

PRESS KIT

HAZEL WOOD PICTURES PRESENTS

THE **OTHER SIDE** OF AIDS



a film by Robin Scovill

HAZEL WOOD PICTURES PRESENTS **THE OTHER SIDE OF AIDS**
MUSIC BY **FOO FIGHTERS** **WARM WIRES** ORIGINAL SCORE BY **b. MOSSMAN**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **ROBERT LEPPA** PRODUCER **ERIC E. PAULSON**
WRITTEN, PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY **ROBIN SCOVILL**

TRT – 86:30



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SYNOPSIS

LOG LINE

Take an unflinching look into an issue the mainstream media doesn't dare touch: the failure of the multi billion-dollar war on AIDS.

SYNOPSIS

Take an unflinching look into an issue the mainstream media doesn't dare touch: the failure of the multi billion-dollar war on AIDS. **THE OTHER SIDE OF AIDS** gives voice to a growing movement of doctors, scientists, journalists, and HIV positives who reveal a tangled web of conflicts of interest, political correctness and unresolved errors surrounding AIDS.

After 20 years and more than \$150 billion in federally funded research, scientists still can't explain how HIV causes AIDS. Millions of people have been declared HIV-positive with tests that can't find the actual virus. The latest AIDS medications are taking more lives than AIDS itself. One expert proposes that the cause and cure for AIDS is as near at hand as our willingness to examine new ideas. Yet according to a prominent AIDS researcher, anyone questioning HIV is a perpetrator of death and should be jailed. Should AIDS advocates have the power to silence scientific debate? Has saving face become more important than saving lives? Watch **THE OTHER SIDE OF AIDS** and decide for yourself.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS



ROBIN SCOVILL – WRITER, PRODUCER, DIRECTOR

Robin Scovill attended CalArts where he studied writing and directing with Alexander Mackendrick. His first film, LA VERGINE DEGLI ANGELI, debuted at Sundance and went on to win numerous awards including Best of the Fest at the Seattle International Film Festival and the Audience Award at the Aspen Film Festival. In 2004, he completed his documentary THE OTHER SIDE OF AIDS. He has conceived and directed numerous live performances and music videos for such artists as Foo Fighters, No Doubt, White Stripes and Sheryl Crow. Other directing credits include QUESTIONING AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA, FALL AWAY, and LA CLAVADISTA.

Scovill lives in Los Angeles with his wife Christine Maggiore, the HIV positive AIDS activist and author who inspired this film, and their two children.

ERIC E. PAULSON – PRODUCER

Eric Paulson's production experience includes such films as THAT THING YOU DO!, SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS, and the HBO mini-series FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON. In 1998, Paulson joined Tom Hanks and Gary Goetzman at their film, television and record entity, The Playtone Company. Recently, he served as Production Manager on Playtone's AIDS tribute THE MAKING OF: WHAT'S GOING ON and was the Production Associate on the feature film MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING. Paulson is also pursuing a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology in addition to having produced the controversial documentary THE OTHER SIDE OF AIDS.



ROBERT LEPPA – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Robert Leppo is a San Francisco based venture capitalist, whose focus is on start-up and early stage ventures across a wide variety of industries. He was an early lead investor in Advent Software and ValueClick, as well as Best Internet (acquired by Verio) and OnPrem (acquired by Copper Mountain). Currently, he runs The Byzantine Forum as a benefit to the companies in his investment portfolio and accredited private investors interested in seeking out good early stage investment opportunities.

Leppo has an abiding interest in Libertarian philosophy, history and political science. He is also deeply involved in researching new medical protocols and alternative therapies, many of which are AIDS related.



