

13<sup>TH</sup> GEN AND BEST REVENGE PRODUCTIONS PRESENT

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE HIV STORY PROJECT

# DESERT MIGRATION

A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT LIFE AFTER AIDS

81 MINUTES – COLOR – 2015

DIRECTED BY DANIEL F. CARDONE

PRODUCED BY MARC SMOLOWITZ



"There was an influx of HIV positive men from across the state,  
From across the country, who came here to die...  
I came here with the express intent to *live*."

#LIFEAFTERAIDS

Twitter - @desertmigration / Instagram - @desertmigration

Facebook - Facebook.com/DesertMigration / IMDB - imdb.com/title/tt3258058/

Youtube: Desert Migration / Website - www.DesertMigrationMovie.com

Version as of April 21 2016





NO ONE ARRIVES IN THE DESERT  
WITHOUT A STORY



# DESERT MIGRATION



- A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT LIFE AFTER AIDS -

13TH GEN AND BEST REVENGE PRODUCTIONS PRESENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE HIV STORY PROJECT -- DESERT MIGRATION --

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY AUSTIN AHLBORG EDITED BY BILL WEBER AND STEPHEN HESLIN ORIGINAL MUSIC BY GIL TALMI  
PRODUCED BY MARC SMOLOWITZ WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY DANIEL F. CARDONE



[www.DesertMigrationMovie.com](http://www.DesertMigrationMovie.com)



Desert AIDS Project  
care :: prevention :: advocacy



PRODUCED BY

**13<sup>TH</sup> GEN**

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**BEST REVENGE  
PRODUCTIONS**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



STORY PROJECT

[THEHIVSTORYPROJECT.ORG](http://THEHIVSTORYPROJECT.ORG)

PRODUCED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF



**Desert  
AIDS  
Project**

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SPECIAL THANKS TO





# ENDORSEMENTS

"The story that *Desert Migration* weaves is universal to the human experience. Living well and living happily with HIV- or any significant challenge - takes courage, compassion, community and hope. *Desert Migration* is a trip to the heart"

**David Riddell**, Chief Executive Office, Bobby Goldsmith Foundation

"*Desert Migration* is a must see. It tells very personal stories that AIDS isn't over, even with the amazing progress in treatment. More important, it strikes a blow against the stigma that shackles many who live with HIV."

**John Hassell**, Washington DC Regional Director, AIDS Healthcare Foundation



"*Desert Migration* is a window into a world never seen before. The profound stories of these men is the essence of the hero's journey. It is a tale of resilience, resolution and, ultimately, redemption. It is a film everyone needs to see. Those who also lived through those early years of the AIDS epidemic will find themselves reflected back and those too young to know the horror of the AIDS epidemic will see what it means to wrest with an unexpected life"

**Tez Anderson**, Let's Kick ASS - AIDS Survivor Syndrome

"*Desert Migration* sends a powerful message about the resilience of long term survivors living with HIV/AIDs. These are intimate personal stories told by those who are facing the daily challenges of this debilitating disease. A unique viewing experience"

**Kim Stacey**, Executive Director, McLaren Housing Society of BC

"The combination of expansive cinematography and a meditative original soundtrack creates an immersive experience that is deeply affecting and lingers in the mind long after the film has ended"

**Jo Vabolis**, In Daily

# NATIONAL OUTREACH

*THE DESERT MIGRATION COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECT* is a multi-media advocacy and film engagement endeavor that seeks to expand public awareness of HIV/AIDS, aging with the virus and empower long-term survivors who have been adversely impacted by it. The mission of the project is to create better understanding and compassion about HIV/AIDS, and help dispel stigma around HIV/AIDS while empowering individuals to lead proactive lives.

To coincide with the 35th anniversary of the first diagnosed AIDS cases, and National HIV/AIDS Long-Term Survivor Awareness Day on June 5th, *Desert Migration* will be launched in a limited theatrical run in key US cities, in addition to making the film available to organizations and community groups across the globe to host their own events.

