

If You Could Say It In Words

an UNFLINCHING romance.



THE MAKING OF *If You Could...*

It all started over brunch one day in 2004, when with the signing of a few documents, **A Chip & A Chair Films LLC** was formed. Once it was decided that *If You Could Say It In Words* would be the first feature film, the company spent almost a year in development of the script, including several public readings to gauge audience reactions and hear actors work with the characters. It was at one of these readings that **Alvin Keith** read the part of Nelson -- making it impossible to imagine anyone else doing the role. Once the script was in place, a two-pronged approach began: to identify the key cast & crew for the shoot and raise the money for the film.

Our Creative Director and the writer/director of the film, **Nicholas Gray**, insisted on a casting process involved working sessions with the potential actors. This was based on a philosophy that a strong working relationship with an actor is more important than a brief impression based on type. Throughout the process, **Marin Ireland**, who would play Sadie in the film, stood out as an actress that had great chemistry with the camera, Alvin and Nicholas. Finding the right Director of Photography was also extremely important to capture the look and feel Nicholas envisioned. Conversations with **Rick Sands** proved enormously fruitful and we knew his experience would be invaluable if we could secure him.

Funding the film would, obviously, be key to our success. As Nicholas says, "As affordable as filmmaking has become, it still costs a great deal more than the average person has lying around. You still have to find backers." We didn't have any connections to angel investors or particularly rich or gullible family members, but we did have a broad network of people we felt would be interested in investing at a micro-level.

Our solution to this all-too-typical impasse is a revolutionary new model for investing in independent film. Typical film industry investment offerings are byzantine documents that can only be presented legally to a tiny segment of the population. Fewer eligible investors means more money needed from each one. But by creating a radically simplified investment structure to loosen the restrictions, A Chip & A Chair was able to lower the cost of investment to **\$225 per share** or less. "It made it so almost anyone we knew could be a meaningful part of this movie's success," says Gray. Since developing this process, we have begun to assist as co-producers for other independent filmmakers who have heard about our process and seek a similar investment structure.

Even with this innovation, completing the film was an exercise in sheer determination. The availability of several key personnel -- including the cinematographer and both lead actors -- only lined up for a two week window instead of the five needed for shooting. Worse, that two week window would pass long before sufficient funds were likely to be invested. Undeterred, the producers took what money had been raised and scheduled a partial shoot with the two available weeks. They carefully crafted a schedule that would minimize continuity problems across the break in filming, then shot nearly half the movie in two weeks during the fall of 2005. The next few months were spent editing the footage to present to investors and interested parties to raise the additional funds needed to complete the film. Shooting on the second half began over ten months after the team wrapped on the first half.

So finally, the film was in the can! But naturally, there were more obstacles to come. As funds ran low, post-production stretched out over the next year and beyond. Feedback from the audience at a private screening of a long cut of the film let us know that the characters and story were compelling, but we had more editing and fine-tuning to do. Getting the correct sound mix was particularly tricky and essential to the success of the film. The final sound mix was completed in June 2008 shortly before Derby City Film Festival began accepting submissions.

The journey has indeed been a long one -- but we are extremely grateful for all that we have learned along the way, and are proud and thrilled with the final product of *If You Could Say It In Words*.

www.IfYouCould-Movie.com