

ARTICLE

## DVD Review: Anywhere USA

by [Chris Delloiacono](#)

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Independent films are a mixed bag, just like major Hollywood films. It's not the amount of money that's spent, but the quality of the many elements that come together like a fine broth. You can have all kinds of amazing bits and pieces in that broth, but if you don't cook it right... what's the point. I'm not a snob that feels indie films are the only flicks worth watching, but I don't cringe in fear at subtitles or a small budget. There's certain genres that I prefer, but predicting what films are going to be good doesn't often work out. The parts going in can give you an idea, but not always. If quality pieces were all that mattered then explain the inexplicable failures of "Godfather: Part 3," Peter Jackson's "King Kong" or Warren Beatty's "Town and Country." These films all had fantastic pedigrees but did not succeed in the way most imagined.

"Anywhere USA" involves: racism, drug problems, and weapons-toting freaks' madcap adventures told in three distinct parts. I'm sure there are plenty of people living in my surrounding area that are very similar to the folks occupying this nugget of film. A brilliant conceit is that all mentions of the characters' hometown are either bleeped or blurred out. This allows the characters' actions to take on special meaning, because they just may be around the corner or even next door. The stories are vaguely linked in the final chapter, but this is not "Magnolia" or "Crash" where seemingly disparate lines will intersect to create a perfect shape.

The formerly married writing team of Chusy Haney-Jardine and Jennifer McDonald put together what appears to be an authentic view of people making strange life decisions. The story is touted as an autobiography in three parts, and the authenticity is evidenced on screen. The events go a little far out at times, but they never seem impossible. My own individualism is important to me, and the script offers a view of people outside the usual. They are not always the type of persons one should look up to but are all of an interesting ilk to spend a short portion of your life.

Amazingly the cast is populated with non-actors throughout. It's hard to believe the large group are not accomplished professionals, because it's quite a well acted movie. Obviously the writing and direction allow these people the opportunity to put forth revelatory performances. The characterizations ring true throughout offering an almost-documentary feeling. The script is great but considering that Chusy literally went out and plucked these actors from places like the local Applebee's, Subway, and the mall these performances come off in a way that nearly knocks you over!

The first segment was easily the most entertaining. The section follows a man's attempts to spy on his estranged lover. He and his midget sidekick spy on the woman as she uses the Internet to meet new men. She ends up linked with a Middle Eastern man. Being racist hillbillies they assume the foreigner must be a terrorist. The thought process of this pair and the hijinks that ensue are funny but tragic at the same time. It's a difficult task to pull off hatred in such a way as to be amusing but maintain them as the antagonists of the piece. I definitely felt some pleasure for what befalls them in the long run.

Jeremiah Brennan and Brian Fox play the scheming twits with relish. I'm sure the men aren't morons of an epic degree, like they appear on film, but they dive into the parts with a believable zest. I could have watched this pair's machinations fail for the entire film. Alas, in a time when films are bloated, the segment probably succeeded because it was brief and to the point.

The other two sections of the film are good, but each one was progressively less enjoyable. The second follows a hippie caring for a young girl and the final one follows an aging yuppie trying to open up to our integrated world. These segments focus on good intentions with poor results. They are still quite entertaining, but I go back to the first as the strongest content in the film. Fear mongering is what the American media excels at in the modern day. That segment totally captures the exaggerated fear that many feel because of ludicrous media coverage of various situations.

### Extras

Most of the bonus content is straightforward with a selection of trailers, gallery of posters, and a hilarious one-minute introduction Chusy filmed for a festival he could not attend. Even though most of the material is standard stuff the disc includes one of my favorite extras offered in a long time. The 24-minute interview with Chusy Jardine that doubles as a making of piece stunned me! Jardine is an artist that's cobbled together a movie and tells you the inside secrets. This isn't a typical studio pablum piece, but instead it's as off kilter as the film. Chusy is without pretense but full of interesting tidbits that also illustrate why his odd persona was able to pull off such a quirky film.

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**Rating:** **NOT RATED****Country:** USA**Release Date:** March 22, 2011**Distributor:** Cinevolve Studios**Director:**

- Chusy Haney-Jardine

**Cast:**

- Frank Avery
- Jeremiah Brennan
- Ralph Brierley
- Brian Fox
- Perla Haney-Jardine

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**Grade:** B+