

Grumpy Burger with everything



Matt
Gallagher

Filmmaker
shoots filmmaker
making flick
about Hi-Ho

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About halfway through *The Rise & Fall of the Grumpy Burger*, you start to wonder who's directing whom.

Matt Gallagher's hilarious profile of fellow Windsor filmmaker Marshall Sfalcin's attempts to make a movie about his family has its big-screen debut Saturday at the third annual Windsor International Film Festival.

"It was pretty clear to me that Marshall wasn't going to make the movie he wanted to make," said Gallagher, who has made documentaries for TVOntario and History Television.



WHO DIRECTS WHOM?: Marshall Sfalcin, left, takes direction from Matt Gallagher on the set of *The Rise & Fall of the Grumpy Burger*.

More than three years ago, Sfalcin invited Gallagher to help make a dramatic film about Sfalcin's late grandfather, Frank Fortin, founder of Windsor's Hi-Ho Restaurant chain.

The title of Gallagher's film refers to Fortin's pride-and-joy, the Grumpy Burger, which he claimed was North America's first fast-food — Sfalcin

even holds up an old article about his grandfather in *The Windsor Star* which seems to support the claim.

Gallagher had known Sfalcin and his brother, Christian, since high school and attended the University of Windsor's film studies program with him.

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Hi-Ho impetus for movie

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"We shot about 90 hours of footage," Gallagher said. Locations were all over Windsor and Essex County.

Eventually, however, Gallagher started having reservations about the direction of Sfalcin's film.

"He started changing the truth of the story. Guns and drugs and all that stuff started creeping into it."

Sfalcin had previously shot several low-budget horror and sex movies, so Gallagher could see where this one was heading. He was also becoming aware that Sfalcin himself was more interested in the process of making a movie than the movie itself.

"He just lost interest in his film," Gallagher said. At the same time, both of them realized a different kind of story was taking shape in front of the lens.

"We're both independent filmmakers," Gallagher said.

"I could completely relate to what Marshall was going through trying to make this movie."

So the focus changed. The movie turned into a depiction of the rise and fall of an independent filmmaker. He finishes his masterpiece — it's called *Eat the Restaurant*. But almost nobody has seen it apart from a few of Sfalcin's close friends and family members.

The Marshall Sfalcin we meet in Gallagher's movie is reminiscent of Ed Wood, king of the '50s B-movies. Or, at least, the Ed Wood who is portrayed by Johnny Depp in Tim Burton's fictional film — Sfalcin is engaging, funny, thick-skinned and often achingly pathetic.

He's a Grumpy Burger with all the fixings.