FILM CREDITS

Written, Produced and Directed by
Robin Scovill

Producer
Eric E. Paulson

Executive Producer
Robert Leppo

Original Score by
b. Mossman

Featuring

Jeff Acuña
Edward Auger
Reggie Bielamowicz
Mark Conlan
Robert Da Prato
Kris Doe
Paul Doe
Rachel Doe
Wanda Doe
Peter Duesberg
Michael Ellner
Charles Farthing
David Fink
Robert Gallo
Charles Gesheker
Dave Grohl
Taylor Hawkins
Margaret Heckler
Neville Hodgkinson
Jeffrey Kishman
Richard MacIntyre
Darren John Main
Christine Maggiore
Nate Mendel
Kary Mullis

Hazel Wood Pictures Presents

THE OTHER SIDE OF AIDS



Paul Philpott
Douglas Piburn
Rex Poindexter
Leonardo Ramirez
David Rasnick
Nicholas Regush
Rodney Richards
Chris Shiflett
Mervyn Silverman
Frank Sontag
David Tyson
Faye Tyson
Felix Tyson
Kathleen Tyson
Mark Wainberg
Winstone Zulu

Music by
Foo Fighters
Warm Wires

Sound Mixer
Scott Greiner

Post Production Supervisor
Steven Dunning

“Stacked Actors” & “Learn To Fly”
Performed by Foo Fighters
Courtesy of Roswell Records
RCA Records BMG 1999
www.FooFighters.com

“Join Life”
Performed by Warm Wires
Courtesy of Two Ton Santa Records
Smooth Toothless Bite Music, BMI, 2002
www.TwoTonSanta.com
www.WarmWires.com

Hazel Wood Pictures Presents

THE OTHER SIDE OF AIDS



Special Thanks To

Steven Allen
Kim Marie Bannon
Ken Bell
Michael Bellefontaine
David Bushell
Alex Capehart
Timothy Gruver
Patty Heffley
George Langworthy
John Lauritsen
Bob Leppo
Richard Lucas
Frank Lusardi
Christine Maggiore
Nate Mendel
Brad Mossman
Jason Nusbaum
David Pasquarelli
Douglas Piburn
Paul Philpott
Jonathan Schuman
Callie Simpson
Eric Simpson
Rick Sinclair
Andy Swenson
Jasper Trout
Eric White

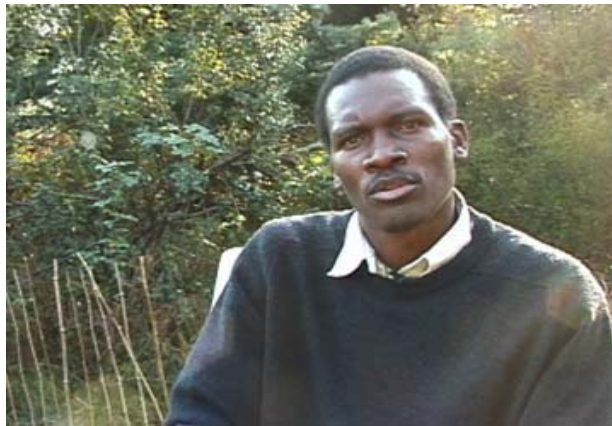


FEATURED PARTICIPANTS



CHRISTINE MAGGIORE

Christine Maggiore was diagnosed HIV positive in 1992. After becoming a public speaker and AIDS educator, she questioned AIDS authorities, engaged in exhaustive research and refused AIDS drugs. She has lived in health for over a decade, marrying and having two healthy children with the film's director Robin Scovill. Maggiore is the founder of Alive & Well AIDS Alternatives and the author of "What if everything you thought you knew about AIDS was wrong?"



WINSTON ZULU

Zambian AIDS activist Winston Zulu, tested positive in 1990. He quickly rose to acclaim as an international AIDS advocate. When it was discovered that Zulu and his wife, both healthy despite their diagnosis, did not take medication and had a healthy, HIV negative child without the benefit of AZT, he was forced to resign his position within the organization. When he agreed to begin taking AIDS drugs, he was reinstated.



