

A STADIUM STORY



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The Battle for New York's Last Frontier

FEATURING

CHARLES BAGLI MICHAEL BLOOMBERG JOSEPH BRUNO JAY CROSS FRED DICKER DANIEL DOCTOROFF
JAMES DOLAN RICHARD GOTTFRIED JAY L. KRIEGLER JAMES MAHONEY EDWARD MALLOY GIFFORD MILLER TERRY MOORE
CHRISTINE QUINN JOHN RASKIN JOE RESTUCCIA SHELDON SILVER TOM TOPOUSIS ANTHONY WEINER

STADIUM PICTURES presents **A STADIUM STORY: THE BATTLE FOR NEW YORK'S LAST FRONTIER** edited by **JOHN KIRBY**
FRANK RUY additional camera **SAM CULLMAN** composer **JOEL HAMBURGER** publicity **GOLDSTEIN COMMUNICATIONS**
production associates **BRYAN COLE SHELBY FRANTZ DAN FRIEDMAN JOSEPH TALBOTT HELENA TEPLY-FIGMAN**
co-producers **RACHEL FLEIT DOUG HAND** executive producers **LIBBY HANDROS JOHN KIRBY MARC LEVIN**
produced and directed by **BENJAMIN ROSEN JEVON ROUSH**



A STADIUM STORY

The Battle for New York's Last Frontier

2006 TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL PRESS KIT

Premiere Screening:
Wednesday, April 26, 2006
7:00pm
AMC 34th Street

SCREENING TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Wednesday, April 26, 7:00 pm, AMC 34th Street
Friday, April 28, 6:00 pm, Regal Cinemas Battery Park Cinemas 11
Tuesday, May 2, 3:45 pm, AMC Village VII
Thursday, May 4, 5:00 pm, AMC 68th Street
Saturday, May 6, 1:00 pm, AMC 34th Street

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A STADIUM STORY

The Battle for New York's Last Frontier

OVERVIEW

In New York City, where real estate is as valuable as oil in Texas, development battles take on a unique intensity. New Yorkers have a special pride in their city, but opinions vary on what makes it great. Residents of Hell's Kitchen, and much of the rest of Manhattan, were not happy about a proposed stadium to be built over the Hudson River Train Yards on the island's far west side.

Development battles typically involve the disenfranchised many fighting the influential few. In this case, however, there were internal divisions, resulting in an intra-class struggle for the future of a neighborhood. Union workers, many who live in the outer boroughs, saw the promise of thousands of jobs in the revitalization of the far west side. Many of their legislative leaders in the City Council supported the project. Westsiders, predominately liberal and supportive of labor interests, found themselves opposed to the unions they would otherwise support. The Bloomberg administration and Woody Johnson, owner of the New York Jets were not the only gorillas in the room. Cablevision, owner of Madison Square Garden, entered the fray on the side of the opponents to protect their interest, some would say monopoly, in the event business. With elites and working class on both sides, and with the conflicting interests of city and state politicians, this is a political battle unlike any other in New York City history.

SYNOPSIS

With billions of taxpayer dollars and the future of a neighborhood at stake, the battle over a west side stadium consumes New York City for two years. The New York Jets want to build a new home over the Hudson Rail Yards, the last frontier for Manhattan development. The Mayor wants to catalyze the transformation of the far west side, and his Deputy Mayor, Daniel Doctoroff, needs a marquee venue for a bid to win the Summer Olympic Games. Opposed to competition, Madison Square Garden wages a 50 million dollar war against the proposal. Hell's Kitchen residents struggle to preserve their community in the shadow of midtown, while the city's construction unions, confronted with a post-911 lull in building, fight for the promise of thousands of new jobs. With New York's biggest players at the line of scrimmage, what follows is one of the most bitterly contested political brawls in the city's history.

