

Two To Tangle Productions in association with Fork Films present



Directed By: Jill Bauer & Ronna Gradus

Produced By: Jill Bauer, Ronna Gradus, Brittany Huckabee

Release Date: April 20th, 2012 – World premiere at Tribeca Film Festival

Theatrical Release Date: October 19th, NYC & LA

Running Time: 83 minutes

Website: www.sexybabymovie.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sexybabymovie

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PRAISE FOR SEXY BABY

"I love all three of the women in the film, each in her own way struggling to escape notions designed to keep women pleasing and fixing their bodies rather than resisting and fixing the world." – *Eve Ensler, author of The Vagina Monologues*

"Just when you think we've come so far, we're reminded that our society still has a female problem. The fact that the system has skillfully convinced many women to participate in their own demise is even more frightening. You have not seen a film like this. There is no film like this." – *Michael Moore*

"There might be something new to say about sex after all, and it's said in *Sexy Baby*." – *Marsha McCreadie, The Village Voice*

"A real eye-opener."
– *New York Magazine*

"Sexy Baby is an important—and at times chilling—film meant to provoke intelligent debate." – *Marlow Stern, The Daily Beast*

"Provocative and highly disturbing...I'm a mother of two teenage daughters, and this is the scariest thing I've ever seen."
– *Jane Rosenthal, Tribeca Film Festival co-founder*

"...[An] absolute favorite Tribeca premiere...There's no narration, no tongue-clucking disapproval, just a look at the material widely available online and in the culture...A spritely, often funny documentary...The fascinating thing about *Sexy Baby* is that it presents horrifying images – without editorializing.
– *Tasha Robinson, The A.V. Club*

"...Harrowing, graphic and poignant – essential viewing for everyone living in a post-Internet age...Sexy Baby is a remarkable film that deserves a wide audience."
– *Jay A. Fernandez, Indiewire*

SYNOPSIS

These days, sex doesn't just sell, it saturates our culture. In the age of runaway social media and "sexting," raunchy rap songs on pop radio and hardcore pornography at the click of a mouse—what's it like to be a woman? A girl? A teenage boy? Their parents? In this feature documentary, the directors follow a trio of characters to reveal the toll all this titillation is taking on America and forces viewers to get comfortable having the uncomfortable conversations.

Twelve-year-old Winnie is a bright and precocious proto-feminist dividing time between Mom's house and Dad's in New York City, but not long after the bat mitzvah celebration that marks her entry into adulthood, the Lady Gaga-loving youngster starts growing up faster than her parents can handle. Pressured by remarks from her porn-loving boyfriend, 22-year-old Laura is spending thousands on surgery to have a top-shelf "designer vagina." And though she's officially retired from the adult film industry, 32-year-old Nakita Kash is making her living teaching housewives and college girls how to pole dance like a porno pro. *Sexy Baby* examines the seismic shift in our society in an age where courtship has been replaced by sexting and kids have access to online porn before sex ed.

ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

Winnifred is a 12-year-old growing up in New York City. She is a bright-eyed emerging feminist starring in a “girl power” play (created and performed by The Arts Effect theater lab). As she comes of age, this savvy and thoughtful teen finds that like all kids her age, she is not impervious to the allure of the Internet and social networking. Subsequently, she struggles with the issue of how much of her life to make public vs. how much to keep private. As children of the cyber age, Winnifred and her friends must also contend with the fact that sometimes they are accidentally exposed to more than they want to see. “We are the pioneers,” Winnifred says referring to her generation. Her parents, Ken and Jeni, who are also in uncharted territory, provide guidance and help her navigate a world that did not exist when they were her age.

Laura is a 22-year-old North Carolina kindergarten teacher. Living in a community where it is not uncommon for young women she knows to get breast implants, Laura does not consider it a big leap to undergo a surgery “down there.” We follow Laura as she travels to Virginia to have a labia reduction procedure by specialist Dr. Bernard Stern. Ever since her first serious boyfriend compared her body to the porn stars he regularly watched online, Laura has been self-conscious and has wanted to measure up to this new standard of beauty. Her mom, Terry, accompanies her to Virginia to provide loving support even though she cannot quite understand Laura's decision. “If it will enhance her life, I want her to be happy,” she says.