KRIS DOE

After testing positive during her fifth month of pregnancy, Kris Doe agreed to begin an AZT regimen. Shortly after her daughter Rachel's birth, she stopped treatment because of severe jaundice and ensuing liver damage. Doe and her family were convinced that Rachel's developmental problems were due to the AZT. Shortly after the film's completion, Doe died of liver failure.

NEVILLE HODGEKINSON

As the Science and Medical Correspondent for the London Sunday Times from 1985-1995, Hodgekinson wrote meticulously researched pieces about HIV and AIDS. For many years he concurred with mainstream AIDS research but after coming across alternative information to the HIV/AIDS hypothesis, he began to question the status quo.

DAVID RASNICK, PH.D.

David Rasnick is the renowned researcher and chemist who designed protease inhibitors. He came out as an AIDS dissident in 1996 after his research revealed that HIV in itself did not appear to be a functional virus.

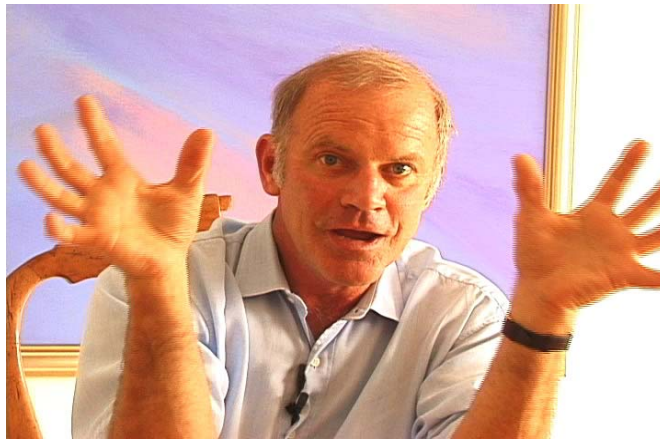
RODNEY RICHARDS, PH.D.

After years of experience developing diagnostic technologies, Rodney Richards, collaborated with Abbot Laboratories to develop the now commonly used HIV ELISA and p24 antigen tests. Richard's research concluded that HIV tests are unable to diagnose HIV infection.



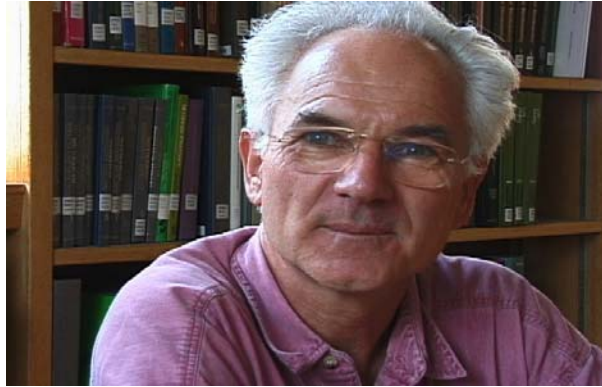
CHARLES FARTHING, M.D.

Charles Farthing serves as the Medical Director of AIDS Healthcare Foundation, the world's largest and fastest growing AIDS treatment advocacy organization. AHF's Treatment = Life campaign is used worldwide. Dr. Farthing maintains a practice in infectious disease at Cedars Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles.



KARY MULLIS, PH.D.

Mullis is the 1993 winner of the Nobel Prize for chemistry for his invention of PCR, the revolutionary DNA amplification process. Despite his research backed assertions that PCR cannot detect or diagnose viral infection, PCR has become the cornerstone of the HIV viral load theory. Mullis is Vice President and Director of Molecular Biology at Burstein Technologies.