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DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

We grew up together in downtown Manhattan, Ben just north of Houston Street in Noho; Jevon just south, in Soho. Through our shared childhood of the seventies and eighties, these neighborhoods completely changed. The downtown of old was quiet and empty, especially at night. It could be dangerous, but it was small enough that you passed friends and neighbors on the street. Now, most of the artists have been priced out, the community of our youth replaced by a thriving retail and service economy. The streets are filled with people that live elsewhere. Both old and new have their admirable qualities, but for both of us, this transformation was a defining experience.

Now, Hell's Kitchen is going through an even more profound change, which drew us to the story from the beginning. In the shadow of Midtown, this neighborhood will sprout skyscrapers over the next generation, and on its western edge, a stadium is proposed to anchor the development. On the surface, this is a film about a land-use deal, the obvious question raised is whether this is a sensible use of a scarce commodity. But in New York, where real estate is the city's life blood, it is much more. This film captures the voice of a city in a moment of definition. Government, big money interests, labor, and the community all weigh in, and the most contentious political battle of our lifetimes is the result. The story becomes whether the people's voice was heard.

We both love New York. Everyone born here takes a special pride in calling it home. But what makes it great is different for different people. Over the course of following this story, our opinions about the project started to diverge. Our nights in the edit room were long and contentious, but the film that emerged is a true cooperation of vision from each side of the fence. To the New Yorker, native and adopted, to the political enthusiast and to those who love the urban experience, we hope this film will resonate.

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The Battle for New York's Last Frontier

CAST AND CREDITS

DIRECTORS

BENJAMIN ROSEN, JEVON ROUSH

EDITORS

JOHN KIRBY, FRANK RUY

PRODUCERS

BENJAMIN ROSEN, JEVON ROUSH

CO-PRODUCERS

RACHEL FLEIT
DOUGLAS HAND

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

LIBBY HANDROS, MARC LEVIN

FEATURING

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG, JOSEPH
BRUNO, JAY CROSS, DANIEL
DOCTOROFF, JAMES DOLAN,
THOMAS DUANE, RICHARD
GOTTFRIED, WOODY JOHNSON, JAY
L. KRIEGEL, JAMES MAHONEY,
EDWARD MALLOY, TOM
MCMORROW, GIFFORD MILLER,
TERRY MOORE, GEORGE PATAKI,
CHRISTINE QUINN, JOHN RASKIN, JOE
RESTUCCIA, REVEREND AL
SHARPTON, SHELDON SILVER, SCOTT
STRINGER, PETER WARD, DAVID
WEPRIN

A STADIUM STORY

The Battle for New York's Last Frontier

BIOGRAPHIES OF KEY PARTICIPANTS

BENJAMIN ROSEN – Producer/Director

Ben recently completed shooting his first feature-length documentary entitled *The Keepers*, an exploration into the lives of Brooklyn's last pigeon fanciers. He is currently associate-producing a documentary being shot in Iran by director Mana Rabiee. *Boy Soldiers* delves into the lives of the Basij, a militant Islamic youth group. In 2002 Ben assisted Doug Liman (*The Bourne Identity*, *Go*, *Swingers*) and producer Eric McCleod in pre-production for their upcoming film, *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*. Ben has been a longtime camera assistant to legendary cinematographer Mark Benjamin (*Slam*, *The Trials of Henry Kissinger*, *Whiteboys*, *The Last Party*). He graduated from Oberlin College in 1998.

JEVON ROUSH – Producer/Director

Jevon Roush has worked in production since 1998 in both independent and studio film as well as broadcast television. Based in New York, he has worked on projects in Turkey, Ireland, and Italy. Clients include Comcast, The Institute of Nautical Archaeology, based in Bodrum, Turkey - Studio in a School, a New York City not-for-profit - and Ombre Electrice, an Italian subtitling company. In 2003, Jevon completed his feature film debut as a writer and director, *Second Born*, a coming of age story set in downtown New York City.

