

Lorenzo DeStefano's H

Distilling Arthur Crew Inman's 17 Million Words and Bri

By Carol Patton



Bizarre, compulsive, eccentric, neurotic, peculiar, amusing, sensitive, quizzical and whimsical are only some of the words that describe Arthur Inman who unto himself became his own solitary world's most interesting puzzle.

Arthur Crew Inman (1895 -1963) chronicled his own egocentric and most unusual life in micro detail from the time he was eight years old until he shot and killed himself at age 68 in Boston, Massachusetts in his dark very private oasis/prison inside #604, Garrison Hall at 8 Garrison Street in the Back Bay. Garrison Hall, an antique apartment hotel still stands very near Boston's famed Prudential Building, Inman's nemesis.

Frequently referring to himself in the third person, it's clear Inman, although extremely sensitive to light and often referred to as blind, turned his own lens inward with the intent of not only deep self examination, but realizing his desire to connect with selected others and with the intent of sharing himself, his findings and his insights with the world. The reclusive Arthur Inman contrastingly wanted to be famous.

Stranded in his fortress against the tides of time and urban renewal, a great literary curiosity of our time was born. Phobia plagued, a hypochondriac and recluse of immense proportions, he believed fame would come through his diaries.

Not only did he secure their preservation by leaving them to Harvard with a bequest so that they would be published, but in the event that Harvard was wiped off the map by nuclear war (he worried about the Russians), Inman deposited microfilmed copies of his 17 million word, 155 volume manuscript in salt mines and various bank vaults around the country!

A synopsis of HYPERGRAPHIA reads: "Acknowledged as one of the longest and most fascinating diaries ever conceived, Inman is the story of the original blogger, a man obsessed with "connectivity" decades before that word was even conceived.

"Inman's passionate chronicling of his own life and the lives of more than 1000 characters populates and enlivens this epic of collective memory. He keeps a scathingly honest record of his politics, his social attitudes, and his fascination with women.

"Many of these and others were recruited from decades of personal ads ("Wanted-Talkers & Readers, to amuse an invalid author") placed by his wife of 40 years, Evelyn Yates Inman even though she knew full well that the "talking" often slipped into other quite intimate activities. Evelyn was one of the most

erily devoted yet independent wives in all of recorded literature. The revelation of Evelyn's 30 year affair with Dr. Cyrus Rumford Pike, her husband's favorite osteopath and medical snake-in-the-grass, threatens to tear Arthur's world apart."

Arthur's increasingly bizarre, hypochondriac lifestyle, his unending and often comic medical complaints are a major theme throughout the diaries. Real and imagined, they included photophobia [fear of light], hypergraphia (an obsession with writing), crippling migraines, bromide and mercury poisoning, along with a multitude of chronic osteopathic and gastrointestinal disasters.

Undervalued and unknown during his lifetime, Inman was so sure of the lasting value of his Diary he relentlessly maintained, "I believe that one day, upon my diary's publication, I will become quite famous."

And so he may well become famous. Harvard University Press first published The Inman Diary in 1985, twenty-two years after Arthur Inman's death.

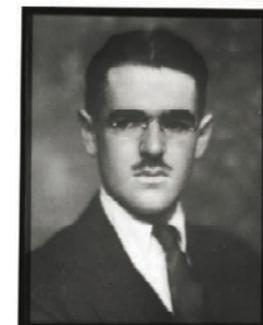
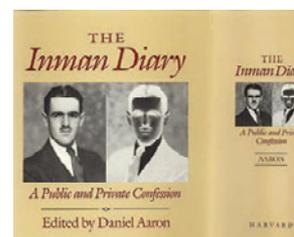
A writer, editor, producer/director, read a book review of The Inman Diary. That day Inman's obsession with his own diary transferred to Lorenzo DeStefano. He told IMAGINE that he started messing with the material in his mind and imagination or visa versa prompting him to write varying treatments of the material. He called it a writer on adventure.

