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Wadi Rum Films
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OFFICIAL PRESS KIT

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ABOUT THE FILM

From the Academy Award® nominated director Roko Belic (*Genghis Blues*) comes a new cinematic adventure. **HAPPY** is a feature-length documentary that leads viewers on a journey across 5 continents in search of the keys to happiness. The film addresses many of the fundamental issues we face in today's society: how do we balance the allure of money, fame and social status with our needs for strong relationships, health and personal fulfillment? Through remarkable human stories and cutting-edge science, **HAPPY** leads us toward a deeper understanding of why and how we can pursue more fulfilling, healthier and happier lives.

HAPPY takes the viewer from the bayous of Louisiana to the deserts of Namibia, from the beaches of Brazil to the mountains of Bhutan. Listen to the wisdom of a Kolkata rickshaw driver, the compassion of a volunteer at Mother Teresa's Home for the Dying and the knowledge of some of the world's leading happiness researchers. Witness as middle school students applaud the bravery of their classmates during a moving presentation on bullying. **HAPPY** combines real-life human drama and cutting-edge science to provide insights into the mysteries of happiness.

In 2005, director Tom Shadyac (*Liar Liar*, *Patch Adams*, *Bruce Almighty*) handed Roko Belic a New York Times article entitled, "A New Measure of Well-Being From a Happy Little Kingdom." The article ranked the United States 23rd on its list of happiest countries. Shadyac, himself dissatisfied with his luxurious Beverly Hills lifestyle, asked Belic to make a documentary investigation into the origins of human happiness--and why the U.S. ranks so low. This simple inquiry led to a global exploration of happiness research.

HAPPY was developed under the Creative Visions Foundation, a publicly supported 501 (c)(3), which supports Creative Activists who use the power of media and the arts to affect positive change in the world. Belic has been filming **HAPPY** for the past four years, and has attracted well-known experts such as Ed Diener, Sonja Lyubomirsky, Richard Davidson, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and others. Marci Shimoff, best-selling author of *Happy for No Reason* and *Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul*, narrates the film.

Wadi Rum Production films are a collaboration between the two Academy Award® nominated brothers Roko and Adrian Belic. Their debut feature, *Genghis Blues*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, where it won the Audience Award and received acclaim at over 100 film festivals worldwide. Adrian's most recent film, *Beyond the Call*, has enjoyed equal success, screening on 5 continents and winning over 70 international awards. **HAPPY** is Roko's latest work.

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ABOUT THE FILM

(Cont.)

KEY POINTS

- Connectedness: strong relationships with friends, family and community make people happier.
- Generosity: giving increases happiness.
- Novelty: breaking out of routine makes people happier.
- Play: people who experience physical aerobic exercise are happier.
- Flow: engaging in a fully absorbing hobby makes people happier.
- Health and Longevity: people who are happy are healthier and even live longer.
- The formula for happiness is not the same for everyone, but research shows that almost everyone can become happier.

WEBSITES

- Movie Site: www.thehappymovie.com
- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/HAPPY-A-Documentary/115243518492062>
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/TheHappyMovie>
- Happiness Blog: <http://happymentary.blogspot.com/>
- YouTube: <http://youtube.com/WadiRumProductions>
- Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/wadirum>

COUNTRIES/RESEARCHERS

- Countries visited: USA, Brazil, England, Scotland, Egypt, India, Japan, Bhutan, Denmark, Namibia, Kenya, China, Thailand
- Interviewed many of the leading psychologists and neuroscientists researching happiness including: Ed Diener, Sonja Lyubomirsky, Daniel Gilbert, Gregory Berns, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, P. Read Montague, Tim Kasser and Richard Davidson
- Narrated by Marci Shimoff, best-selling author of *Happy for No Reason* and *Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul*

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FILMMAKERS

- Director / Cinematographer / Producer: Roko Belic
- Producer: Eiji Han Shimizu
- Producer: Frances Reid
- Executive Producer: Tom Shadyac
- Editor: Vivien Hillgrove
- Cinematographer/Associate Producer: Adrian Belic
- Associate Producers: Pamela Harris, Bhagyashree Raorane, Jess Furman
- Assistant Editors: Jazmin Jamias, Ben Flanigan, Josh Fisher
- Social Outreach Directors: Kevin Fitzgerald, Omid Heidari, Derek Silvers, Alex Palmer

