



**A Film by: Little Cabin Films**  
**Directed by Nick Nummerdor & Andrew J. Morgan**  
**Official Selection: SFDocs • Calgary Underground Film Festival**  
**Heartland Film Festival • Indy Film Festival • + More to come**

**sleezelake.com • FB: sleezelake • IG: vanninmovie**



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## **Synopsis:**

It's 1977 and the idealistic message of the hippie counter-culture has played a decade long game of telephone with America's youth. Still searching for freedom and community in a post Vietnam world, groups of young people took to the open roads in shag-carpeted custom vans. They called themselves "vanners" and their culture was a strange cocktail of irreverence and hedonism.

On the south side of Chicago, the van proved the perfect escape vehicle from the smog of the steel mills and refineries. It was here that a van club called Midwest Vans Ltd. was born. On Memorial Day weekend in 1977, these blue collar outcasts set out to build their own personal utopia, free of rules and restrictions. They erected a ramshackle resort town around a small pond and called it "Sleeze Lake". When over 20,000 people showed up to the party, all bets were off! Set among the foggy memories and ephemera of a subculture lost to time, *Sleeze Lake* tells the story of Midwest Vans LTD and the biggest party you've never heard of.

## **Short Synopsis:**

Set among the foggy memories and ephemera of the world's largest custom van club, "Sleeze Lake" tells the story of a wild van party thrown in the middle of a fictitious resort town and the people who dreamt it up.

**Running Time:** 60 Minutes (HD 16:9)



*"SLEEZE LAKE shines a light on a subculture that's almost been forgotten but should really be making a comeback. Living in a time filled with large corporate-sponsored events dominating the festival market, it's inspiring to see a story about a group of people who came together for a DIY party celebrating one of the things they loved most - vans. The filmmaking team does a fantastic job of bringing an epic event from 1977 to life in a way that gave me FOMO in 2020, and the blend of archival photos and modern day interviews shows clearly how one party can change lives forever." - Henri Mazza, VP of Content Alamo Drafthouse*

## **About The Film:**

At its heart, "Sleeze Lake" is a big fish story; the type that perhaps your weird uncle would tell at a family dinner after a few cocktails. It's simultaneously nostalgic and somewhat unbelievable.

This film presents a unique and nearly lost subculture that was born out of lower class blue collar life in South Chicago and other places along America's rust belt. Within the film's story there lies a certain creativity and do-it-yourself attitude that resonates with anyone who has ever found themselves on the outside of life, culture and "the norm". In a modern era so connected by technology and manufactured culture, many long to be part of the proverbial "party". Here we present a story of those who bucked the system and made their own party and culture.

We made this film because we were the only ones who could tell our character's stories. We have been involved in what is left of the van world for the past eight years. Andrew liked it so much, he bought a van and joined the club. In some way, this film is an artifact to keep these strange memories alive and accessible.

## Director's Statement:

All the way back in 2012, myself and co-director Nick Nummerdor set out to make a film about the reclusive, and enigmatic American automotive subculture known as "vanning". We wanted to know where all the bubble windowed, shag carpeted boogie vans came from. What we got in return was a peek behind the curtain at an overlooked group of colorful characters and the gonzo world they have created for themselves. It was during the making of that film (*Vannin'* - 2013) that we kept hearing rumblings of a mythic van party by the name of "Sleeze Lake". We dug through countless photo albums, ephemera, and our character's own big fish stories in an attempt to create a film that distills the unique culture of vanning in the 1970's.

As filmmakers who love to explore forgotten Americana, the chance to tell this story was irresistible. We wanted to share the creativity and do-it-yourself spirit of a forgotten subculture while also telling a story of youth in a bygone era. As everything in the world becomes more connected, it's sometimes important to look back at a time when people could do their own thing and be who they wanted to be without the whole world watching; even just for one weekend.

Mix one part the writings of Hunter S. Thompson, one part Woodstock's brown acid, add a dash of irreverence, and muddle it in a bit of hedonism and out comes something akin to *Sleeze Lake*. It is with great pleasure that we are able to present to you this story from a long buried volume in the library of Americana. Welcome to *Sleeze Lake*, the wildest party you've never heard of!

