

## Interview: Matthew Weinstein on ‘A Missed Connection’ at Beloit Film Fest, Feb. 21-22, 2020

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on February 19, 2020 - 11:38am

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CHICAGO – Writer/director Matthew Weinstein is bringing a bit of Chicago to the Beloit (Wisconsin) International Film Festival this upcoming weekend (February 21st and 22nd) as he presents his short made-in-Chicago film, “A Missed Connection.” Featuring a couple, a chance encounter and a meditation on the past, more information on the screening is available by [Third Wheel Entertainment](#)

Matthew Weinstein is a based-in-Chicagoland filmmaker. Since his graduation from Northern Illinois University in 2011, he has been the writer, director, and editor for two other short films, (“Conservation Area,” and “The Gun Equation”). “Gun” was featured in the 2015 Cannes Film Festival Short Film Corner and the 2016 Blue Whiskey Independent Film Festival. HollywoodChicago.com got the opportunity to talk to Weinstein in anticipation of this weekend’s screening of “A Missed Connection.”

**HollywoodChicago.com:** How does Chicago lend itself as a location, both interior and exterior, that really helps your filmmaker point-of-view tell the story?

**Matthew Weinstein:** A city setting was essential in helping to convey a feeling of longing and loneliness but ultimately it can take place anywhere. It was also essential to have it take place during the winter – especially the early sun setting. It really helps tap into that bittersweet melancholia, a ‘Midwestern Melancholia.’

We were all prepared for no snow and just working with what the weather provided but it was to our great fortune that it snowed the first night and didn’t melt the next day. Thankfully we were shooting our interiors the first day so it wouldn’t have messed with continuity but fortunately, the last night of filming when we did all our exteriors in Lincoln Square, that night happened to be ‘snowpocalypse’ that year. Not only does it help sell the authenticity but there’s also no greater thrill than when it’s captured in camera.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What is the origin of the line ‘the past is a foreign country’ and how did it resonate with you in making it a major theme in the film?

**Weinstein:** That quote actually comes from L.P. Hartley from his novel ‘The Go-Between.’ I had first heard that line from an interview with filmmaker William Friedkin and it just instantly resonated with me. Not only that, but it immediately tied into what the script was trying to say, and that individual line helped to ground the theme of the past and how we reconcile where we’re at as individuals. It felt even more appropriate to have Jake [Tyler Pistorius] say that line given the character’s writing background.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** When the two principle characters are talking in the coffee shop, there is a panning technique between them which combines movement in the background. In the context of the story, what did you and Director of Photography Tom Kinstle want to communicate using this style of shot?

**Weinstein:** It was really about taking these sections of this extended conversation and giving them each distinctive visual styles. So for instance, when they first sit down, the shots for most of that section are over the shoulders – rather wide – to help show the world happening around them in the coffee shop, but to also give a rather voyeur and eavesdropping aesthetic.

The section after that was designed to help show the passage of time and how each of them is letting their guard down. The camera work also helps to lend more energy and gives a feeling that we’re just happening upon this conversation as it’s taking place. Tom did a terrific job of conveying that, as well as the music by Mark Bartels. But I also really love the performances here ... they each really helped sell the spontaneity and it was great for them to help establish a sense of past history together.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** The lead actor was a dominating presence in the sense of this story, what qualities did Tyler bring to this story that surprised you, even as the writer and director?

**Weinstein:** Tyler has an ability to say so much without dialogue. That much I knew having previously worked with him on the short film ‘The Gun Equation.’ Without giving anything away, he contributed a major moment in the film and it was immediately decided that this was going in the film come hell or high water. What was great about this particular moment was that I had no idea what he was going to do. He just told me

he wanted to try something and it was exactly what the movie needed at this specific point. Not only is this a great moment, but he really tapped into the character of Jake right here. But besides tapping into the existential qualities of the character, just working with Tyler is rewarding. He has great focus and an incredible sense of humor. He literally had me laughing hysterically on the drive into set on at least two of the shoot days.



Writer/Director Matthew Weinstein on the Set of 'A Missed Connection'

*Photo credit: Third Wheel Entertainment*

**HollywoodChicago.com:** And how was working with the other principle actor, Kimberly Michelle Vaughn?

**Weinstein:** She really helped to flesh out the character of Lauren and made terrific contributions to the script. In fact I would say Tyler, Kimberly, and producer Megan St. John were valuable collaborators to the screenplay as we got closer to production.

Kimberly has such a warm and down-to-earth personality in addition to having a natural screen presence. There are specific shots of her in the movie that are held longer because her performance is so strong that cutting any sooner would diminish the impact. Her interactions with Tyler are so fluid and she brings such a lively spirit to the point where it's hard to imagine those scenes without her. Ultimately the chemistry between Kimberly and Tyler is the absolute heart of the piece.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What fascinates you about cause and effect in the context of this story, such as a broken briefcase, a woman stood up for a date and how that it all blends into a chance encounter of the past?

**Weinstein:** All of this was essentially about allowing the viewer enough time to have their moment with these two characters on their own before throwing them into this chance encounter ... allowing for audience empathy so that there is a real resonance when they sit down. In writing the script, whether it was conscious or not, it really became about raising certain questions that weren't related to this central idea, but ultimately when this chance meeting becomes the focus.

It's my hope that the original questions raised in the beginning have taken a backseat only to slowly come to the forefront in conjunction with the main story. For instance, the broken briefcase was absolutely essential to get established off the bat because the viewer needs that set up in order for what happens later not to feel out of place.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** How would you pitch both your screenings and the Beloit International Film Festival as a weekend destination for Midwesterners?

**Weinstein:** I look at both screenings as an opportunity to finally share this movie with a wide audience. I feel while any movie can be seen and enjoyed anywhere, there's no greater thrill than to experience it with an audience. But apart from the chance to see 'A Missed Connection.' I look at the Beloit International Film Festival as an opportunity for Midwesterners to see what the filmmaking community has to offer. There are a lot of exciting films being shown this weekend courtesy of the fine filmmaking talent not just in the Midwest, but worldwide.

*"A Missed Connection" is part of the 15th Beloit International Film Festival, from Friday, February 21st through Sunday, March 1st, 2020. For details and schedules [click here](#). [17]*

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**Source URL (retrieved on *Apr 24 2024 - 2:20pm*):**

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/31112/interview-matthew-weinstein-on-a-missed-connection-at-beloit-film-fest-feb-21-22-2020>

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