TECHNICAL INFO

- Camera: Sony Z1U
- Format: Color HD
- Length: 78min
- Edited: Final Cut Pro

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ROKO BELIC

Director Bio



ROKO BELIC

An Academy Award® nominee and Sundance Award winner, Roko Belic was born to Czechoslovak and Yugoslav parents in America. In 1996 he founded the film production company Wadi Rum with his brother Adrian. His directorial debut, *Genghis Blues* (1999), which the brothers shot using home video cameras, was nominated for an Academy Award® for best documentary feature. Roko's multinational upbringing, together with his mother's encouragement to explore the world through television documentaries, set the foundation for his passion and vision as a filmmaker. Belic has worked in numerous capacities during his career, including director of photography, editor, writer, producer and director. He recently directed a 44-minute documentary called *Dreams: Cinema of the Subconscious*, for the Blu-Ray disc of the Hollywood feature film *Inception*. Belic's upcoming feature project, *Twilight Men*, tells the story of an American seeker and an Indian holy man who journey into the Himalayas in search of an enlightened master. More information on his work can be found at:
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WADI RUM FILMS

Production Company



WADI RUM PRODUCTIONS

Wadi Rum is an award-winning film production company founded by the brothers Roko and Adrian Belic. The brothers had their first experience with filmmaking in elementary school when a childhood friend, Christopher Nolan [*The Dark Knight* (2008), *Inception* (2010)], borrowed a Super 8 movie camera from his parents. *Genghis Blues*, Roko and Adrian's first feature documentary, won the Sundance Film Festival Audience Award as well as 45 other festival awards and Academy Award® nomination. Based in Los Angeles, Wadi Rum continues to seek out and produce entertaining films with social impact. Their recent features include *Beyond the Call* and **HAPPY**.

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PHOTO PAGE

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(1) HAPPY director Roko Belic (left) and producers Eiji Han Shimizu and Frances Reid.



(2) Namibian Bushman



(3) Children - Kolkata, India



(4) Manoj Singh - Kolkata, India



(5) HAPPY Producer Eiji Han Shimizu tries out rickshaw pulling.



(6) Okinawa grandmothers demonstrate traditional dance.



(7) Manager



(8) Embrace - Melissa Moody and son Jamie Treadwell



(9) Silhouettes - Namibia



(10) Manoj and child - Kolkata, India



(11) Director Roko Belic on location - Namibia



(12) Director Roko Belic



(13) Movie Poster

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THE FACES OF HAPPY

Meet the people who have shared their stories and research with us in the film. Please contact Info@thehappymovie.com for any image requests from this page.



Sonja Lyubomirsky - Professor of Psychology at the University of California and well-known author of *The How of Happiness* (F1)



Richard Davidson - A prominent neuroscientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Davidson studies meditation's effects on individual happiness (F2)



Roy Blanchard Sr. - A happy resident of the Louisiana Basin, Blanchard shares his crab fishing and love for nature with his community (F3)



P. Read Montague - Ph.D. in neuroscience, discusses the role of neurotransmitters in creating happiness (F4)



Ronaldo Fadul - With over 40 years of surfing experience, Ronaldo finds happiness and a rhythm in the waves (F5)



Tim Kasser - Professor and chair of psychology at Knox College, author of *The High Price of Materialism* (F6)



Melissa Moody - Even after a horrific truck accident, Melissa feels happier than ever before (F7)



Hiroko Uchino - Discusses her husband's deadly factory accident and the effects of focusing too much on work (F8)



Anne Bechsgaard - Her move to a Danish co-housing community pulls her out of depression, discusses the importance of close social ties (F09)

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Andy Wimmer – Finds happiness by giving up his worldly goods and volunteering at Mother Teresa's Home for the Dying (F10)



Ed Diener - Known as Dr. Happiness, has studied happiness in America for over 35 years (F11)



Manoj Singh - A rickshaw driver living in the slums of Kolkata, has the same level of happiness as most Americans (F12)



Ushi Okushima - A resident of the "longevity village" in Okinawa, with the world's highest number of centenarians per capita (F13)



Dasho Kinley Dorji - Member of the Royal Government of Bhutan, a nation devoted to Gross National Happiness instead of GDP (14)



Michael Pritchard - A motivational speaker who uses humor to educate students on empathy, compassion and happiness (F15)

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