

CAMINA ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS AN UPSTAIRS INFERNO, LLC PRODUCTION

"UPSTAIRS INFERNO" NARRATED BY CHRISTOPHER RICE DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY NICK MORR A ROBERT L. CAMINA FILM

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS KEVIN COAKLEY TIM CHASE & ERIC POWELL PHILLIP LEGE JOHN PAFFORD GREY SAMPLE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS SHEP SHEPPARD ZACHARY SPENCER ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS SCOTT BAUGH SCOTT M. DWYER GARY GANSLE
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS DAVID GOLDEN BRIAN LONG JOHNNY TOWNSEND WRITTEN AND EDITED BY ROBERT L. CAMINA

WWW.UPSTAIRSINFERNO.COM

Press Contact:

Robert L. Camina

214.850.5027

RCamina@CaminaEntertainment.com

[f](https://www.facebook.com/UpstairsInferno) /UpstairsInferno

Technical Information:

Running time: 96 minutes

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TAGLINE

“The Largest Gay Mass Murder in U.S. History” ¹

“The 1973 New Orleans Gay Mass Murder” ²

SYNOPSIS

On June 24, 1973, an arsonist set fire to the Up Stairs Lounge, a gay bar located on the edge of the French Quarter in New Orleans, Louisiana. For 43 years, the deadly fire was the “*Largest Gay Mass Murder in U.S. History*”. Despite its staggering historical significance, few people know about the crime. The tragedy did not stop at the loss of lives. There were also the delayed injuries: lost jobs, fear, public ridicule and severed families. The devastation was compounded by the homophobic reactions and utter lack of concern by the general public, government and religious leaders. The fire permanently altered lives and was the root of many lifelong struggles. Featuring interviews from survivors, witnesses and friends/families of victims, **UPSTAIRS INFERNO** is the most comprehensive and authoritative film about the nearly forgotten tragedy and its aftermath. However, **UPSTAIRS INFERNO** isn't simply a stagnant exposition of facts. **UPSTAIRS INFERNO** brings humanity to the headlines by shining a light on the very painful effect the tragedy had on the people left behind.

FROM FRAMELINE FILM GUIDE: A 40 year old mass-murder-mystery is at the center of this captivating and thoughtful documentary from filmmaker Robert L. Camina. In 1973, a devastating fire consumed the UpStairs Lounge, a New Orleans gay bar and occasional church. Thirty-two people died. Despite a conspicuous can of discarded lighter fluid at the scene, law enforcement officials turned away from evidence of foul play. Meanwhile, the community at large chose to ignore what was clearly a hate crime. No one was ever prosecuted, and the crime lives on as a tragic chapter in New Orleans history.

Camina combines emotional interviews with survivors—some of whom have never spoken out before—with intense archival footage to capture a very specific time and place for LGBT people. While the horrible crime helped to unite the New Orleans gay community, the bigoted and uncomfortable reaction of the straight world was a disturbing reminder of what it meant to be out in the South in 1973. Narrated by *New York Times* best-selling author Christopher Rice, this festival audience award-winning film is a mesmerizing mix of crime drama and human connections that brilliantly captures the heartbreaking feelings of unconditional love and overwhelming loss. An unsettling snapshot of what was, until the early hours of June 12, 2016, considered the largest mass murder targeting gays in American history, **UPSTAIRS INFERNO** gets inside the hearts and minds of a handful of vibrant people who are connected by tragedy and compassion. - BRENDAN PETERSON

¹ The original tagline (pre-production - June 12, 2016)

² In light of the mass murder at Pulse Nightclub on June 12, 2016, where the death toll exceeded that of the Up Stairs Lounge arson, the original tagline was modified to reflect historical accuracy.

ABOUT THE FILM



UPSTAIRS INFERNO is a full length film documenting the nearly forgotten Up Stairs Lounge arson: an event that remained the “*Largest Gay Mass Murder in U.S. History*” for 43 years.

On June 24, 1973, an arsonist set fire to the Up Stairs Lounge, a gay bar located on the edge of the French Quarter in New Orleans, Louisiana. For over four decades, it was the deadliest single event to affect the gay community in U.S. history.

Despite the staggering historical significance, few people know about the tragedy.

Thirty-two people were killed and some bodies were never identified. One-third of the New Orleans chapter of the Metropolitan Community Church were killed in the blaze, including two clergy.

The primary suspect was never charged with the crime. The tragedy did not stop at the loss of lives. There were also the delayed injuries: lost jobs, fear, public ridicule and severed families. The devastation was compounded by the homophobic reactions and utter lack of concern by the general public, government and religious leaders. The fire permanently altered lives and was the root of many lifelong struggles.



UPSTAIRS INFERNO is the most comprehensive, compassionate and authoritative film about the fire and its aftermath. However, **UPSTAIRS INFERNO** isn't simply a stagnant exposition of facts. **UPSTAIRS INFERNO** pulls humanity into the headlines by shining a light on the very painful effect the tragedy had on survivors, witnesses and loved ones. Their interviews are gut wrenching, yet insightful. Some of the people interviewed in the film haven't publicly discussed the fire until now, especially on camera. Many granted the production exclusive interviews.

