

**Press Contact:**

**Gabriel Diamond | [g@outsidefilms.com](mailto:g@outsidefilms.com) | 323.687.2258**

# **LESS**

LOSING IS EVERYTHING

Title	LESS
Tagline	Losing is Everything
Running Time	77 minutes
Original Format	24P Mini-DV
Camera	Panasonic DVX-100A
Screening Format	Digibeta/Blu Ray/DVD
Color/BW	Color
Language:	English
Production Company	Outside Films
Completed	September 2010
Premiere	2010 Port Townsend Film Festival
Location	Shot in San Francisco, CA
Website	<a href="http://www.losingiseverything.com">www.losingiseverything.com</a>

## **Blurb**

Finn has chosen to be homeless. He lives off what others throw away and makes bizarre street theater, staying one step ahead of a haunted past. Set on the streets of San Francisco, *Less* is a gritty portrait of three outsiders, an unlikely romance, a treacherous friendship, and ideals taken to extremes.

## **Short Synopses**

*Less* tells the story of Finn Norman, a renegade artist who has severed all ties with his past to make his home on the streets. Living off what others throw away, Finn's quest for a life free from attachment is threatened by his growing connections with a painfully shy cafe girl and a grizzled street performer. *Less* subtly throws assumed values into question...does true happiness come from having everything you want, or simply not wanting anything? Can we live in the moment if we're not at peace with our past? Shot on the streets of San Francisco's Tenderloin District in a gritty documentary style, this portrait of three outsiders shows a world both decaying and beautiful, where city streets become rivers, sidewalks are bedrooms, and passersby audience to the blurry line between genius and madness, an unlikely romance and the magic simplicity of a

city witnessed anew.

### **Medium Synopses**

Could the quickest route to enlightenment be straight into the gutter? *Less* is a dark urban fairy tale about ideals taken to extremes.

Finn Norman (Zak Barnett) has chosen to be homeless on the streets of San Francisco. In pursuit of a life free of materialism, conformity and societal expectations, he has abandoned everything to live off what others throw away. Unfettered by time, responsibilities, or the burden of relationships, it appears he has discovered true freedom.

But two lost souls he encounters throw his ideals and solitude into question. Mia (Rebecca Noon) is a painfully shy cafe girl who envies his reckless abandon, and Gunther (Lew Levinson), a savant street performer, mentors him with hodgepodge spirituality and sidewalk antics. Despite his disdain for any form of attachment, Finn finds himself deeply connected with them and begins to see the difference between freedom and escapism until he is forced to confront the things that led him to live outside.

*LESS* subtly throws assumed values into question: does happiness lie in having everything you want, or simply not wanting anything? Can we live in the moment if we're not at peace with our past? Shot on the streets of San Francisco's Tenderloin District in a gritty documentary style, this portrait of three outsiders shows a world both decaying and beautiful, where city streets become rivers, sidewalks are bedrooms, and passersby an audience to the blurry line between genius and madness, an unlikely romance, and the magic simplicity of a city witnessed anew.

### **Full Synopsis**

Could the quickest route to enlightenment be straight into the gutter?

**FINN NORMAN** (Zak Barnett) is a young man who has severed all ties with a dark past to make his home on the streets of San Francisco. In pursuit of a life free of materialism, conformity and societal expectations, he has abandoned everything to live off what others throw away. The streets become his partner in this search for true freedom, his desire to live fully and without attachment. Each new day is a revelation, but Finn is living with a secret that he is hesitant to reveal, even to himself.

We meet Finn several months after he's left everything he knew behind. He is recklessly impulsive, balanced between the anonymity of being just another invisible huddled mass, and the desire to reach out and disrupt the doldrums of passersby. But two lost souls he encounters throw his ideals and solitude into question.

**GUNTHER** (Lew Levinson), a sly vagabond and apparent savant, enlists himself

as Finn's mentor. Together they begin to explore hidden landscapes, forbidden buildings and become partners in publicly unveiling the extraordinary in the mundane. As camaraderie with Gunther develops and his daily routine solidifies, freedom evolves into connection. Finn finds himself beginning to trust.