Andrew Morgan & Nick Nummerdor, Co-Directors.



## The Filmmakers:



Little Cabin Films is a creative collaboration between two lifelong friends: Nick Nummerdor and Andrew Morgan. Nick and Andrew have been creating films together since their high school days in West Michigan.

Growing up together in the industrial port city of Muskegon, Michigan, they share a penchant to travel the path less walked when it comes to their filmmaking and subject matter. The pair of directors find that in between the cracks of our culture, there lies the fascinating lives and tales of American experiences that are often written off as

unimportant, mundane, or obscure. But it's these experiences that fascinate the pair of directors the most. Their best known film *Vannin'* successfully screened at numerous festivals and was a featured film on Amazon Prime in 2018. [www.littlecabinfilms.com](http://www.littlecabinfilms.com)

## Additional Bios:



**Nick Nummerdor, Co-Director:** 2017 Chicago Digital Media Production Fund Grantee, Nick is a filmmaker and skateboarder based in Chicago. His film, "Concrete Dreams", a documentary following the decade-long struggle and ultimate triumph of one woman's mission to provide a free public skatepark in Villa Park, IL recently gained distribution through skateboarder Tony Hawk's RIDE Channel on YouTube. Nick is a former intern of Kartemquin films, graduate of Columbia College, and worked as an outreach coordinator for "Minding the Gap". "Hannibal Takes Edinburgh", a film he produced and did sound on was executive produced by Judd Apatow and purchased by Netflix. His films "North Branch" and "Vannin'" are currently on Amazon Prime. Currently he's producing a coming of age feature documentary titled "Skate or Die," & editing a feature about female dog mushers in the midwest.

**Andrew J. Morgan, Co-Director:** Since graduating Columbia College Chicago in 2008, Andrew J. Morgan has been working professionally as a Director, DP, and Editor on a number of projects ranging in size, budget, and style. In 2009, he helped start Little Cabin Films with friend and business partner, Nick Nummerdor. As Co-Director and Producer of "Vannin'" (2013), Morgan saw his first feature film go from conception to successful distribution via streaming services such as Amazon Prime. Morgan has also acted as a producer, director, and cinematographer on two short documentaries, "North Branch" (2018) and "Hill Climb" (2017), that both focus on unique aspects of Americana. Most recently, he found himself as director of photography for shadow puppetry material to be included in the 2020 release of Monkey Paw Productions' "Candyman".



## **FAQ:**

### **Q: How did you develop the visual style of the film?**

**A:** The aesthetics of the film were something we came to about halfway into the editing process. *Sleeze Lake* is mainly an archival documentary and we were looking for a way to treat the archival material that made it feel a bit more alive and akin to the subject matter. Initially it was the very typical process of zooming and panning on photographs that's common in docs.. Eventually we started looking at the archival material in front of us, such as van event fliers, and realized there was a really great do-it-yourself aspect to a lot of it; whether it be photocopied collages or hand drawn graphics. We decided to try to mirror this in the materials from our subjects personal history presented in the film. We wanted it to play out like you were viewing someone's scrapbook come to life. Every photograph and shred of 8mm you see in the film came from the archives of Midwest Vans Ltd.'s members, right down to the flash frames and film grain.

### **Q: What are your hopes for the film moving forward?**

**A:** Our main goal is to get as many people to see the film as possible and to keep the vanning movement & spirit alive. The original vanners are generally seniors now and they are losing their friends and culture as time passes. As vanners have come and gone, some vanners have raised their kids, retired, and are now coming back to their old clubs and truck-ins. There has been a small revival with the use of social media and facebook groups. The spirit of the movement is exciting to younger people looking for nostalgia, parties, and freedom. The custom boogie van is slowly becoming cool again with new media, drivers, and van clubs popping up across the world. We are hoping we can play the film all over North America and invite vanners of all ages to the theater to have a good time together.



