

Dancing With Our Shadows

A Celebration of Gay & Lesbian History



A Feature Length Documentary Film
and
Six-Part Documentary Television Series

Created by:
Xorin Balbes
William Gazecki
Henry Bloomstein

"The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie -- deliberate, contrived, and dishonest -- but the myth -- persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic."

-- John F. Kennedy

"It's time for us to recognize -- and understand -- the unsung historical contributions of gay men and women to every field of endeavor. By doing so, we will find an untapped reservoir of inspiration, along with something far more valuable: our common humanity."

-- Xorin Balbes



OVERVIEW

As we rush headlong into the 21st Century, we find ourselves at a perplexing crossroads marked "Gays and Lesbians." While the feverish campaign to outlaw gay marriage continues, same-sex couples now routinely grace the pages of glossy magazines -- and no one flinches when a gay award-winner thanks his or her partner in front of an international television audience. In every vital area of human endeavor -- from science and academia, the governance of nations and industrial progress, to spiritual teaching and the advancement of the arts-- major milestones have been consistently achieved by Gays and Lesbians. To date, acknowledgement of these contributions remains buried beneath history's three-fold disposal system: ignorance, denial and repression. How much more the perception and acceptance of Gays and Lesbians would change if the public knew that so many of its

heroes and role models in politics, science, business and culture are gay. Knowledge leads to familiarity just as understanding leads to tolerance.

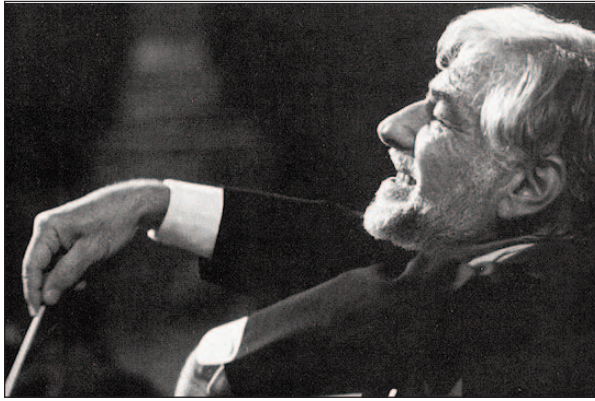
Towards that end, no documentary film or series programming has yet been produced.

DANCING WITH OUR SHADOWS is a groundbreaking documentary feature film and multi-part television series designed to educate, enlighten and entertain by presenting the invaluable contributions that gay people, male and female, have made throughout history. And how those long-departed, and those still with us, continue to enhance our lives. Many films have dealt with the struggles of Gays and Lesbians to attain equal rights, or to survive society's abuses. But this is the first project to fully document and celebrate Gay and Lesbian achievements for their natural, target audience (that estimated 10% of our population) as well as for mainstream audiences the world over.

The unique tone of **DANCING WITH OUR SHADOWS** will combine the comprehensive, experiential approach of Ken Burns, with an intensity and originality befitting our subject. Period music will be used emphatically and extensively. Available to the production are privately held archival materials depicting rare and hitherto unseen aspects of gay and lesbian lifestyles.

In stark contrast to the stellar accomplishments of this remarkable "10%", we will also emphasize the age-old persecution endured -- a testament not only to Gays' and Lesbians' innate collective strength, but also to their fundamental right to be acknowledged as full partners in the shaping of human history.

DANCING WITH OUR SHADOWS will be fascinating and dramatic, weaving unknown facts and untold stories into an astonishingly fresh historical narrative.



Current gay and lesbian notables will be invited to comment on past events. Ellen Degeneres, for example, may have a compelling take on why Susan B. Anthony acted in particular ways - another gay woman willing to step out from behind the veil of her sexual preference to achieve wide acceptance. Interpretations will be provocative, personally revealing, as well as humorous. The creators and producers of the documentary already have an established network of relationships with authors, journalists,

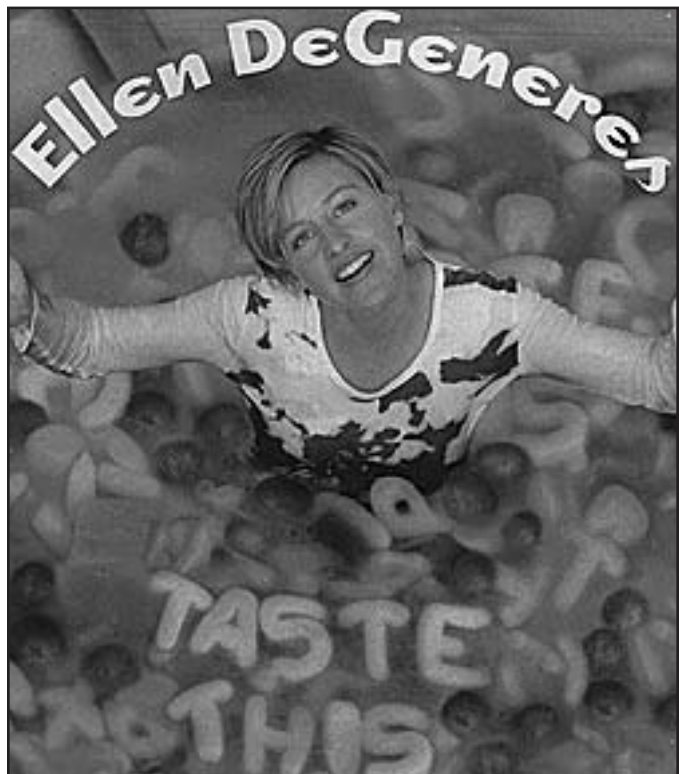
historians, politicians, activists, academics and celebrities, along with articulate, passionate people just "living the life," who can be called upon to comment, or serve as experts.