DeStefano developed a deep appreciation and understanding of Arthur Inman through extensive and exhaustive studies of the published and unpublished diary, copious personal research and an ensuing friendship with The Inman Diary editor and HYPERGRAPHIA's Literary Advisor, Daniel Aaron now the Victor S. Thomas Professor of English and American History Emeritus at Harvard University.

Lorenzo DeStefano's total awe of and intrigue with the material grew into a stage play that he work shopped for the 2000 - 2001 season at Seattle Repertory Theatre making its World Premiere at London's Almeida Theatre. The work was titled "Camera Obscura," and was directed by renowned British director Jonathan Miller. A Chamber Opera by Boston composer Thomas Oboe Lee received its world premiere in Boston in 2007 with the Intermezzo Opera Company. DeStefano served as its consultant.

"What began as a fixation has grown into a deep exploration of the American psyche. Through Inman's obsessive efforts to capture time, I encountered a literary milieu and aspects of American and World history I had no awareness of before. These years later, I now hold exclusive dramatic rights to the Inman Diary from Harvard University Press" DeStefano said.

He continues, "In my work as a photographer, film editor, playwright and filmmaker, I have always approached the world around



HYPERGRAPHIA

Bringing a Most Unusual 20th Century Life to the Screen in New England



me with what I believe to be a distinct and solid point of view. The making of HYPERGRAPHIA embodies a major expansion of my work as a storyteller."

"The evolution of my involvement with this fascinating true story, through the theater, opera and documentary film productions, has always led me back to the belief that this story is one among many, of the ages. It trades in truths about ourselves that we seldom reveal or even clearly identify ourselves. It presents this filmmaker with the opportunity of a creative lifetime - working with twice Oscar nominated actor John Hurt and many others to bring Arthur Inman's compelling diary world to a wide cinema audience." The seeds of an epic motion picture had been sown.

When legendary actor John Hurt first read the screenplay of HYPERGRAPHIA, the strange but true saga of the eccentric Boston diarist, Arthur Crew Inman, he saw a dynamic way to explore one of the most extreme, charming and complex personalities to have walked the earth. "I have done quite a lot of outsider figures," Hurt concedes, "but then drama is all about them. Hamlet isn't exactly one of the crowd, is he?"

And how you might ask does one manage to get an, as yet, unfunded film a star attachment like John Hurt? It's always connections, isn't it? Lorenzo's mutual friend, the Australian director Paul Cox had worked with John Hurt on his wonderful film VINCENT (Hurt reading the Van Gogh's letters). Cox set up the submission. John Hurt responded positively to the script from the beginning. Hurt and DeStefano met in July 2007 in LA and, three plus years later, after ongoing

Assembled are images that imbue the expansiveness of HYPERGRAPHIA including the central poster, which points to Arthur Inman's phobias and his sensitivities to light and noise. Note Inman's sensitivity to the noise that pounded his eardrums daily during the construction of the Prudential Center drove him to kill himself. This after a lifetime of controlling all the nuisances around him.

The B & W photos are of Arthur Inman and Evelyn Yates Inman, his tormented and devoted wife who took up with Inman's favorite snake oil Doctor. Fascinating is the youthful photo of Arthur in his little sailor suit. Born into a very wealthy family in Atlanta, it doesn't really look like he had too many hang-ups in this photo.

A star throughout this saga is Garrison Hall where Inman cloistered himself, taking all the apartments above, below and around him so he would not be disturbed.

And finally, pre-visualization images, top left and left third down designed by Fine Arts Marbling, the Japanese Company expanding to Boston that will build the miniatures that Brickyard Film Works will use for CGI.

All photos and images courtesy of hypergraphiafilm.com.

discussions and tailoring the script to John with the help of his wife, Anwen Rees-Myers, "here we are," says DeStefano.

The exclusive dramatic rights secured, with John Hurt committed to star, Anwen Rees-Myers, Hurt's wife, signed on to Co-Produce, Lorenzo DeStefano began to assemble his production team.

Populated with a startling array of Boston humanity in a revolving door ensemble cast, the film requires a serious level of visual effects. Add Brickyard Filmworks and Marbling Fine Arts to the team to create highly visual elements that will vividly convey time, history and Inman's startling world of dreams.