JOHN KIRBY – Editor

John Kirby made his feature directorial debut with *The American Ruling Class*, the world's first "dramatic-documentary-musical." Mr. Kirby has produced and edited for major broadcasters, including many projects for the award-winning Blowback Productions. His editing credits include the HBO *America Undercover* documentaries *Gladiator Days: Anatomy of a Prison Murder* and the Emmy-award winning *Thug Life in D.C.* With his production partner Libby Handros, he recently completed *The Good Fat Diet*, a ground-breaking study of the role of Omega-three fatty acids in human nutrition, to be released this year on public television, and *Legacy of a Kidnapping: Lindbergh and the Triumph of the Tabloids* which featured Lewis Lapham.

FRANK RUY – Editor

Frank Ruy has worked in film and broadcast television since 1998. His list of credits include writing, producing, and directing numerous segments, music videos, and screenplays for clients such as ABC News, Nickelodeon Networks, MTV, Monster.com, TVLand, Showtime Networks, 20th Century Fox, and Avid Technologies. Frank Ruy's short films have been shown at festivals in New York City, Philadelphia, London, Geneva, Oberhausen, and Tokyo. His work has received critical acclaim in such periodicals as *Esquire UK*, *ARTnews*, *Contemporary Visual Arts*, *New York Press*, *The Scotsman*, and *The Big Issue* in the North. In 2004 Frank's short film *Speed Graphic* was named Best Short Film At The Philadelphia International Film Festival. Frank Ruy currently lives in New York City and attends New York University's Graduate Film Program. He is currently in preproduction for his thesis film, a feature length narrative entitled *Quiet Zone* to be produced by Ferris Road Productions.

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RACHEL FLEIT – Co-Producer

Rachel Fleit has been a producer with Chashama since August 2002 (www.chashama.org) developing the AREA Program, Accessing Real Estate for the Arts, an endeavor started in 1995 to make temporarily vacant commercial properties in New York City available to artists at a free or an accessible rate. Rachel completed a short film with writer/director Evan Cabnet titled *Fools' Errand* in December 2005. Rachel is currently developing 3 feature films with Marina Shron, Patrick Darragh, and Frank Ruy.

BLOWBACK PRODUCTIONS – Executive Producer

Founded by Marc Levin and Daphne Pinkerson, Blowback Productions has produced over 2 dozen documentary and feature films. *Slam*, directed by Levin, won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and the Camera D'Or at Cannes in 1998, receiving international recognition for its seamless blending of the real world with a narrative flow. *Street Time*, a television series co-produced by Columbia/Tristar for Showtime, received critical acclaim for its authenticity and verite style. Blowback's most recent documentary, *Protocols of Zion* was an official selection of The Sundance Film Festival 2005.

LIBBY HANDROS – Executive Producer

Libby Handros began her career working on the critically acclaimed series *Inside Story*, the first regular examination of the American press to appear on television. Hosted by former State Department spokesman Hodding Carter, the weekly series aired nationally on PBS for five years, winning many honors including five Emmy Awards and an Edward R. Murrow Award. Today, the series is in the Museum of Television and Radio's permanent collection. After producing a series of documentaries on a wide range of subjects for PBS, Fox, ESPN, and Showtime, she teamed up with Lewis Lapham and John Kirby to produce *Legacy of a Kidnapping: Lindbergh and the Triumph of the Tabloids*, named "the best documentary of 2000" by *Newsday*. With this film she began to explore the "possibilities of a literary form adapted to the expectations of a film and television audience," the concept for *The American Ruling Class*. Most recently, she produced the Tribeca Film Festival, 2005 "New York Loves Documentaries," Special Mention, *The American Ruling Class*. Last month, the film made its theatrical debut at the American Film Institute's Silver Theater in Maryland.

