

*In life, there will be many adventures...*



# INDESTRUCTIBLE

"An intimate, lacerating, absorbing visual diary...  
*Indestructible* is an immersive, edifying journey of  
acceptance, setback and strength." -*VARIETY*

a film by Ben Byer  
an ALS Film Fund Production  
2008 • 113 min

contact: Rebecca Rush  
312-848-5919 • [alsfilm@gmail.com](mailto:alsfilm@gmail.com)  
[www.indestructiblefilm.com](http://www.indestructiblefilm.com)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                             |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| FILM INFO.....              | pg. 3  |
| CONTACT.....                | pg. 3  |
| COPY.....                   | pg. 4  |
| DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT.....   | pg. 5  |
| CAST.....                   | pg. 6  |
| DIRECTOR AND CREW BIOS..... | pg. 9  |
| CREDITS.....                | pg. 11 |
| SCREENINGS AND AWARDS.....  | pg. 12 |
| REVIEWS.....                | pg. 14 |
| TESTIMONIALS.....           | pg. 15 |
| PRODUCTION NOTES.....       | pg. 16 |
| STILLS.....                 | pg. 17 |
| POSTER.....                 | pg. 18 |

## FILM INFO

Film Title: **Indestructible**

Director: **Ben Byer**

Running Time: **113 min**

Genre: **Documentary**

Country of Origin: **USA**

Filming Locations: **USA, Greece, China, Jamaica, Israel, and Egypt**

Languages: **English, Greek, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Tibetan  
(with English subtitles)**

Shooting Format: **DVCam**

Aspect Ratio: **16X9 anamorphic**

Year of Production: **2008**

Screening Format: **DVCam, Digibeta, DVD**

## CONTACT

**Producer:**

Rebecca Rush

P.O. Box 5126

Winston-Salem, NC 27113

Phone: 312-848-5919

Fax: 336-245-3724

Email: [alsfilm@gmail.com](mailto:alsfilm@gmail.com)

<http://www.indestructiblefilm.com>

# COPY

**TAG LINE:**

In life, there will be many adventures...

**LOG LINE (14 words):**

A young filmmaker diagnosed with a fatal neurological disease documents his life on camera.

**ABOUT THE FILM (98 words):**

Diagnosed with ALS, a fatal neurodegenerative disease, filmmaker Ben Byer starts documenting his life on camera. What begins as a series of video diaries grows into an epic journey spanning three years and six countries as he scours the globe looking for answers - and a cure.

A cinematic adventure filled with extraordinary characters, breathtaking landscapes and abundant humor, *Indestructible* is beautifully shot by Academy Award™ nominee Roko Belic (*Genghis Blues*). In his first feature film, Byer takes us on a visually stunning global quest to survive as he begins to understand the power of the human condition.

**SYNOPSIS (199 words):**

Diagnosed with ALS, a fatal neurodegenerative disease, 31 year-old Ben Byer begins documenting his life on camera. What begins as a series of video diaries grows into a three-year journey as he searches for answers, and maybe even a cure.

Joined by his childhood friend Roko Belic (Academy Award™ nominee, *Genghis Blues*) as his cameraman, Ben takes the audience on a daring first-person ride through the world of ALS. As he meets with medical experts and other ALS sufferers, Ben reveals a hidden world in which people struggle to stand, to speak, and to remain alive as they await the breakthrough that might save them.

In China, Ben meets the inventor of an herbal compound that may prolong his life, an All-American weightlifter with ALS trying to cure himself through Tai Chi and acupuncture, fortune-tellers, monks and many others. When he discovers a radical fetal-cell transplant procedure in Beijing, Ben must decide if the operation's potential to restore his body outweighs its danger.

