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Director: Habib Azar, habib@armlessthemovie.com, 412-953-7290



Azar Productions
presents

ARMLESS

LOGLINE

In this off-kilter comedy, a woman comes to terms with her husband's strange secret: a compulsive desire to cut off his arms.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Armless tells the story of a man who suffers from Body Integrity Identity Disorder (B.I.I.D.), a real-life psychological condition in which an individual paradoxically doesn't feel "whole" unless he loses one or more major limbs. When he leaves his wife and goes to find a doctor willing to amputate his arms, it triggers a twisted romp filled with mistaken identities, missed chances, and tragic consequences. Strange as it sounds, this real-life condition has sprung up in pop culture with increasing frequency—in episodes of *Nip/Tuck* and *Grey's Anatomy* among others. Unlike many pop culture treatments of B.I.I.D., which aim to shock, *Armless* explores the metaphorical resonance of this psychological condition—as a symbol for the secrets that all of us have. It is a quirkily funny, strangely poignant story about love, lies, marriage...and amputation.

ALTERNATE SYNOPSIS

For years, John, an insurance executive living in the suburbs, has secretly wanted to have his arms chopped off. He gathers the courage to leave his loving wife, Anna, and travel to New York City to find a physician willing to amputate. Convinced that John is simply having an affair, Anna is determined to find him—and cut off his balls. So begins Emmy Award winning director Habib Azar's debut feature *Armless*, a twisted romp of comedic drama filled with mistaken identities, missed chances, and revealing consequences. Azar deftly crafts a thoughtful, off-kilter farce out of Kyle Jarrow's tautly written play by the same name.



PRINCIPLE CAST/CREW

John – Daniel London (*Synecdoche, New York*)
Anna – Janel Moloney (*West Wing*)
Dr. Phillips – Matt Walton (*Burn After Reading*)
Jenny – Zoe Lister-Jones (*Arranged*)
Marie – Laurie Kennedy (*Winter Passing*)

Exec. Producers – Habib Azar, Hsiano Bian
Director – Habib Azar
Writer – Kyle Jarrow
Cinematographer – Orson Robbins-Pianka
Editor – Sarah Smith
Art Director – Eunice Bae
Original Score – Habib Azar
Songs by Kyle Jarrow & Nathan Leigh
Songs performed by Super Mirage

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Armless offers a dark, philosophical fable about marriage and acceptance—speaking to those who fake it and still make it, and perhaps especially to those who want to change but still stay the same.

LONG SYNOPSIS

A husband with a bizarre secret. A wife who's determined to learn it. A doctor who's desperate for some excitement in his life. A receptionist who's sick of excitement. And a mother with an Asian fetish. All these lives come crashing into one another in this quirkily funny, strangely poignant movie about love, lies, marriage...and amputation.

Filmed in New York City, *Armless* is the first feature by Emmy Award winning director Habib Azar. *Armless* is based on the award-winning play of the same name by OBIE Award winner Kyle Jarrow, called "a sleek, taut comedic drama" by *New York Magazine* and "an affecting comedy [both] droll and humane" by *The Village Voice*. The film features the talents of Janel Moloney (*The West Wing*), Daniel London (*Old Joy*, *Synecdoche, New York*), Zoe Lister-Jones (*Arranged*), Matt Walton (*Burn After Reading*), Keith Powell (*30 Rock*), and Laurie Kennedy (*Winter Passing*).

As *Armless* opens, John (Daniel London) is leaving a voice message for his wife, Anna (Janel Moloney). "I'm going away to the city," he says, "and you will never see me again. Try not to panic." When Anna gets this mysterious message, panic is *exactly* what she does. Convinced that John is having an affair, she pays a visit to his mother (Laurie Kennedy), hoping she might have some information to offer. However, this visit only yields more questions, and soon the two women set off together on a quest to find John and find out what he's hiding.

John suffers from Body Integrity Identity Disorder (B.I.I.D.), a psychological condition in which an individual paradoxically doesn't feel "whole" unless he loses one or more major limbs. Strange as it sounds, this real-life condition has sprung up in pop culture with increasing frequency—in episodes of *Nip/Tuck* and *Grey's Anatomy*, among others. Unlike many pop culture treatments of B.I.I.D., which aim to shock, *Armless* explores the metaphorical resonance of this psychological condition—as a symbol for the secrets that all of us have.