**PETER DUESBERG, PH.D.**

A Nobel Prize nominee for his discovery of oncogenes and pioneer in the field of retroviruses, Peter Duesberg has become the best known of the AIDS dissidents. He was asked to write the now infamous article on the HIV retrovirus for a highly regarded scientific journal. When the piece was published with Duesberg's hypothesis that in regard to its standing as a retrovirus, HIV would not necessarily advance to AIDS, the effect was cataclysmic. Duesberg, who had been an acclaimed scientist prior to publication, was now decried as a fraud. He lost his funding and his lab. Duesberg has not backed away from his theory and his most recent cancer research has inspired talk of another Nobel Prize nomination. He is a tenured professor at the UC Berkeley.

**KATHLEEN TYSON**

A full-time mother of two, Kathleen Tyson tested positive in 1997 and does not take AIDS medications. Her husband has continued to test negative and both of her children were born healthy and HIV negative. She briefly lost custody of her youngest child, Felix, when she and her husband refused to give him AZT. Despite Felix's HIV negative status, Tyson was forced by a court order and threat of vacating her parental rights, to give him the medication. Tyson, who remains healthy, lends support to other HIV positive women who refuse drug treatments.



MARK WAINBERG, PH.D.

Mark Wainberg is a leading researcher for AIDS technologies, and the first scientist to test the drug 3TC as a potential AIDS treatment. He holds several drug patents and has worked with GlaxoSmithKlein, Bristol-Myers Squibb and Boehringer-Ingelheim to develop new drug protocols.. Wainberg is a professor at McGill University's AIDS Center in Montreal, Canada. He is also a past president of the International AIDS Society.



INTERVIEW WITH WRITER & DIRECTOR, ROBIN SCOVILL

Q: You're married to an HIV positive activist/dissident, so you're in an interesting position to make this film. Do you feel you were able to achieve a balance, some degree of objectivity?

A: Being so intimate with Christine and her work is actually what helped me to arrive at the balance and objectivity that I feel and am told the film achieves.

The question of balance is always interesting to me since we rarely see a “mainstream” presentation on AIDS that attempts to provide a balanced view on the subject. One of the goals of The Other Side of AIDS is to offer a counterbalance to the 20-year monologue on AIDS and open some real discussion.

Q: Did you find yourself ever giving in to the impulse to impose a personal perspective and propagandize a bit?

A: I'm married to a healthy HIV positive woman who lives a normal life and doesn't take any AIDS drugs. We've conceived two healthy children together which seems to go against conventional rules, so naturally I have a personal perspective on this issue. Despite our experiences, I don't believe I impose anything in the film, but rather present a side of AIDS to which most people have never been exposed. The objective is to shed light on many biased aspects of mainstream AIDS information. My film is not instructional; it allows people to make up their own minds on the issues.

Q: You've been criticized for not having enough mainstream AIDS researchers in the film and the three you do have fall into the stereotypes of clueless bureaucrat and one-note demagogue. How did you decide who would represent the AIDS establishment in the film?

A: The AIDS establishment made the decision for me on who would represent their side. We invited many AIDS experts to participate and all of them refused except for the ones you see in the film. This is not a unique situation. When my wife has been scheduled to appear on television or radio programs, the producers almost always try to find a mainstream AIDS expert to oppose her but so far, no one has agreed to engage in direct dialogue. ABC News, NBC News, CNN and other networks have found that this is considered a forbidden topic in the AIDS community.

This notion of mainstream AIDS researchers is also worth discussing. Everyone in my film, including those raising questions about HIV is a vital part of the mainstream. Kary Mullis won a Nobel Prize for his invention of PCR, one of the most widely used technologies in genetics. He's also the V.P. and Director of Molecular Biology at Burstein Technologies.



Peter Duesberg was a Nobel candidate for his discovery of oncogenes and is a pioneer in the field of retroviruses, of which HIV is one. He is also a member of the National Academy of Sciences, is a recipient of the prestigious Outstanding Investigator Grant from the National Institutes of Health, was named California Scientist of the Year and is a tenured professor at UC Berkeley. Again, all very mainstream.

