

## That Way Madness Lies...

**Sandra Luckow is a brilliant and talented film maker, not only providing insight through her work but providing awareness of mental health in our current culture. A prominent professor at Yale and Columbia University, Luckow taught the essentials throughout her specific courses. However, Luckow firsthand understood the severity of untreated mental illness. Luckow's brother, Duanne, was suffering from Schizophrenia – yet he documented every possible stage.**

**When Sandra visited her brother, he was previously placed in high security lockdown ward in Portland, Oregon. With the stress of court laws and a court-ordered involuntary commitment, the experience was both dangerous and tedious. During her visit, Duanne instructed Sandra to retrieve his iPhone, which was confiscated in the ward, and to create a documentary using the videos on his phone, depicting his life before present time. Little did Luckow know, there were 250 films on her brother's phone, showcasing the raw, disturbing, and real-life experience of someone suffering from untreated schizophrenia. From this, Sandra spent two years creating a documentary showing the ups, downs, and real-life authenticity through six years of recordings on her brother's iPhone. Sandra explained how she felt compelled to do this, to exemplify the way mental challenges and disorders really do affect an individual. It was time to attack the stigma that has been connected to our culture for far too long, and to showcase the true experiences we often neglect.**

### **Biography of Film:**

**"This is a specific harrowing story about a singular family trying to find its way through society's imperfections, stigmas and prejudice when dealing with mental illness. It is a search for answers — a free-fall into a quagmire of conflicting interests, policies, and despair. Three months into Duanne's first court-ordered 180-day commitment at Oregon State Hospital, Sandra Luckow, his sister and filmmaker, visited him. He gave her his iPhone with 250 video clips. He wanted his experience documented.**

**As the film proceeds, we see a myriad of seemingly insurmountable obstacles surround the Luckow family: a bill for almost \$118,000 from the hospital that could not medicate him; several mis-diagnoses from mental-health professionals; elderly parents suffering from severe denial and their own health issues; a tsunami of debt incurred by Duanne's involvement with internet scams; and Duanne's extraordinary ability to hide his illness and the secret life he lived from friends and family who knew nothing about it for so many for years."**

### **Goal of the Film:**

“Getting the film to the post-production finish-line is one thing. Not to diminish that accomplishment, but it must be acknowledged that it is only the first (and, perhaps, easier) step. Now it is about making sure that the audience who sees it grows exponentially with each viewing and the demand to repair the mental health systems grows from a whisper to a roar. This takes imagination and resources, planning and strategy.

We are applying to festivals, but there is a huge ‘non-industry’ audience that needs to see this film. We want it shown on Capitol Hill. If you know of places and organizations that would also like to have a screening, we will work with you. If you want to donate resources so that we can bring the film to your area, we will work with you. This is quintessential grass-root activism. Reach out — we want to hear from you!”

### **Goal of Sandra Luckow Concerning the Film (Written by Sandra Luckow):**

“My 48-year-old brother, Duanne, unwittingly chronicles his descent into madness with his iPhone's capabilities. It's brutal and honest.”

“My name is Sandra Luckow and I need your help to continue my ascent into "Madness." You think it can't possibly happen to you or anyone you care about. And, certainly, if fate dealt such a blow, it would be more manageable in the shadows. But the odds are not in your favor. An estimated 26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 or older--or about one in four adults -- suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. Even though mental disorders are widespread in the population, the main burden of illness is concentrated in a much smaller portion of about 6 percent, or 1 in 17 who suffer from a serious mental illness. In addition, mental disorders are the leading cause of disability in the U.S. and Canada for ages 15-44. (The Kim Foundation)

"That Way Madness Lies"... (a line from "King Lear," Act III, Scene IV) is a feature-length documentary film about my brother's rare late-onset paranoid schizophrenia told, in-part, from his point-of-view with a collection of iPhone video clips he made before being committed to 180 days at the Oregon State Hospital in Portland. His illness has been an unpredictable, hellish journey through a landscape including his friends and family.

Filmmaker Sandra Luckow with brother Duanne Luckow circa 1969, Aberdeen Washington.  
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The Background...

During the spring recesses from the undergraduate film production workshops that I teach at Yale and Columbia Universities, I visited my brother in the high security lockdown ward with the ironic acronym of POSH -- Portland, Oregon State Hospital. Getting a court-ordered involuntary commitment was a tedious, bureaucratic, dangerous ordeal. Duanne told me his iPhone had been confiscated because he had been recording on the floor. He wanted me to retrieve it in order to extract the footage and make a documentary film of his experience. What he did not tell me at the time is that the phone contained approximately 250 video clips filmed over the course of 2 years that unwittingly chronicle his ever-loosening grip on reality. The footage is

raw, disturbing and includes a scary rant during a suicide attempt the top of Multnomah Falls. His own youthful days as a student filmmaker enhance the quality and substance of the videos even if his intention was not a narrative aesthetic. Since he gave me the footage over a year ago, I have returned to Portland bi-monthly with a camera and recorded our battles with this insidious illness. This is not a film I want to make, but feel compelled to make. The exposure, vulnerability and familial tragedy we feel is compensated by the power this film has to illuminate. My parents, both proud and private people, participate despite the shame and stigma because they have hope that this film might provide insight and understanding. My father's dementia has been exacerbated considerably by the bizarre and frustrating behavior of my brother. We missed all the clues in his young adulthood, perhaps blinded and dazzled by his talents, as well as his adoring parents and loyal friends. The reason for the rarity of the "late-onset" is that we did not know how to read the atypical clues. Doctors have hypothesized that symptoms of the illness did not manifest themselves in his early adulthood because he was tobacco, drug and alcohol free. It is unclear if addiction to these substances exposes the mental illness, or if the mental illness is caused by addiction; it is possible that mental illness is simply more easily identified when one is being treated for the effects of substance abuse.

I showed some of Duanne's footage to Larry Davidson, Professor of Psychiatry and Program Director for Recovery and Community Health at Yale University School of Medicine, who feels it is imperative that this footage be used in the context of a documentary film. He writes, "This will be a gripping, disturbing and necessary film. Ms. Luckow provides a window into the subjective experiences of a person with a psychotic disorder in interactions with his family and broader community. This is the only film project I know of that rises to the task of representing the terrors and tragedies of psychosis accurately and with immediacy ... it can truly serve educational and advocacy functions."