This project will create a robust network of community minded companies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, foundations and community leaders to unleash the film's incredible potential to support public conversations about HIV/AIDS and aging.

Our vision is to bring communities together to create a more clearly drawn understanding of the emotional and psychological costs of healthcare and aging with HIV/AIDS as well as to share resources and knowledge. A key goal is to support more effective coalition building among the various stakeholder groups affected by HIV/AIDS.

By aligning closely with national and local nonprofits that do critical work in key areas of HIV/AIDS, aging and long-term survivors, *THE DESERT MIGRATION PROJECT* will look to dispel the myths and stigma around HIV/AIDS.

Interested in arranging a screening in your local community?

Contact Producer Marc Smolowitz

[marcsmolowitz@gmail.com](mailto:marcsmolowitz@gmail.com) | [films@13thgenfilm.com](http://films@13thgenfilm.com)

A screening of *Desert Migration* creates a fantastic opportunity to hold a convening event where long term survivors can share their stories about living long-term with HIV, examine the persistent PTSD that comes with 35 years of the epidemic, and offer up resources and personal information on what has been successful for them in coping with the virus. This public sharing of knowledge and experience is vital for combating the isolation that is exacerbated in the aging HIV positive community, and the stigma those living with HIV still face.

The film has been successfully used to create educational and cathartic discussions for participants across the world, including the series of events World AIDS Day 2015, which included screenings in Sydney, Vancouver, Copenhagen, and Washington DC, made possible by LGBT organizations working in partnership with film festivals and HIV Healthcare groups. We hope to keep this series of events going long into 2016.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Saved by the introduction of protease inhibitors in the mid-1990s, many HIV positive men needed to rebuild the lives they thought they'd never be able to live. In an effort to make peace with the virus inside them, some migrated to California's Palm Springs in the hope of finding a healing desert oasis. But is this environment, with its tolerant population and constant sunshine, enough to heal their shattered bodies and dispel their lingering grief?

## FULL SYNOPSIS

More than half the people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States are over 50 years of age. Those people, whose lives were saved by antiretroviral therapies, are dealing with a barrage of new problems as their ageing bodies struggle to maintain the upper hand against the virus, accompanied by the many side effects of the treatment itself - insomnia, depression, neuropathy, bone degeneration, kidney failure, cognitive disorders, suicidal ideation... Many also struggle with the symptoms of post-traumatic stress, having lived through a period of decimation and debilitation that remains largely unacknowledged.



*Desert Migration* focuses on gay men living long-term with HIV who sought out an oasis in Southern California's Palm Springs where both their homosexuality and health condition is not just tolerated, but understood. They represent a huge number of people who migrated to this desert community burdened with memories of watching their friends die, all believing that a similar fate would befall them.

Over the course of a single on-screen 'day', we observe a group of men as they work, eat, sleep, love, recuperate and grieve. By sharing their stories, Desert Migration reflects on subjects that relate to all of us; HIV positive or negative, young or old. How do we approach our own aging, and the notion of mortality? What gives us will to create, to achieve, and even to live at all, as our bodies and minds deteriorate?

The environment in Palm Springs is highlighted as something unique in the United States, and perhaps the world, in terms of offering acceptance and a level of care that is unparalleled in a town of its size. However, even in this 'safe haven', no one arrives without bringing with them some burden of the past.

The daily ritual for every one of these men begins with taking their medications. - a constant reminder of their status. The rest of their day varies - some still work, others are on long-term disability and struggle with filling their day in a meaningful way. Their routine is presented so that both the magical and the mundane are highlighted – even the most rudimentary of chores can be a tool to help an individual find focus.

The harsh and unforgiving desert landscape around the town is a consistent visual presence, reminding us of the constant maintenance it takes to keep Palm Springs green and vibrant, much like the effort it takes to keep the virus at bay. As the activities of the subjects are observed, their voice-overs suggest the weight of the past and the worries and thoughts of the present and the future that they carry with them.

