

# Local filmmaker sets sights on Sundance

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Photography Editor

## Passion.

That is what is evident on the set of "Schism," the new feature-length film directed and produced by John C. Lyons.

Lyons is an Edinboro University alumnus and employee of the technology and communications department on campus.



**Lyons**  
John Lyons is a local filmmaker and an EUP grad.

Lyons is one of the co-creators of the EUP Film Series, which recently received SGA program status this semester and last semester brought "Wristcutters: A Love Story" to campus.

Lyons has written, directed and produced several movies, including "Hunting Camp," which was released in 2005.

"Hunting Camp" made seven film festivals, including Rochester 47th International Film Festival, winning "Best of the Fest."

The film that Lyons is now working on, "Schism," which he intends to send to the Sundance Film Festival, hits close to home for Lyons since it is based on his recent struggle with putting a loved one in a nursing home.

He wanted to make a movie about the older population, portraying nursing homes in a positive light, rather than focusing on the negative aspects.

Lyons also wanted to focus on the struggles that go along with putting a family member in a care facility.

Lyons said he wrote the story

with help from nursing homes in the area.

"Unfortunately, we all have to go through something like this in our lives, whether it's having to take care of our parents when they are older or grandparents. It's something that I am going through right now."

Lyons explained how he came up with the title for the movie.

"A fracture, division or two pieces breaking apart. That is what 'schism' means."

"The main character, Neil, goes through several schisms during the movie that he has to overcome."

The story is set around an older gentleman who lives by himself. He breaks his hip and has to move to a nursing home.

Neil battles his own demons, which include accepting others' help and friendship and also hallucinations from dementia and Alzheimer's.

"Throughout the movie, when Neil sees something, it's usually 'skewed' to show the conspiracy that is forming in his mind," said Lyons of how the movie takes unsuspected turns.

"You begin to realize that you are not sure that everything you see is truly reality because his mind has declined into dementia."

The filming for "Schism" started in October.

Lyons wanted to get a real nursing home and use residents as actors for the filming.

"It took a long time to find some place that would accommodate us for a year. I thought it wouldn't get made because we kept hearing 'no' after 'no,'" said Lyons.

Brevillier Village in Harborcreek gave Lyons a location to film and residents were willing to participate in the movie.

Terry Smith, who plays Neil, has been acting for several years



Photo by Lauren Vokish

John Lyons controls the camera on the set of his new movie 'Schism,' which is currently in production. The film, which Lyons intends to send to the Sundance Film Festival, revolves around the emotions one experiences when placing a family member in a nursing home.

and has acted in six independent films produced in the Erie and Meadville areas. This is his first time as the main character.

And how does Smith feel about his turn in the spotlight?

"I love it! It's great. I love acting even though I started later in my career. I love working with John."

Actors auditioned and were recruited from all over Erie and surrounding areas. Some people drove as far as six hours each weekend for taping.

Students from Edinboro, Mercyhurst and Gannon are in the film as well.

Dr. Kathleen Golden, a communications and media

studies professor at Edinboro, is acting in the film as "Ms. Clark."

Filming for "Schism" wraps up in May. Lyons said he will spend all summer editing the film and adding a soundtrack. The release date will be sometime in September.

Lyons will be sending the

final product to the Sundance Film Festival in January 2008 for judging.

"I look forward to the festival and can't wait for it [the film] to be all put together," said Lyons.

"I love making movies. It's a serious investment and it's what I want to do for a long time."