Nichole aka Nakita Kash, 32, is a former porn star, and an award-winning pole dancer (she was a finalist on America’s Got Talent, Season 3). Easy access to Internet porn and its effects on the mainstream world have enabled Nakita to create a burgeoning business that caters largely to a clientele made up of housewives and college girls. Nakita teaches erotic movement and pole dancing -- her students find it thrilling to learn the art of seduction from a seasoned professional. Meanwhile, we watch as Nichole and her husband Dave settle into a more conventional life and attempt to start a family. “I find women wanting to be like Nakita, but Nichole just wants to be like them,” she says.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKING TEAM

JILL BAUER, *Co-Director, Producer, Sound Operator*, was 15 when she landed her first interview with Barbara Walters and was so taken by the interview process that she never stopped asking questions – especially about relationships, one of her main beats while at the Miami Herald. Bauer is a Hearst and SPJ award-winning journalist and has written for and edited several magazines and newspapers including Esquire, The Dallas Morning News, The New York Times, and launched Smart Kid, a national parenting magazine. She is the author of the non-fiction humor book *From “I Do” to “I’ll Sue”: An Irreverent Compendium for Survivors of Divorce* (Penguin Books).

RONNA GRADUS, *Co-Director, Producer, Director of Photography*, was born and raised in New York City. Since a young age she loved to watch people, so when a camera was placed in her hand a documentarian emerged. She graduated with a BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and began her career as a photojournalist. Most notably she was a staff photographer at The Miami Herald where she was dubbed by editors as one of the strongest among the 22-member photography staff. While there, she was sent on several assignments in Cuba and covered Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

BRITTANY HUCKABEE, *Editor and Producer*, is an award-winning independent filmmaker with more than a decade of experience directing and producing documentaries for public television and other outlets. Her most recent film, *The Mosque in Morgantown* (PBS 2009), chronicled conflict in a West Virginia Muslim community. She is the founder and principal of Version One Productions, Inc., and served as a Filmmaker-in-Residence at WGBH, Boston's flagship PBS station. She also works as an editor and camera operator and is particularly drawn to stories about women, religion and human rights. She currently lives in New York.

ABIGAIL E. DISNEY, *Executive Producer*, is a filmmaker and philanthropist. Her longtime passion for women's issues and peacebuilding culminated in her first film, *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, about the Liberian women who peacefully ended their country's fourteen-year civil war. She is currently Executive Producer of the PBS mini-series *Women, War & Peace*, the most comprehensive global media initiative ever mounted on the role of women in peace and conflict. And along with her husband, Pierre Hauser, Abigail co-founded the Daphne Foundation, which works with low-income communities in the five boroughs of New York City.

Chandra Jessee, *Executive Producer*, is an activist and venture investor. Her wish to see more balance in the world led her to found the InMaat Foundation, which currently supports charities that promote equality for women and girls. Chandra has produced several films and is a co-executive producer of the award winning film, “NY Export: Opus Jazz.” Recently, she was part of a scientific expedition to tag sharks in an MPA in the Bahamas as part of her work supporting ocean's health. When she's not traveling on adventures and expeditions, Chandra lives in New York City.

David Zieff, *Creative Consultant*, has been editing documentaries, feature films and television for almost three decades. Recently Zieff was a creative consultant on the Oscar Award-winning documentary *The Cove*, and edited and produced ESPN's *Winning Time: Reggie Miller vs. The New York Knicks*. He also won a Peabody Award for the doc mini-series *Black Magic*. Zieff edited and produced *Crazy Love*, winner of the Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary. He was the supervising editor of the critically acclaimed and multiple award-winning *Metallica: Some Kind of Monster*, shaping over 1600 hours of footage into a Sundance hit, and one of the most celebrated music films of all time.