Occasionally the men cross paths; their lives crisscrossing like threads in a tapestry. This community might be small in size, but the diversity of people is endless and sometimes the gulf between them can be enormous. The people who are the happiest are those that manage to bridge that divide. The day ends with some people alone, others sharing dinner with friends or their partners, and still others mourning lost friends. Life, or whatever our version of it is, goes on...

# CAST

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE



KEITH EPLEY



STEVEN HENDERSON



DOUG GRAHAM



JEFF DANNELS



STEVEN BARKAL



DOC DUHON



WILL GRANT



# CAST

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE



BILL FAUBER



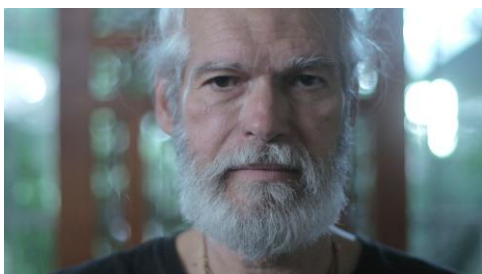
ERIC JANNKE



MICHAEL PATTON



JOEL KRAMER



JUAN-MANUEL ALONSO



TED HAACK

# KEY PERSONNEL

## Daniel F. Cardone – Director

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2134849/>



Born in Australia, Daniel F. Cardone worked on critically acclaimed productions such as *The Home Song Stories*, *Animal Kingdom*, and the Emmy award-winning *The Pacific*. Daniel was also an Associate Producer on Australian sitcom *Outland*. After moving to the US, Daniel directed the segment *Construct* of the feature documentary *Still Around* (2011, distributed by Outcast Films), in addition to writing and directing the short film *Incident*, which premiered at Palm Springs Shortfest 2012. Daniel also directed the second unit sequences for the feature length documentary *The Life & Crimes of Doris Payne*.

Daniel lives in Southern California with his husband and his four rescue dogs - Henry, Eleanor, Mabel and Lady Miss Betty Boo. *Desert Migration* is his first feature film as director.

## Marc Smolowitz – Producer

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0810625/>



Marc Smolowitz is a multi-award winning director, producer and executive producer with 25 years of experience across all aspects of the entertainment and media business. His career focus has been powerful social issue filmmaking across all genres. His long list of credits includes films that have screened at top-tier festivals - Sundance, Berlinale, AFI Docs, IDFA, Tokyo, Melbourne, among others - and been released worldwide theatrically, across all forms of television, and on VOD/Digital. Select titles including: "*The Nine*" (Producer, 2016), "*Buried Above Ground*" (Producer, 2015), "*Desert*

*Migration*" (Producer, 2015), "*Black Is Blue*" (Producer, 2014), "*Heaven Adores You*" (Producer, 2014), "*Havana Curveball*" (Exec. Producer, 2014), "*The Campaign*" (Producer, 2013), "*Keep The Promise: The Global Fight Against AIDS*," narrated by Margaret Cho (Director/Producer, 2013), "*The Power Of Two*" (Director/Producer, 2011) "*Still Around*" (Exec. Producer/Collaborating Director, 2011), "*The Weather Underground*" (Producer, 2003), "*Trembling Before G-d*" (Producer, 2001). In recent years, he was the Producer at TellyTopia, a Silicon Valley start-up specializing in interactive television, IP-TV and VOD products for cable & satellite companies. In the 1990s, he was widely known as the President & Founder of Turbulent Arts -- a boutique, indie film distribution and sales company based in San Francisco that ranked as the 26th largest film company in North America, 14th among independents, at its peak in 1998. Today, he works full-time as an independent filmmaker, while maintaining a thriving consulting practice called 13th Gen that guides filmmakers through key stages of development, fundraising, production, post, completion, and distribution.

# KEY PERSONNEL

## Austin Ahlborg – Director of Photography

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm3981246/>



Austin Ahlborg is an up and coming cinematographer that specializes in documentary and commercial production. Coming from a background in music videos and action sports, his passion for telling real world stories has pushed him to explore travel projects around the world. In 2014 he shot the feature-length documentary *American Futbol: A Journey to the World Cup* by traveling from Los Angeles to the World Cup in Brazil.. He also shot a branded web series for Jeep, documenting WWII events in Normandy based on the real-life story of *Saving Private Ryan*. When not on location, Austin prefers to spend time surfing and taking casual photography.

