

NOT YOUR AVERAGE SPORTS MOVIE



SLUMP

SLUMP PRODUCTIONS INC. Presents "SLUMP" | LARA DEGLAN MORGAN CHURLA BEN DEXTRAZE MATT KENNEDY MARCO WALKER-NG
DOUG ABRAHAMS JONATHAN MUBANDA | Edited by DAVID SCOTT TITUS | Production Designer NATALIE MUSSELL | Director of Photography STIRLING BANCROFT csc
Produced by LARA DEGLAN MORGAN CHURLA MATT KENNEDY | Written by LARA DEGLAN | Directed by POLLY PIERCE

SLUMP

PRESS KIT 2022

"...if a team's in a slump, or if you personally are in a slump, you gotta find the fattest, gnarliest, grossest chick and you just gotta lay the wood to her. And when you do that, you're just going to have instant success..." – Mark Grace, former Major League Baseball Player.

SLUMP is a contemporary dramedy short film that uses the female perspective to bring attention to the negative side of team dynamics by shedding light on the ritual of male athletes targeting and sleeping with fat women for the sole purpose of “helping them play better” and/or “get out of a slump.” Though these unsuspecting women are referred to as “slumpbusters” in baseball, there are a slew of code words surrounding these rituals within other sports, such as “jumping on a grenade,” “slaying a dragon,” “roasting,” and/or “pig hunting.” But, it is not just within sports culture where these “games” are played. Stories about men being dared to hook up with what they deem to be the most unattractive and fattest girl in a bar (known as “pulling a pig” or “pigging”) are becoming more common—not because it didn’t happen before, but because women are starting to openly talk about it and share their experiences.

With women in top creative roles (directed, written, and predominately produced), we are proud to be an unconventional, female-driven sports film that draws attention to something that has been going on for generations, yet is rarely talked about—or even known of. To this day, *not a single woman* we have asked has known about this issue (with the only exception being those women who found out only because they were targeted themselves). Conversely, most men we have asked who have played competitive sports are aware and tend to either feel ashamed that they didn’t stop it (whether it was acted on or joked about), or feel shame that they took part in it.

Our goal in making this film is to bring awareness to these rituals and the damaging effects they cause for those who are unwillingly involved. We want to promote change so that no other woman (or person) has to feel the ramifications of being targeted for sport. Shedding light on these rituals is key, so that no other woman (or person) can be blindsided and dehumanized again.



Actor Lara Deglan as “Sidney Ryan”



Actors Lara Deglan as “Sidney Ryan”, Morgan Churla as “Mackenzie”, and Ben Dextraze as “Chase Owens”

LOGLINE

Not your average sports movie.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

After her comedy video with the school baseball team goes viral, a plus-size broadcasting student discovers that locker room talk is more than just talk.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Sidney Ryan, a plus-size broadcasting student and former athlete, lives and breathes baseball. In an attempt to blend her two passions, sports broadcasting and baseball, she makes a spoof sports interview video with her school baseball team. During her interviews, Sidney unexpectedly forms a connection with the star player. But when the video goes viral and Sidney is at the height of popularity, she learns the hard way that her baseball knowledge is limited to what happens on the field... not the locker room.



Actors Marco Walker-Ng as “Sanders” and Ben Dextraze as “Chase Owens”

CREATIVE CONTEXT

SLUMP, originally titled *Batting Practice*, started as a feature length film based on the world of professional sport from the insider perspective of our two producers Lara Deglan and Morgan Churla. But as we dove deeper into the story, along with our co-producer Matt Kennedy, we realized that something was missing. It was then, at a writer's meeting, where Lara shared her story of how she learned the "Slumpbuster" term and the fact that she was publicly ridiculed for being the "perfect" one. It started with, "this may be too dark, but..." and ended with, "it's too dark isn't it?" It was at this moment that the film changed. The deafening silence in the room that followed was indication enough that this was the story that needed to be told.

Through crowd funding and donations from our amazing friends and family, we were able to secure enough money to make shooting our film a reality. Though Covid-19 was a curveball we did not anticipate, we were able to transform *SLUMP* into a short film and began production in March 2021.