Paul Brill, *Composer*, is a musician and composer who has scored for TV and films including *Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work and Love Free or Die* (Sundance, 2012). He has been nominated for 3 Emmy Awards for his film work and recently collaborated with U2 to compose a new acoustic version of their song “Walk On” for an upcoming HBO film. He recently won the Best Music Award from the International Documentary Association (IDA) for his score for the film, *Better This World*. For further information, Paul's website is: www.paulbrill.com

Daniel Raiffe, *Co-Producer*, is a graduate of Syracuse University where he received a BFA in film. He also attended a program at The Prague Film and Television Academy of Performing Arts with an emphasis on directing and cinematography. He is a native of Miami, Florida and moved to New York several years ago to begin his career in filmmaking where he associate produced the documentary film *The Soprano State*. Daniel was a production assistant for *Throwdown* with Bobby Flay and the Fox series *Fringe* and has produced commercial web videos.

Q & A with Directors Jill Bauer and Ronna Gradus

Q: How do you describe *Sexy Baby* in your own words?

Whenever we get asked this question, we chuckle, because its synopsis really isn't a simple one-liner. But here's my attempt at an elevator pitch (but let's pretend we're in the Empire State Building elevator): *Sexy Baby* is a complex weave of characters and themes that explores the hot-button issues of sex, sexiness, self-image and today's newfangled click-of-the-mouse pornography.

We think it's the first film to put faces to a seismic cultural shift. Our characters—Nakita, 32, Winnifred, 12, and Laura, 22—show us how social media, digital photography/videography and easy-access porn have altered the way young women portray themselves and how both women and men perceive and have sex.

One of the rewards (and drawbacks) of making an agenda-free film (which is what *Sexy Baby* is) is that the takeaway message is nuanced. It's oftentimes easier to present issues in a black-and-white format: "This is good for you" or "This is bad for you, and here are 20 experts who will tell you why it's good or bad." We were interested in showing people what truly goes on in a teenager's life nowadays (and in the lives of two other women whose stories thematically dovetail with Winnifred's) so that viewers can bring their own ideas, values and feelings to the table. Viva la difference, and let's talk about it—finally, and in an honest way!

Q: What inspired you to tell this story?

We met working at the Miami Herald: Jill was a reporter, I was a photographer. One night I had an assignment that involved photographing in mainstream clubs on "college night out." Most of the clubs had stripper poles in them and girls were gyrating on them. I was taken aback, not because the behavior was shocking (I saw my fair share of wild behavior in my clubbing days), but because they were trying so hard to get attention and to be sexy—all the while looking like they weren't having any fun at all.

I called Jill the next day to see if she could help me articulate what it was that I witnessed that I found so disconcerting. She looked through my photos, and what struck her was the fact that as half-naked as the girls were, the guys standing around seemed un-phased, like: "Been there, done that, see it every day."

The two of us were fascinated by the topic, and we decided there was some type of story in it. Initially we pitched it to the newspaper as a feature story, but after doing a bit of research and pavement pounding, we realized there was a film in it. And then Jill pushed us to actually do it! We soon moved to New York, since we didn't think Miami was a good base for tracking mainstream cultural trends.

Q: How did connect with your subjects? They come from such diverse backgrounds. Did they immediately warm to the idea of opening their lives to a documentary?

Ultimately, our film is about three very different women and their families and friends play supporting roles. Though we address a few central themes in *Sexy Baby*, we always knew we wanted our characters to narrate the film. And as journalists, we knew the only way to connect with characters would be to spend a lot of time with them, to get to know them and to allow them to get to know us. So we basically cultivated several long-term relationships in the process of making *Sexy Baby*.

Winnifred, Nakita and Laura are the film's central characters, but the supporting players were equally as important. So we spent a lot of time with Winnifred's parents and her siblings, Nakita's husband Dave, Laura's mom Terry, and also Laura's surgeon, Dr. Stern. I think we can safely say that we now have lifelong friendships with each of our main and supporting characters. At the end of the day, it's all about relationships and connection, and we hope viewers connect with our subjects so deeply that they feel like they know everyone in the film by the time the credits roll.

Did our subjects immediately warm to the idea of having their lives documented on camera? The short answer is no. But we both love getting to know people, and journalism is the one career where you get paid (albeit, oftentimes not very well) to indulge yourself in human bonding. We soon realized while working on stories together that people opened up to us in a big way. So the long answer is, it was our responsibility to warm our characters to the idea of opening up to us.