MIA (Rebecca Noon) is a quiet, wide-eyed girl who works in a café near the street that Finn makes his home. Mia's daily routine consists of a lonely apartment and an unfulfilling job. She longs for the reckless abandon she sees in Finn, and she is compelled to take him home but their passionate connection incites painful flashbacks for him. To continue to avoid his past, he is forced back out on the street where he is free to recreate his own form of amnesia. After Mia's tender attempts to win his affection fail, she shames him into seeing the selfishness and isolation of his lifestyle.

Finn's construct crumbling, he runs to Gunther for guidance and distraction. After they put on a Butoh inspired hobo mime street performance, Gunther's true nature is revealed and Finn is left utterly alone. His world unravels. Wracked with agony, wasting away in the harshness of his surroundings, he seeks solace with Mia but her apartment is empty, and he has nowhere left to escape to. In the morning, under a freeway overpass he sees a vision, and finds the peace he's been searching for.

Outside Films presents this unique and compelling first feature from filmmakers Gabriel Diamond, Zak Barnett and Gabriel Goldstein. LESS subtly throws assumed values into question: does happiness come from having everything you want, or by simply not wanting anything? Can we live in the moment if we're not at peace with our past? Directed and shot by Diamond on the streets of San Francisco's Tenderloin District in gritty documentary style, this portrait of three outsiders shows a world both decaying and beautiful, where city streets become rivers, sidewalks are bedrooms, and passersby an audience to the blurry line between genius and madness, an unlikely romance, and the magic simplicity of a city witnessed anew.

Diamond, Barnett and Goldstein collaborated on Less for four years, sharing the responsibilities of writing, editing and producing. Nathan Matthew David and Hands contributed the score and original music, which also features songs by Ivy Ross.

### **Director's Statement (Gabriel Diamond)**

When I was a kid growing up in Berkeley I used to ride my bicycle up to Telegraph to watch the homeless people. I was intrigued by how they would act, talking to themselves, yelling, dancing, sleeping... all on the street, as people passed them by, pretending they weren't there.

After high school I volunteered to be a bell ringer for the Salvation Army. When

people would smile at me, it made my day, and when they ignored me, it was devastating. Something about being on the street all day long made my heart open up and I vowed never to ignore panhandlers again.

At City College in San Francisco I took a class on James Joyce's *Ulysses* and something about the audacity of that book and the teacher's passion for it compelled me to undertake a symbolic task that both intrigued and terrified me: hitchhiking alone from Berkeley to the Grand Canyon and back. After a week of adventure, from having a knife pulled on me, being propositioned by a drug pusher/wannabe John, spending Christmas Eve in the Flagstaff police station, sleeping in bushes, caves, and snow, and meeting some true angels, the image that has stayed with me more than any other was the feeling of standing alone, on the side of the road, with my thumb out, having no idea where I was going, when, or with whom. Since then I have held that experience in my memory as the ultimate state of freedom.

In 1996 I woke up one morning with a question I was compelled to ask strangers: "What was the last beautiful thing you saw?" Camera in hand, I interviewed people on the street in Berkeley and San Francisco, half of them homeless. Many people didn't know or couldn't think of anything. [Most men said a woman, most women said their children.] But the people who tended to have the most original and unique responses were homeless. My favorite was from a deaf man pushing a shopping cart full of recycling, he answered in his broken speech that 14 days earlier he'd been at the Cliff House and some people had left a quarter in the telescope and he looked through it and saw a big ship coming through the fog about to go under the Golden Gate Bridge. It broke my heart. This man whose livelihood was based on scavenging what others throw away had the most specific answer of anyone. One might think he'd be the most miserable, but his appreciation for simple beauty and humble gratitude confirmed something that had been brewing in me for many years: there is a hidden gift to living on the street, that somehow having nothing would might allow one to feel gratitude and compassion much more than "homed" people.

I began to harbor a naïve fantasy of being homeless, a cross between a monk, hippie, performance artist, and traveler. I felt if I had a second life to live, and could gamble one away, I'd go off and live that life, but alas, I do not.

So I made a movie about it instead.

## **FILMMAKER BIOS**

### **Gabriel Diamond (Director, Cinematography, Story, Writer, Editor)**

Gabriel is a director, actor, cinematographer, and teacher. He got his start in movies by taking a video production class in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at the local cable TV station in Oakland, CA. After high school he set down the camera and took up acting. After graduating from Trinity Rep Conservatory in Providence, RI, he

toured the country with a traveling children's theater troupe, appeared around the Bay Area on various stages, bunches of independent films, and is a founding member of Cutting Ball, and Precarious Theater. Now he travels the globe shooting documentaries, music videos, and other fun stuff. See [www.outsidefilms.com](http://www.outsidefilms.com) for more.