Actors Morgan Churla as "Mackenzie" and Lara Deglan as "Sidney Ryan"



Actor Matt Kennedy as "Grayson Ryan"

MEET THE TEAM

LARA DEGLAN

Producer, Writer, “Sidney Ryan”

Lara is a writer, producer, and actor who has a passion for telling unique stories that are representative of real people. Tired of being told that her personality and mannerisms don't match those of a “typical overweight person,” she is especially passionate about telling stories that break stereotypes surrounding fat people.



Photo Credit: Matt Reznick

She is a graduate of UBC's Acting Program and *SLUMP* is her first short film that she has written and produced. Previously she co-created, co-wrote, and co-starred in the award winning comedy series, *The Country Club*—a mockumentary about the inner workings of a Golf and Country Club. Currently, she is working on the feature film version of *SLUMP*.



Photo Credit: Matt Reznick

MORGAN CHURLA

Producer, Script Consultant, “Mackenzie”

Morgan is originally from the USA, but now calls Vancouver, BC home. She is an actor, writer, and has her own wedding and event planning company. Morgan is a graduate of the BFA Acting program at UBC and has been active in the theater and film community.

Her recent film credits include *Chasing Saudade* (Honourable Mention- Best Woman Short), *The Country Club* (Comedy Series, various awards), and *Lucy Dies* (short) written by Andrea Bang. Favourite theater credits include Chutney in *Legally Blonde* (Align), Effie Trinket in *The Hunger Games: The Musical trilogy* (District13 Presents), *Carry On The Musical* (Winner of Pick of the Fringe) and April in *Company* (United Players).

MATT KENNEDY

Producer, Script Consultant, “Grayson Ryan”

Matt Kennedy is a graduate of the BFA Acting program at UBC and is the co-founder of Young Moviemakers, an award-winning acting and video production program for children and youth ages 5-18. He works as a resident filmmaker and educator with Mulgrave School in West Vancouver and is the coordinator for the Zoom Film Festival, one of BC's largest student film festivals.

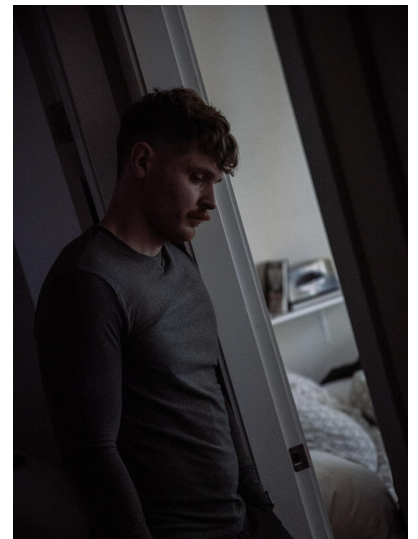


Photo Credit: Matt Reznick

POLLY PIERCE

Director

Polly is an Australian/Canadian dual citizen, with biracial ethnicity (Chinese and Caucasian) and has worked throughout Australia, Canada, Mexico and Hong Kong.

After receiving her BFA: Film and Television Production (High Distinction) from the Queensland University of Technology, Polly has been the cinematographer on numerous narrative short films, two of which were awarded funding from Screen Australia, Screen Queensland and the Pacific Film and Television Commission. One of these films, the moody, Colonial Australia based drama, *Blood Hollow*, won the Rising Star Award and screened at the Canada International Film Festival (2011) and won the Silver Lei Award and screened at the Honolulu International Film Festival that same year. And in 2021, Polly received the Best Cinematography Award for her work on the short film *Where Everyone Lives* at the Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival.

Polly recently wrote, produced and directed two short films, the award winning supernatural dark comedy *Wytch Craft*, where she personally received the Best Female Director award at the Arthouse Festival of Beverly Hills and the Best Female Filmmaker Award at the Chicago Indie Film Awards, and the pandemic set rom-com, *Dependable Pandemic Life Partner*, shot entirely remotely and on iPhones during the height of the Coronavirus Lockdown.

In the summer of 2021, Polly was a guest industry speaker at the *Videatur Collective Film Project* and Solarhouse Productions *New Future's Lab*, workshops offering on-set experience and information to young, emerging BIPOC and LGBTQ+ filmmakers in the Toronto area. And in the Fall, Polly was selected to take part in the *Women in the Director's Chair Career Advancement Module* where she is developing a period drama, television series called "Paldi" which uses the immigrant journeys of a Chinese and a Sikh family as they navigate contrasting cultural customs and other obstacles to seek a 'better life' for their families.