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PARTICIPANTS FEATURED AND INTERVIEWED

NORMAN ADLER, *President of Bolton-St. Johns Inc.* Mr. Adler is also a political consultant and lobbyist to public officials, corporations, professional associations and labor unions. He has served 11 years as Director of Political Action and Legislation for District Council 37, AFSCME, and as assistant to the Speaker of the New York State Assembly.

CHARLES V. BAGLI, *New York Times* Mr. Bagli has covered the intersection of politics and development in NYC for the New York Times for more than 8 years, writing about efforts to build a baseball or football stadium on the Far West Side for more than 15 years. Bagli has written for the Brooklyn Phoenix, the Tampa Tribune, the Daily Record (Morristown, NJ), and the New York Observer.

MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG, *the108th Mayor of the City of New York* Mr. Bloomberg's Company, Bloomberg LP has over 165,000 subscribers worldwide. In 1990 Bloomberg LP entered the media business, launching a news service, and then radio, television, Internet, and publishing operations.

JOSEPH L. BRUNO, *State Senate Majority Leader* Mr. Bruno was first elected to the Senate in 1976. A Republican, Senator Bruno was first elected Temporary President of the New York State Senate in January 1995 and re-elected to that position in 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005.

STEVEN COHEN, *Director, Program on Environmental Science Policy* Mr. Cohen is also director of the Office of Educational Programs of the Earth Institute.

JAY CROSS, *President of the New York Jets* Prior to joining them in 2001, Mr. Cross served as President for the Toronto Raptors and the Miami Heat.

DANIEL L. DOCTOROFF, *Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding for the City of New York* As Deputy Mayor, Mr. Doctoroff oversees the planning and implementation of the policies that affect the economic prosperity of New York City. Mr. Doctoroff was the Founder and the President of NYC2012, the not-for-profit corporation formed to bring the Olympic Games to New York in 2012.

JAMES L. DOLAN, *CEO of Cablevision Systems Corp.* Dolan oversees the company's extensive telecommunications and entertainment businesses. He also serves as chairman of Madison Square Garden.

RICHARD N. GOTTFRIED *City representative of the 64th Assembly District* Gottfried works for the interests of neighborhoods covering Chelsea, Clinton, Murray Hill, Midtown and part of the Lincoln Center area in Manhattan.

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JAY L. KRIEGEL, *Executive Director and President of NYC2012 (1997-2005)* Mr. Kriegel ran New York City's national and international campaign to host the Olympic Games of 2012. Mr. Kriegel has served as senior Vice President at CBS and the Chief of Staff for Mayor John Lindsay.

ED MALLOY, *President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York* Mr. Malloy is also the New York State Vice President of the AFL-CIO.

GIFFORD MILLER, *Former Speaker of the New York City Council* Barred from seeking reelection due to term limits, Mr. Miller ran in the 2005 Democratic Mayoral primary in 2005.

GEORGE E. PATAKI, *53rd Governor of New York State* Governor Pataki is currently the longest serving Governor in the United States. He is New York State's first Republican-Conservative chief executive, defeating the Democratic Party's liberal icon Mario Cuomo in November of 1994 to win his first term as Governor.

CHRISTINE QUINN, *Speaker of the New York City Council* During the West Side Stadium discussions, Ms. Quinn represented the 3rd Council District of the City for the interests of Chelsea, the West Village, Clinton/Hell's Kitchen, and parts of Soho and Murray Hill.

JOHN RASKIN, *Community Organizer at Housing Conservation Coordinators HCC* is a not-for-profit organization in Hell's Kitchen that advocates for affordable housing. Mr. Raskin is the founder of Democracy in the Park, a political action group that contacts swing voters using free weekend cell phone minutes.

JOE RESTUCCIA, *Executive Director of the Clinton Housing Development Company CHDC* is a not for profit affordable housing development firm. Mr. Restuccia is on the board of the Hell's Kitchen/Hudson Alliance, an organization of community groups and elected officials opposing the west side stadium.