## **Press:**

*“Andrew J. Morgan and Nick Nummerdor’s documentary reminisces on a city of vans, debauchery, and summertime anarchy that sprung up on Memorial Day weekend in 1977; what one of the participants refers to as “the Woodstock of Van-Culture.” It certainly revels in its celebration of lowlifes living their best life.” - [Screen Anarchy](#)*

*“...they do a fantastic job adding some movie magic to make every piece of history look exciting and make us feel like we were there... worth watching for anyone fond of Americana and modern American History, and for anyone who wants to hear about something completely insane that really happened.” - [Film Threat](#)*

*“SLEEZE LAKE does a great job of balancing your standard talking heads reminiscing with great archival footage and ephemera, along with having a rockin’ modern soundtrack... As an armchair historian of oddball American subcultures, this film filled a blind-spot that I didn’t even know I had.” - [Cinefile](#)*

*““It’s like Disneyland on acid” What more needs to be said?” - [Screen Magazine](#)*

*“Much like the party itself, Sleeze Lake is short but chocked full of entertainment. I really dug the opportunity to take a glimpse into such a close-knit, rad community people my age have no other way of experiencing, really.” - [Heavy Horror](#)*

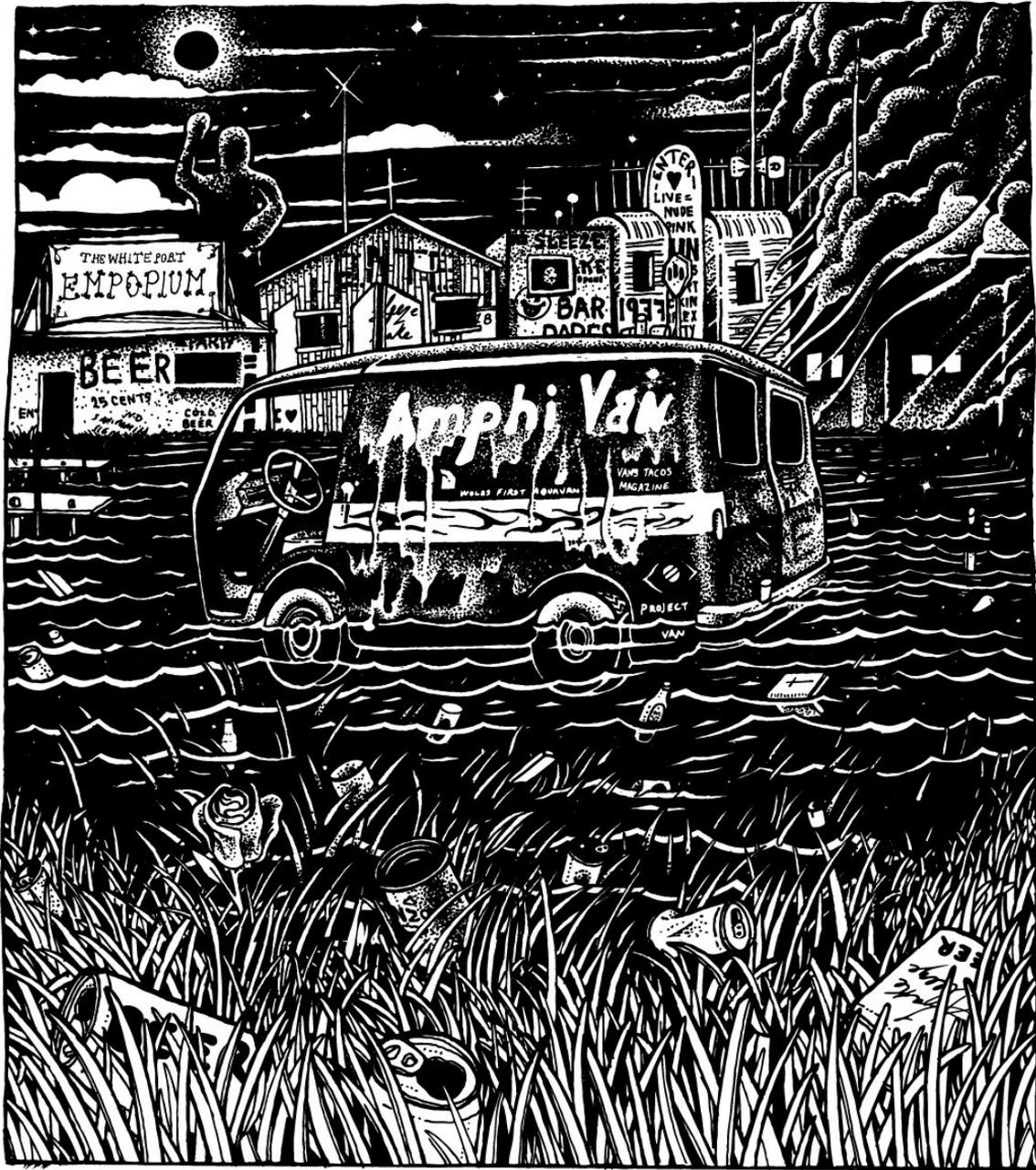
## Film Festivals:

- Chicago Underground Film Festival (Closing Night Selection) - Chicago, IL
- Calgary Underground Film Festival - Calgary, AB
- Heartland International Film Festival - Indianapolis, IN
- Indy Film Festival (WINNER, Hoosier Lens Award) - Indianapolis, IN
- SF Docs - San Francisco, CA
- Austin Indie Fest - Austin, TX
- Moviate Underground Film Festival
- Arizona Underground Film Festival (WINNER, Best Documentary) - Tucson, AZ
- Berlin Underground Film Festival (WINNER, Best Documentary) - Berlin, Germany
- YoFi Film Festival - Yonkers, NY
- Rock Horror in Rio Film Festival - Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (WINNER, Best Documentary)
- Riverbend Film Festival - Goshen, IN
- Moments Film Festival - Malaga, Spain
- Tampa Bay Underground Film Festival (Nominee, Best Documentary) - Tampa, FL
- VideoDrunk Film Festival - Toronto, ON
- Docuwest Film Festival - Golden, CO
- Threadbare Mitten Film Festival - Lansing, MI
- Brainwash Drive-In Movie Festival - Doyle, CA
- Dunedin International Film Festival - Dunedin, FL
- American Reality & Doc Fest (Finalist) - Los Angeles CA
- Sydney Lift-Off Film Festival - Sydney, Australia





LITTLE CABIN FILMS PRESENT A DOCUMENTARY



☺ Vanlife at its lowest and Best ♥

# SLEEZE LAKE

## **Production Credits:**

### **Produced by**

Little Cabin Films Inc

### **Directed & Produced by**

Nick Nummerdor

Andrew J Morgan

### **Editor**

Andrew J Morgan

### **Additional Editors**

Bryan Simpson

Nick Nummerdor

Fielden Nelson

### **Camera & Sound**

Andrew J Morgan

Nick Nummerdor

### **Graphics & Color**

Andrew J Morgan

### **Sound Mix**

Stephen Holliger

### **Starring**

Midwest Vans LTD

Sherman Simmons

George Kettell

Howard Furtak

Mike Hilburger

Tom Speirs

Joan Eorgoff

Ruthann Graczyk

Joe Luse

“Andy” Carl Anderson

Denis Hoffman

Bill Wade

Terry Cook

Curt Gilbertson

Pat Shannon

### **Archival Film & Photo**

Midwest Vans Ltd.

Larry Bauer - Indiana Beach 57

Mike Hilburger - 8mm

Curt Gilbertson

Howard Furtak

Ruthann Graczyk

Bill Wade

Denis Hoffman

Scott Brenenstuhl

Sherman Simmons

Bluegrass Vanners

Rob Maurice

Paul Matecika

### **Titles & Original Art**

Jourdon Gullett

### **Music**

Ethers

Danava

Bulldada

Donny Mahlmeister

Theo Katsaounis

Ian Link

Rich Salamander

Where the Moon Came From

David Brooks

Cory Martenez

Kiss Me Quick

State Champion

Joe Miller

### **Consultants**

Ryan Sarnowski

Charles Borg

I.B.O.B

Arlen Parsa

Matt Lauterbach

Flame