In her over a decade long career in film and television, Polly has amassed over 80 professional credits as a Camera Assistant on feature films such as the French/ Australian co-production *The Tree* (2010) and television series such as *Bletchley Circle: San Francisco* (2018), the Apple TV series *Home Before Dark* (2018/19) and the Steven Spielberg produced sci-fi, *Terra Nova* (2011) as well as countless commercials and music videos.



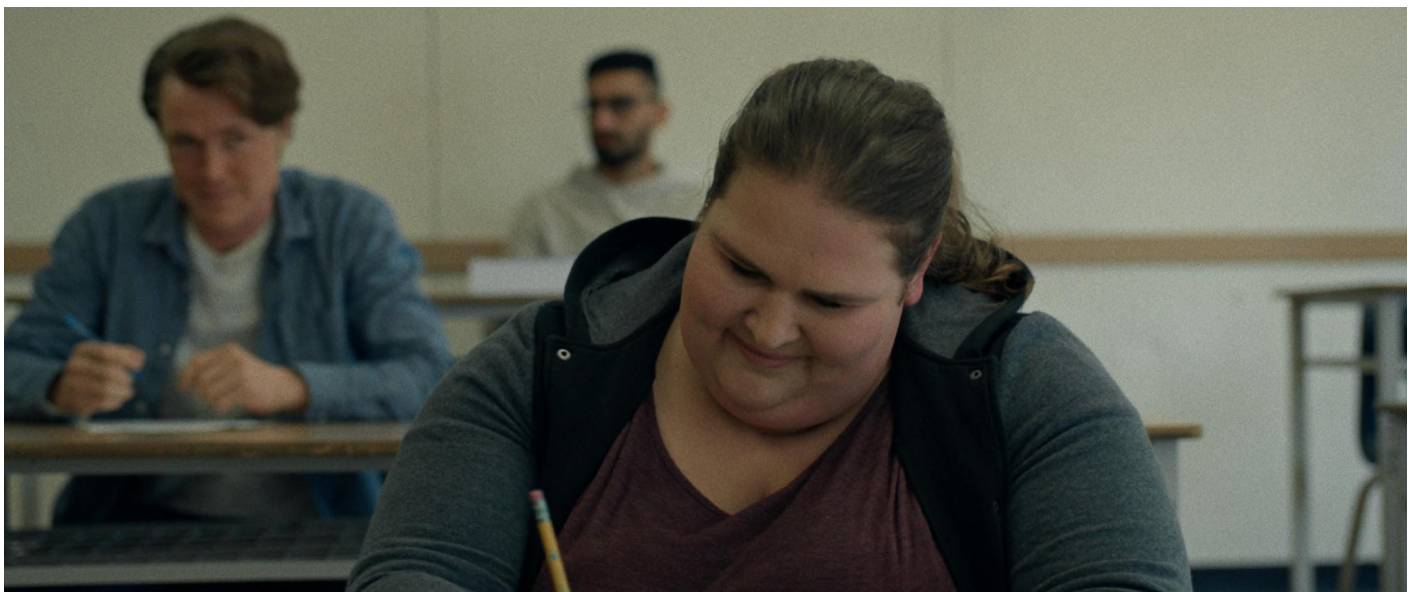
Photo Credit: Matt Reznak

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I first read the script for “Slump” I was in disbelief that an act so base and disgusting, such as sports players targeting plus-size women for sex to help them out of a bad playing streak, was actually a thing! In meeting with the scripts’ co-producers, Lara Deglan and Morgan Churla, and hearing that a similar incident had happened to them and was the inspiration for this story, just riled me up and I really wanted to be seriously considered to direct this story so we could shed light on this humiliating and hurtful act and those who resort to it. My personal background is as a survivor of Domestic Violence, so I could empathize with Sidney’s hurt, shame and humiliation after she was targeted as a Slumpbuster, as those are similar feelings that surround domestic violence survivors and which silence many of its female victims in both instances. “Slump” is also a coming-of-age story where I imagine Sidney is a late bloomer romantically, just like myself, and for that first sexual attraction to be with the hot baseball player, one could easily get carried away with stereotyped notions of being ‘chosen’ and ‘the one.’ However, as is the case with many first crushes, the veil falls and reveals the truth, and sadly in this case, a hard and dark one.