The one huge difference between print journalism and documentary film is that the camera is a constant witness, so as directors it was really important to us that we oversee the editing process in order to portray each of our characters in a fair, balanced and compassionate way. Our greatest reward would be that we accomplished that.

Q: How common is the labiaplasty surgery that you cover in *Sexy Baby*?

It has been impossible for us to find any satisfactory statistics. The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery does not chart the amount of labiaplasties done in a year—they include those numbers under the umbrella of “vaginal cosmetic surgery,” which includes many other procedures. The UK, however, reported in the *British Journal of Obstetric and Gynecology* that there was an increase of 70% between 2008 and 2009. Dr. Stern, the surgeon in *Sexy Baby*, says that in his personal experience, there is an increasing demand for these surgeries—and by younger and younger women who have an increasing awareness of “what they should look like.” (He says the prevalence of online porn is contributing to this.) Also, we have heard from several gynecologists (one in Australia, even) that their patients are inquiring about labiaplasty more and more every year.

Q: Winnie seems to have a solid head on her shoulders, but it's really terrifying to see what she and her peers deal with on a daily basis. What do you want parents—and teens—to take away from your film?

We are extremely grateful to Winnifred for letting us tag along with her and for putting up with us constantly peering over her shoulder with our camera—and ultimately, for trusting us. She has gifted us all with a first-hand account of what kids are now exposed to everyday. She let us follow her around New York City and witness her day-to-day life—sometimes exciting and sometimes mundane. Winnifred is seldom without her iPhone or a computer nearby, so there was often some kind of virtual drama unfolding in her teenage life, to which we were privy.

And though she has a solid head on her shoulders, she is far from impervious to today's influences—in fact, we think that no kid is impervious to the onslaught of technology and rapid-fire sexual images nowadays. As Winnifred's parents say in the film, "It's everywhere." And Winnifred, in all her wisdom, can't escape the 24/7, hyper-connected world she's been born into. "We are the pioneers," she says early on in the film.

And yes, this bombardment is oftentimes terrifying, and that's exactly why we made *Sexy Baby* and why Winnifred takes up so much screen time. In Act I of the film, Winnifred is seen acting in a teen play, and at the end of one of her scenes she says, "Keep your eyes open." That is our film's takeaway message to parents, teachers, teens and basically everyone living in today's easy-access culture. The genie is out of the bottle, so the only solution is to be aware, to have genuine conversations with your kids and with one another.

Q: This is the first movie for both of you. Did you always know you wanted to direct? As first-time filmmakers, what's the biggest lesson you took from the experience? Any advice for those following in your footsteps?

This is our first film and neither of us intended to become filmmakers. The topic of what eventually became *Sexy Baby* is what led us into this medium. And because it was the two of us on the ground doing it, we became the directors by default.

As journalists, we found ourselves pretty comfortable being a filmmaking duo, and our approach to making a documentary was the same as our approach to a long-term newspaper feature story would have been. We learned a new lesson every week! The biggest one was probably that you can't wait for someone to become interested in your project before you have something to show them. Making a trailer was key—we didn't get our first penny of support until we had one to show.

Also, once you get one ounce of encouragement from a notable person, advertise that fact like crazy: "Hi, Person A. Person B said she thinks we're doing something really important!" And then just keep building on that.

The other crucial thing was to find an editor who understood what we were trying to accomplish—your editor becomes the most instrumental person in bringing your idea to life.

Another very practical tip: if you live in NYC and want to make documentary films, attend **Stranger Than Fiction** at **IFC Center** every Tuesday night. The top talents in the field attend the series, and it's a great way to access them in a casual environment: everyone goes to a

bar after each week's film. It was there that we literally met the majority of the people that became our team: editor (**Brittany Huckabee**), creative consultant (**David Zieff**), composer (**Paul Brill**) and sound mixer (**Margaret Crimmins**). Additionally, **Thom Powers**—who runs the series—became a great mentor, along with filmmaker **Doug Block**, whom we met there, too.

Q: What makes Sexy Baby a must-see?

