

JIMMY IN SAIGON PRESS KIT



JIMMY IN SAIGON

A FILM BY PETER McDOWELL
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER - DAN SAVAGE



"Handsomely filmed and filled with very forthcoming, honest and emotional interviews, it has the feel of a detective story."

Rick Kogan, *The Chicago Tribune*

Jimmy in Saigon
Documentary
90 minutes, digital, 2022
jimmyinsaigon.com

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LONG SYNOPSIS

Jimmy in Saigon explores the mysterious death, radical life, and forbidden romance of a 24-year-old Vietnam veteran who died in Saigon in 1972. Jimmy's rejection of his family's values and his eventual death created deep trauma within the lives of his surviving family and complicated how he was remembered.

Director Peter McDowell, Jimmy's younger brother, was only five years old when Jimmy died under a shroud of secrecy and shame. *Jimmy in Saigon* follows Peter's 10-year search to uncover secrets surrounding Jimmy's sexual orientation and rumored drug use. Peter finds surprising connections with his deceased brother and struggles to reach a new understanding of his own identity as a gay man.

After leaving the army, Jimmy unexpectedly chose to return to Vietnam as a civilian while the war still raged. He died a year later. Where a son cut down in military action might be remembered with rituals and pride, a son who abandoned his native country to live and die far from his roots could be seen as a traitor. Why do some aspects of a remembered life fade, while others persist? Why are some memories cherished, and others buried? In accepting complicated truths, Peter hopes to redeem Jimmy's past and restore how he is remembered in the present.

By shedding light on the secrets of one family, *Jimmy in Saigon* aims to normalize the grieving process for countless others and to destigmatize both drug use and LGBTQ+ sexuality. Peter's journey provides an empathetic lens through which to explore Jimmy's life in Saigon—a story of adventure and of love that was unacceptable at the time and still challenging today.

June 6, 2022, marks the 50th anniversary of Jimmy's death in Saigon. In the half-century since then, the world has experienced monumental change. *Jimmy in Saigon* is an opportunity for audiences to travel between the past and the present, witnessing both a family and a nation deal with trauma, war, and profound social change. The opportunities for meaningful dialogue about memory, history and healing are vast.

Jimmy in Saigon

SHORT SYNOPSIS

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MEET THE TEAM

PETER McDOWELL DIRECTOR & PRODUCER

Peter's storytelling reflects his training as an actor, musician, curator and producer, stemming from a childhood surrounded by opera and the arts. Previous films, including the acclaimed *I Dream of Dorothy*, have been shown at festivals around the world. A recipient of the highly competitive DeVos Institute for Arts Management International Fellowship at the University of Maryland, Peter also received a Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events Individual Artists Program grant and a California Humanities Council grant for *Jimmy in Saigon*.

Peter is the founder of Peter McDowell Arts Consulting and recently served as the Director of Development for American Friends of the Louvre. He currently resides in Los Angeles.

DAN SAVAGE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Dan is an author, advice columnist and podcaster. His groundbreaking column, "Savage Love" first appeared in *The Stranger*, Seattle's alternative weekly in 1991, and has since been syndicated to more than 50 papers across North America. The host of the wildly popular Savage Lovecast and author of six books, Dan and his husband Terry Miller founded the Emmy-winning "It Gets Better Project" (IGBP) in 2010, which gathered thousands of videos from people all over the world offering hope to LGBT kids.

Dan is a regular contributor to *This American Life* and a frequent guest on *The Colbert Report*, *Real Time with Bill Maher*, and other television programs. Dan's graphic, pragmatic, and humorous advice has changed the cultural conversation about monogamy, gay rights, religiosity and politics.

LUCIA PALMARINI PRODUCER

Lucia is a Chicago-and-Mexico-City-based producer and creative consultant who has worked across the media sector for more than ten years. Steeped in community media, film and event management, Lucia brings a knowledge of production, community engagement and creative development together to help tell stories that challenge conventions. Lucia has served as a producer on many projects, including *Drive Slow*, an Independent Pilot Competition contestant at NYTF in 2017; the dramedy series and short film, *Dizhsa Nabani* (2018); a documentary web series on Zapotec culture in Oaxaca, Mexico; and *No Refuge*, a feature-length narrative in competition for best script at the Oaxaca Film Festival.