Rodney Richards is a founding scientist of AmGen Labs, one of the largest and most highly regarded diagnostic/pharmaceutical companies in the world and designed the very first HIV test. David Rasnick holds several patents on protease inhibitors, the type of drugs used to treat people diagnosed HIV positive.

It's unfortunate how mainstream scientists who challenge entrenched ideas on AIDS are marginalized by their peers and portrayed as outcasts by the media. The real innovations in science and medicine always come from experts thinking outside the box.

Q: The controversial notion of gay promiscuity in the 1970s as a probable cause of AIDS comes up several times in the film. How do you defend a theory that appears to both blame the victim and smack of homophobia?

A: The discussion of sexual practices comes up in the film as part of a look at gay liberation. It was a unique period in history in which certain portions of gay men were defining themselves by their ability to have as much anonymous and often times, drug fueled sex as possible. These facts are brought up and discussed in the film by gay historians, gay medical professionals and gay men who lived through those times. It's a well-known fact that the first AIDS cases in this country were among gay men who had an average of 1,120 lifetime sexual partners. As a result of such intense sexual contact, they were contracting a great number of viruses, microbes, amoebas and parasites, were treated with immune damaging prescription drugs and as the gay spokespersons in the film point out, they also used unprecedented amounts and combinations of recreational drugs. All these factors combined to create serious damage to their immune systems. This is part of medical and historical fact. I think the real controversy is not in illuminating this period and these practices, but in the desire to revise or deny these facts.

When it comes to AIDS, I think people confuse honesty on the topic of health risks with blaming the victim. Any effort to understand a problem relies on an honest appraisal of all relevant facts. If anything, the people discussed in the film were victims of a lack of understanding and information on the potential effects of their celebratory activities.

Q: How does the idea of sexual promiscuity and drug use square with AIDS in Africa, where the genesis of the disease appears to be radically different?

A: AIDS in Africa is entirely different from what we call AIDS in the developed world. Here in the states, AIDS predominately occurs among men. Those who self



identify as men having sex with men or as men using IV drugs make up over 80% of AIDS cases here. In Africa we're told that AIDS is a heterosexual epidemic affecting largely women and children. The circumstances and criteria for diagnosing and counting AIDS are entirely different in Africa than they are in the US and are confounded by simultaneous epidemics of poverty, TB, malaria and other illnesses as well as problems of widespread malnutrition and unsafe water. I put forth some of these facts in my film "Questioning AIDS in South Africa."

There is also a collection of literature calling into question the estimates for Africa that we assume represent real AIDS cases but an investigation into what is really happening in Africa reveals that predictions for the demise of many African nations have gone unfulfilled. For example, Uganda, once considered the epicenter of AIDS is currently flourishing, experiencing what social scientists and economic experts characterize as a renaissance. Botswana, the first nation predicted to become extinct from AIDS has today one of the fastest growing populations on the African continent. Interestingly, both countries have reversed or erased their alleged AIDS epidemics without evidence of changed sexual behaviors and without the importation of AIDS drugs.

Q: What about the rise of HIV diagnoses in Hispanic and African American heterosexual populations in the U.S?

A: Although uncritical news sources contend that there is a rise in HIV diagnoses in Hispanic and African American heterosexual populations, the data to support this is highly questionable. Claims are usually based on small sample groups, things like street corner surveys and in some cases preferential use of statistics. It's important to note that the overall totals for HIV in the US haven't changed in eight years. The same estimate of between 650,000 and 900,000 HIV positive Americans has been used since 1996 to say HIV is on the rise.

Q: The film glosses over the issue of safe sex. Where does that concept stand within the theory that HIV doesn't cause AIDS?

A: I don't think it's a prerequisite for a film on AIDS to address the safe sex issue. As a father, I'm very concerned that people protect against unwanted pregnancies; I know it takes a lot of love and care and commitment to raise children. As a responsible adult, I think it's wise to protect oneself against sexually transmitted diseases as an overall part of good health practices. At the same time I didn't feel it was necessary to reiterate the safe sex message in this film because it isn't a "how to" film. Safe sex has been so deeply embedded into global pop culture that I didn't feel the need to repeat it.