In addition, **UPSTAIRS INFERNO** features interviews with historians and experts on the fire. Police reports, crime scene photographs, personal photographs, newspaper clippings and long lost artifacts, interviews and archival news footage are prominently featured in the film.

Many books and newspaper articles have been written about the fire, but there's no doubt that film can tell a story that words alone cannot. There's something about **seeing** and **hearing** survivors and witnesses tell their stories that are more powerful than words alone. It's impossible for audience members not to relate to the basic human emotions of grief and frustration. **UPSTAIRS INFERNO** humanizes what before had remained, in some ways, theoretical.



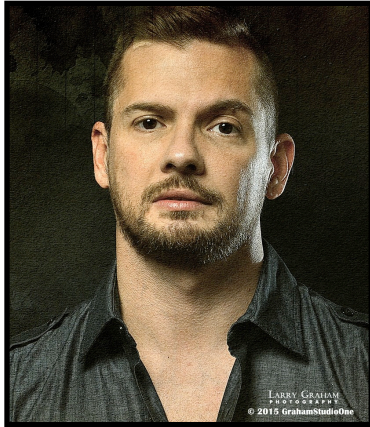
With the assistance of narrator, **CHRISTOPHER RICE (famed New Orleanian and New York Times best selling author)**, these emotional interviews tell the little known story about how this neighborhood bar became the notorious site of a horrific tragedy which would permanently alter their lives and the course of the gay rights movement in New Orleans.

"The tragedy eliminated some beautiful people from our city and unfortunately, most people will neither care nor recognize the loss."

-Richard Hargrove, *States-Item*, June 30, 1973

Promotional photos available for download at: <http://Press.UpstairsInferno.com>

CREW



Robert L. Camina (Writer, Director, Producer): Camina's previous film, ***RAID OF THE RAINBOW LOUNGE*** is a documentary about the controversial 2009 police raid of a Fort Worth, Texas, gay bar that sparked an unprecedented outcry by the gay community leading to historic change. The film, narrated by TV icon Meredith Baxter, opened to rave reviews and a media frenzy in March 2012. Since the premiere, the film screened at dozens of film festivals and garnered a number of awards, including 5 "Best" film awards. Camina is very proud that the film is helping to create change. The film is still being used to turn an unfortunate event into far-reaching teachable opportunities. ***RAID OF THE RAINBOW LOUNGE*** is strengthening grassroots organizations, engaging local communities and advancing social change. Camina looks to use ***UPSTAIRS INFERNO*** in a similar way.

A highlight of Camina's career was receiving an invitation to the White House for President Obama's 2012 LGBT Pride Month Reception and greeting the President. Other highlights include meeting U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Valerie Jarrett (Senior Advisor to President Obama) in March 2012 and receiving an invitation by the U.S. State Department to screen ***RAID OF THE RAINBOW LOUNGE*** to a delegation of 16 visitors from Europe participating in the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) focusing on "Advocating for Human and Civil Rights for the LGBT Community". Camina was also incredibly honored to receive an invitation by North Texas U.S. Attorney Sarah Saldana to speak and screen the documentary during her office's inaugural LGBT Pride Month Diversity Program. In addition, the film was chosen to screen at the Library of Congress in September 2014. In January 2013, the Dallas Voice newspaper named Robert L. Camina one of the "North Texans Who Helped Define 2012" for his work with the film.

Christopher Rice (narrator): Rice is a New York Times best selling author. His debut, "A Density of Souls", was an overnight best seller and was greeted with a landslide of media attention, much of it due to the fact that Christopher is the son of legendary vampire chronicler, Anne Rice. Much of his writing is heavily influenced by the years he and his Mom lived in New Orleans. Rice considers New Orleans his "hometown". Christopher currently co-hosts his own Internet radio show, ***THE DINNER PARTY SHOW***, with fellow New York Times best selling novelist, Eric Shaw Quinn. Rice recently published the novel, "The Vines", which is set in the outskirts of New Orleans. Christopher Rice also wrote the adapted screenplay for Anne Rice's novel, "The Tale of the Body Thief", which was acquired by Universal Pictures in November 2014, according to Variety Magazine.



Nick Morr (Director of Photography): Nick Morr received his BFA in Cinematography from the School of Visual Arts and his MA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Columbia College Chicago. He works as a Director of Photography and Video Artist in Los Angeles. A highlight in his portfolio includes the film festival favorite, "Leather" by Patrick McGuinn. The film premiered at Philadelphia's QFest in 2012 to enthusiastic audiences and it continued to play the film festival circuit throughout the year.

Nickolas Rossi (Cinematographer - Los Angeles Unit): Nickolas Rossi was born in Chicago, Illinois. He attended Columbia College Chicago for fine art photography and graduated from Portland State University with a B.Sc in Sociology. Following university, he lived and worked in Montréal, London, Prague and Los Angeles. His portfolio includes the award winning Del Shores' film "Southern Baptist Sissies" and the award winning documentaries, "Power of Two" and "Still Around". As a cinematographer, he has worked extensively across the United States, Canada, Asia, Europe and Mexico. His work has screened in numerous film festivals across the globe, as well as PBS Independent Lens, CNN, MTV/LOGO and Fuel TV.