Brickyard Filmworks of Boston (THE PROPOSAL, THE SURROGATES) became a production partner and a co-Producer for HYPERGRAPHIA in January of 2010. The deep experience of Brickyard's Dave Waller, Geoff McAuliffe and Michael McCarthy extends not only to the visual effects component but to the role of committed, on-the-ground representatives of this project in Boston. McCarthy, along with Lorie Conway, serves as Associate Producers for the film.

"I read it and found Arthur Inman a fascinating and magnetic character but also always looked at him as I would see John Hurt, who's attached to play him. It just made sense. I'm also looking forward to making a great art film that is a character study, which shows society's weaknesses and strengths," said Michael McCarthy. Hurt's attachment continues to open doors for HYPERGRAPHIA. Dave Waller agrees.

Marbling Fine Arts, which enjoys 90% of the Japan Film Industry's modeling, miniatures, props, and design business providing weapons, armor; vehicles, airplanes and ships for the big screen as in KILL BILL and GODZILLA: FINAL WARS, has begun the pre-visualization work and historical renderings of 1963 Boston Back Bay for the filming of HYPERGRAPHIA. Sophisticated miniatures will be built of close to 30 historically accurate buildings and associated streets around the Prudential complex, especially in relationship to Garrison Hall. The 55 story Prudential Tower itself is being planned as a 20 foot/1/40th scale model. Marbling Fine Arts are expanding their business to the USA and are very interested in landing in Boston, MA. Needless to say, we're interested in having them here.

"I'm glad I knew Boston before the full impact of the motorcar era, when horseback riders still sauntered through well-kept parks past people of quality, when the music was melodious and there were private cars on trains and No Income Taxes! Soon after I moved here from Atlanta, everything began to change." Inman's words taken from the stage play. His diary reveals he believed the world be blown into oblivion by 1958.

Clearly the dedicated effort of bringing a motion picture to the screen has been exhibited. Now DeStefano says, "The goals for

2011 are many but the main one is to be in production during the calendar year, as early as reasonably possible. After what can be referred to as a 'generous gestation period,' I definitely feel a lot closer to realizing this dream than I was a year ago, and at any time during its development.

Lorenzo and his colleagues at Brickyard Filmworks have the script out to several leading actors for the roles of Arthur's wife of 40 years, Evelyn Yates Inman, and for her lover of 30 years and Arthur's favorite osteopath, Dr. Cyrus Rumford Pike. It is anticipated that other leading and supporting roles will be cast from the vital pool of talent that exists in New England and Boston in particular."

I had the opportunity to have lunch and chat with Lorenzo DeStefano and Michael McCarthy last month while DeStefano was here shooting footage for the film's documentary A DARKENED ROOM and frankly ferreting out investors for HYPERGRAPHIA. I began reading the script then. I just kept turning the pages and now have a thorough understanding of their fascination with Inman, a fascinating riddle of 20th Century American Life.

However, for HYPERGRAPHIA to get into production as early as possible in 2011, investment is required. DeStefano told IMAGINE, "To get there, even with all of the incentives in Massachusetts, we need to be able to put the financing and distribution together that will ensure that our passionate commitment to this mission will have a chance to make its own way with a wide cinema audience." Interested investors need to apply!

The production team intends HYPERGRAPHIA to be an all Boston, Massachusetts and New England Production. They feel that attention and interest in the production in New England will continue to bring positive press attention that will be a launch for their national and international outreach efforts. In short, DeStefano wants to be a proud addition to the films that have been and will continue to be made in Massachusetts. He says, "I'm confident that, were we to shoot this draft tomorrow, I would have all that I need to go into the editing room and craft a remarkable movie."

The script is currently out to several potential lead producers/executive producers, established makers of movies for the express purpose of raising funds to get HYPERGRAPHIA made in Boston both on location and in-studio for both principal photography and post production on a sensible budget. IMAGINE cheers and supports this effort.

For more information and detail visit www.hypergraphiafilm.com

Carol Patton is the Publisher and Founder of IMAGINE Magazine. She champions and defends Film Tax Credits in New England.