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## Hot Dog!

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## Hot Dog!

### Abstract

This is a film review of *Hot Dog!* (2023), directed by Frank Volk.

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### Author Notes

Dr. Brady DeSanti is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Native American Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is the current Director of the Native American Studies Program. He is an alumnus of UNO and received his Ph.D. in American History from the University of Kansas. He is an enrolled citizen of the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Nation in Wisconsin. His research focuses on Native American history and religious traditions.



***Hotdogs! (2023), dir. Frank Volk***

Director Frank Volk’s short, animated film, *Hotdogs!* examines a hotdog connoisseur named Billy who questions the meaning of his life after experiencing a couple of crises. Billy’s enthusiasm for his hot dog business is all consuming until a friend and fellow hot dog entrepreneur dies suddenly of a heart attack. Billy’s friend passed without a wife or children, causing Billy to examine his own personal life and to appreciate how short and fleeting life can be.

With some soul-searching complete, Billy meets a woman named Susana at a hot dog academy, who introduces him to a Marxian analysis of social and economic disparities. Susana and Billy begin a movement to unionize hot dog entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, however, “Big Hot Dog” (akin to Big Pharma) sends a couple of criminals to Billy and Susana’s home, where they are both brutally assaulted. Susana no longer wants to engage in the hot dog business and gives Billy an ultimatum—settle down with her or run his hot dog business. Billy’s injuries also leave him in a wheelchair, and he once again questions the meaning of his life.

While on a sojourn in nature contemplating his future, he asks God to show him a sign, which God eventually does by saying “hot dog” from the sky. Billy comes to realize that life is

about finding meaning in what you really love, which for him is running his hot dog business. He is sad that his relationship with Susana did not last and for the trauma they endured, but his optimism about his future and ambition for the rest of his life is restored. Billy finds that his purpose is to prepare and sell hot dogs and make his customers happy. *Hot Dog!* is a short and interesting examination of some of the existential questions we all face—the impermanence of life, the importance of finding meaning in existence, and the value of finding long-lasting personal contentment on one’s own terms matters more than what other people and society might think of your choices.