Armless is a twisted romp filled with mistaken identities, missed chances, and tragic consequences. *Armless* utilizes the structure of a classic farce, combining it with a darkly philosophical tone. It explores the ways in which a culture with so much wealth can come to fetishize suffering. But at its heart, *Armless* is a fable about acceptance—a meditation on trust, love and marriage.

FESTIVALS

Sundance Film Festival, Park City, Utah, USA (2010)

Raindance Film Festival, London UK, *nominated for best debut and micro budget feature* (2010)

DeadCenter Film Festival, Oklahoma City, OK, USA (2010)

New Hampshire Film Festival, Portsmouth, NH, USA (2010)



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PRESS

Sundance Film Festival Coverage

“An entire cast that brilliantly plays roles tuned to perfection” *Huffington Post*

“a heartbreaking performance by Moloney as a woman trying to understand her husband's hidden desire”
Salt Lake Tribune

“a fascinating little handful of thoughts, themes, and ideas” *Cinematical.com*

“a generous dose of comedic strokes” *Ioncinema.com*

“the clever dialogue and quirky character interactions...make this film so noteworthy” *SLUG Magazine*

“Azar turns a story of self mutilation into a comedy of ridiculousness” *Review St. Louis*

“a nice level of absurd comedy, paying off in a nice climax” *Salt Lake City Weekly*

On the *Armless* Trailer/Sundance Announcement

[*Armless*] “will be a much talked about item at this year's fest.” *Ioncinema.com*

“we're keeping a close eye on this one” *Twitch.com*

“Azar deftly crafts a thoughtful, off-kilter farce” Sundance Film Festival synopsis

On the original play *Armless*, adapted for the movie by Kyle Jarrow

“a sleek, taut comedic drama” *New York Magazine*

“an affecting comedy [both] droll and humane” *The Village Voice*

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

We all have secrets. Some are embarrassing, and we only keep them from certain people. Then there are the secrets that are so dark and debilitating that we've never told them to anyone. Would anyone ever understand a deep desire to lose a limb? Would anyone ever sympathize with that desire so profoundly that they would help amputate? These are the questions that *Armless* takes on.

And I thought—perfect material for a comedy!

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What drew me so strongly to Kyle Jarrow's brilliant script was the effervescence of his comedy. There is a certain levity that allows this story to rise above sensationalism. The movie isn't solely about a disturbed man's plight—it's about a wife who is terrified that the bubble of her suburban utopia might burst. It's about the ridiculous lengths that people go in order to battle upper middle class ennui; the wife who pops pills to make it through the day; the doctor who talks of trips he will never take; the older woman who seduces young men in unexpected places.

The personalities that collide in *Armless* all have their own secrets—and yes, some are just a little stranger than others. At the core of all this gloom is a sentimental heart. *Armless* is a meditation on love and acceptance and explores the depths of a husband and wife's love for each other in the face of a weird secret desire. What are the limits of trust and what are we willing to live with?

The challenge in going after all of these themes is that we had to find a way to straddle the line between farce, melodrama and sensationalism. *Armless* isn't a slasher movie or a trivial comedy, but it isn't a sappy love story either. It is in the intersection of these genres that we create a singular tone that is both quirky and poignant.

Q&A WITH THE DIRECTOR HABIB AZAR

What drew you to the topic of Body Integrity Identity Disorder (BIID)?

I don't think of *Armless* as a movie about BIID. It's partly a movie about a person with a secret that is so dark, so deviant, that he believes that no one will ever understand or accept it. The character John (Daniel London) is debilitated by this secret desire. He is also debilitated by his upper-middle class ennui. He never feels any emotion in his life and yearns to experience something, *anything*. I think we all have a twinge of that in us—secret desires or feelings that we keep to ourselves because we believe people will think less of us if they know them. I think screenwriter Kyle Jarrow mined this theme in a very clear and elegant way in the script, and I was excited to explore it.

Then there is the character of Anna (Janel Moloney) who I think the movie is really about. The core of the story is her journey to chase after the love of her life who has mysteriously left her and then come to terms with what she discovers. Her desire to maintain the superficially good life she had, albeit full of lies and secrets, and the lengths she goes to do that is very poignant to me. Much of her love is born out of fear, and I find that strangely real and beautiful.

What kind of camera did you use?

Panasonic HDX900 with Canon Cinestyle lenses

What was the shooting schedule?