**Zak Barnett (Lead Actor, Writer, Editor, Co-Director)**

Zak wrote, directed and starred in his first play when he was 16, and has been working on stage and in film ever since. He studied at NYU-Tisch School of the Arts, the American Conservatory Theater, New College of California and San Francisco State University, earning both Bachelor's and Master of Fine Arts in Acting and Playwriting.

While working as an actor on various film and theater projects, Zak Co-Founded and served as Artistic Director of the experimental theater company "ghosttown", for which he won numerous grants, residencies and awards, including the Zellerbach Family Fund Multi-Disciplinary Grant in 2000, the New College Performing Artist in Residence grant from 1999-2001, and the 2006 Highsmith Award for Best Gay and Lesbian Play. From 2001-2008, Zak Founded and served as Chair of the Experimental Performance Institute (EPI) at New College of California: the first BA, MA and MFA program in the world focused exclusively on experimental, queer and activist performance.

Since Moving to Los Angeles, Zak has been working as an actor, writer and director, as well as coaching actors privately and at Margie Haber Studios: the recipient of "Best Audition Studio" in the 2009 Backstage Reader's poll.

Zak is now in development for his second feature film with a major indie film production company.

**Gabriel Goldstein (Writer, Editor, Co-Director)**

Gabriel Goldstein is a filmmaker, writer and musician raised in the blue ridge mountains of Virginia. He was studying film at San Francisco City College and living in a communal warehouse in '05 when the universe (in the form of Gabriel Diamond) found him through craigslist, and called him into action, initially to write the screenplay for LESS. His roles expanded from Writer to Assistant Director to Co-Producer to Editor until eventually he had earned "film by" credit. LESS is his first feature film.

His previous work includes, as a writer: two produced plays (THiS and Indigo Don't Vote); as a filmmaker: an experimental documentary feature (Making Sense of It All), nine short films; and as a musician, two solo albums and three years, a U.S. tour, EP and full-length album with Sweet Crude Bill & the Lighthouse Nautical Society. He currently moves from season to season as an itinerant artist.

## **Principal Cast**

Finn	Zak Barnett
Mia	Rebecca Noon
Gunther	Lew Levinson

## **Supporting Cast**

Paul	David Crane
Glen	Dave Amriott
Beaten Man	Walter McQuesten
Tourist with Polaroid	Dan Griffiths
Cafe Girl	Lea Endres
Teddy	Deacon Tillman
Girl at Performance	Kelcie Stranahan
Woman with glasses	Glenda Solis
Women at Café	Sara James
	Diane B. Rooney
Man at Café	Jeff Redlick
Finn's Wife in Photo	Leah Diamond
Finn's Son in Photo	Robert Sloan
Customers in café	Gabriel Goldstein
	Diane Rooney
	Faheem Salemi

## **PRINCIPLE CAST BIOS**

### **Rebecca Noon (Mia)**

Rebecca is a collaborative theatre artist, devising and performing plays from Egypt to Alaska. She trained at the London International School of Performing Arts, is a member of San Francisco-based theatre company mugwumpin and a founding member of the East Coast-based Burvil Hoist. Long before *Less*, Rebecca spent three years performing a one-woman show for the Faithful Fools, a San Francisco street ministry. As a Fool she participated in numerous street retreats, including one week long retreat where she slept, ate, and lived for seven days in San Francisco's Tenderloin. In *Mia* Rebecca found a role she enjoyed so much that it was hard to let her go. After production ended, Rebecca took her first coffee shop job. It did not end well. Now Rebecca lives mostly in Rhode Island with her main squeeze Jed.

### **Lew Levinson (Gunther)**

Since the character, Gunther, is the antithesis of my image of myself. I found it freeing from the restraint of worrying if anyone would think he was like me. The 20 of the 21 characters I had previously portrayed were so much closer to the me I recognize as me. Having acted and directed most of my life for the stage, having a large part in a film was a really exciting experience. I tried hard to internalize Gunther, to like the Gunther in me, but I never liked him

myself. Maybe that is why the bad guys do such risky stuff, a motive for their self-destruction.

