

GABRIEL FILM GROUP

presents

***BOBBY G. CAN'T SWIM***

A film by  
John-Luke Montias

**A cinéBLAST! PRODUCTION**

85 minutes

PRELIMINARY PRODUCTION NOTES

DOMESTIC SALES:  
GABRIEL FILM GROUP  
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# ***Bobby G. Can't Swim***

**Winner!**  
**Grand Jury Prize**  
**Florida Film Festival 2000**

**“Bobby G. Can't Swim is the kind of movie that comes along only occasionally. One so unconventional, gutsy and perfectly executed it takes your breath away.”**

**Winner!**  
**The New Directions Prize and Best New**  
**Director Prize**  
**13<sup>th</sup> Annual AFI Los Angeles International**  
**Film Festival**

**8<sup>th</sup> St. Louis International Film Festival**  
**“Superlative writing, direction and acting by John-Luke Montias, a real triple crown winner in this effort.”**

## BOBBY G. CAN'T SWIM

Bobby G. lives life on the edge in this real, raw New York street drama. Bobby is a small-time coke dealer, always on the hustle but rarely successful. He lives in Hell's Kitchen with his Puerto Rican girlfriend Lucy, who makes ends meet as a prostitute. A typical day finds Bobby selling \$20 bags to neighbourhood locals and passing cars.

A yuppie kid looking to score a kilo of coke approaches him to broker a deal and Bobby sees the opportunity of a lifetime to make some real money. His rough days may just be over. With the tidy profit he could even leave the business. Playing out of his league, Bobby arranges to get the kilo from Astro, a fearsome, high-level drug dealer. Though Lucy announces that she's decided to go back to Puerto Rico and pleads with him to make a fresh start too, Bobby is sticking to his deal and isn't going anywhere now, convinced he'll be "...livin' large in a matter a' days."

On deal day the client gets nervous and the plan goes awry with Bobby turning over the merchandise without being able to hold on to the cash. He now fears for his life unless he can come up with the money, fast, to pay back Astro. Seized with panic Bobby seeks out an acquaintance, Dollar Bill, who puts him in touch with a mob figure who needs somebody "whacked" and is willing to pay big bucks for it too. Though Bobby has never fired a gun in his life, he carries out the execution. The act plunges him into a state of shock and torment verging on madness.

In the ensuing hours, Bobby, his mind in a daze, will find redemption in a bizarre journey involving a homeless woman, the Hudson River, and a blind street-peddler named Popeet. He will also learn, that what fate may give, she is just as free to take away.

## About the Characters

**John-Luke Montias** plays the part of *Bobby G.*, a lost soul in Hells Kitchen, treading the sidewalks looking for the one big break that will finance his escape from a desperate existence in an unforgiving city. Constantly moving between the roles of hero and villain, Bobby bends the rules and breaks the laws as a means to his own end, but reaches out a helping hand to the lonely and destitute along the way. The question is whether Bobby will “sink or swim” when he gets in over his head in the seedy underworld of drugs and murder.

*Lucy*, played by **Susan Mitchell**, is Bobby’s hooker girlfriend. Although she once aspired to be an actress, Lucy has fallen prey to drugs and prostitution. Frustrated by the lowly life she and Bobby have to suffer through, Lucy forces her wayward boyfriend to choose between her and a new start in Puerto Rico, or his life in New York City and the big break which may never come.

**Vincent Vega** plays *Coco*, a small time dealer happy to supply Bobby with insignificant amounts of coke. He is reluctantly drawn into Bobby’s plan to sell a Kilo in exchange for a cut of the profits. When Bobby’s plan goes awry, Coco has to choose between his loyalty towards his friend or the safety of himself and his family.

**Norman Middleton** plays *Popeet*, a blind street vendor who survives by selling objects he finds on the street. Always exuding hope in the face of adversity, Popeet unwittingly inspires Bobby on his journey to redemption.

*Mike, Andy and Tim*, played by **Paul Maged, Andrew Rein and Michael Gnat**, are the out of town yuppies who come to Bobby looking to buy a kilo of coke. Bobby believes this will be his big break if he can clinch the deal but the buyers are strangers to the rules of drugs, money and New York City.

**Donna Sonkin** plays *Gina*, Lucy’s sparring partner and a fellow prostitute, who is constantly vying for Bobby’s affection.

# The Making of Bobby G. Can't Swim

*Bobby G. Can't Swim* is John-Luke Montias' first feature film. Originally from New Haven, CT, Montias moved to New York to study acting at New York University. After graduating, he won roles in various New York Theater productions and also became interested in writing. Like most actors in New York, Montias held down a survival-job to make ends meet while waiting for his break.