To help promote the show, connect the gay and straight community, and provide links to more information, an interactive Website will be set up.

LOOK AND STYLE

DANCING WITH OUR SHADOWS will have a distinct, contemporary look -- a mix of styles ranging from fast-paced music video montages to "in-your-face" cinema verite, to intimate, personal interviews. The entire repertoire of classic documentary techniques will be employed, from "characterized" narration of exemplary historical writings, to the blending of brief, ultra-realistic reenactments -- all in a well-developed, insightful, through-line narrative. Several hosts will be utilized, each one lending a personal familiarity to a specific section of the film, or episode of the series. During the stock footage portions of the show, a celebrity host will provide voiceover and conduct interview with experts.

Academy Award-nominated and Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker, William Gazecki, will direct **DANCING WITH OUR SHADOWS**. Mr. Gazecki has won awards at several International Film Festivals, as well as being the recipient of the prestigious International Documentary Association's Distinguished Documentary Achievement Award. Sound and music play an important role in all of his films, and Gazecki plans to make extensive use of period visuals for **DANCING** to impart a rich sense of each era portrayed.





CELEBRITIES and NOTED HISTORICAL PERSONS

For **DANCING WITH OUR SHADOWS**, we will draw on a wealth of current and historical Gays and Lesbians from every field and walk of life.

A random sampling might include:

Andy Warhol, Cole Porter, Dag Hammarskjöld, T.E. Lawrence, Alexander the Great, Martina Navratilova, Greg Louganis, Hans Christian Andersen, Susan B. Anthony, Emily Dickinson, Leonard Bernstein, King James I, Vita Sackville-West, James Baldwin, Michelangelo, Tennessee Williams, Socrates, King Gustav III, Montgomery Clift, Sappho, Gore Vidal, Lord Byron, Walt Whitman, Marcel Proust, Emperor Hadrian, Gertrude Stein, Richard the Lion-Hearted, Alice B. Toklas, Charles Laughton, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, W.H. Auden, Van Cliburn, Leonardo da Vinci, Willa Cather, John Maynard Keynes, E.M. Forster, Noel Coward, Christopher Isherwood, Melissa Etheridge, Elton John, Edna Ferber, Langston Hughes, J. Edgar Hoover, Patty Smyth, Oscar Wilde, Rudolph Nureyev, Chastity Bono, Freddie Mercury, Liberace, Barney Frank, Virginia Woolf, Rock Hudson, Francis Bacon, Allen Ginsberg, Katharine Hepburn, Marlene Dietrich, Barry Diller, David Geffen, Brendan Behan, Ellen DeGeneres, George Michael, Rosie O'Donnell, Barry Manilow, James McGreevey, k.d. Lang, Andrew Sullivan, Mary Cheney, and many more.

SYNOPSIS



J. Edgar Hoover and
Clyde Tolson



Vita Sackville-West



Alice B. Toklas and
Gertrude Stein



James Baldwin

EPISODES ONE & TWO -- Hidden History

Episode One will focus on the achievements of Gay and Lesbian philosophers, artists and academics from ancient times to the turn of the 20th Century. Many of the world's most lauded individuals were Gay or Lesbian, and the overwhelming absence of knowledge about their contributions has critically influenced our history. In addition, we will explore the roots of anti-gay bias -- religious, social and governmental -- that isolated the "10 %" from the larger, prevailing culture.

Tribal, indigenous same-sex traditions will be compared with Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, and Islamic customs (and their respective sacred texts). We will raise the question: "What is the true definition of homosexuality within a specific context -- whether that be historical, cultural or religious."

EPISODES THREE & FOUR -- The Emerging Presence

With the dawn of the 20th Century came a new social milieu for Gays and Lesbians -- that of differentiation. Over the past 80 to 90 years, being "in or out of the closet" has become a choice with unprecedented consequences, imparting new meaning to same-sex lifestyles.

We will examine the multi-faceted range of new roles that Gays and Lesbians have adopted during this period. With each passing decade of the 20th Century, a milestone in Gay and Lesbian integration occurred (paralleling revolutionary advances in other cultural areas). Beginning around the 1920's, Gays and Lesbians began to recognize their collective commonality.

