the Elephant* and the PBS series, *Art 21*.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

From the time I shot my very first wedding over 20 years ago, I knew I would make a film like *112 WEDDINGS*.

As a documentary filmmaker, I found it unexpectedly thrilling to be a wedding videographer. We're always struggling to gain access to our subjects, and here I was being granted a front-row position as an ordinary couple experienced perhaps the most extraordinary day in their lives (and being paid well for it, no less!). To be able to observe and capture the actions and behaviour and intense emotions of the day was a rare privilege and utterly fascinating.

And then there was the curiosity factor. We all go to weddings, especially if we don't know the couple well, and enjoy speculating about whether or not they're "keepers." By the end of the wedding day, I felt I knew my couples quite well and had formed a genuine bond with many of them. So of course I wondered what would become of them, and what would become of their marriages.

Two years ago, I decided it was finally time to follow up with some of my favorites and see for myself. I had a lot of questions, but at the core it all came down to two basic ones: What did they enter marriage thinking it would be? And what did it turn out to be?

With this kind of documentary approach comes a great responsibility. Because of the nature of our relationship and the intimacy of my shooting style (I shot both my weddings and the interviews as a one-person crew), the couples opened up to me with a level of candor that surprised me, almost as if I were a therapist rather than a documentarian. Additionally, by shooting them side by side on a couch, their body language, facial expressions and silent pauses often spoke as eloquently as their words, and, while sometimes quite funny, revealed more than they probably meant to. My enormously skilful editor Maeve O'Boyle and I did our very best to balance our goal of creating the most intense and dramatic storylines with a sense of fairness and respect for our couples' vulnerability.

While making the film I was continuing to shoot the occasional wedding, and it occurred to me

that the experiences of a young couple in the months leading up to their wedding might make an interesting counterbalance to the seasoned and bittersweet perspectives of those looking back at their marriages of many years. By the time our couple, Heather and Sam, walk down the aisle at the end of *112 WEDDINGS*, paralleling the classic ending to so many Hollywood movies, the iconic moment will hopefully have a more nuanced and poignant resonance for viewers. As we've come to learn, happily-ever-after is complicated.

I would never claim *112 WEDDINGS* is the definitive film on marriage. I'm a documentary filmmaker, not a social scientist. I'm interweaving 10 very real-life love stories in an attempt to present a bigger picture view of love and long-term relationships. My goal is that it all adds up to an usual and powerful look at the subject.

Ultimately, I think *112 WEDDINGS* is a film about time. It's about what time does to our looks, our beliefs, our expectations and our feelings about our partners. The one thing we know for certain when we marry is that life will throw all sorts of unexpected and challenging stuff at us and things will change. How we deal with it all together as a couple is our ultimate barometer of success.

On that note, some who are familiar with my previous three autobiographical documentaries (*HOME PAGE*, *51 BIRCH STREET*, *THE KIDS GROW UP*) might wonder why I've not included any references to my own marriage in the film. It's not like I didn't give the matter lots of thought. In the end, I decided I had gone down that road before, and that it would be inauthentic to imply that I was exploring the subject of marriage in an attempt to somehow fix or save my own.

28 years of marriage hasn't made me any kind of marriage expert. It has given me the perspective to dedicate *112 WEDDINGS* to my ever-lovely, ever-patient wife Marjorie and leave it at that.



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PRESS:

THE **Hollywood** **REPORTER**

A wedding video director tracks down some former clients in this engaging documentary about the highs and lows of long-term matrimony.

The premise for Doug Block's slight but charming new documentary is so brilliantly obvious, it seems surprising nobody has attempted something similar before. After almost 20 years of shooting wedding videos as a money-making sideline, the New York-based director had the inspired notion of reconnecting with a bunch of former clients to interview them about their subsequent experiences of married life. How did their dreams turn out? Are they still together 5, 10, 15 years down the line? Can young love survive the long haul?

Made with backing from HBO and the BBC, 112 Weddings looks glossy and slick. Full of gossipy confessionals, awkward body language and knowing glances to camera, it should be an easy sell to audiences accustomed to reality television. Following its European premiere at Sheffield Doc/Fest earlier this week, it opens in U.K. theaters this weekend. Later this month it screens at AFI Docs in Washington DC and Nantucket Film Festival in Massachusetts.