Q: Kary Mullis and Rodney Richards both developed systems that are now used as established AIDS protocols, yet they are highly critical of these "standards" of use. Their opposition hasn't seemed to land them in the same category as Peter Duesberg, who has been savaged. Why is that?



A: Peter Duesberg's fame or infamy may be due to the fact that his original paper challenging HIV as the cause of AIDS slipped through the official radar and ended up in a mainstream scientific journal. Censors didn't catch on to him until after his critique was published, and then all hell broke loose. My wife has a copy of an alert sent from the Department of Health and Human Services to various government agencies that shows the fear and furor caused by his article and the effort to exert spin-control. The attack on Duesberg was swift and merciless. He lost his grants, his funding, his lab, his stature in the scientific community, his ability to publish, to attend professional conferences and more. This sent a clear message that would make any other professional think twice about speaking up on the AIDS issue.

Although detractors often characterize Duesberg as a trouble-maker, he was actually asked to write his famous paper. Since retroviruses had been exonerated as a cause of cancer it made sense that Duesberg would write about HIV. With his vast knowledge and research on the subject, the only thing Duesberg could honestly report was that HIV as a cause of AIDS didn't add up.

Q: Much is made of the influence of drug companies on the AIDS dialogue. Did you find this concerned anyone in the AIDS establishment that you spoke with?

A: Although the pharmaceutical industry and the AIDS industry are almost synonymous, I met only a few people that were bothered by drug company influence.

Q: Did you run into researchers who found the theory that HIV may not cause AIDS of interest but refused to speak on record?

A: In the five years of research for both my films on AIDS, I've come in contact with a number of medical doctors and researchers who felt that the HIV theory was wrong, but who couldn't risk their practices or positions by speaking out publicly. After Duesberg, a very clear message was sent about what happens to dissenters on this subject.

When Thabo Mbeki, the president of South Africa convened an AIDS panel to address the AIDS crisis in his country and included Peter Duesberg, David Rasnick and other experts with opposing views on AIDS, he was attacked in the media, called a murderer, a fool and worse. Nearly five years later he is still vilified in the world media although he was recently re-elected with more than 70% of the popular vote.

Q: ACT UP has denounced the film. Why would an organization that was once deemed radical, close itself off from any new theories and take such issue with AIDS dissidence?

A: From what I understand, a few of the old guard members of ACT UP New York threatened to shut down a screening of my film at the NewFest in New York City but did not follow through.



I've noticed a number of people and groups that are normally radical or at least skeptical about government information, the media and multinational chemical corporations who align themselves totally with the government, the media and the pharmaceutical companies on the AIDS issue. It's like our leaders have become followers when it comes to AIDS, and I think they stake out their positions without really looking into the issues. I believe if they did their usual due diligence, they would alter their stance.

Q: What's the response been like on the festival circuit?

A: Festival selections often represent one person's or a small committee's opinion and sometimes the films selected must fit a festival's overall thematic vision. Given that, I feel encouraged by the number of festivals that have selected The Other Side of AIDS.

At the festival screenings I've attended, the audiences have been respectful, attentive and have participated enthusiastically in Q and A and other discussions following the film.

Q: Do you worry about reaching a wider audience?

A: As a filmmaker, I want my work to reach as wide an audience as possible. As far as worrying, I worry about people that have or will test HIV positive and as a result may give up on their lives. I'm concerned these people might never have the opportunity to see or hear about another side of AIDS, a side filled with hope, health and empowerment. I made the film, because without that other side, my wife would have given up on her life and I wouldn't have the beautiful family and life I now have. It's my hope that the film will inspire people to look deeper, think harder and examine closer, especially those people whose lives are most directly affected by these issues.

Note:

**Additional materials including, references, articles and documentation
available upon request.**