## Bill Weber – Editor

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2406324/>



Bill Weber cut his editing teeth with a broadcast Emmy, an MTV Music Video of the Year Award, and a successful career in commercial work. He discovered a passion for documentaries by editing and directing (with David Weissman) the award-winning *The Cockettes* (2002). In 2011, he edited and co-directed *We Were Here: The AIDS Years in San Francisco*, which opened to rave reviews and screened both theatrically and on PBS. Just recently he completed work on *To Be Takei* (2014) and *The Galapagos Affair* (2014). Other recent work includes the Academy Award nominated documentary *The Final Inch* (2009), the Emmy-nominated HBO films *Last Letter Home* (2010) and *The Alzheimer's Project - Caregivers* (2009), as well as the Telluride premiering documentary feature *Hats Off* (2008), and numerous specials for HBO and The History Channel.

## Stephen Heslin – Editor

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1189939/>



Stephen Heslin has been working in feature film and TV production for over 15 years. He discovered his talent for storytelling back when he and his childhood friends would shoot short videos to entertain their families. Stephen has created and edited content for the web, including the award winning weekly video podcast *The Totally Rad Show* (2007 - ). He also created several popular online comedy shorts with the sketch group Very Angry Neighbors. *Desert Migration* marks his first feature length film editing credit. Stephen and his husband Sean live in Los Angeles.

# KEY PERSONNEL

## **Gil Talmi – Original Music**

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1284601/>



Gil Talmi is a world-renowned film composer with a focus on socially conscious projects. Gil's music can be heard in a variety of award winning films and TV programs worldwide, from productions for Warner Brothers, Paramount and PBS to pro bono collaborations with The International Rescue Committee and StoryCorps. Gil was nominated for a "National News and Documentary Emmy Award" for his work on CBS Evening News.

## **Joel Raabe – Sound Designer & Re-Recording Mixer**

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2395008/>



Joel Raabe is a sound designer and mixer who began his career in New York City, editing and mixing content for broadcast television shows, commercials, radio spots, trailers and feature films. In 2009, he received an AICP award for sound design on Durex's "Get it On" campaign, and in 2010, won a News & Documentary Emmy for his work as supervising sound editor and re-recording mixer on History Channel's 10-part series, *WWII in HD*. Joel resides in the Bay Area and runs Lichen Lion, a boutique audio post house.



# CREDITS

*Written and Directed by*  
Daniel F. Cardone

*Produced by*  
Marc Smolowitz

*Director of Photography*  
Austin Ahlborg

*Edited by*  
Bill Weber  
Stephen Heslin

*Original Music by*  
Gil Talmi

<i>Associate Producers</i>	Joy Tomchin Sabrina Mikan Julia Robertson
<i>Sound Designer &amp; Re-Recording Mixer</i>	Joel Raabe
<i>Camera Assistant</i>	Erik Butts
<i>Gaffer</i>	Lucas Pitassi
<i>Production Assistant</i>	Tony Vacarro
<i>Additional Cinematography</i>	Daniel F. Cardone Stephen Heslin
<i>Additional Editing</i>	Daniel F. Cardone
<i>Post-Production Associate</i>	Benjy Blanco
<i>Transcription Services</i>	Leigh Ann Cole
<i>Music Licensing</i>	Elise Lebec, Bay Area Film Company
<i>Marketing Consultant</i>	Peter Broderick

Produced with the support of Desert AIDS Project

## ***Featuring***

Juan-Manuel Alonso	
Steve Barkal	
Jeff Dannels	
Doc Duhon	<b><i>with</i></b>
Keith Epley	Bryan Wilmoth
Bill Fauber	Robert Concienne
Doug Graham	John Lustenring
Will Grant	Matt Moran
Ted Haack	Matt Fowler
Steven Henderson	
Eric Jannke	
Joel Kramer	
Michael Patton	