Intimate family dynamics are a recurring motif in Block's work, exposing the marital secrets of his own parents in 51 Birch Street(2005) and exploring his complex feelings towards his daughter in The Kids Grow Up (2009). But 112 Weddings is a lighter and less personal film, with a heart-tugging but banal message about the power of love. Intercutting between contemporary interviews and archive wedding clips, in places it feels like watching a feature-length compilation of the real-life married-couple vox pops that punctuated RobReiner's classic 1989 rom-com When Harry Met Sally.

The prevailing tone is bittersweet, but more sweet than bitter. A pair of New Age hippie types renew their non-marriage ceremony after 13 years together, replacing free-love idealism with more traditional wedding vows. A comically uptight American husband visibly squirms when his much younger Korean wife cheerfully confesses to marital tensions. And former bar-hopping

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Brooklyn hipsters appear amusingly shell-shocked by the heavy workload of new parenthood: "Sleep deprivation ... that's a form of torture in some countries, right?"

But there are darker stories here too, including one deceptively upbeat couple whose daughter is living with a life-threatening illness, and another whose child was diagnosed with learning difficulties. A little surprisingly, most of the interviewees remain together many years later, though there is one heartbreaking saga of infidelity and divorce in the mix.

The most dysfunctional case study here is David Bromberg, screenwriter of the 2007 indie rom-com *Dedication*, who admits to destroying his marriage in a crazed meltdown of prescription drugs and manic depression. Judged on his babbling, Willy Wonka-ish appearance, Bromberg's mental state remains fragile. His ex-wife Janice does not appear in the film.

Straying outside his archive of former clients, Block interviews a recently hitched lesbian couple and a young rabbi friend, who provides some of the film's funniest observations on the stresses of married life, particularly when money and liquor get involved. Block also gives the film a loose narrative spine by tracking the build-up to his latest matrimonial video stars, Heather and Sam Dodge, whose nuptials in the picturesque Montana countryside lend *112 Weddings* a suitably sunny climax.

Set to jaunty music and smoothly edited into easily digestible morsels, *112 Weddings* skips along so effortlessly that it sometimes feels like an upmarket cousin of America's Funniest Home Videos. Block plays on our emotions shamelessly, invoking both laughter and tears, though his ultimate goal appears to be fast-moving entertainment rather than serious insights. The social profile of his client base, mostly moneyed New York professionals, also leads to an inevitable narrowness of focus. But even if it lacks depth, Block's big-screen banquet of matrimonial testimonials is still a highly engaging proposition.

Production companies: Copacetic Pictures, Hard Working Movies

Starring: Heather Dodge, Sam Dodge, David Bromberg, Janice Caillet, Alexander Caillet, Yoonhee Roberts, Tom Roberts, Rachel Shapiro, Paul Shapiro

Director: Doug Block

Writers: Doug Block, Maeve O'Boyle

Producers: Doug Block, Lori Cheatle

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Cinematographer: Doug Block

Editor: Maeve O'Boyle

Music: Jon Foy

Sales company: Dogwoof, London

Rated PG (U.K.), 92 minutes

CREDITS:

Director: Doug Block
Producers: Lori Cheatle, Doug Block
Cinematography: Doug Block
Film Editor: Maeve O'Boyle
Music: Jon Foy
Sound: Otto Gain
Associate Producer: Elizabeth J. Theis

Featuring
HEATHER AND SAM DODGE
RACHEL AND PAUL SHAPIRO
JENNIFER HYJACK AND AUGIE ALEXANDER
OLIVIA AND DENNIS LANGBEIN
JODI AND MICHAEL SMART
DAVID BROMBERG
JANICE AND ALEXANDER CAILLET
YOONHEE AND TOM ROBERTS
SUE AND STEVE ODIERNA
DANIELLE AND ADAM HARK
GALINA PORTNOY AND DAVID ENGWALL
ANNA CONLAN AND ERICA BECKMAN
RABBI JONATHAN BLAKE

[Copacetic Pictures](#)

[Hard Working Movies](#)

In association with HBO Documentary Films, ZDF, ARTE and BBC

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“As common as it is, marriage remains among the most mysterious of human experiences.”

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