Alan Lefebvre (Cinematographer - Dallas Unit): Alan Lefebvre has been a professional filmmaker since 1981, after graduating from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California with a BFA in Film with Honors. Alan has performed professionally as a cinematographer/DP/director for hundreds of local and regional commercials, corporate, institutional and educational projects, television shows, and more.

Omar Godinez (Colorist): Digital cinema colorist Omar Godinez began his career as a DaVinci artist in 1984. He built a solid reputation color grading national and regional commercials. In 2005, Omar fulfilled his dream of owning his own shop, Colour Cafe, which provides a high-performance DaVinci Resolve color grading suite. Godinez grades HD to 5K formats using unlimited layers of Power Windows with 3D Auto Tracking, Precise Color Isolation, Noise Reduction and Image Stabilization, all in real-time. His suite is equipped with state-of-the-art video scopes and video monitoring to ensure accurate color reproduction. As he states it, Omar's mission is this: *"My role, as digital cinema colorist, is to interpret and fulfill my client's vision, utilizing the latest technology available"*.

Dallas Audio Post (Audio mix): Roy Machado – Owner and Creative Director and Supervising Sound Editor for DAPG. With decades of experience in film/television and advertising, Roy has brought well-rounded knowledge to clients such as Lions Gate Films, New Horizons, Universal Pictures, NBC TV, Fox TV and Hasbro Games. He has composed music, sound designed and mixed audio for hundreds of movie trailers, TV spots, toys, games and corporate video productions. As part of the team Roy continues to expand his knowledge in all aspects of audio and post production. He studied music performance and composition as well as radio/television and film at the University of North Texas. Roy and his team worked on Camina's previous award winning film, ***RAID OF THE RAINBOW LOUNGE***.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I *thought* I knew my Gay History. A few years ago, when somebody informed me about this tragedy, I was shocked!! I asked myself the question, "Why isn't this story more prevalent in our culture?" It's offensive that more people don't know about it. It's as historic as the Stonewall Inn raid, but it doesn't exist in the common LGBT history narrative. I felt that needed to change.

I didn't want to create a stagnant documentary, with only an exposition of facts. Through very honest and intimate interviews, I also wanted to humanize the story and show the real impact the fire had on the victims' friends, families and the LGBT movement. It's easy to trivialize a situation when you gloss over a headline in a newspaper (or a Facebook post). There is something about SEEING and HEARING the story from those who experienced an event, that truly makes it "real". That's what possesses the potential to create change.

The more I learned about the fire, the more important this project became. I believe it is crucial to acknowledge, preserve and honor our history as LGBT people. The LGBT dialogue has changed SO much in the past few years. As popular attitudes shift on LGBT issues, we risk losing the stories of the struggles that got us where we are today. It's our responsibility to honor the memories of those who came before us, including those who died at the Up Stairs Lounge. The people who experienced this tragedy paved the way for the freedoms enjoyed by the New Orleans LGBT community of today, as well as the overall LGBT movement. I wanted to create a film that honored their forgotten stories.

Over the years, I've gotten to "know" the victims of the fire. Even though I never actually knew them, I feel very close to them and I grieve for them in the same way I would if one of my current friends suddenly passed away.

As a storyteller, I had to remain objective and keep my emotions in check. However, I would be lying if I said there weren't times that the sheer magnitude of the tragedy didn't get to me. One time in particular, a family member of one of the victims mailed me an original portrait of their loved one. As I held this 40+ year old photo in my hands and looked into his eyes, I broke down in tears. Physically touching the heirloom made this story extremely personal.

I've gotten to know the families of many of the victims and I now consider them part of my extended family. I've also grown very close to many of the survivors. They have touched my life immeasurably. I have learned so much and I am honored to call them my friends.

UPSTAIRS INFERNO audiences should expect to see a balance between investigative reporting and very intimate profiles of people lost or affected by the tragedy. The victims are more than statistics, more than names in a newspaper clipping or even names on a plaque. These were unfinished lives, tragically cut short by a senseless act. The victims and their families and friends left to cope with the aftermath deserved better treatment than what they got. I thought, if I have an opportunity to provide any sort of legacy or light for them, I wanted to try.

We were only a few months into our film festival run and just two weeks shy of the 43rd anniversary of the deadly arson, when the unimaginable happened: the Pulse night club shooting. The grim parallels between the two gay bar mass murders immediately made headlines.

As I watched the news, my prayers went out to the shooting victims and their families. However, I couldn't help but think about those affected by the New Orleans mass murder. I reached out to many of them. It was a trying time for the survivors and witnesses of the Up Stairs Lounge arson. Many couldn't stop crying as they witnessed history repeat itself.

