In 1995, at age 43, Jean-Dominique Bauby, the successful and charismatic editor of Elle France magazine, suffered a massive stroke that left him with a rare condition called locked-in syndrome – mentally alert but unable to speak or move except for his left eye. Using that eye to blink out a special alphabet code, he composed a memoir that became a best seller and the basis for Julian Schnabel’s fiercely beautiful film.

Though Bauby is trapped in his body, he discovers he can escape his “diving bell” by letting his imagination take flight like a butterfly. Scenes of his daily life in the hospital flow effortlessly into memory and fantasy sequences, gorgeously shot by the brilliant cinematographer Janusz Kaminsky.

Introducing this special screening is Frank Guenther, a professor in the Departments of Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences and Biomedical Engineering at Boston University. Dr. Guenther develops brain-machine interfaces (BMIs) that can restore speech and other capabilities to patients with locked-in syndrome. BMIs have already produced astounding laboratory demonstrations, including locked-in patients controlling computers, speech synthesizers, and robotic arms using only their thoughts.

DIR. JULIAN SCHNABEL, W/ MATHIEU AMALRIC, EMMANUELLE SEIGNER, 1H52M, 35MM.