My vision for “Slump” was definitely for Sidney’s perspective to be the central one and emphasized in the filming of this story. So, in our coverage for scenes, I deliberately chose to hang on Sidney and to let her push the story forward and let the audience’s experience of it be alongside hers, from the first flirtations with cute guy, Chase, through to her abandonment post sex with him at the Frat House party, through to her upset and isolation after learning that she was targeted as a Slumpbuster. I also felt that a story like this could have easily been static but I wanted to carry the story with a moving camera and in many scenes we planned coverage using a Steadicam to provide momentum to the scene. However, when the truth of Sidney being targeted as a Slumpbuster is revealed to her, her world does become static as she is processing her hurt and shame.

I’m hoping that “Slump” will expose the misogynistic and cruel hazing rituals that still exist in the sporting arena as well as in our post #metoo world, showing that we do still have a long way to go for equality and to eradicate harassment. I also hope it educates audiences to these not so often heard stories of everyday harassment that are usually reserved as ‘locker room talk’ or simply labeled as ‘boys being boys.’



Actors Ben Dextraze as “Chase Owens” and Lara Deglan as “Sidney Ryan”

KEY CREW

Directed by	Polly Pierce
Written by	Lara Deglan
Produced by	Lara Deglan Morgan Churla Matt Kennedy
Cinematographer	Stirling Bancroft csc
Production Designer	Natalie Mussell
Editor	David Scott Titus
Sound Design	Steven Roe
Music	Drop Dead Red This Gun for Hire Steven Roe

CAST

Sidney Ryan	Lara Deglan
Mackenzie	Morgan Churla
Chase Owens	Ben Dextraze
Grayson Ryan	Matt Kennedy
Mark Sanders	Marco Walker-Ng
Pat	Doug Abrahams
Jerry	Jonathan Mubanda
Mike	Mark Ferns
Larry	Matthew D. Simmons
Third baseman	Steven Mason



Actors Lara Deglan as “Sidney Ryan” and Doug Abrahams as Coach “Pat”

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Duration:	18:23
Picture Format:	Colour
Aspect Ratio:	2:40
Shooting Format:	Digital (Arri Alexa SXT)
Exhibition Format:	H.264, ProRes
Language:	English
Country:	Canada
Genre:	Dramedy

CONTACT

Lara Deglan and Morgan Churla
Slump Productions Inc.
Vancouver, BC, Canada
slumpproductionsinc@gmail.com

SOCIAL MEDIA

Instagram: @slumpthemovie
Facebook: @slumpthemovie

SPONSORS



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FILM FESTIVALS

**Our festival circuit began October 2021*

Awards

- Best Short Drama at the Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival (World Premiere)
- Best Short Film at the Topaz Film Festival, presented by Women in Film Dallas, US (US Premiere)
- Best Canadian Short Film at the Cyrus International Film Festival of Toronto
- Best Actress in a Short Film for Lara Deglan at the Cyrus International Film Festival of Toronto
- Award of Excellence from the Canada Shorts Film Festival
- Finalist at the NewFilmmakers NY Festival
- Semi-Finalist at the Cascadia International Women's Film Festival

Nominations

- Best Canadian Short Award – Vancouver Asian Film Festival
- Best Director for Canadian Short Award – Vancouver Asian Film Festival
- Best Cinematography for Canadian Short Award – Vancouver Asian Film Festival
- Best Movie Director (Canada) - Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival
- Best Actress (Canada) - Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival

Official Selections

- Vancouver Asian Film Festival and screening as part of the *Canadian Shorts Program* (BC Premiere)
- New Filmmakers LA as part of their *Canadian Cinema Spotlight*
- Santa Fe Film Festival
- LA Indie Film Festival
- Manhattan Film Festival
- Sunset Film Festival LA
- Vancouver Shorts Film Festival
- LA Independent Women Film Awards
- Chicago Indie Film Awards
- Toronto International Women in Film Festival



Actors Marco Walker-Ng as “Mark Sanders” and Lara Deglan as “Sidney Ryan”



Actors Ben Dextraze as “Chase Owens” and Lara Deglan as “Sidney Ryan”



Actors Morgan Churla as "Mackenzie", Ben Dextraze as "Chase Owens", and Lara Deglan as "Sidney Ryan"