For nearly 43 years, the June 24, 1973 arson at the Up Stairs Lounge, an event that claimed 32 lives, was considered "The Largest Gay Mass Murder in U.S. History". That changed on June 12, 2016. With 49 patrons dead and families shattered, the mass shooting at Pulse now holds that dubious title. No one wanted to pass that moniker on and see a horror of this nature again. It was a stark reminder that while the LGBTQ community has achieved a lot in its fight for equality, there are many people who still feel that LGBTQ lives are expendable.

What we learned in the wake of the Up Stairs Lounge arson is that this tragedy will have a tremendous psychological impact, not only for those directly impacted by the shooting, but throughout the entire LGBTQ community.

If any comfort can be found in the wake of the violence at Pulse, it's in the fact that unlike in 1973, the LGBTQ community should no longer feel alone in the struggle and the grief. Unlike after the 1973 New Orleans gay mass murder, most political leaders expressed compassion, grief and determination for justice after the shooting. Communities across the country and world held vigils, standing in solidarity with Orlando. That didn't happen in 1973. And while the outpouring of compassion was far greater than it was in 1973, there were still community and religious leaders callously turning their backs to the victims and the LGBT community.

UPSTAIRS INFERNO is a heart breaking and gruesome story, there is no way around it. But I hope through it all, people walk away with a renewed call for compassion: Compassion for those unlike us. Compassion for those who are hurting. Compassion for those in need. Because they're definitely wasn't a lot of compassion when this tragedy happened. In addition, I hope the film acts as a stark reminder that we need to seize the day. We need to make sure we tell our loved ones every day that we love them, because we don't know what lies ahead. Life is fickle and unpredictable. Today may be our last chance.

Especially in the wake of the Orlando tragedy, we must continue to educate and enlighten people about our history and the current state of LGBT equality. My convictions are stronger than ever. I believe **UPSTAIRS INFERNO** can play a key role in the global conversation. "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

ABOUT THE FILM'S PARTICIPANTS

Regina Adams (aka Ricky Soletto): Moments before the fire, Regina left the Up Stairs Lounge to retrieve her checkbook from the nearby apartment she shared with her lover, Reggie Adams. After about 10 minutes, she returned to the bar to find it fully engulfed in flames. Reggie perished in the fire and was identified by his dental records. For weeks, she laid out his clothes on the bed as if he was coming home. She soon legally changed her name to "Regina Adams", as a tribute to her lost soul mate. Regina provides a step by step account of the evening and shares the difficulties she had recovering from the trauma, including a long struggle with alcoholism. Through heart felt stories, she brings to life many of her friends that were lost in the fire and what the bar meant to the community. Known for routinely refusing to talk about the fire, she agreed to share her story with us, providing an exclusive on-camera interview.

Misti Ates: Voted New Orleans Lesbian of the Year for the past few years, this young leader of the community helped organize the 40th anniversary memorial ceremonies held in 2013. She plays a key role in providing perspective from the point of view of a younger generation.

Reverend David Billings: St. Mark's Methodist Church played a HUGE role in the aftermath of the fire. Reverend Kennedy, with the approval of Bishop Finis Crutchfield, opened the doors to St Mark's to host the memorial service for the victims. This was in a time when all but one other church closed their doors to the grieving and those in need of spiritual comfort. David Billings was part of the church at that time and worked with Reverend Kennedy to host the memorial. Billings later became pastor of the church. He provides the inside story about Reverend Kennedy's and Bishop Crutchfield's involvement with the Memorial.

Reverend Paul Breton: As a member of Reverend Troy Perry's team of ministers and gay activists who traveled to New Orleans to help minister to the dead, injured and hurting, Breton was the primary clergy to minister to the gravely injured victims in Charity Hospital. He also performed funerals for many of the fire victims, including fellow Metropolitan Community Church pastor, Deacon Bill Larson (posthumously ordained as "Reverend"). As someone who was there, Breton provides intimate details about the hours and days after the fire, the struggles in the community and attitudes of the dying. He's also one of the trustees who established the "New Orleans National Memorial Fund", designed to help pay for medical bills, funerals or other expenses incurred by the victims.

Stewart Butler : A frequent patron of the Up Stairs Lounge, Stewart vividly remembers what the Up Stairs Lounge looked like and the role it played in the community before the fire. He witnessed the horror of seeing his friend, MCC Reverend Bill Larson, burn to death as he tried to escape through a window. Grieving was extra difficult for people like Stewart, since many were forced to stay "in the closet", fearing loss of their job or home. They were not able to grieve openly. Over 80 years old, he is still an active leader in the New Orleans LGBT community.

Kevin Coakley: The Godson of the Up Stairs Lounge owner, Phil Esteve. Kevin saw first hand the effect the fire had on Phil and how it bankrupted and nearly destroyed him. He is a fourth generation New Orleanian and is a Sergeant with the New Orleans Police Department, proudly serving the city for nearly 20 years.

Clayton Delery-Edwards: Born in New Orleans, Clayton Delery-Edwards has a B.A. and an M.A. in English from the University of Louisiana, Lafayette, as well as a Ph.D. from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. His book, "The Up Stairs Lounge Arson", was published in 2014. It was named Book of the Year by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, was a finalist for a Lambda Literary Award in LGBT Nonfiction, and was named one of eighteen "must-read" Books by The Advocate. For 5 years, he thoroughly researched the topic, conducted interviews and is now considered an expert on the facts surrounding the fire.