At once an impassioned cry for change and an artistic triumph from a filmmaker persevering against the odds, *Indestructible* delivers a universal message about the necessity of hope and the tragic joy of being alive.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"In September of 2002, at 31 years of age, I was diagnosed with ALS, a neurodegenerative disease that kills 90% of its victims within five years. At the time, I was working as a playwright and actor in Chicago, running a painting company and changing my son's diapers. Nine months later I began to make a documentary film chronicling my new life, not one I had chosen and unlike anything I ever could have imagined. Traveling by myself and then with a small crew, we filmed the isolated world of ALS, interviewing patients and their families, medical professionals, scientists, religious figures and almost anyone we could find. I wanted to know (perhaps naively), 'What does it all mean?'

"*Indestructible* is an attempt to understand and accept the reality of a mysterious and deadly disease that has brought science to its knees, an illness that is a paradigm for life's ultimate challenges. My personal story in the film, and that of every ALS patient, follows this frightening path into an uncertain future. To show the broad and difficult landscape of medicine for ALS, or lack thereof, we have documented mainstream approaches, controversial stem cell surgeries, Chinese herbal treatments, vitamin supplements, vibrating beds, Yoga, and almost anything that might stop the progression of this horrific killer.

"My initial purpose in making this film was to share the extraordinary moments, both dark and light, of a life with ALS, and there are many. I now believe *Indestructible* will be a catalyst, and mark a turning point for the millions who have and will suffer the wrath of this elusive beast, bringing us one step closer to what every sick person wants - a cure. *Indestructible* has at times provided answers to my questions, if only momentarily, and they are no substitute for my health. In the meantime, I will continue to search. When we unlock the secrets of ALS we will better understand not only neurodegeneration, but also aging, environment, psychology, spirituality, and what it truly means to be both alive and facing mortality every day."

-Ben Byer  
March 2004

## CAST



**Ben Byer** was diagnosed with ALS in September 2002 at 31 years of age. After a career as an actor and playwright, he began making *Indestructible* as a way to continue working despite the debilitating effects of the disease. After completing *Indestructible* and witnessing its theatrical release, Ben Byer died of ALS on July 3, 2008.



**Stephen Byer** became a full-time patient advocate when his son, Ben, was diagnosed with ALS in 2002. One of his major efforts has been to expand the use of a previously little-known herbal treatment for ALS called BuNaoGao, which has now been used by over 430 patients. Prior to that he was a private art dealer and business executive.

Steve is the father of five children, has eight grandchildren and has been married to his wife Barbara for 43 years.



**John Byer** was three when filming began on *Indestructible*. Now he is seven. He likes Legos, *Star Wars* and baseball. His favorite foods are spaghetti, broccoli and candy. When John grows up he intends on becoming a police officer.



**Danny Vyvey** was diagnosed with ALS in 2002. The owner of a restaurant supply business, he became the first European to undergo Dr. Huang's controversial OEC transplant. Feeling that the operation had slowed his progression, a year later Danny returned to Beijing and underwent the procedure a second time. In 2006, he and his girlfriend had a baby girl and in December of 2007, Danny passed away from ALS.



**Dr. Oliver Sacks** was born in 1933 in London, England and earned his medical degree at Queen's College, Oxford. Since 1965, he has lived in New York, where he is clinical professor of neurology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, adjunct professor of neurology at the NYU School of Medicine and consultant neurologist to the Little Sisters of the Poor.

As a physician and a writer, Oliver Sacks is concerned above all with the ways in which individuals survive and adapt to different neurological diseases and conditions, and what this experience can tell us about the human brain and mind. His books exploring these themes have been bestsellers around the world and are used widely in universities in courses on neuroscience, writing, ethics, philosophy and sociology.



**Annie Papoulias** was diagnosed with ALS in 2000 at the age of 42. She was born in 1951 in Athens and has been married to her husband, Tony, since the age of 17. They have two daughters, Anastasia and Demi. Prior to her disease, Annie was a business administrator and Tony served as the director of information and technology for the Samos Agriculture Cooperative until his retirement in 2004. Annie is still alive and is cared for by her husband, daughters and parents at their home on the island of

Samos, Greece.



