

WHERE THE LONG TALE ENDS

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Wholphin Issue 8 Review

Posted by: [Matt Gamble](#) in [Features](#), [Movies](#), [Reviews](#)



Since there seems to be a lack of reviews of the various issues of *Wholphin*, though the internet sure seems to enjoy talking about them, and as I am a subscriber, I thought it would be a good idea to offer up my feelings on the discs. And since they are comprised of multiple short films, I figured I would simply offer up short synopsis and reviews of each film contained within the issues. This will hopefully prove helpful to those considering purchasing/watching them, as so little is explained on the packaging.

I'm going to start off with Issue 8 since it is both the latest issue and because the Internet seems abuzz about [James Franco](#) destroying a room during one of the films. Being that *Wholphin* is released quarterly I'll hopefully have plenty of time to go back and review previous installments that I own. And while I don't own every issue of *Wholphin*, I do own all but the inaugural issue, and it is out of print, making a review less than helpful for those wanting to purchase it. Even so, it is my hope that I can provide some additional insight to those of you who haven't been exposed to this "magazine", and hopefully help you decide which issues are worth your time and money.

Short Term 12

Directed by [Destin Daniel Cretton](#)

22 min Short Film

This winner of "Best Short" at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival, *Short Term 12* focuses on a single day at a residential facility for at risk teens. While the length of the film might initially be viewed as a short coming, the film delicately creates believable characters and interactions in its relatively short time span, making it easy for audiences to quickly identify and empathize with them. It also helps that the story is surprisingly strong, being both direct and full of emotional surprises. While not the best film on the disc, it certainly is enjoyable with a high rewatch potential.

Kids + Money

Directed by [Lauren Greenfield](#)

32 min Documentary

The first of two truly standout films on this disc, *Kids + Money* is a documentary on teenagers living in Los Angeles and their copious spending habits. The kids are all of differing economic backgrounds, but the one thing they have in common is an obsession with status and they use their money, and sometimes their parent's, to acquire it. And while this concept is fascinating in and of itself, there are three key moments in the film that are utterly captivating. One involves a girl with her own personal nanny discovering on camera that her best friend couldn't afford to go to prom and had been lying about this to maintain her status. The second involves a sixteen year old child actor who has his own

show on Nickelodeon and has been acting since he was a baby. In the last few years he has earned so much money that his mother quite her job and started managing his career. But when he states he's been supporting his family financially for three years, his off-camera mother steps in and puts him in his place. While they try to give the appearance of a normal, healthy familial relationship, it is clear the relationship is far more complicated and tenuous than they want to admit. The last involves two pre-teen sisters who are growing up in a family that has more money than God. And while their mother seems relatively comfortable and open about trying to maintain balance and sensibility, the two girls present a see-saw dynamic unlike anything I've ever seen. The older of the two is relatively empathetic and caring, while the younger sister is an unholy Capitalist monster, basing everything on looks, makeup and clothes, and making sure everyone knows about it. And wait until you hear them talk, completing each others sentences in a way that the other never intended. As fascinating as the rest of the film is, these two clearly could have a feature made about them and your jaw would be on the floor for every minute of it.

My Friend Told Me About You

By [Carlos Dangler](#) in collaboration with [Daniel Ryan](#)

25 min Short Film

The one film in this issue I truly didn't like, so much so I didn't finish the film. It's smart, well written and has some fantastic dialogue, but it is also so pretentious I wanted to vomit. Though the degree of turgid self-aggrandizing this film reaches is almost impressive in its own right.

From Burger it Came

Directed by [Dominic Bisignano](#)

7 min Animated Short

A truly odd film, as Bisignano relates to the world his past struggles with OCD when seemingly every interaction caused him to think he had become infected with AIDS. If that isn't enough, there is a Greek styled chorus following along, only it is played by a tape recording of Bisignano's mother, who just might be crazier than he was.

Love You More

Directed by [Sam Taylor-Wood](#)

15 min Short Film

Based on the short story "Peter Shelley" by Patrick Marber, *Love You More* is the second standout film on this disc, as it chronicles a boy and a girl who just might fall in love because of a shared interest in the Buzzcocks. Simply a magnificently made film that easily navigates the awkward "Will we or won't we?" tension of newly blossoming adolescent love.

Hidden

Directed by [Hanna Heilborn](#), [David Aronowitsch](#) and [Mats Johansson](#)

8 min Animated Documentary

Damn my HDTV. Once again a foreign film proves impossible to watch as the subtitles were cut off due to it being presented in letterboxed full frame. But what I did see was animation that was impressive to no end. Animated like it was being filmed by a non-professional cameraman, complete with sloppy zooms and awkward focusing, the animation clearly stands out as something special. Make no doubt about it, I'll be checking this one out on my computer the first chance I get.

Great Man and Cinema

Directed by [Jim Finn](#)

4 min Documentary

Just a half step behind the two best films on this disc, this "documentary" is actually a semi-straight faced propaganda film about the Dear Leader Kim Jong Il, using archival stock footage of the man. All backed by the outstanding track "Fucking U.S.A." by the Bay Area band Neung Phak, making it just as much a bizarre music video as a propaganda film.

The Room Before and After

Original Wholphin Short

Directed by [Dave Eggers](#)

Part 1: [James Franco](#) 40 min

Part 2: [Creed Bratton](#) 10 min

Part 3: [Maria Bamford](#) 10 min

Finally the one the entire Internet seems to be talking about, James Franco destroying a room. Oddly enough, Franco's version was the one I found least compelling, as it essentially was him mumbling and breaking stuff for a half hour. Sure, running through a door Looney Tunes style is impressive in its own right, but the sheer length of the ordeal really ends up detracting from the impact of the film. And since Franco's segment is clearly all about seeing how many things he can trash, it simply pales in comparison to the other two pieces. Creed Bratton's clearly has the strongest narrative of the three, and in the course of the four minutes you watch him crumble from rage to despair before your eyes. It is easily the most disturbing of the three, yet oddly enough garners the most sympathy as well. But my favorite was Bamford's, already a bonafide loose screw in her stage act, brings inspired lunacy to these proceedings as a woman with all sorts of relationship issues. And I dare you to not laugh when she pulls the scale out to weight herself. The only drawback to her scene is the post-performance interview in which she stays in her on-stage caricature of herself. I was far more interested in hearing about her goal and motivations for the scene than simply cracking a few jokes.

Overall I can happily recommend this disc as nearly every single film on it is worth watching multiple times, which is rare in compilations. And while this is not the best issue of Wholphin to date, it certainly ranks very high and is a worthy benchmark for newer releases to aim for.

Tags: [Animation](#), [Dave Eggers](#), [documentary](#), [Foreign](#), [James Franco](#), [review](#), [Reviews](#), [short film](#), [sundance film festival](#), [Wholphin](#), [Wholphin Issue 8](#)

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