Montias was working as a bartender in the Hell's Kitchen section of Manhattan when he came up with the idea of writing the screenplay for *Bobby G. Can't Swim*. "I worked in a place that was chock-full of seedy characters. As I was usually working by myself, I inevitably got to know them. Most of the characters in *Bobby G.* are based on people I either met, or heard about. Sometimes people who made money doing bad things would try to make up for it by doing something good. The theme of redemption has always fascinated me."

Rather than spend time shopping the script around to various production companies, he decided to get things rolling himself. "I wrote the script so that the movie could be shot for nothing, making the story more dependent on the actors' performances than on exploding helicopters or car crashes. I didn't feel like spending years pitching this project to every producer and his brother. I knew I could shoot this movie, and I knew I could do it myself."

He then went about raising money from friends and acquaintances. "I told everybody I approached that it's a risky investment, and to not give me money unless they can afford to lose it. Strangely enough, the few people who I know with disposable income didn't invest. Most of the money came from hard-working people who invested because they believed in me, or they believed in the project."

# About The Film Makers

## **John-Luke Montias** (Writer/Director/Star)

John-Luke Montias studied acting at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. As a writer, his plays *Happy Birthday Johnny Red*, *The Roof*, *Oedy* and *Jo* have been performed at various venues in NYC.

Besides "Bobby G.", Montias' recent acting credits include *Home Sweet Hoboken*, *Shooting Vegetarians*, and *Mole*. On TV he guest-starred on NBC's *Law and Order* and *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*. His film projects in development include *Cherry Pie*, a story about the Irish-American mob in Hell's Kitchen circa 1981, and *Perfect Pitch*, a comedy about a car sales-pitch competition.

## **Michael Pilgram** (Producer/Assistant Director/Editor)

Pilgram has been working on *Bobby G.* from the beginning. He handled everything from hiring the crew, to buying the film stock, to making sure the shoot stayed on schedule. He even jumped in front of the camera when an actor who was supposed to play a small role failed to show up.

Pilgram has been working on independent films for more than a decade. He recently edited the dialogue for Stephen Earnhart's *Mule Skinner Blues*, a documentary that premiered in May at the Doubletake Film Festival. Earlier, he worked as an editor on *The Escape Artist*, a feature by Michael Lawrence; associate editor, sound editor and post-production producer for Debra Eisenstadt's *Daydream Believer*, the winner of the best dramatic feature award at Slamdance 2001; and associate editor of Tom Zuber's *Lansdown*, which won the best first feature award at the Cinequest Film Festival 2001. Pilgram also edited *Kill By Inches*, a film by Diane Doniol-Valcroze & Arthur Flam, and served as the assistant editor on Peter Cohen's *Drunks*, a Shooting Gallery feature that starred Richard Lewis.

Pilgram grew up in Leiden, The Netherlands, and later studied photography and filmmaking at the Arts Academy in The Hague. His

career as an editor started while he was working as a gaffer, when the editor drafted him to serve as an editing assistant.

### **Gill Holland** (Producer)

Nominated for the Spirit Award for Producer of the Year 1998, Gill's producing credits include, in addition to Bobby G Can't Swim; Morgan J. Freeman's triple Sundance award-winning *Hurricane Streets* (MGM); his follow-up *Desert Blue* (Samuel Goldwyn), starring Christina Ricci, Casey Affleck, Brendan Sexton III, Sara Gilbert, and the then-unknown Kate Hudson; Rob Tregenza's *Inside/Out* (Cannes 1997); Tom Gilroy's award-winning *Spring Forward* (starring Ned Beatty and on many critics' top tenlists for 2000); and Tim Kirkman's Spirit Award and Emmy nominated documentary *Dear Jesse* (Cowboy Booking). Other films include Kirkman's follow-up *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me*, Jamie Yerkes *Spin the Bottle*, Kipp and Adam Marcus's *Let it Snow* (AFI winner starring Bernedette Peters), Mikey Jackson's *Shooting Vegetarians* (with French star Elodie Bouchez), Arthur Flam and Diane Doniol-Valcroze's *Kill by Inches* and Tim McCann's *Revolution #9*. He is half-Norwegian, half North Carolinian reformed lawyer and adjunct professor at NYU Graduate Film School. He was on the jury at Sundance in 1999 and was the Executive Producer of IFC's *The Greg the Bunny Show* (coming to Fox this fall). Gill worked for three years at the French Film Office after a brief stint at October Films (now USA Films).

