

Films that Start Conversations

A Review of “The Tale of Timmy Two Chins” and “Speechless”

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Scenarios USA films are written by young people for young people. Each one is 15-20 minutes long, was made by a professional director, and includes a discussion guide, lesson plans, and ideas about how to take action in your community on the topic. See more at: <www.scenariosusa.org>.

“Timmy Two Chins” was written by Luis Hernandez when he was a junior at the Brooklyn High School for Collaborative Studies in Brooklyn, NY, and directed by Nancy Savoca. “Speechless” was written by Roxanne Lasker-Hall when she was a junior at the Cleveland School of the Arts, in Cleveland, OH, and directed by Karyn Kusama.

Talking About Bullying

I can remember being picked on at school. One kid would say to me, “That’s so gay.” This really offended me. I have gay parents, and I don’t like people making fun of gay people. People would gossip about a girl in our group because she had a girlfriend.

Another kid would say racist things to me, and the other kids wouldn’t know what to say. They couldn’t stand up against the bully. But then once he was gone, they would all talk about him.

“Timmy Two Chins” is about a guy who is overweight. When he is unhappy, he eats. He gets treated badly, and he treats himself badly. He treats other people badly as well. You can see how bullying is a bad cycle that just keeps going.

This is a good film to show in schools and adult education programs. Almost everyone has an experience with bullying. You might be the one who got bullied or the one who did the bullying or the one who stood by while it happened. If you create an opportunity for people to talk about it, maybe they will be able to make different choices next time it happens.



Writer Luis Hernandez, right, and the actor who portrayed his leading character, Timmy Two Chins, Armani Del Rio.

Finding Your Voice

“Speechless” is about a young man who is sexually assaulted by another young man. He is so ashamed, he can’t talk about it. This film will help people who have had this experience. It will help them speak up. Kids who haven’t had this experience will have their eyes opened. They might be able to step up and support somebody who has been through the same thing.

I could imagine both of these films opening up a lot of conversations for students and teachers. They both tell the story of someone who had to find their voice. No matter what issue you are facing, finding your voice is an important first step.

To me, it is meaningful that the films are written by young people. When a story comes right out of someone’s experience, you can tell. It has a different feeling to it.

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