**Dr. Stanley H. Appel** is Chair of the Department of Neurology and Co-Founder of the Methodist Neurological Institute, and Professor of Neurology at Weill Medical College of Cornell University. He serves as the Director of the MDA/ALS Research and Clinical Center and is the former Director of the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine and previously served as the Director of the Jerry Lewis Neuromuscular Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine

in Houston, Texas. He has authored some 175 articles in medical journals and is on the editorial board of the journal *ALS and Other Motor Neuron Disorders*.

In 2005, Dr. Appel received the Forbes Norris Award from the International Alliance of ALS/MND Associations.



**Todd vanBodegom-Smith** is a former three-time All-American weightlifter and ran a health club until his diagnosis of ALS in March 2002. The following year, he moved to China to receive traditional therapies such as massage, acupuncture, Tai Chi and herbal remedies. He continues to live in Kunming with his new wife, Fan Fan.



**Dr. Hongyung Huang** received his medical degree at the Xinjiang Medical Institute in China before spending the late 1990s as a postdoctoral student at Rutgers University, where he was introduced to olfactory-ensheathing glial cells. In 2001, he did his first OEC transplant at Chaoyang Hospital, Beijing, and has done over 600 treatments for spinal cord injuries and over 150 for ALS patients.



**Dr. YongChao Xia** worked as a neurologist at Beijing Medical College (currently Medical School of Beijing University) for ten years until 1969, when he was reassigned to Provincial Hospital of Chinese Medicine Gansu Province in northwest China as a result of the Cultural Revolution. There he provided medical services to locals including many poor farming communities and also began experimenting with traditional herbal remedies. This led to the invention of BuNaoGao (“decoction for brain

nourishment”), a treatment for ALS he developed over the course of 25 years of research.



**Dr. Daniel H. Gordis** is Vice-President of the Mandel Foundation, Israel and Director of its Mandel Leadership Institute. Since moving to Israel and joining the work of the Mandel Foundation in 1998, Dr. Gordis has been writing and speaking extensively on Israeli society and the challenges facing Israel's future. His work has appeared in a variety of journals and newspapers, including the New York Times and the New York Times Magazine and has authored nine books.



**Dr. Teepu Siddique** has directed the Neuromuscular Disorders Program at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine since 1991. In 1993, Dr. Siddique co-discovered the very first known cause of ALS: mutations in the SOD1 (superoxide dismutase) gene on chromosome 21. In 2001, his lab discovered the mutation responsible for juvenile onset ALS.

His awards include the Forbes Norris Award from the International Alliance of ALS/Motor Neuron Disease Associations in 1995; the Sheila Essey Award for ALS Research from the American Academy of Neurology and ALS Association, and the Third Annual Eleanor and Lou Gehrig Award from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1997.

In September of 2002, he diagnosed Ben Byer with ALS.



**Dr. Paul Alan Cox** serves as the director of the Institute for Ethnomedicine in Provo, Utah and was formerly the director of the National Tropical Botanic Garden in Hawaii. His work providing scientific validation of traditional plant wisdom around the world has led to the development of five drugs currently in different stages of development, including prostratin, which seems to inhibit growth of HIV. In addition, he leads a team researching the entire canon of Swedish healing plants as the King Carl XVI Gustaf Professor of Environmental Science.

Dr. Cox is also a researcher with ties to the NCI, an author, a husband and father of five, and, if certain Samoan tribal chiefs are to be believed, the reincarnation of their god Nafanua.



## DIRECTOR AND CREW BIOS



### **Ben Byer – Director/Writer/Producer**

Ben Byer was born in Chicago in 1971. He was diagnosed with ALS in 2002. During the 31 years between these two occasions he has done many things, mostly legal. After graduating from Evanston Township High School he studied Journalism at Indiana University and Film Theory at The University of Paris where he made short films on 8mm. A job as a translator at the Cannes Film Festival led him to Hollywood where he worked for a producer of B-movies. Returning to Chicago he took up acting and has since performed on many of that city's notable stages including Steppenwolf Theatre, Organic Theatre, Trap Door Theatre, European Repertory Company, Circle Theatre, Café Voltaire and the Stadschowburg Theatre in Amsterdam. Like all struggling actors he left for Los Angeles and found himself selling beef out of the back of a truck. This unsavory experience inspired him to write his first play, *Take it Deep*, which was produced to much success shortly before he was diagnosed with a fatal neurodegenerative disease. Unable to write or perform, Ben turned his attention towards film directing, a vocation more suited to the disabled. In 2003 he co-founded ALS Film Fund with his sister Rebeccah Rush to produce original works of art, whether film, theatre, sculpture or other intended to create positive change for ALS sufferers around the world.



