

## Volunteer Spotlight Interview



# LOGAN LAWRENCE

**Nadine: What's your day job?**

Logan: I'm a PhD candidate at Dalhousie University, and I also work part-time with the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness.

**N: What's your PhD area?**

L: It's around health policy and policy capacity—so, how we can make health policies more successful.

**N: It makes sense that you're working with the Department of Health and Wellness, then! What do you do there?**

L: I work in primary care policy, trying to figure out how Nova Scotians can get better primary health care services.

**N: How did you get involved with FIN?**

L: I've always loved movies! I can't remember if I just heard an ad or saw posters for it. I think I probably went to the Festival first just to watch movies and then saw volunteers and chatted with a few people. And things kind of snowballed from there. I think it was probably 2012 or 2013, right when I first moved out to Nova Scotia.

**N: And you volunteer with our social media team now?**

L: The first year I was just a general volunteer. That was fun! I enjoyed being a greeter and directing people around, and I saw that it was more than just the movies; it was this bigger festival experience. I had no idea that it was also delegates from the film industry and local talent. There was just so much else going on! I can't remember how exactly I got connected with the social media team, but I kind of fit the bill of young and used to social media... so I've been doing stuff with the social media team ever since.

**N: What is your favourite FIN Atlantic International Film Festival memory?**

L: There was a movie called THE TRIBE. It was a movie out of the Ukraine, I believe, that was done entirely in sign language. So there was no talking, no subtitles, just the movie. That in and of itself was a really profound movie experience; you're able to follow along and realize we don't actually need talking and dialogue as much as we think we do. But it was also a very, very powerful movie. I actually ended up fainting during it.

**N: Oh my!**

L: Yeah. Jason Beaudry [FIN Program Director] had even done a disclaimer at the beginning to say just so everyone knows, this is not a PG-13 movie. It told the story of a bunch of people living at a school for the deaf and hard of hearing in the Ukraine. Parts of it were quite graphic. My friend was like, "Are you okay?" and I was kind of slumped in my seat. I actually passed out during a movie! Now when I read about something screening at Cannes and people fainting... I have been someone who has fainted at a screening at a film festival! It was an amazing movie, an amazing movie experience.

**N: So you still enjoyed it?**

L: Oh, absolutely! It's not too often that you're really, really affected by art. I mean, we're constantly being inundated with media. The Festival, to me, it gives permission to be there for the movie, and just the movie. It's usually a really respectful crowd.

At the same time, I've had other great experiences. Last year, there was a movie out of PEI, *POGEY BEACH*. What a blast! You had the entire film community come out, people drove from the Island to go to it, a bunch of the actors and the crew were there. It was so, so cool! And that's the other side of the Festival.

**N: But again, you have everyone focused and in it together!**

L: And rooting for it!

**N: What part of the film festival would you recommend to a first-time festival goer?**

L: Oh, you've got to go see movies! Just see something! I think the Festival really does have something for everyone. Every year, my biggest challenge is figuring out what I'm going to see, getting a program guide, looking at what I've heard of, what I recognize, what sounds good—but also leaving room for the random, the unexpected. You know, like the shorts programs. I'd never really been exposed to short films before, and they do such a good job of showcasing local, Atlantic Canadian content. It's cool, too, because it really challenges budding filmmakers, usually, who are working with a smaller production budget, to do something impactful both emotionally as well as from a production standpoint.

There's plenty of stuff that, if I hadn't seen at the Festival, I would never have seen. Like, a few years ago I saw Xavier Dolan's *MOMMY*—and it was fantastic. Here's this Canadian director that I'd heard so much about. I can find a bunch of his movies at the library, but if I hadn't known to go look for them....

I don't have enough good things to say about the Festival!

**N: What do you most look forward to every year at FIN?**

L: Oh, going to see the movies! I mean, I love volunteering, I love supporting the broader Festival, and it's great to support some of the big parties. I think that every year, the opening night and closing night parties, they're in different locations, there's different themes, there's always something special about them. It never feels stale; every year they do a really good job. So I guess I do look forward to the parties as well! It's just neat.

**N: What's your favourite film?**

L: I think that one of the first movies that really opened my mind to what movies could do was *FIGHT CLUB*. It just did so many things that I'd never seen before. And [Gaspard Noé's] *CLIMAX* is another example; I didn't really know that movies could do that.

I love the film fest for exposing me to new ways of using that kind of medium. I think that one of the things that I love about the Festival is that it's gotten me thinking more broadly about film as an industry. So now I'm more critical—not in a negative way, but in a discerning way—when I watch movies. I'm more aware of the elements that go into it.

**N: What's your favourite movie snack?**

L: Oh, I love popcorn! Movie, buttery popcorn, usually with some kind of flavouring on it.