SHELDON SILVER, *Speaker of the New York State Assembly* Upon assuming the Assembly's top leadership post in 1994, Mr. Silver moved quickly to recast the public image of the House by reasserting the education policy, private job creation and criminal justice reform.

TOM TOPOUSIS, *New York Post* Mr. Topousis has been with the New York Post for 16 years covering politics, transportation, and major development issues. He has also written for the Bergen Record, The Poughkeepsie Journal, the Newburgh Evening news, Oneonta Daily Star, and the Times-Herald Record.



Posted: Thurs., May 11, 2006, 11:35pm PT

A Stadium Story: The Battle for New York's Last Frontier

(Documentary)

A Stadium Pictures presentation. Produced by Benjamin Rosen, Jevon Roush. Co-producers, Rachel Fleit, Doug Hand. Executive producers, Libby Handros, John Kirby, Marc Levin. Directed by Benjamin Rosen, Jevon Roush.

By **JOHN ANDERSON**

Taking a hands-off approach but still managing to treat the issue as farce, Benjamin Rosen and Jevon Roush's "A Stadium Story" tells of the fight over the proposed Jets football stadium and New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg's desperate bid to bring the Olympics to Manhattan. Arthouse play and TV exposure seem assured, especially given the stylishness of the production and the all-too-candid portrait of politicians behaving at their worst.

Ostensibly picking no sides in what turned out to be a face-off between labor unions and residents of what would have been a transformed West Side, the directors leave a few grimy stones unturned in their effort to be objective -- Bloomberg's well-known friendship with Jets president Jay Cross, for instance, or the home addresses of most of those protesting construction workers, few of whom were likely to be neighbors of the protesting Westsiders. Doc is a good explanation, though, for why it's so hard to build a consensus, or a building, in today's political climate.

Camera (color, DV) Sam Cullman, Rosen, Roush; editors, John Kirby, Frank Roy; music, Joel Hamburger. Reviewed on DVD, Los Angeles, May 10, 2006. (In Tribeca Film Festival -- NY NY Documentary.) Running time: 85 MIN.

NEW YORK CITY

Newsday

WWW.NYNEWSDAY.COM

MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2005 | CITY EDITION

Stadium saga is a film in the making

BY JOSHUA ROBIN
STAFF WRITER

It's a tale of conflict, ego, betrayal and money. And it's coming soon to the screen: a documentary on the battle to build a stadium on the far West Side.

"A Stadium Among Us," as two city filmmakers have tentatively titled their maiden project, is being shot with the end — whether or not the Jets stadium will be built — still unknown.

"It's a great New York story," one of the producers, Jevon Roush, 28, said in an interview

yesterday. "It's got sports, it's got politics, it's got big money, it's got clash of the titans."

It also has the support of Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Marc Levin, in whose office the idea was hatched.

Benjamin Rosen, 28, Roush's partner, who worked on several Levin films, including "Slam," which won top honors at Sundance and Cannes in 1998, gazed out Levin's 17th-story windows in Manhattan last year. Before him was a perfect view of the 13-acre site that the Jets want for a stadium, over the objections of community activists and the

owners of the Garden. A movie idea was born.

Levin couldn't work full-time on it, but offered his expertise. So

Rosen turned to Roush, a childhood friend with whom he had long dreamed of collaborating.

They tapped into about \$10,000 in savings, ordered TiVo



NEWSDAY PHOTOS / MOISES SAMAN

Benjamin Rosen and Jevon Roush

interviews and rallies and hope it will air on HBO or PBS.

While cagey about who they've spoken with, they admit that are still waiting for Mayor

to record the news, and waded into the imbroglio. With help from friends, they've filmed about 100 hours of meetings,

Michael Bloomberg, who has staked re-election on the arena, to sit down for the camera.

Also unknown is when to finally stop filming. The MTA approved the rail yard sale to the Jets March 31, but the project still needs approval from two state commissions. At least one commission may not vote before the decision is made in July on whether New York will get the 2012 Summer Olympics.