### **J.D. Matonti** (Executive Producer)

Matonti has a multifaceted background in all aspects of filmmaking. Matonti has always taken a cost-effective approach to physical production, successfully directing and producing feature films (*Cassian's Kids*), music videos (Deborah Gibson's *Only Words*), documentaries (*The Rise and fall of the Etruscans*) and TV commercials (Dominos Pizza, Lender's Bagels, Burger King). Recent

feature films that Matonti has also executive produced *Wedding Band* (Dom Deluise, Deborah Gibson) and *Loose Women* (Charlie Sheen).

Matonti founded Matonti Films and has served as President since the company was established in New York City at Robert DeNiro's Tribeca Film Center in 1995. In 1998 Matonti founded the Gabriel Film Group, a full-service distribution entity. Matonti and the Gabriel Film Group recently acquired North American Distribution rights to *The Simian Line* (Lynn Redgrave, Harry Connick Jr., William Hurt)

Graduating from Syracuse University, Matonti received a dual degree: a Bachelor of Science in Television, Radio, and Film from the S.I Newhouse School and a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from Crouse-Hinds School of Management.

#### **Chris Matonti** (Executive Producer)

While attending graduate studies at New York medical College, Chris worked with J.D. Matonti on various projects. He handled music for *Cassian's Kids*. With the success in film production and foreseeing the rapid growth in independent film in New York, Chris Matonti helped establish Matonti Films in the Tribeca Film Center. He produced *Loose Women*, where he was responsible for overseeing all aspects of film-making, including raising the necessary financing to bring the project from script to screen. In addition, he produced a 21-song soundtrack, which included such musicians as Hootie and the Blowfish and Luscious Jackson. He also Executive Produced *Wedding Band*. Matonti helped strategically launch Gabriel Film Group.

Matonti received a B.A. from Bucknell University with a degree in Art History/Studio Art and Biology. He is an active member of the Independent Feature Project. He is a supporter of the Tribeca Partnerships.

#### **Adriana Chiesa** (Executive Producer)

The owner and President of Adriana Chiesa Enterprises, Chiesa is among the most established distributors in the world, with over 25 years of experience. Industry peers most recently recognized her expertise when she received the prestigious European Exporter of the Year Award at MIFED 1999. Before forming her own company, Chiesa spent 17 years at Medusa Distribution where she acquired, for



European distribution such films as *Dead Ringers*, *Amadeus*, *Ran* and the first two *Rambo* films. Adriana's offices are located in Rome, where she resides with her husband, Carlo DiPalma; one of the most respected Cinematographers in the world.

**Julia Coppola** (Executive Producer)

As Chairman of Matonti Films, Julia Coppola served as financing partner and Executive Producer of *Wedding Band*, starring Deborah Gibson and Dom DeLuise. She also strategized marketing and publicity for *Loose Women*, with Charlie Sheen and Giancarlo Esposito. Coppola acted as casting Director and the cornerstone of production for *Cassian's Kids*, an urban drama (which was positioned for the 1995 Cannes Film Festival and the Independants Showcase of the 1997 Berlin film festival). Coppola is presently Executive Producing several independent films and is heading up distribution with foreign co-distribution partner Adriana Chiesa Di Palma (Adriana Chiesa Enterprises). Coppola is a member of Women in Film and received a Bachelor of Arts from the College of Notre Dame.

*Cast*

*Bobby Grace* ..... John-Luke Montias  
*Lucy* ..... Susan Mitchell  
*Coco* ..... Vincent Vega  
*Popeet* ..... Norman Middleton  
*Mike* ..... Paul Maged  
*Andy* ..... Andrew Rein  
*Gina* ..... Donna Sonkin  
*Tim* ..... Michael Gnat

*Alex* ..... Gene Ruffini  
*Tony Zino* ..... Anthony Caso  
*Astro* ..... Steve Heinze  
*Dollar Bill* ..... Rick Poli  
*Girl at Church*..... Carly Weil

*Director* ..... John-Luke Montias  
*Screenplay* ..... John-Luke Montias  
*Executive Producers*..... Matonti Bros  
Adriana Chiesa  
Julia Coppola  
Michael Morley  
Kevin Chinoy  
*Producers* ..... Michael Pilgram  
Gill Holland  
*Director of Photography*..... George Gibson  
*Editing.* ..... Michael Pilgram  
*Sound* ..... Andy Rayland  
*Assistant Camera* ..... Chris Benker

	Yawmeng Soo
<i>Production Assistants</i> .....	Carrie Jones Carla Reyes
<i>Script Supervisor</i> .....	Sally Rowe
<i>Make-Up Artist</i> .....	Irene Power
<i>Gaffer</i> .....	Jerome Taylor
<i>Music</i> .....	Ed Tomney
<i>Music Supervisor</i> .....	Carol Sue Baker Jonathan Hafter