Our movie's tagline is "Sexiness and the Cyber age," and we made Sexy Baby for one reason only—to create an honest dialogue. We feel that Sexy Baby is a must-see documentary because there is a huge need and demand to have these conversations already! There is so much talking around these topics but very little straightforward dialoguing. We believe we are, for the first time ever, puncturing the hot air balloon and showing you, the viewer, what truly exists in a teen's life. We present you with real parents navigating this new world and afford you an opportunity to judge them—for better or for worse—and decide for yourselves how you want to talk to your own kids.

FESTIVALS

Tribeca film festival
Hotdocs International Film Festival
Newport Beach Film festival
Flickers Rhode Island Film Festival
Traverse City Film Festival
Palo Alto Film Festival
Citizen Jane Film Festival
IDFA

THE CAST

Winnifred Bonjean-Alpart
Jennifer Bonjean
Ken Alpart
Nichole Romagna
Dave Romagna
Laura Castle
Dr. Bernard Stern

SEXY BABY IS SUPPORTED BY
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The fledgling fund www.thefledglingfund.org

CREDIT ROLL

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Producer & Editor

Brittany Huckabee

Executive Producer

Abigail E. Disney

Executive Producer

Chandra Jessee

Executive Producer

Jill Bauer

Director of Photography

Ronna Gradus

Original Music by

Paul Brill

Co-Producer

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Jill Bauer

Sound edit and mix

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Jennifer Bonjean

Ken Alpart

Nichole Romagna

Dave Romagna

Laura Castle

Terry Castle

Dr. Bernard Stern

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Anne Delaney

Barbara Dobkin

Grant Me The Wisdom Foundation

Lucy Lehman

Shirley Press & Bill Rapoport

Jacki Zehner

Very Special Thanks

Louise Bauer

Joy Bauer

Diana & Ari Gradus

Sara Adler

Larry Greenwald & Karen Adler

Heidi Alberti

Ellen Alpart

Brittani Arkin

Joanne & Danny Aronson

Mara Schneider Baldwin

Candace Barbot

Kevin Beaty

Julie Parker Benello

Louisa & Mark Benjamin

Velma Black

Nikki Blakeman

Doug Block

Ellie Brecher

Carol Burgess

Katie Cappiello

Betsy Carter & Gary Hoenig

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Lilly Echeverria

Beth Esposito

Wendy Ettinger

Penny Falk

Melissa Fairbanks

Jared Feldman

Dr. Helen Fisher

Samantha Fox

Elyse Fuerth

Katharine & Sebastian Gordon

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Gail Laguna

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Tammy Loff

Glenna MacGregor

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Meg McInerney

Debbie McLeod

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Brian Paloski

Emily Parker

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Dr. Lance Raiffe

Andrea Reese

Gini Reticker

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Susan Schein

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Amanda Snyder

Rachel Starr

Antoinette Stern

Leah Stern

Paul Stevens

Simone Sutnick

Genna Terranova

Winston Townsend

Wendi Weinman

John Winer

Jena Zelkowitz

The Arts Effect

Bella Angel Imaging

Camp Woodward

Canon Camera

Christine's Cabaret & Steakhouse

The Entertainment Industry Incubator

The Hampton Inn

The Miami Herald

NYC Elite Gymnastics

Spark a Movement

Weblogik Design Studios

24 Karat Gentleman's Club

Original score composed & produced by

Paul Brill

at Casa de Rico y Luca Studios, Brooklyn

Additional orchestration by

Michael Leonhart

Additional recording BY

Robert L. Smith

Assisted by Tyler Hartman

at Avatar Studios, NYC

Musicians

Keyboards Michael Leonhart

Cello Yair Evnine

Violin, Viola Entcho Todorov

Bass Rob Jost

Drums Bill Dobrow

“The Fear”

written by

Lily Allen and Gregory Allen Kurstin

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Elizabeth Ziman

with Paul Brill

Digital Intermediate provided by

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Colorist Sean Dunckley

Colorist Rob Sciarratta

DI Producer Colin Davis

Color Assistant Jason Robinson

Head of Production Marcelo Gandola

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Co 3 Executive Producer Stefan Sonnenfeld

Sizzle Reel Music Supervisor

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Archival Consultant

Joy Ardizzone

Additional Camera

Daniel Raiffe

Dave Romagna

Nichole Romagna

To See More of Olivia's photos, visit

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