Clancy DuBos: A cub reporter at the time for the Times-Picayune newspaper, the Up Stairs Fire had a permanent impact on his life. As an up close witness to the gory mayhem outside the bar and the triage of victims in the Emergency Room at Charity Hospital, his articles about the fire paint a graphic and startling picture of the horrific fire and are frequently cited by scholars. The fire and the callous, homophobic reactions by the community completely altered the way he viewed the gay community. This was the first time he ever "saw gays as real people".

Francis Dufrene: A regular of the Up Stairs Lounge, 21 year old Dufrene was in the bar with his date, the night flames burst into the bar. He is one of the only survivors to escape through the windows. After jumping from the 2nd story window, he blacked out and was transported to the hospital. He suffered 3rd degree burns on his face and arms. Even today, scars are visible. His date was one of his many friends that died in the fire. Up until the 40th anniversary of the fire, he chose not to talk to anybody about the tragedy. He is another survivor who agreed to provide ***UPSTAIRS INFERNO*** with an exclusive on-camera interview.

Ricky Everett: A regular at the Up Stairs Lounge, Ricky often performed in the popular stage productions ("Nelly Dramas") held at the bar. He was also a founding member of the New Orleans Chapter of the Metropolitan Community Church. He was in the bar as flames rushed in. He remembers the details vividly and praises God for saving him. He methodically explains how the bar manager/bartender, Buddy Rasmussen led him and a handful of others through the panic and flames to an exit behind the stage, which led to the roof. Not seeing his friend on the roof, Ricky went back into the bar to look for him. He went back into the inferno with MCC Associate Pastor Mitch Mitchell, who was looking for his partner. Only Ricky made it back out.

Morris Kight: Based out of Los Angeles, Morris Kight was one of the architects of the modern gay rights movement, spearheading a non-violent movement for social reform. A brilliant public relations strategist, he forced gay issues into the mainstream media when there was minimal coverage--most of it quite negative. This skill set was extremely valuable after the Up Stairs fire. He traveled to New Orleans with his good friend, Reverend Troy Perry and three other gay activists and MCC ministers to help mobilize the community, set up the National New Orleans Memorial Fund and hold the police and press accountable for their homophobic responses to the tragedy. While he passed away in 2003, a cassette tape containing an interview of Morris candidly detailing their experience in New Orleans was recently discovered. ***UPSTAIRS INFERNO*** was given exclusive rights to the audio.

Henry Kubicki: A founding member of MCC New Orleans, Henry Kubicki witnessed the congregation grow. He supported the founding Reverend's decision to hold church services at the Up Stairs Lounge, in the room that housed the stage. Henry considered the members of MCC and people at the Up Stairs Lounge as his "family", since he had been rejected by his own family. He suffered Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome after losing so many members of his "family" to the fire. As one of the people deeply hurt by the unsympathetic and homophobic reactions to the fire, he was forced to endure popular cruel jokes such as "What do you bury the ashes of queers in? Fruit jars." Henry details what it was like living in New Orleans under those suppressive conditions. He firmly believes the true "hate crimes" related to the fire include the churches' refusals to hold funerals for the victims, families refusing to claim their loved one's bodies and the city and state leader's failure to acknowledge the huge loss of life. To this day, memories of the fire and its aftermath bring him to tears, over 40 years later.

Ronnie Lebouef: Nineteen years old at the time, Lebouef was a brand new photographer at the local newspaper, the *Times-Picayune*. He was one of the first people at the scene of the fire. He immediately began snapping photographs, ultimately capturing the iconic and horrifying images that made headlines across the country. This includes the photo of Reverend Bill Larson's charred, lifeless body wedged in the Up Stairs Lounge window, a victim (Luther Boggs) on a stretcher with "skin dripping off like wax" and bartender "Rusty" Linn Quinton staring up at the fire with tears of horror in his eyes.

John Meyers: Not everyone in the gay community was happy that Reverend Troy Perry and his group of ministers and activists traveled to New Orleans to organize memorials, hold press conferences and talk to the media. Meyers is one of several business owners who referred to them as "fairy carpet baggers". He and Troy engaged in a very heated confrontation. To this day, Meyers resents their actions.

New Orleans District Chief Chris Mickel: At 18 years old, Mickel was a volunteer for the Red Cross, actively participating in their Fire Watch Program. He often assisted at fire scenes. He arrived at the Up Stairs Lounge fire when the building was still in full blaze. He assisted with first aid and canteen services for the fireman. He then helped the firemen with the difficult task of separating the charred bodies, putting them in body-bags and transporting them to the coroner's unit. This fire was one of several major fires that compelled him to pursue a career as a firefighter. As someone who worked closely with the firefighters on the scene, Mickel brings an insider's point of view from the perspective of the first responders.