### **Rebeccah Rush – Producer**

Rebeccah Rush is a newcomer to the world of filmmaking. Since earning her BFA in glassblowing and crafts from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana in 1996, she has studied with and worked for many notable glass artists around the United States. In fall of 1999, Rebeccah returned to Chicago to teach and work with glass in addition to producing *Indestructible*. She brings an extensive array of relevant professional history to this project, which includes marketing, sales, project management, event planning, publishing, bartending and administration. As Ben's sister, Rebeccah has a strong personal attachment to this project. She resides in Winston Salem, North Carolina with her husband Drew and their sons Henry and Elliot.



### **Roko Belic – Cinematographer/Co-Producer**

Roko Belic received an Academy Award nomination, the Audience Award at the Sundance Film festival and numerous other awards around the world for his film *Genghis Blues*. His credits include programming on PBS, FOX, KRON and Tuva Television. Belic's project and assignments have taken him to over 20 countries including Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Tibet, Malawi, Croatia, Republic of Tuva and China. Belic is in the final stages of his second feature film, *Twilight Men*. Through his work, Belic hopes "to play a role in bridging the gaps which still hold nations and people apart."



**Tim Baron – Editor/Associate Producer**

Tim Baron began working on *Indestructible* as a part-time job that proceeded to consume his entire life for the next three and a half years. In addition to writing and directing several short films, Tim has worked as a freelance editor for the past seven years. His credits include *Charlotte Sometimes*, *Down into Happiness* and *The Fire Within*. Recently, Tim co-founded the

documentary production company Loudspeaker Productions. He is currently directing and editing their first feature, *Laborland*.



**Alison Chesley – Composer**

Alison Chesley is a Chicago-based cellist who has become known for her unique sound and compelling stage performance. Using the tools of a lead guitarist to compose and perform what are essentially rock songs without words, she channels her sensibilities and experience as a rock musician through a classical instrument. A founding member of Epic Records recording artist Verbow, Alison has also worked and recorded with musicians such as Bob Mould, Disturbed, Frank Orrall, Fred Lonberg-Holm, Mono and

Archer Prewitt, among others. In addition to her debut solo album, *Helen Money*, she also recently completed the full-length album *Aural Anarchy* with poet Krista Franklin, exploring the life, work, mythology and influence of Jimi Hendrix, and is currently composer-in-residence for Mordine and Co. Dance Theater.



**Dave Suycott – Sound Engineer**

Back in the early-eighties, during down time in his former first love and career as a high profile international jewel thief, David had taken up the art of digitizing and manipulating audio. After deciding to leave his controversial life behind him, he embarked on a life-long pursuit, a trans-dimensional pilgrimage if you will, of manipulating the reality of what you hear in your everyday life. [DavidSuycott.com](http://DavidSuycott.com)

# CREDITS

|                                 |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Director/Producer               | Ben Byer       |
| Producer                        | Rebecca Rush   |
| Cinematographer/<br>Co-Producer | Roko Belic     |
| Editor/<br>Associate Producer   | Tim Baron      |
| Composer                        | Alison Chesley |
| Sound Engineer                  | Dave Suycott   |

