



genre: comedy / running time: 13 minutes / country: USA

All Press Inquiries:

**SAMBA**  
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FILMWORKS

Todd I. Gordon  
Director & Executive Producer  
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## About the Film

### Logline

When Belle's married lover, Rudy, collapses in the stairwell outside her apartment after one of their trysts, Belle enlists her naïve and unworldly neighbor, Edith, to carry Rudy's half-naked body downstairs to his front door.

### Synopsis

Belle (60s) has been carrying on an affair with Rudy (70s), her shoe repairman, for many years. While Belle is single, Rudy lives with his wife one floor below Belle in their urban apartment building. Late one night, after an evening of lovemaking, Rudy goes out into the building stairwell for his usual smoke. Some minutes later, after first having a tense conversation about her morals with a photograph of Herb, her dead husband, Belle ventures out to find Rudy. When Belle enters the building stairwell, she finds Rudy's apparently lifeless body sitting on the stairs, a cigarette

stub between his fingers, wearing only Herb's old pajama top. Desperate to cover up her affair, Belle enlists her naïve and unworldly building neighbor, Edith (40s), to help her carry Rudy's body down one flight to his apartment. Although initially horrified by Belle's sordid situation, Edith is a loyal friend and lets herself be persuaded to help Belle carry Rudy back to his apartment. It all goes well, and Edith even gets some relationship advice from Belle, until they start arguing outside Rudy's front door and his wife suddenly appears.

### **Technical Information**

Runtime: 13:00

Color

Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1

Shooting Format: HD 4.6k

Language: English

Exhibition Format: .MOV, DCP

### **Director's Statement**

#### **Genesis of the Story**

"Herb's Pajamas" is based on the short story by Abigail Thomas, a renowned memoirist. What attracted me to the story was Thomas's quirky, earnest characters and the interplay between the loving but jaded Belle and her naïve friend, Edith, who overcomes her qualms about helping Belle with Rudy's body out of loyalty and perhaps a hidden desire to spice up her life just a bit.

I love adapting stories and novels because it allows me to explore worlds and cultures I don't necessarily have direct experience with and transmute stories into cinematic language, while being loyal to the author's intentions and the spirit of the stories. Nothing pleases me more than finishing a script and not readily being able to figure out whether particular elements of the story were from the author's pen or mine.

#### **Themes**

Two of the themes that preoccupy me include the emotional and sexual lives of elders, and the disparity between the way we build and even luxuriate in our own particular safe spaces (homes, offices, other literal and metaphoric communities) versus how we are treated in the world outside the walls and doors (literal or figurative) that protect us.

Inside Belle's bedroom, she and Rudy, in their 60s and 70s, have their own little lush, colorful Shangri-La. Their relationship is encapsulated in this exchange:

Rudy: You know what I like about you, Belle?

Belle: What Rudy?

Rudy: It's that you're old, like me.

Belle: Old and kind of wrinkly.

Rudy: Yeah, just the way I like you.

Once Rudy ventures outside that paradise, reality intrudes in the harsh light of the stairwell and the threat that their relationship will be exposed.

To Edith, Belle is a woman of loose morals and the world is a scary, unfamiliar place. At first, Edith doesn't want to get involved in any "chicanery," but her fear gradually transforms into curiosity, if not envy, and near the end, she naively asks Belle, "How do you catch all these men?"

### **Visual Approach**

My DP and I were aiming for a timeless, nostalgic look, perhaps like a slightly faded photograph from the 1960s or a decade or two later to reflect the age of the main characters and the timeless nature of Belle and Rudy's relationship. To that end, the visuals are moderately saturated, with a bit of graininess. We definitely were not going as far as a de-saturated or sepia-toned look.

For the intimate scene between Belle and Rudy, I would cite, as influence, the intimate scenes in such films as "The Remains of the Day" (1993), and "Maudie" (2016), which use a naturalistic style to focus attention on character and intimacy (or the lack of it).

For the look and feel of the visuals generally, our influences include "Rosemary's Baby" (1968) and "A Ghost Story" (2017), among other films.

### **Production Design**

The timelessness is emphasized by the production design and wardrobe, which have no obvious references to a particular time period, except the analog table clock at the start of the film, a record player in the corner of the first scene and a rotary wall phone in another scene. There are no digital appliances or electronic gadgets anywhere.

### **Director's Bio**



Todd I. Gordon came to filmmaking after a long career practicing entertainment law and managing complex web development projects for a large media company.

"Pianoforte," a short narrative film that he wrote and produced, was released in 2018. "Old Hen" (2020), which he also wrote and produced, was his first foray into directing and was the official selection of 15 festivals in the U.S. and Europe. In 2023, Todd wrote and directed two short films, "Herb's Pajamas," a comedy, and "Mr. Donahoe's Mangoes," a drama, both based on short stories by the renowned memoirist,

Abigail Thomas. In 2024, Todd wrote and directed two more short films, "The Ghost Writer," inspired by a Henry James short story, and "The Revenge of Ordinary Things."