We shot for 12 days in and around New York City. Our budget was microscopic so we had to keep our locations to an absolute minimum. We shot as much as we could indoors so we wouldn't be at the whim of the weather or the time of day. We also didn't have much money for overtime, so our schedule was very ridged. Of course, 1000 things always go wrong when you're making an indie movie, but miraculously we only had one day that lasted more than 12 hours.



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I think my training on the soap opera (*As the World Turns*) served me well for this project. At the soap, we are directing three cameras live to tape, which means that I am editing the show live as I direct it. While one camera is on the air, the next camera is preparing a new shot, and I edit to it in a control room with a switcher. There is no extraneous coverage when one shoots this way. When it came time to plan shots for *Armless*, I felt confident that we could shoot only the absolutely necessary footage—sometimes even one line per shot—because I knew how it would edit together afterwards. This is admittedly a far from ideal way to shoot. The luxury of a single camera movie is that you can explore scenes and set up masters and medium shots that an editor can then use to open up performances when necessary and find new and surprising moments. But when you only have a few hours to get through the pages, the ability to understand what coverage is essential to telling the story is very helpful.

Speaking of the Soap—can you talk a little bit about how you came to direct *As the World Turns* and your experience there?

I was incredibly lucky to get the opportunity to direct at *As the World Turns* right after I completed undergrad at Carnegie Mellon University. I was planning on moving west to work as an intern at the San Francisco Opera, when I got an unexpected phone call from the executive producer of the soap. He asked if I'd like to apprentice as a director for the show. Obviously the answer was an emphatic yes! I turned my '71 VW bug towards the other coast, filled it with the few belongings that would fit and came to New York City.

2010 will mark my seventh and last year directing on the soap—it will go off the air after a 54-year run on CBS. It has been an amazing experience. I've gotten the opportunity to direct just about everything you can think of—weddings, funerals, kidnappings, long lost evil twins, car crashes, airplane crashes, talking ventriloquist dummies, gunfights, ice storms, fires, ghosts, evil santas, love scenes, births—the list goes on. *As the World Turns* featured the first male gay kiss and subsequent relationship in daytime TV beginning in 2007—I was very proud to have a hand in directing that story.

What was your idea behind the style of the film?

I wanted to get across that *Armless* is also a journey towards gaining control in one's life. From a technical perspective, we start with an alienating point of view where the characters are acted upon by the camera and the environment and end with a more documentary approach where the characters are in control of the photography. In the first scene, the camera moves independently of the character's actions, and in the last scene, the camera pans from character to character and is completely dependent on their actions. These shots create a sense of anticipation—what will the character do next.

Tell me about the music.

We didn't have the money to record instruments live, so I decided to do the score with synthesized sounds. We stuck with percussion (marimba, xylophone, glockenspiel) because I feel the electronic version of these instruments stay truer to their acoustic sound.

We were really lucky to have Kyle Jarrow involved with this project. Not only is he the screenwriter, but he is also a talented musician. He and his band Super Mirage are behind the songs for the movie. Kyle's music is catchy, moody



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and theatrical rock. There is also a song from Kyle's earlier band *The Fabulous Entourage*. I was lucky enough to produce their debut album *Play Nice Now*.

BIOS

Habib Azar (Director)

After directing his first episode of *As The World Turns* at age 22, Habib Azar's Emmy Award winning career has spanned many media, from soap to contemporary opera. Azar has directed numerous plays including Kyle Jarrow's *Gorilla Man* at PS122 for which the *Village Voice* said his direction "snaps, crackles, and rocks." His directing credits feature contemporary operas in the US and abroad, including Lewis Nielson's *USW* which will premiere in February 2010. Azar has worked as a 3-camera rehearsal director for the Metropolitan Opera Live in HD series and has directed webcasts for Live From Lincoln Center including performances by the New York Philharmonic and Wynton Marsalis. Also an accomplished composer and conductor, his most notable commission was for his second opera *Heliopause*, which premiered at the Wats:on? Festival in Pittsburgh. *Armless* is his first feature film.

Kyle Jarrow (Writer)

Kyle Jarrow is a Brooklyn-based writer and musician, creating work for film, television, and the stage, as well as playing with the rock bands *The Fabulous Entourage* and *Super Mirage*. He's been called "the kind of writer who likes to provoke people" by *The New Yorker* and "an iconoclast" by *The LA Times*. He won the prestigious OBIE Award at age 24 for his Off-Broadway hit *A Very Merry Unauthorized Children's Scientology Pageant*, which has subsequently been produced around the country. Other plays include *Love Kills*, *Trigger*, *President Harding is a Rock Star*, *Rip Me Open*, *Hostage Song*, *Gorilla Man*, and the upcoming *Whisper House* (co-authored with Duncan Sheik). He's guest lectured at Juilliard, Pratt, and the Actors Studio. More on Kyle at www.landoftrust.com.