## **SOUND**

### **Nathan Matthew David (Score)**

Nathan Matthew David's music has been heard in film festivals around the world. He has composed music for over ten feature films including the award-winning feature documentaries "Children of the War" (Hijos de la Guerra) and "The Philosopher Kings", as well as the award-winning feature narrative, "The Lost Coast". In addition to film work, he has written for television, video games and video art. HYPERLINK

"<http://www.nathanmatthewdavid.com/>"[www.nathanmatthewdavid.com](http://www.nathanmatthewdavid.com)

"I was very fortunate to work on *Less*. The film provided a unique and beautiful canvas upon which to collaborate with Gabriel and Zak, as well as the wonderful co-composers, Geoff and Ryan. I hope the film has the same impact on its viewers as it had on me. It forever will be a film that I remember."

### **Hands: Geoffrey Halliday & Ryan Sweeney (Score)**

Hands is an up and coming indie act out of Los Angeles, with two core members, Ryan Sweeney and Geoffrey Halliday. Originally started as Geoffrey's electronic solo project in 2008 the project quickly bloomed when he met and collaborated with fellow east coaster, Ryan Sweeney after their move to LA. They mix a wide array of influences into their music while relying on strong compositions and interesting arrangements to express their ideas with a pop sensibility hard to ignore.

For "*Less*" they employed a wide array of instruments and moods in order to capture the desolation and loneliness expressed through the intimate character relationships. Now working on a follow up their "Cities EP" released in May 2008, they are finding new ways to create and record music. A new single, "Hold" is set to be released via Creative Commons and the label Headphonica. See HYPERLINK "<http://www.myspace.com/handsmusic>" [www.myspace.com/handsmusic](http://www.myspace.com/handsmusic) for more.

### **Ivy Ross (Songs)**

Ivy is a traveling musician, teacher, recording artist and play-writing coach based out of Portland Oregon. Her work in the Bay Area in the late 20th century included documenting artistic endeavors of many of the local homeless population. It is no surprise that the songs that emerged from her restless psyche and minimalist aesthetic fell gently into place amidst the landscape of '*Less*'.

**CREW****Director/Cinematographer**

Gabriel Diamond

**Co-Directors**

Gabriel Goldstein

Zak Barnett

**Written | Edited | Produced**

Gabriel Diamond

Zak Barnett

Gabriel Goldstein

**Original film score by**

Nathan Matthew David

Geoffrey Halliday

Ryan Sweeney

**Featuring original songs by:**

Ivy Ross

Hands

Tommy Rickard

Dylan Trees

**Sound Design & Additional Music**

Robert Brinkerhoff

**Color Correction & Titles**

Dan Wilken

**Editing Consultants**

Patrick Barnes

Matthew Beighley

**Second Assistant Editor**

Julia Robertson

**Additional Writing and Story Consultant**

Jennifer Tien

**Production Manager**

Carrie Schreck

**Gaffer**

Ren Dodge

**Second AD**

Fay Dearborn

**Location Sound**

Mandel Lum

Ryan Macarthur

Richard Sammons

**Steady Cam Operator**

Robert Render Harrison

**Second Assistant Camera**

Carrie Schreck

**Art Direction | Make Up | Wardrobe**

Beth Alyse Snyder

**Special Effects Make Up**

Alexis Johansing

**Mia's art work**

Judd Vetrone

**Additional Costumes**

Maria Meyer

**Set Photographer**

Ren Dodge

**Mia's birds made by**

Judd Vetrone

Nobuyo Kinoshita

Bridget May

Richard Griswald

Keiko Maguro

Jeff Cotler

Sparky Levee

**Location Assistants**

Deldelp Media

Paul Burke

**Casting Assistants**

Gabrielle Demestere

Rami Margron

Kristen Teiche  
Fay Dearborn  
Kalonica McQuesten  
Deldelp Medina  
Lilia Scott

**Production Assistants**

Alexis Hosea  
Megy Nascimento  
Scot Schneider  
Nicholas J. Hurwitch  
Quincy Lefevre  
Leah Bailey  
Davide Fabbian  
Paul Burke  
Jennifer Tien

**[www.losingiseverything.com](http://www.losingiseverything.com)**