PETER SCHULMAN PRODUCER

Peter is a filmmaker, artist, and teacher based in New York City. He has worked with various non-profits, including Free Arts Los Angeles, The Children's Institute, and the Koreatown Youth Community Center. His non-fiction work is driven by curiosity and built on mutual vulnerability with his subjects. Peter also works with sculpture, digital collage, and photography. He is currently shooting his first feature-length non-fiction film, *With Ben*.

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MEET THE TEAM

KELLY CREEDON EDITOR

Kelly is a documentary editor and filmmaker based in Durham, North Carolina. Her most recent film editing projects include the Emmy-nominated *Farmsteads*, broadcast on POV in September 2019; *You Gave Me A Song: The Life and Music of Alice Gerrard*, which premiered at the Full Frame Festival in 2019; and *Santuario*, a Tribeca Film Institute If/Then-supported project, awarded Best Documentary Short at the 2018 New Orleans Film Festival. She was a 2018-2019 NC Arts Council Artist Fellow, and she is a member of the All Y'all Southern Documentary Collective.

LIZ KAAR EDITOR

Liz is an independent editor, director, and producer working in Los Angeles. She collaborated closely with Kartemquin Films, Chicago's documentary powerhouse, for over a decade. Her editing projects have been honored with a variety of awards and recognition, including being short-listed for the Academy Award, nominated for Emmy and IDA awards, and winning the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Journalism Award. Among other projects, Liz recently edited the SXSW-premiering documentary *The Dilemma of Desire* and the festival-favorite short film *'63 Boycott*, directed by Gordon Quinn. She co-directed and edited *Hard Earned*; and directed *Stranded by the State*, a web series and TV mini-series, co-produced by *In These Times* magazine and Kartemquin Films.

JOHN McDOWELL COMPOSER

John achieved worldwide recognition with his soundtrack to the Academy Award-winning documentary *Born Into Brothels*. Winner of Best Musical Score at the Bend Film Festival, the score blends Western and Indian music in a mesmerizing mix. After receiving music composition degrees from DePaul and Northwestern Universities, McDowell lived in Europe and Africa. His research took him to Senegal, Gambia, India, and to work with Native American drummers and singers from the Tuscarora and Oglala tribes. In Europe, his dance scores have been featured at the Brussels Dance Festival, the Holland Festival, and the Berlin-Amsterdam Festival. He has written over 100 pieces ranging from solo flute music to dance scores, a requiem, and works for a world music ensemble and orchestra. He has performed at major venues and festivals, including the Montreal Jazz Festival, Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors, and the United Nations.

SABINA SCIUBBA COMPOSER

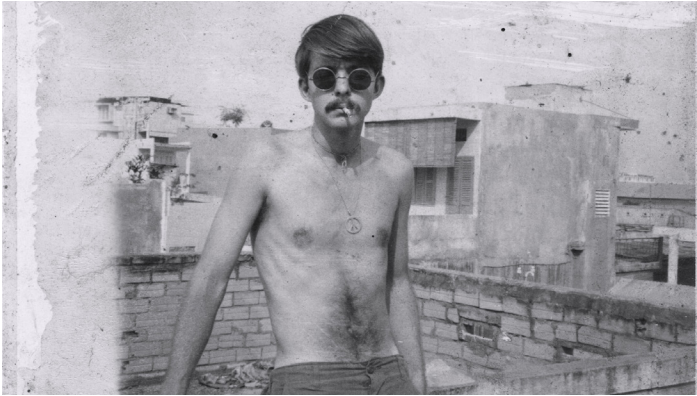
Sabina is an Italian/German singer, composer, and actress, best known as the lead singer for the Grammy-nominated electronica band Brazilian Girls. She also has a solo career, is a visual artist, and has worked as an actress, appearing in a recurring role on the FX series *Baskets*, beginning in 2016. Sciubba has composed the scores for feature films and commercials, and has collaborated with John McDowell on the soundtracks for the films *Born into Brothels*, and *Orgasmic Birth*.

TRIẾT LÊ ANIMATOR

Triet Le is a filmmaker from Vietnam whose short films have been screened at various international animation festivals including Anima Brussels, London Animation Festival, KROK, Les Sommets du cinéma d'animation, Primanima, Melbourne Animation Festival, Seoul Animation Festival and more.

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FILM STILLS



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