# CREDITS

HD Post Production Services provided by ZAP  
Zoetrope Aubry Productions, San Francisco

<i>Post-Production Supervisor</i>	Kim Aubrey
<i>Online Editor</i>	Ashley Pagán
<i>Colorist</i>	Leo Hallal
<i>Foley</i>	Alchemy Post Sound, Peekskill, New York Andrea Bloome, Leslie Bloome, Jonathan Fang
<i>Graphic Design</i>	Matthew Baldwin Ian Price

Sound Mix Facility  
Mission Film & Design, San Francisco

## ***Music***

Diamonds, Fur Coat, Champagne  
Written by Martin Rev and Alan Vega  
Courtesy of Revega Publishing Co. / ASCAP

Something In Red  
Written by Angela Kaset  
Published by Ten Ten Music Group / Nettwerk One Music (Canada) Ltd.  
Courtesy of Nettwerk One Music (Canada) Ltd.

From The Vine  
Written and Performed by F11  
Courtesy of Konsonant Music

## ***Special Thanks To:***

The Robertson Family Fund

Gene White

Yves Averous  
Alvin Baum & Robert Holgate  
Jörg Fockele

Bill Barrick  
Steve Bolerjack  
Rick Vila  
Roy Alton Wald  
Ken Lyon

# CREDITS

## *Special Thanks (continued)*

Jose Luis Garcia Triguero

Ted Guice

John Biron

Dave Piluso

David Boughner

Nicholas Snow

Gordon Hempton

Barry Dayton

Alexis Ortega

Brett Klein

Darrell Tucci

World Gym Palm Springs - Mark Henkle, Steven Michael

Revivals Palm Springs - Joseph Sandberg

The Corridor - Hank Bates

Palm Springs Piercing - David J. McCammon

DIGS Bar

Eddie's Frozen Yogurt

The Curve Hotel

The Saguaro Hotel

Lulu Bistro

Hyatt Regency

Trio Restaurant

Cindy L. Abel

Tez Anderson

Don Brown

Mike Bruno

Leo Chyi

Deborah Craig

Véronica Duport Deliz

Regg Evans

David Frederickson

Alessandra Gallo

Andrew Gross

Carl Rashad Jaeger

Marcia Jarmel

Timothy Kulikowski

Lanz Lowen

Gerald McLanahan

Chris Metzler

Doug Mobley

Mark Morsfield

Alyssa Nickell

Daniel Polk

Matthew Pond

Tracey Quezada

Angela Romeo

Heiner Schulze

Matt Sharp

Leslie L. Smith

D. Blake Spears

Sean Strub

Geof Teague

Erin White

Andrew Gross, Konsonant Music

San Francisco Film Society, Filmmaker 360 and FilmHouse

Noah Cowan, Michele Turnure-Salleo, Amanda Todd, Athena Kalkopoulou

# CREDITS

## *Indiegogo Supporters:*

Adam Ouderkirk

Rocky M Wood

Peter Staley

Rosemary Cardone

Daniel Healy

Michael Melancon and Glenn Johnson

Jeremy Doupe and Steven E. Powell

Henry Doering

Marc Bearden

David Davis

Larry McFadden

Tom Finan

Kenneth Morris

Eddie Givens Jr.

Jim Gazan

Sabrina Mikan

Jaime H. de Leon

Israel Hoyer

John Scott

Randy Curlee

Susan Thames

Peter Myers

Dan Fourrier

John Preckel

Jim Grace

Derth Adams

Debra Polson

David Edwards

Ralph Tardugno

Larry Fulton

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Andrew Park

Kevin McCausland

Manish Champsee

Steve Bolerjack

Brady Chapin & Charles Moniz

David M. Phillips

Brien O'Brien

Jesse Jackman

Zack Ginies

Stacey Blue

TitanMen.com

Race Bannon

*And everyone who supported our Indiegogo campaign.*

In Memoriam

Will Grant



WWW.DESERTMIGRATIONMOVIE.COM



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