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May 04, 2008 02:01PM EST

## [Film Junkie Reports: \*Under Our Skin\* the Perfect Date Movie](#)



So it was Friday night and I had two passes for any screening at the festival, and I made the right choice: I let my wife pick. And she, being a hopeless romantic, chose what else but a documentary about Lyme disease. It was a busy night at the Village East Cinemas, on Second Avenue and 12th Street, with a lot of high quality shows playing—it was even reported that Michael Moore was somewhere in the building—so I was duly impressed that so many attendees chose to kick off their weekend by coming to see [Under Our Skin](#), by director Andy Abrahams Wilson. The house was nearly full, and emotions ran high even before the film began—obviously many in the group were there because of personal connections with Lyme. One girl sitting next to us kept nodding enthusiastically and even raising her hand when some conditions, such as entire families getting infected, were mentioned. She and many others sat, teary-eyed, as the credits rolled.

Neither my wife nor I know anyone with Lyme, though we'd read a little about the epidemiology and the controversy over treatment methods. And though the film tends more to the emotional than the intellectual side of the story, it was informative, touching, and even occasionally mushy enough for a good old-fashioned date. To summarize, Lyme disease has so many myriad manifestations that it can go undiagnosed for years, and once diagnosed two factions in the medical community differ so vehemently on how it should be treated (as a short-term or chronic condition) that it can be very difficult for patients to obtain good care.

Michael Moore's aura, if not his body, was present, as throughout the film I kept thinking of H.R. 676 and how dismantling private insurance would eliminate the incentives that the filmmakers alleged were restricting Lyme treatment under the current system. *Under Our Skin* touched on universal health care in passing but kept its focus more on individual stories: doctors getting their licenses revoked, patients finding relief through "unproven" methods, etc. Still, a political agenda was clear, and the filmmakers enhanced this by having two pamphlets distributed (a good example of Third Cinema right here in New York), urging public participation in pushing for legislation on Lyme disease. (I don't think they'll mind me saying that information on a rally in New Jersey this Wednesday is available at [Lyme Rights](#), and check out information on the [NYC Lyme Disease Support Group](#) and [HR 741](#), the Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Prevention, Education, and Research Act.)

I love good escapist, even silly fare as much as the next film junkie, and I plan to see some such pics through the rest of the weekend, but I also quite like it when a film has an agenda and fits within a greater social cause. Each viewer must decide on the validity of claims made by propaganda, of course, but there is nothing undeserving about making films with agendas in the first place. So I'm glad the Tribeca Film Festival saw fit to include this film in their lineup, and my wife saw fit to use our sole date night in a long while to come see it.

Posted By Randy Astle | [Permalink](#) | [E-Mail This](#) | [0 Comment\(s\)](#)

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