## Cast Bios



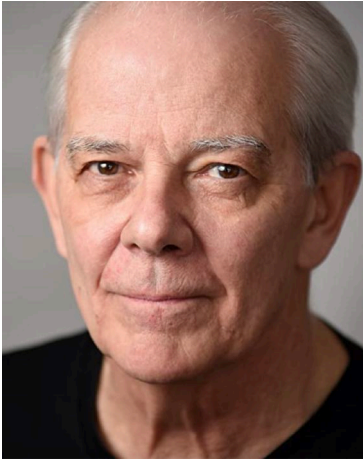
**Deborah Offner (*Belle*)** - Deborah's film and TV credits include: "The Pink House", "Shiva Baby", "FBI: Most Wanted (2024)", "Blue Bloods". "Orange is The New Black", "The Last OG", "The Jim Gaffigan Show", "Divorce", "The Good Fight", "Top Five", "Home", "Unlawful Entry", "Black Swan", "Six Feet Under", "The Boy Downstairs", "The Naked Brother's Band", "Cruel Intentions" "Horace and Pete", "Law and Order" "Law and Order SVU", "True Believer", "Mourning Become Elektra (PBS)", "The Guardian". NY, LA and other theatre credits include: "Act One", "Hair", "The Singing Forest", "Rebel Women" "The Hunchback of Notre Dame", "Say Goodnight Gracie", "Danny And The Deep Blue Sea", "Merry Wives of Windsor", "Don Juan", "Everett Beekin", "Perestroika", "The Normal Heart", "The Job", "Sisters Rosenzweig", "Indiscretions", "Sideman".



**Alison Cimmnet (*Edith*)** - Alison recently appeared on *Law & Order: SVU* and the feature film *The Wrath of Becky*. Other film/tv credits include *The Big Sick*, *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, *Blacklist*, *Ray Donovan*, *Bull*, *Younger*, and *Evil*. Alison's Broadway credits include *Gary*, *Amelie*, *She Loves Me*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Bonnie & Clyde*, *Baby, It's You!* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. NYC/Regional favorites include *Romeo & Juliet* (Westport Country Playhouse), *Into the Woods* (Fiasco/The Old Globe), John Guare's *3 Kinds of Exile* (Atlantic Theater), *Mame* (Kennedy Center) and *Someone Spectacular* (Signature Theater). After graduating from Brown

University, she continued to study acting with Upright Citizens Brigade, Larry Moss, and myriad master teachers at The Actors Center. Alison lives in Hastings-on-Hudson with husband David, daughter Ella, and son Gavin.

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



**Richard Eagan (*Rudy*)** – Richard is an actor and artist from Croton on Hudson in New York’s Hudson valley. In his 20s he worked as an actor in theater- off-Broadway, film, and television. But for a time life took him in other directions. During that time Richard found himself occasionally sought by film students and filmmaker friends, but he found a true creative home with Samba Filmworks, where he has done five films for Todd Gordon.

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**Yvonne Brechbuhler (*May*)** - Yvonne was born and raised in Basel, Switzerland, where she worked as a kindergarten teacher before moving to New York in 1994 to pursue a career in theatre. She was a member of The Irondale Theater Ensemble, utilizing improvisational theatre and group-building skills to work with high-risk teenagers in schools and prisons and has been in charge of the afterschool program at a Waldorf preschool. Along with Matt Mitler, Yvonne created and co-taught a series of theater classes for girls 7-12 called *BEING!*, utilizing text from Shakespeare, and is currently teaching music classes at a Montessori preschool. Yvonne is dreaming of a

theatrical program that will bring Dzieci’s basic wisdom into children’s lives. Yvonne is also a certified Feldenkrais practitioner and the proud mother of two beautiful girls, Yona and Ora.

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## Other Production-Team Bios

**John L. Murphy (Director of Photography)** – John loves light. As such he is a cinematographer and has worked on a wide variety of films, television series, and media projects that include three feature films as well as countless short film films, amongst them the feature “The Idea of Manhood” which won best picture at the 2018 Phoenix Film Festival. He has worked with networks such as Travel, Discovery, and Food Network on doc style series, most notably “Uncommon Grounds” in which he traveled and shot in over 30 countries. John did not begin his story telling career behind the camera, he began it in the theater, lighting for stage and live performance. He transitioned to film work after attending NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts carrying over his fascination with light from stage to screen. He now lives in Brooklyn, NY continuing his love affair and helping to shine a light on unique and interesting stories.