## CAST

|                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ben Byer                 | John Byer                 |
| Josephine<br>Christopher | Rebecca Rush              |
| Steve Byer               | Barbara Byer              |
| Teepu Siddique           | Robert Miller             |
| Sue Zuckerman            | Cary Smith                |
| Marty Konieczny          | Ronnie Abdinoor           |
| Barry Coughlin           | Elio Marzullo             |
| Steven Albert            | Howard Bergert            |
| Alvin Mitchell           | Tony Papoulias            |
| Anaximander Thales       | Annie Papoulias           |
| Dmitri Papoulias         | Oliver Sacks              |
| Granny Papoulias         | Anastasia Papoulias       |
| Miriam Dick              | Hiu Hung Huang            |
| Yong Chao Xia            | Wang Shouren              |
| Roko Belic               | Todd vanBodegom-<br>Smith |
| Fan Fan                  | Young Laotia              |
| Qi Pie                   | Hongyun Huang             |
| Danny Vyvey              | Stanley Appel             |
| Dwight Stang             | Paul Alan Cox             |
| Daniel Gordis            | Josh Byer                 |

## CREW

### Additional Camera

|                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Tim Baron                | Ben Byer       |
| Steve Byer               | Patricia Calvo |
| Josephine<br>Christopher | Tyler Dallman  |
| Miriam Dick              | Hiu Hung Huang |
| Reuel Kaplan             | Dr. Lee        |
| Jake Rademacher          | Glen Miller    |
| Kevin Riley              | Barry Wein     |

## China Crew

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Miriam Dick    | Production<br>Coordinator/<br>2nd Unit Director |
| Hiu Hung Huang | Translator                                      |
| Lan Zoulan     | CCTV<br>Representative                          |

## Post-Production

|                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| Brett Sutton     | Web Master    |
| Tim Vonderloh    | Web Design    |
| Torrey Hyatt     | Web Support   |
| Drew Rush        | Tech Support  |
| Mengqi Xia       | Translator    |
| Tyler Dallmann   | Logger        |
| Miriam Dick      | Logger        |
| Stephanie Fee    | Logger        |
| Mia Fiorella     | Logger        |
| Jessica Galloy   | Logger        |
| Maya Kuper       | Logger        |
| Patricia Stewart | Logger        |
| Kourtney Vahle   | Logger        |
| Erin Yerges      | Logger        |
| John Byer        | Tape Wrangler |

## Production Assistance

|               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| Josh Byer     | Steve Byer  |
| Arnie Draiman | Julie Ford  |
| Torrey Hyatt  | Richard Liu |
| Liatte Miller |             |

## Featuring Songs By

|                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| Chinbat Batmunkh | Greg Brown    |
| Frédéric Chopin  | W.A. Mozart   |
| Beth Orton       | John T. Rice  |
| Luke Rothschild  | David Suycott |

Original score produced and recorded at  
Mike Lapchick Studio  
and idigmusic studios, Chicago.

# SCREENINGS AND AWARDS

## IN RELEASE

### **Gene Siskel Film Center**

July 18<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>  
164 N. State Street  
Chicago, IL 60601

### **The Roxie Cinema**

May 30<sup>th</sup> – June 5<sup>th</sup>  
3117 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103

### **Laemmle Theatres**

**Grande 4-Plex**  
May 16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>  
345 S. Figueroa St.  
Downtown Los Angeles, 90071

### **Westgate Art Cinemas**

May 2<sup>nd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>  
340 Westgate Mall  
Madison WI, 53711

## IN FESTIVALS

### **Astoria International**

**Film Festival**  
Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>  
Astoria, OR

### **Split Film Festival**

September 13<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>  
Split, CROATIA

### **Kansas International Film Festival**

September 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Overland Park, KS

### **Reykjavik International Film Festival**

September 25<sup>th</sup> - October 5<sup>th</sup>  
Reykjavik, Iceland

### **Raindance Film Festival**

October 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>  
London, ENGLAND

### **New Orleans Film Festival**

October 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>  
New Orleans, LA

### **ReelHeART International**

**Film Festival**  
June 16<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>  
Toronto, CANADA

### **Brooklyn Independent**

**Cinema Series**  
May 5<sup>th</sup>  
Brooklyn, NY

### **Roving Eye**

### **Documentary Film Festival**

Apr. 6<sup>th</sup>  
Providence, RI  
\*\*\*WINNER – JURY PRIZE\*\*\*  
**BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY**