Duane Mitchell: Son of Metropolitan Community Church Associate Pastor, "Mitch" Mitchell. Mitch initially escaped the inferno through the back door, but he rushed back into the bar to rescue his partner, Horace Broussard. They both perished in the fire. Their bodies were found next to each other. He considers his Dad a hero, not only for risking his life to save his partner, but for living his life working for what he believed in: LGBT equality. Only 11 years old at the time, Duane and his younger brother Dane were visiting their Dad in New Orleans. Mitch and Horace dropped them off at the movies, but they never returned to pick them up. To this day, Duane feels his Dad was "murdered" and the murderer robbed him and his childhood. He does not forgive the Mayor, city and state officials or religious leaders of the time for "sweeping this under the rug". He holds the city responsible for the fire and feels the victims' families should be compensated.

Mike Moreau: A long time resident of New Orleans, Mike had been on the receiving end of the homophobic attitudes of New Orleans police before. He had experienced several bar raids. Mike lost one of his best friends in the fire, Skip Getchell. However, like Stewart Butler and many others in the gay community, Mike was forced to grieve in private, fearing he would be outed if he talked about the fire. He was even too frightened to attend any of the memorials.

Frank Perez: As an expert in New Orleans history, specializing in LGBT History, Perez is the author of two books, "In Exile: The History and Lore Surrounding New Orleans Gay Culture and its Oldest Bar" and "Treasures of the Vieux Carre". He is a former college professor, with a B.S. in Criminal Justice and M.A. in English. He is a licensed tour guide in New Orleans and writes a weekly history column for the local LGBT newspaper, *Ambush Magazine*. Perez organized all the events related to the 40th Anniversary Memorial held in 2013. This included lectures, a funeral procession through the French Quarter (complete with horse drawn hearse), a second line march and a "Celebration of Life" reception.

Reverend Elder Troy Perry: Perry founded the Metropolitan Community Church, a Christian denomination with a special affirming ministry with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, in Los Angeles in 1968. Other MCC Churches began forming around the country, including in New Orleans. After learning about the fire, Perry assembled a team of MCC ministers and gay activists to travel to New Orleans to help minister to the injured, perform funerals and hold city and government officials accountable for the investigation and homophobic remarks. He also organized and presided over the two memorials.

Reverend Bill Richardson: Rector of St. George's Episcopal Church in New Orleans at the time of the fire, Richardson was an LGBT ally from the start of his career. He opened the doors to the chapel at St. George's (rent free) to the fledgling New Orleans chapter of the Metropolitan Community Church, as an alternative to the 3rd room at the Up Stairs Lounge as a place of worship. This was instrumental to the MCC congregation. It allowed them to save money for their own house of worship. The day after the fire, Richardson once again opened the doors of the chapel for a small memorial service. This decision was heavily chastised by his vestry and Archbishop. They were upset that the Episcopal Church had been used for a memorial service for "those people". Richardson was very upset that the congregation was acting this way, in what he considered "a non-Christian way entirely". He threatened to resign, saying "If I can't be a Christian and try to do what I think is right to help people, I'm just gonna leave St. George's." Richardson was one of only two clergy in the entire city that didn't turn their backs to the grieving community. All other churches refused to open their doors for funerals. While Richardson passed away in 1995, an audio tape was recently discovered at St. George's containing an interview about the Up Stairs Lounge fire. ***UPSTAIRS INFERNO*** was granted exclusive access to this audio.

Johnny Townsend: With 25 years of research behind him, Townsend is considered the first "expert" on the topic of the Up Stairs Lounge fire. He wrote the leading publication about the fire, its victims and the aftermath, entitled "Let the Faggots Burn". Feeling a sense of urgency to record this story before too many people were lost to AIDS and age, Townsend began writing the book in 1989. Many of the people he interviewed have since passed away. Without Townsend's diligence and devotion, many details would've been lost forever. No one will have the access to the survivors and levels of information like he had. This includes the last interview given by Buddy Rasmussen, the bartender considered a hero for leading many survivors out a back door to escape the fire. Townsend's tremendous foresight and tenacious research put a face on this tragedy at a time when few people would talk about it. He frequently lectures about the fire at universities across the country.

Jamie Warren: Grandson to the only woman to lose her life in the fire, Inez Warren, he is also the nephew of Eddie and James Warren, two more victims of the fire. His family was devastated at the loss of three members of their family and resented the fact that the Mayor, Police Chief, Governor or religious leaders wouldn't acknowledge the fire or even offer cursory condolences.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SCREENING: Invited to screen in February 2017

JURY AWARD: HONORABLE MENTION, Frameline: the San Francisco Int'l LGBTQ Film Festival

JURY AWARD: BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE FILM, Seattle Lesbian and Gay Film Festival

JURY AWARD: BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE AWARD, Long Beach QFilm Festival

SPOTLIGHT FILM, FilmOut San Diego

JURY AWARD: BEST DOCUMENTARY AWARD, FilmOut San Diego

PROGRAMMING AWARD: FREEDOM AWARD, FilmOut San Diego

AUDIENCE AWARD: BEST DOCUMENTARY, FilmOut San Diego

CLOSING NIGHT FILM, North Carolina Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