Daniel London (John)

Daniel London played Wally the Caretaker in *Minority Report*, directed by Steven Spielberg, Mark in Kelly Reichardt's *Old Joy*, and Tom in Charlie Kaufman's *Synecdoche, New York*, among other movies. He has acted in two world-premiere Beth Henley productions, *Impossible Marriage*, opposite Holly Hunter, and *Ridiculous Fraud*, among other plays. He's been on television in *The Sopranos*, *Nurse Jackie*, and *The Good Wife*, among other shows. Some recent and upcoming projects include Ethan Coen's play, *Offices*, at the Atlantic Theater, a 30-minute film about robots directed by Spike Jonze, and Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden's feature, *It's Kind of a Funny Story*.

Janel Moloney (Anna)

Janel Moloney is delighted to be at Sundance in Habib Azar's *Armless*. Moloney is best known for her work as 'Donna' in Aaron Sorkin's series *The West Wing* (two Emmy nominations.) More recently, Moloney recurred as 'Dana' in Showtime's *Brotherhood*, played the title role in the critically acclaimed *Amber Fry* for Lifetime, and has made appearances in *30 Rock*, *House*, *Criminal Intent* and *Life on Mars*. Other film includes *Desperate Measures*, *'Til There Was You*, *Souler Opposite* and Todd Haynes' *Safe*. Off Broadway, Moloney appeared opposite Lois Smith and Zoe Kazan in *100 Saints You Should Know*.

Matt Walton (Dr. Richard Phillips)

Matt Walton's film credits include Coen Brothers' *Burn After Reading* and recent indies *Gigantic*, *Montclair*, *Favorite Son*, and Sundance selected films *Flannel Pajamas & Death in Love*. Walton currently appears on Lifetime's *Sherri*, ABC's *OLTL*, and he is anchoring Comedy Central's team-up with *The Onion*, *Sports Dome*. Other television credits include *Rescue Me*,



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Cashmere Mafia, *The Bronx is Burning*, Hallmark movies and soaps, and all of the *Law and Order*'s. Off-Broadway created the title character in Kyle Jarrow's *Gorilla Man*, directed by Habib Azar. Back in good hands.

Zoe Lister-Jones (Jenny)

Zoe Lister-Jones is from Brooklyn, NY. Film credits include *Salt*, *The Other Guys*, *State of Play*, *In Praise of Shadows*, *All Good Things*, *Stuck Between Stations*, *Arranged*, *Turn the River*, *Wedding Bros*, and *Breaking Upwards*, which she co-wrote and produced. Television credits include *Bored to Death*, *Kidnapped*, *The Class*. She is the youngest female to ever guest star on all four *Law and Order*'s. She can be seen in the upcoming Adult Swim live action series *Delocated*, currently in its second season. She made her Broadway debut in 2007 with *The Little Dog Laughed*, a role that she originated off Broadway at Second Stage. Other theater credits include *The Accomplices* (The New Group), *The Marriage of Bette and Boo* (Roundabout), and *Codependence is a Four Letter Word: A One Woman Show* (P.S. 122).

Laurie Kennedy (Marie)

Laurie Kennedy has appeared on Broadway in *Copenhagen*, *Angels in America*, *Major Barbara*, *Spoils of War*, *Macbeth*, and *Man and Superman* for which she earned Tony and Drama Desk nominations. Off-Broadway plays include *Madras House*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Andorra*, *Master Builder*, *Recruiting Officer*, *He and She*, *Ladyhouse Blues*, *Candida*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Preservation Society*, and *Three Tall Women*. Kennedy has performed at many regional theaters including the Mark Taper Forum (*Three Sisters*), Ahmanson Theatre (*Hay Fever*), among others. Kennedy has acted in 21 seasons of the Williamstown Summer Festival and 12 seasons at the O'Neill Theatre Center. Television credits include *Mony*, *Bedford Diaries*, *Oz*, *Third Watch*, *Criminal Intent*, *Law and Order*, and *Homicide*. Film credits include *Love Letter*, *Choices*, *Path to Paradise*, *Perfect Tribute*, *Kennedy*, *Twisted*, *Iris*, and *All Good Things*. Kennedy's work has earned her the Theatre World and Clarence Derwent Awards.