Then there is the larger story of developing the entire far West Side, which could take decades. "Maybe this is a Ken Burns-esque series," Roush said.

MIKE, SILVER FIGHT IS REEL DEAL

Michael Saul. New York Daily News. New York, N.Y.: Apr 26, 2006. pg. 10

Full Text (173 words)

Copyright Daily News, L.P. Apr 26, 2006

STEP ASIDE Tom Cruise and Mel Gibson.

Mayor Bloomberg and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver are co- starring in a new film premiering today at the Tribeca Film Festival.

The documentary, "A Stadium Story: The Battle for New York's Last Frontier," chronicles their high-profile, high-dollar battle over the proposed Jets stadium on Manhattan's West Side.

The Bloomberg-backed proposal ended in ignominious defeat last June after Silver (D-Manhattan) dealt the fatal blow.

The film was directed by Benjamin Rosen and Jevon Roush - 29- year-old Manhattan natives who say they have known each other since they were 4.

Roush called the pols' epic fight "a defining moment in the city's history."

Neither Silver nor Bloomberg will be attending tonight's world premiere.

"The mayor lived through the creation of the movie last year and doesn't need to see it again now," his spokesman, Stu Loeser, said. "He is proud of his hard work, even though it ended up with a lost opportunity for New York."

A spokesman for Silver said the speaker had a scheduling conflict.

THE HUFFINGTON POST®



04.27.2006

New York Community Politics Fuel 'A Stadium Story'

S.T. VAN AIRSDALE

As much as I appreciate festival press screenings, I hate going to them. The theaters reek of work and fatigue, and worst of all, a press screening's snobby austerity is no match for the anything-can-happen fever of a public premiere.

Take last night's opening of *A Stadium Story: The Battle For New York's Last Frontier* for example. Directors Benjamin Rosen and Jevon Roush arrived at the AMC 34th Street theater as sleep-deprived as they were ecstatic, the victims of a crashed computer that threatened to scuttle their big night. Rosen introduced at least the first half the film; the second half was still being output 20 blocks away at the DuArt lab, and either way, both looked extremely rough. "We're rolling with it, and you guys are going to roll with it, and you're going to love it," Rosen said. He then shouted out to the crowd, a divided bunch comprising supporters and opponents of the now-defunct West Side Stadium, whose high-stakes saga supplied the basis for Rosen and Roush's documentary.

"I'm so glad to see the anti-stadium shirts out," Rosen continued, "and I'm so glad to see the union guys in fine form right there! Jim Mahoney, bravo!" He pointed into the audience, planted his tongue in his cheek. "We didn't want to say this, but let the healing begin."

As evidenced throughout the screening, a little healing may be in order: Viewers applauded anti-stadium leader John Raskin's first appearance and hissed at the introduction of deputy mayor and pro-stadium godhead Dan Doctoroff. Union boss Mahoney greeted at least one of Raskin's allegations -- that union protestors were paid to lobby Albany the day of the deciding vote -- with a throaty cry of "Bullshit!"

But ironically or not, *A Stadium Story* may indeed provide at least *some* of the groundwork for resolution. In fact, early segments hinting at the filmmakers' anti-stadium bias give way to a final act daring to suggest that nobody won the doc's namesake battle: In helping to kill the stadium construction deal, activists preserved the West Side's sense of community while thwarting the ailing union's chance at rebounding. The immense political capital expended by Mayor Mike Bloomberg (and ultimately quantified by Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, whose final stadium veto reflected his dissatisfaction over the rebuilding of his district in Lower Manhattan) will not likely return to the Hudson Rail Yards if or when it is ever reacquired, meaning that the housing and jobs desired by advocates on both sides are equally unlikely to appear on the West Side anytime soon.