JURY AWARD: BEST MEN'S DOCUMENTARY FEATURE, North Carolina Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

AUDIENCE AWARD: BEST MEN'S FEATURE, North Carolina Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

AUDIENCE AWARD: FAVORITE DOCUMENTARY, North Louisiana Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

JURY AWARD: FAVORITE FEATURE, Pride Film Festival, Bryan/College Station LGBT Film Festival

JURY AWARD: BEST SOUTHERN FILM AWARD, Kaleidoscope: Little Rock Int'l LGBT Film Festival

AUDIENCE AWARD: BEST DOCUMENTARY, Outflix: Memphis International LGBTQ Film Festival

GRAND JURY PRIZE, QFest International LGBT Film Festival: San Antonio

JURY AWARD: BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE FILM, QFest Int' LGBT Film Festival: San Antonio

CENTERPIECE DOCUMENTARY, Reeling: Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival

CENTERPIECE FILM, Fresno Reel Pride

OPENING NIGHT FILM, OutReels Cincinnati Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

QUEEN CITY AWARD, OutReels Cincinnati Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

BEST OF THE FEST: FEATURE DOCUMENTARY, South Texas Underground Film Festival

JURY AWARD: FILM HEALS AWARD, Manhattan Film Festival

FILM FESTIVAL FAVORITE, Cinema Diverse: The Palm Springs LGBTQ Film Festival

FILM FESTIVAL FAVORITE, Out on Film, Atlanta's LGBTQ Film Festival

JURY AWARD: BEST DIRECTOR, FEAT. DOCUMENTARY, GLITTER: Oklahoma LGBT Film Festival

NOMINATED: JURY AWARD: BEST DOCUMENTARY, GLITTER: Oklahoma LGBT Film Festival

NOMINATED: JURY AWARD: BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE AWARD, Kansas Int'l Film Festival

HONORARY MEDALLION: CITIZEN COIN, Presented by Louisiana State Fire Marshal, Butch Browning at World Premiere in New Orleans: June 24, 2015

OFFICIAL SELECTIONS

North Carolina Gay and Lesbian Film Festival - Raleigh-Durham, NC (2015)

Long Beach QFilm Festival - Long Beach, CA (2015)

CinemaDiverse: The Palm Springs LGBTQ Film Festival - Palm Springs, CA (2015)

North Louisiana Gay and Lesbian Film Festival - Shreveport, LA (2015)

Out on Film - Atlanta, GA (2015)

Portland Queer Film Festival - Portland, OR (2015)

ImageOut: The Rochester LGBT Film & Video Festival - Rochester, NY (2015)

Seattle Lesbian and Gay Film Festival - Seattle, WA (2015)

Austin Film Festival - Austin, TX (2015)

Columbus Film + Video Festival - Columbus, OH (2015)

OutReels Cincinnati - Cincinnati, OH (2015)

Out at the Movies - Winston-Salem, NC (2015)

Pride Film Festival - Bryan/College Station, TX (2016)

TampaBay Int'l Gay and Lesbian Film Festival Monthly Series - Tampa, FL (2016)

OUTVIEW - Athens Int'l Gay and Lesbian Film Festival - Athens, Greece (2016)

Julien Dubuque Int'l Film Festival - Dubuque, IA (2016)

QFest St. Louis - St. Louis, MO (2016)

Emerge Film Festival - Lewiston/Auburn, ME (2016)

MiFo LGBT Film Festival - Miami, FL (2016)

FilmOut San Diego - San Diego, CA (2016)

Frameline: The San Francisco Int'l LGBTQ Film Festival - San Francisco, CA (2016)

QCinema: Fort Worth's Gay and Lesbian Int'l Film Festival - Fort Worth, TX (2016)

QFest: The Houston Int'l LGBTQ Film Festival - Houston, TX (2016)

SAFilm: San Antonio Film Festival - San Antonio, TX (2016)

GAZE: Int'l LGBT Film Festival Dublin - Dublin, Ireland (2016)

Rhode Island Int'l Film Festival - Providence, RI (2016)

Kaleidoscope: The Little Rock LGBT Film Festival - Little Rock, AK (2016)

DOCUTAH - Southern Utah Int'l Documentary Film Festival - St. George, UT (2016)

Outflix Film Festival - Memphis, TN (2016)

Fresno Reel Pride - Fresno, CA (2016)

Reeling: Chicago Int'l LGBTQ+ Film Festival - Chicago, IL (2016)

Out Film CT Monthly Series - Hartford, CT (2016)

QFest: International Film Festival: San Antonio - San Antonio, TX (2016)

Bay County LGBTQ Film Festival - Panama City, FL (2016)

Kansas International Film Festival - Kansas City, MO (2016)

South Texas Underground Film Festival - Corpus Christi, TX (2016)

Reelout Queer Film + Video Festival - Kingston, Ontario (2017)

Queer Screen's Mardi Gras Film Festival - Sydney, Australia (2017)

Manhattan Film Festival - New York, NY (2017)

GLITTER: Oklahoma LGBT Film Festival - McAlester, OK (2017)

REVIEWS

Named one of the ten "Best Bets" for Frameline40 — **SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE**