**Joseph Gutowski (Editor)** — Joseph is a film editor who has cut over 20 feature films in a wide variety of genres, such as Echelon Conspiracy, Bella, Front Cover, and Passenger 57. He apprenticed with some of the industry's top film editors including Dede Allen, Stephen A. Rotter, and Richard Nord. Joseph is also a painter, and has had several exhibitions of his works in New York and California.

**Julian Evans (Composer & Sound Designer)** - A proud member of USA829 and IATSE Local 700 (Motion Picture Editors Guild), Julian oscillates between theatrical and cinematic mediums, bringing cinematic language to the stage, and theatrical stylings to the screen. As co-founder of Audioworks Film & Theatre in Chelsea, he has provided sound supervision for six seasons GZero World with Ian Bremmer on PBS. Recent mixes include A Holiday Spectacular in collaboration with Madison Square Garden and The Radio City Rockettes (Hallmark), and indie shark thriller The Requin starring Alicia Silverstone. Off-Broadway: Desperate Measures (New World Stages), Cheek to Cheek; Forbidden Broadway; Enter Laughing (The York), Felix Starro (Ma-Yi); Tick, Tick...BOOM! (Keen Company); The Artificial Jungle (TBTB), I Like it Like That! (Pregones Theater), Soulographie (La MaMa), Kurt Vonnegut's Mother Night (59e59). Regional: The End of War [2017 RTCC Winner: Outstanding Sound Design] (Virginia Repertory Theatre), Oklahoma! (Weston Playhouse). Cruise: Scarlet Night (Virgin Voyages). BA: Carnegie Mellon. [www.julianevans.info](http://www.julianevans.info) "Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away."

**Elle Kunnos de Voss (Producer & Production Designer)** - Elle Kunnos de Voss is an award winning designer, director and writer with an M.A. from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts School of Design. She has developed theatrical pieces that have played at The Royal Dramatic Theater Stockholm, Prosthesis with choreographer Charlotta Öfverholm: Too Much for Dansens Hus (Stockholm) and The Echo Drift opera for Alfred Nobel Hall and Baruch Performing Art Center New York. For her work on The Echo Drift libretto she received the Opera Genesis Fellowship, alongside composer Mikael Karlsson.

## **"Herb's Pajamas" Crew**

*Writer & Director* - Todd I. Gordon

*Director of Photography* – John L. Murphy

*Editor* - Joseph Gutowski

*Composer & Sound Designer* – Julian Evans

*Producer & Production Designer* - Elle Kunnos de Voss

*Executive Producer* - Todd I. Gordon

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*Assistant Director* - Coren Helene-Gitomer  
*Unit Production Manager* – Ellinor DiLorenzo  
*Prop Master* – Irina Kuraeva  
*Wardrobe* – Linnea Larsdotter Mikkela  
*Assistant Camera* – Sage O’Brien  
*Gaffer* – Alessandro Imperiale  
*Key Grip* – Michael Kyriakides  
*Sound Mixer* – Ryan Alan Collins  
*Boom Operator* – Sebastian Fazio  
*Art Production Assistant* – Julian Sky  
*Casting Director* – Karin Agstam  
*Hair & Makeup* - Ilise Harris  
*Script Supervisors* – Susan Feder, Elle Simone Cohen  
COVID Compliance Officer – Franca Paschen  
*Audio Post-Production Services* - Audioworks NYC  
    Julian Evans – Sound Designer  
    Ben Dotson – Sound Editor  
    Jake Pollack – Assistant Sound Editor  
*DI Facility* - Nice Dissolve  
*Colorist* - Joseph Mastantuono  
*Online Editor* - Julian Grady  
*DI Supervisor* - Pierce Varous  
  
*Still Photographer* - Jim Metzger

## “Herb’s Pajamas” Stills



Cinematographer: John L. Murphy



Richard Eagan as Rudy, Deborah Offner as Belle. Cinematographer: John L. Murphy





Deborah Offner as Belle. Cinematographer: John L. Murphy



Richard Egan as Rudy. Cinematographer: John L. Murphy



Richard Eagan as Rudy, Deborah Offner as Belle. Cinematographer: John L. Murphy



Deborah Offner as Belle. Cinematographer: John L. Murphy



Alison Cismet as Edith. Cinematographer: John L. Murphy



Alison Cismet as Edith, Richard Eagan as Rudy, Deborah Offner as Belle.  
Cinematographer: John L. Murphy





Alison Cimmnet as Edith, Deborah Offner as Belle. Cinematographer: John L. Murphy



Yvonne Brechbuhler as May, Deborah Offner as Belle, Alison Cimmnet as Edith. Cinematographer: John L. Murphy.

## “Herb’s Pajamas” Social Media

Official Website: [www.sambafilmworks.com](http://www.sambafilmworks.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/sambafilmworks](https://www.facebook.com/sambafilmworks)