Even Rosen admits that such blown-out realities made it hard to choose sides as *A Stadium Story* barreled toward its conclusion. "Well, my partner found himself on the pro-stadium side

of things, and I found myself on the anti-stadium side of things," he told me at the premiere's after-party, thrumming along at a bar three blocks from the Hudson Yards. "And so, inevitably, we found ourselves in intellectual battles about if this thing was a good thing for the city. Is this a good use of public funds? We both grew up in the city, and we both had our biases. I felt like I had to battle my own biases. My kneejerk reaction was to say, 'This is stupid. \$600 million for a football team? That's retarded.'

"But when you factor in the union situation in this town -- the fact that 50 percent of the [building construction](#) trades are non-union, and all the construction trades have 75 percent unemployment, that's a powerful, powerful factor in this story. That opened my eyes."

Rosen said he got the idea for *A Stadium Story* while chatting with Marc Levin, the acclaimed documentarian (*Slam*, *Protocols of Zion*) whose office overlooks the rail yards and for whom the young filmmaker was working when inspiration struck in 2004. "We were talking about the Knicks, and then we started talking about football," Rosen said. "And then he gradually mentioned, 'The stadium battle would make a great documentary.' And I said, 'Oh, all right.' A month later, I was thinking about it, and it came up and we just decided to go for it."

Rosen and Roush had known each other since they were 4 years old; they grew up together downtown in Noho and Soho, respectively. "One of the things that drew us to the story to begin with was that our neighborhoods underwent profound transformation as we were growing up," Roush told me. "The same thing's going to happen over in this neighborhood." The pair began shooting in August 2004, getting to know players in community, union and city politics as they went along. When the stadium became the hub of New York's bid for the 2012 Summer Olympics, Rosen and Roush started trailing additional players like Doctoroff and NYC 2012 executive director Jay Kriegel.

And while a few archival plays backfire (did they really need to shoot NY1 news footage directly from the Web?), Rosen and Roush secure almost unimaginable access to the inner workings of the pro- and anti-stadium campaigns. On paper, at least, *A Stadium Story*'s final 30 minutes have no right being as enthralling as they are; after all, everybody knows how the vote will go. But the filmmakers' omnipresence is mind-blowing, and editor John Kirby's masterful intercutting from Albany to New York City on the day of the vote creates a rich, rewarding intrigue.

Wednesday night, it also revived the heartbreak of vanquished dreams. "I thought the portrayal of the argument was not accurate," Mahoney told me after the film. "But from an outsider's point of view, it was pretty close. (The stadium) was a good project; economically, it was smart. Artistically, it would be popular to be opposed to it. From the point of David vs. Goliath, the truth is I was David. I was portrayed as Goliath."

"My members are out of work," he said. "They don't have jobs. This would create jobs. Right now, only drug dealers and prostitutes profit by the West Side Yards. Thank you, Shelly Silver."

But nothing in New York can be so [black and white](#) -- least of all the transcendent spirit of hometown films like *A Stadium Story* at a festival like Tribeca. I could suffocate with the critics, but why bother? There is only one first time for every one of these films, and for better or worse, you might as well make it an experience.



A Stadium Story: The Battle for New York's Last Frontier

From [Pamela Skillings](#),
Your Guide to [Manhattan](#).

Tribeca Film Festival Review

A Stadium Story: The Battle for New York's Last Frontier, a documentary chronicling the epic clash over the West Side Stadium, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival on Wednesday to raucous crowds from both sides of the debate.

A Real New York Premiere

Neighborhood activists in anti-Stadium t-shirts loudly applauded every on-screen victory. Meanwhile, representatives from New York unions showed continued support for the other side with chants of “Build it! Build it!”

All in all, it was a very New York filmgoing experience. By the end of the evening, after the filmmakers exhorted the crowd to “let the healing begin,” members of the opposing factions were seen shaking hands and finally agreeing to disagree.

Both Sides Now

New York natives Benjamin Rosen and Jevon Roush make their directorial debut with *A Stadium Story*.