CREDITS

Directed by HABIB AZAZ

Written by KYLE JARROW

Director of Photography ORSON ROBBINS-PIANKA

Edited by SARAH SMITH

Production Design by EUNICE BAE & RYAN KRAVETZ

Casting by JAMES CALLERI, CSA & PAUL DAVIS, CSA

Original Score by HABIB AZAR

Songs by KYLE JARROW & NATHAN LEIGH

Songs performed by SUPER MIRAGE

Executive Producer HABIB AZAR

Executive Producer HSIANO BIAN

Produced by CARLA STUART & JAIMIE MAYER

Line Producer SHEILA DVORAK

Co-Producers KYLE JARROW & ORSON ROBBINS-PIANKA

Cast in order of appearance

John	DANIEL LONDON
Anna	JANEL MOLONEY
Hotel Receptionist	KEITH POWELL
Marie	LAURIE KENNEDY
Hardware Store Clerk	AVERY PEARSON
Dr. Richard Phillips	MATT WALTON



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Jenny ZOE LISTER-JONES
James Lampe AS HIMSELF
Korean Bartender ANGEL SING

Costume Design EUNICE BAE
Hair and Makeup Artist ANITA NOURYEH
Unit Production Manager/First Assistant Director MERYL JAFFE
Second Assistant Director SARAH SMITH
Location Sound Mixer MICHAEL GASSERT
Boom Operator MARK ALEXANDER
Re-Recording Mixers MARK DESIMONE & BEAUX NEYLON
Additional Cinematography by JON MILLER
Gaffer ANDREW RODDEWIG
Grips DAVID GANCZEWSKI, TATIANA GELFAND, BRYAN LANDES & RYAN MINELLI
Camera Operator JON MILLER
Additional Camera Operators DAVID GANCZEWSKI & KEVIN KILCHER
Assistant Camera DANIEL YATES
Still Photographer SARAH SLOBODA
Additional Still Photography TOM STARKWEATHER
Production Assistants RICHARD BONGURIO, TODD JAMBON, DEMETRIUS WREN & DANIEL YATES
Website by ORANGEWIZ STUDIOS LLC
Poster and Website Image BRENT BUCK
Additional Web Support JASON REISMAN
Post Production Services by DIFFERENT BY DESIGN
Accounting Services by VASCO ACCOUNTING
Payroll Services by PAYREEL

“Before You Leave Me First” Written by KYLE JARROW and NATHAN LEIGH
Performed by SUPER MIRAGE

“The Lying Song” Written by KYLE JARROW
Performed by THE FABULOUS ENTOURAGE

“One More Night in the Crowded Club” Written by KYLE JARROW
Performed by SUPER MIRAGE

“Lost Cause” Written by KYLE JARROW and NATHAN LEIGH
Performed by SUPER MIRAGE

Locations provided by
TENNANT HOUSEHOLD
SID'S HARDWARE AND HOME CENTER
AFFINIA MANHATTAN
THE LEMONGRASS GRILL

Vehicle Loans HSIANO BIAN & MORGAN FITE

Armless Movie Productions LLC
JAY PARK
MARK ALEXANDER
JASON ALTMAN
HABIB AZAR
KATIE BARTHMAIER
HSIANO BIAN
KEVIN BLACK
BRENT BUCK



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MATT EHRENS
BRETT FONTAINE
MERRITT GILE
BARBARA HELLER
BEN HELLER
RICHARD HELLER
KYLE JARROW
JAMES LAMPE
NICK LEE
MATT MALTER-COHEN
ERIN MENDELL
EMILY MOTHERWELL
MANNY PATA
JEFF PISARE
DANIEL TENNANT
RYAN THOMAS
NICK ZITELLI

Adapted by KYLE JARROW from his original play *ARMLESS*

Thanks to the original cast and crew of *ARMLESS* at the NY International Fringe Festival:
IAN TRESSELT, REBECCA HABEL, REED RIDGLEY, ROBERT CARR,
COLLEEN QUINLAN, GABRIELLE REZNICK & SAM TURICH

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MFNM
GEORGE OSIPOV
JULIE KESSEL, ESQ.
MORGAN FITE
ANNE TANAKA

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