"[Upstairs Inferno] echoes of Spike Lee's [Oscar nominated] civil rights film '4 Little Girls'"
— **SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE**

Named one of the ten best films at the 2015 Austin Film Festival — **AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN**

"Camina crafts an eloquent story of family and faith, of hope and horror, of friends and the forgotten." 4 (out of 5) stars — **UNITE CINCINNATI MAGAZINE**

"The film's characters offer affecting glimpses of another era of LGBT life, making the film a rewarding and sometimes harrowing viewing experience." — **THE TEXAS OBSERVER**

"Like so much of our history, 'Upstairs Inferno' evokes anger and tears, and determination."
3 (out of 4) stars — **GEORGIA VOICE**

"As shown in this must-see documentary, the pain from this ordeal is just as raw and intense as if the horror was being experienced in real time. Our community needs to know about this event. Events like these remind us of where we've been so that we can do everything in our collective power to not have to experience it again. Random acts of violent will always continue to occur, but hopefully people will never feel compelled to look the other way again...Go see this film. Grade: A." — **FOCUS MID SOUTH MAGAZINE**

"a painful, yet beautiful vignette....director Robert Camina concocts an investigatory documentary with a needed dosage of American queer history". 4 (out of 5) stars
— **EXAMINER. COM**

"'Upstairs Inferno' is an enraging documentary from Texas filmmaker Robert L. Camina, and it should be seen by anyone who isn't familiar with the numerous struggles for civil rights during from the 1950s through the 1970s and beyond." — **AUSTIN360**

"With a poet's compassion and a muckraker's tenacity, director Robert L. Camina tells the story of lives lost and a community forever changed." — **JOSH PRETE, IMAGEOUT**

"There are films that you know you need to watch, that it's important for our soul and growth to bear witness to, but when those films include such sorrow as this, it's hard to stay focused. With the patience and love dedicated to telling this story, Camina serves as a beacon of light. Only through his eyes could the story of sorrow be mixed with such hope. This film is an example of how we must look past the horrible and be the change we deserve in the community, preventing anything like this from happening" — **AUSTIN FUSION MAGAZINE**

"By the time credits roll, no matter what's your background, it's impossible to not empathize with these people's devastating losses, yet it's infuriating to learn how back in the day the significance of their death was barely acknowledged." — **GAY ESSENTIAL**

"UPSTAIRS INFERNO will sear your heart" — **FOCUS MID SOUTH MAGAZINE**

"'Upstairs Inferno' does more in 90 minutes to elicit empathy for a community of people than the city of New Orleans did in 40 years...If there is one antidote to deliver to my friends who think without compassion, it might be 'Upstairs Inferno', or nothing at all." 4.5 (out of 5) stars.
— **BILL ARCENEUX, CRITICAL N.O.**

Named one of the five "Best Bets" for Reeling 2016 — **TIMEOUT CHICAGO**

*"**UPSTAIRS INFERNO** isn't just compelling viewing for its journalistic competence and historical value, but most importantly it's essential viewing for its social value, showcasing how far we've come and still have yet to come and eventually proving that somewhere out there it's always possible to find loving, compassionate people that will see past our differences."*
— **GAY ESSENTIAL**

*"**UPSTAIRS INFERNO**: a historical horror made cathartic"* — **MYGAYTORONTO.COM**

"As a tribute to the lives lost, Upstairs Inferno reminds us of both the crimes committed against LGBT activists [at Pulse and the Up Stairs Lounge] and the strength of a community facing hatred." — **FBI RADIO (SYDNEY)**

*"[**UPSTAIRS INFERNO** is a] compelling account of a shameful, gut-wrenching episode in history."* 4 (out of 4) stars — **CITY HUB NEWSPAPER**

*"[**UPSTAIRS INFERNO**] excels in its handling of eyewitness and survivor interviews. Only a heartless soul could hold back tears...[This film] is extremely affecting and filled with important lessons of banding together, organizing resistance and never giving up."* — **BOY CULTURE**

*"What **UPSTAIRS INFERNO** does so brilliantly is provide not just a history, but also a historical positioning and places human faces on the tragedy...Never has a time and place, particularly a gay time and place, been brought to life so vibrantly."* 4 (out of 5) stars
— **MYGAYTORONTO.COM**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Tim Chase and Eric Powell
Kevin Coakley
Phillip Lege
John D. Pafford
Grey Sample
Shep Sheppard
Zachary Spencer

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

Scott Baugh
Scott M. Dwyer
Gary Gansle
David Golden
Brian Long
Johnny Townsend

SCORE COMPOSERS

Michael Austin
Stoyan Ganey
Mark Kueffner
Ric Mills
Paul Ritchings

FEATURING:

"UPSTAIRS INFERNO"

Written, composed and performed by Rachel Panay
Recorded, edited and mastered by
Blake Athen at Human Factor Productions
© 2014 Music Moves Mountains Publishing
(Administered by The Royalty Network)

"ALL THINGS END"

From the album entitled "Between Green and Blue"
By David Helpling
www.spottedpeccary.com