Roush was in favor of building the stadium while Rosen was decidedly against it. During a Q & A with the filmmakers after the premiere, Roush explained, “Our angle was to tell both sides.”

The film itself is an entertaining look at the complex worlds of New York politics, real estate, and government bureaucracy. The audience is first introduced to the neighborhood activists who seek to protect their community from being destroyed. Later, we also come to sympathize with the New York union officials who support the Stadium project as a source of badly-needed jobs. Throw in Mayor Bloomberg, Cablevision, and the star-studded New York bid for the 2012 Olympics and you’ve got quite a story.

An Entertaining Look at a Polarizing Issue

The directors do a very capable job telling a complicated story in an entertaining way. The clever use of music, movie clips (including “West Side Story” naturally), and candid interviews helps to interject humor at just the right moments. And the real-life New York characters in this film are far more memorable than those in most Hollywood blockbusters.

If you build it, they will film

Documentary filmmakers capture city construction

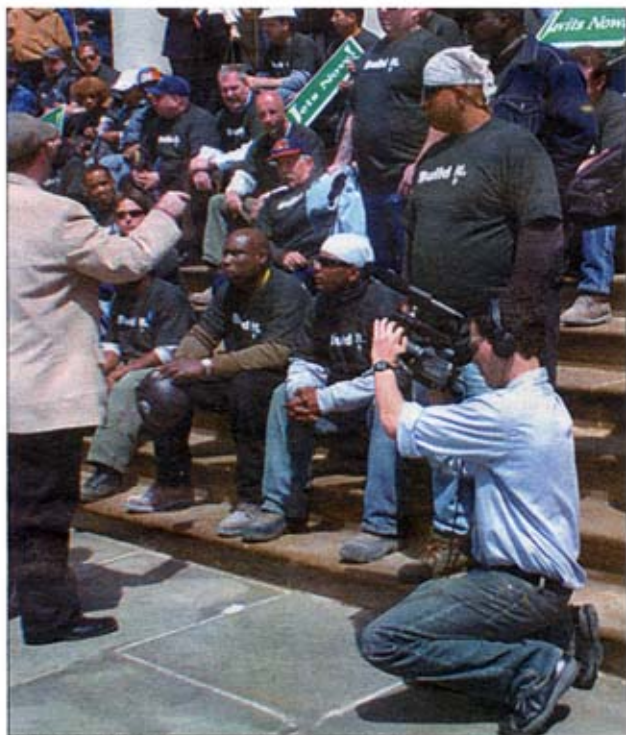
MANHATTAN The plans to build a football stadium on the West Side of Manhattan and the gentrification of Williamsburg have sparked plenty of controversy. They have also inspired a new crop of New York documentary filmmakers.

"We're trying to make the quintessential film about quintessential New York stories," said Jevon Roush who, along with Ben Rosen, has become a familiar face to Hell's Kitchen residents opposed to the stadium and construction workers who want the jobs promised by the project, which would house the New York Jets and 2012 Olympics.

"The tricky part is winning people's trust on both sides," Rosen said, adding, "I'm keeping myself pretty agnostic on it. Both sides have legitimate concerns; that's what makes it so compelling."

Lobbying effort

The two 28-year-olds also scored access to politicians, including Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff — City Hall's point man for development. They did it, Rosen said, by "shaking lots of hands, sending out lots of letters and trying to ingratiate ourselves."



BEN ROSEN films a rally in favor of the West Side stadium by union workers at City Hall last week.

The childhood friends — Rosen grew up in NoHo, Roush in SoHo — got the idea when talking to Rosen's mentor, Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Marc Levin, whose office overlooks the Hudson Yards where the stadium may be built. They have invested \$15,000 of their own money and logged approximately 150 hours of film so far.

"It's not up to us," Roush said about when they may finish their film. "The next big day is July 6th [when the host city for the 2012 Olympic Games will be chosen] and we may wrap up soon after that."