### **Oxford International**

**Film Festival**  
Apr. 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>  
Oxford, OH  
\*\*\*WINNER – JURY PRIZE\*\*\*  
**BEST OF FESTIVAL**  
**BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY**

### **Wisconsin**

### **Film Festival**

Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>  
Madison, WI

**Thessaloniki International  
Documentary Film Festival**  
Mar. 7<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>  
Thessaloniki, GREECE  
**\*\*\*RUNNER UP–  
AUDIENCE AWARD\*\*\*  
BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY**

**Lake County  
Film Festival**  
Mar. 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008  
Libertyville, IL  
**\*\*\*WINNER – JURY PRIZE\*\*\*  
BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY**

**Byron Bay  
Film Festival**  
Feb. 29<sup>th</sup> – Mar. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
Byron Bay, AUSTRALIA  
**\*\*\*WINNER – JURY PRIZE\*\*\*  
BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY**

**Waisman Center  
University of Wisconsin-Madison**  
Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
Madison, WI

**Festivus  
Film Festival**  
Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
Denver, CO

**Midwest Independent  
Film Festival**  
Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007  
Chicago, IL  
**\*\*\*WINNER\*\*\*  
BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY  
\*\*\*NOMINATED\*\*\*  
BEST DIRECTOR  
BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY  
BEST EDITING**

**Newburyport Documentary  
Film Festival**  
Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
Newburyport, MA

**Montreal World  
Film Festival**  
Aug. 31<sup>st</sup> – Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007  
Montreal, CANADA

**Cinequest  
Film Festival**  
Mar. 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
San Jose, CA  
**\*\*\*WINNER – JURY PRIZE\*\*\*  
BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY**

## REVIEWS

"*Indestructible* is a stirring narrative, a movie of epic dramatic force that holds its own with the best of any major work of cinema."

**-Beverly Berning, Culture Vulture**

"An intimate, lacerating, absorbing visual diary of the three-year onset of terminal disease Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) in aspiring filmmaker Ben Byer, *Indestructible* is an immersive, edifying journey of acceptance, setback and strength." **-Eddie Cockrell, Variety**

"Gripping...courageous." **-Gary Goldstein, LA Times**

"...an autobiographical *tour-de-force*..."

**-Harry van Versendaal, International Herald Tribune**

"Byer masters the art of personal reportage."

**-Bill Stamets, Chicago Sun-Times**

"...a wrenching reminder that the answers to our most essential questions must come from within." **-Sam Sweet, LA Weekly**

"Unforgettable...much more than just a film." **-Shelley Gabert, Film Stew**

"Radiant!" **-Masha Savitz, The Epoch Times**

"Byer demonstrates the humanity and humor that can be retained even in the face of debilitating disease." **-SFist**

"★★★★! This is a must see film for everyone that celebrates life."

**-Patrick McDonald, The Last Blog in Cyberspace**

"Intimate, often funny, at moments hopeful and at others infuriating."

**-Gayle Worland, Wisconsin State Journal**

"Byer exudes an ebullient and celebratory attitude, and experiences a series of unspeakable joys and sorrows, carrying the audience along with him."

**-Nathan Southern, All Movie Guide**

"Definitely the most fearless and personal (and also the best) documentary of [Cinequest]." **-Jason Wiener, Jason Watches Movies**

"One of the most touching, powerful films I've ever seen."

**-Paul Aflalo, Citizen Shift**

"...a rare spirit...Ben's inner journey is beyond words...phenomenal."

**-John Campbell, Byron Shire Echo**

[read more reviews...](#)

# TESTIMONIALS

"It's an incredibly brave and powerful piece of storytelling."

**Joanna Rudnick, Kartemquin Films**

"Your film will live in my heart while working on this disease. It was simply inspirational. Every second."

**Clive N. Svendsen, Ph.D.**

"Freakin' awesome, great and put together tight. A great piece of work. Great movie."

**Peter DeFaria**

"I found it to be extraordinary."

**Ken Moses, Ph.D.**

"I think it is one of the most amazing and beautiful things I've ever seen."

**Laura Zinger**

"I just spent the night watching *Indestructible* and I'm sitting here stunned, awed, devastated and rethinking the meaning of life. Thank you for making this movie, you have forever changed me."

**Wendy Keller**

"I can't get it out of my head. And heart. It's impressive ... heartrending, scary, moving, smart, [and] surprising in every frame."

**Bob Curry**

"Watching your heroic account was one of the greatest film experiences we've ever had and we were completely blown away."

**Darja Bajagic and Aleksandar Stojakovic**

"I am so incredibly grateful to have finally seen the film last night; I will hold it close to my heart as the impact in so many ways was so profound. It made me rethink much of how I am dealing personally with my father's terminal illness, and that feels like an unexpected gift."

**Wendy Kopald**

"This film affected me in a way that I never thought a documentary would."

**Jorge Godinez**

"[*Indestructible*] was the most intense, heartbreaking, phenomenal, most amazing film I have ever seen. Counting every movie I have seen in my life I favor this one the most."

**Christopher Ledesma**

[read more testimonials...](#)

## PRODUCTION NOTES

Nine months after receiving my ALS diagnosis, life as I had known it was rapidly disappearing. My wife and I had split up and I was living with my sister, Rebeccah. My son John had just turned three. The painting company I owned had no work lined up and acting jobs had vanished. I was unable to type and spent most of my time with my son or recording my thoughts on a miniature tape recorder. After enjoying the first thirty years of my life as a robust, healthy, active man with the world at my fingertips, I suddenly found myself on the slow road to hell. The demands of parenting a toddler kept me from jumping into traffic. My father's feverish search for an effective therapy only added to my discomfort. I knew he wasn't handling my diagnosis well. However, I was excited by BuNaoGao, a Chinese herbal therapy he had found. It seemed promising.

On a May afternoon, I had one of the few true moments of clarity, vision and purpose in my life when I saw the experience I was living needed to be made into a film and I needed to make it. It was as if there was a way to walk the long road ahead with a destination: the completion of a great film. I had wanted to make a feature since my first short films in Paris. I suddenly had total access to an epic battle between life and death; a drama like no other. I found myself at once elated and sickened. Thrilled that I had in my pocket the workings of the project of a lifetime and disturbed at how happy I was, considering I would be filming my own struggle with one of the deadliest and most debilitating diseases in the world of medicine.

Still uncertain if I wanted to really take the plunge, I called Roko Belic, a childhood friend and Oscar-nominated filmmaker for *Genghis Blues*. I told him what I was thinking, half-hoping he would try and talk me out of it. His enthusiastic response, however, sealed my fate. His total support and passion for the project now made it impossible for me to back away. Roko sent me a camera and microphone that day from his home in California, gave me a few rudimentary lessons on how to work it over the phone and said... "The adventure begins."

[read more production notes...](#)



# STILLS



[click for high-resolution image](#)



[click for high-resolution image](#)



[click for high-resolution image](#)



[click for high-resolution image](#)



**"An intimate, lacerating, absorbing visual diary...  
*Indestructible* is an immersive, edifying journey of  
acceptance, setback and strength."**

**-VARIETY**

**"...an autobiographical  
tour de force."**

**-International Herald Tribune**

**"...a rare spirit ...  
beyond words ... phenomenal."**

**-Byron Shire Echo**



# INDESTRUCTIBLE

*In life, there will be many adventures...*

ALS FILM FUND presents 'INDESTRUCTIBLE' a film by BEN BYER

stars BEN BYER, JOHN BYER, STEVE BYER, DANIEL GORDIS Ph.D., Dr. HONGJUN HUANG, OLIVER SACKS M.D.

producer REBECCA RUSH executive producer ROKO BELIC editor TIM BARON sound designer DAVID SLYCOTT

visual score by ALSON CHESLEY camera and sound by GREG BROWN, JASON NARDUCY and NORA O'CONNOR

© 2014. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED BY BEN BYER.

[www.indestructiblefilm.com](http://www.indestructiblefilm.com)