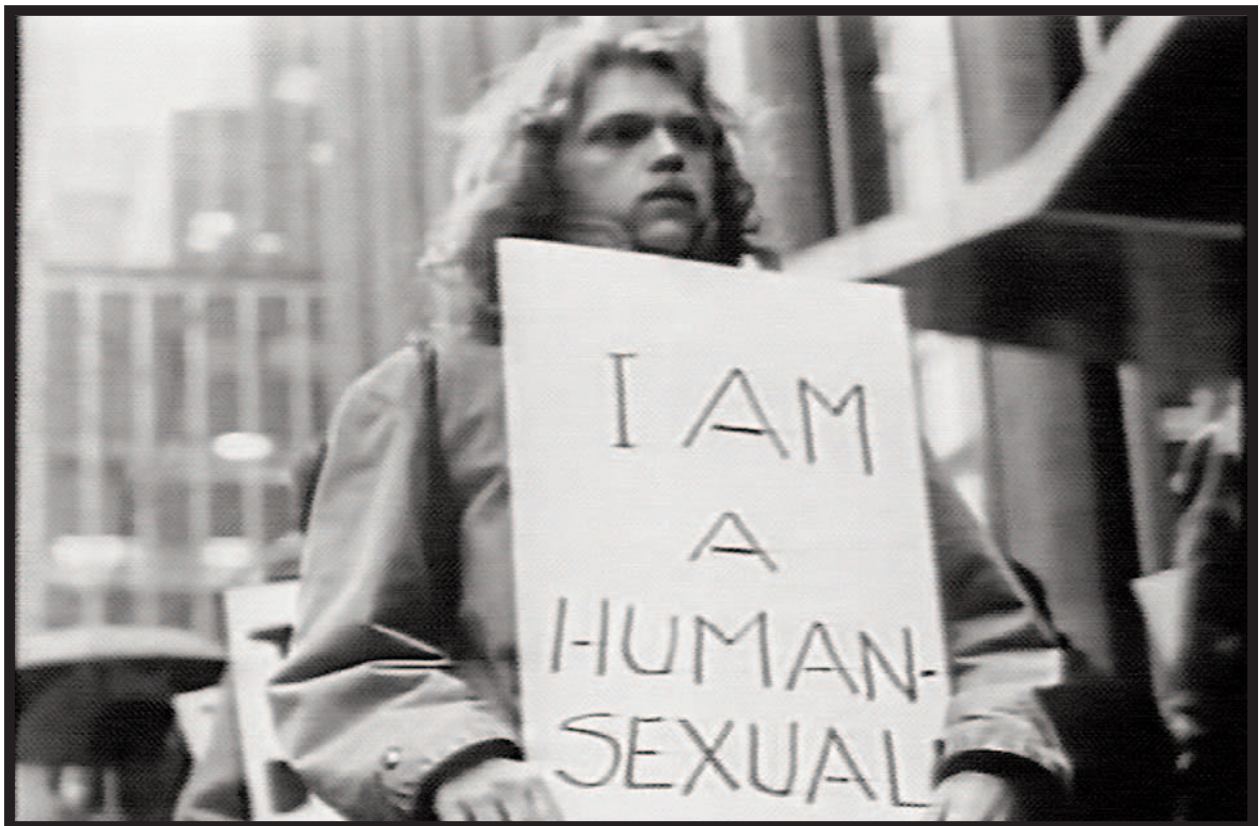
But while freedom and acceptance have gradually evolved, both repression and abuse have increased in severity.

EPISODES FIVE & SIX -- Beyond the Plague

The advent of AIDS has advanced the legitimate inclusion of Gays and Lesbians into mainstream society. Within the Gay and Lesbian community, the trauma of coping with AIDS has shifted emphasis away from a preoccupation with sexuality, and towards the forging of spiritually-committed lifestyles.

The shared intent and higher purpose of fighting AIDS has brought many diverse factions together. Prior to AIDS, being Gay or Lesbian had been an isolated process of creating personal and individual identity. The common bond of fighting AIDS has encouraged the coming together of a worldwide community.

We will examine the increasing role of Gays and Lesbians in technology, medicine, the arts, and government as a result of the AIDS epidemic. We will also present the current attempts of the Gay and Lesbian community to transcend being perceived as a separate segment of society. We will give a voice to their goals of achieving complete integration within our global society.



PRODUCT LINE

DANCING WITH OUR SHADOWS will be divided into the following product categories:

Feature-length theatrical film
Six-hour television documentary series
Boxed DVD collection



The project will generate revenues from a number of distribution and marketing scenarios. We intend to initially penetrate the domestic and foreign markets with a feature-length theatrical documentary release. The broadcast of the six-episode television series will follow. Simultaneously, the project will roll out corresponding ancillary products.

They include:

"Dancing With Our Shadows": The Website
Large format art-photo book
Music CD
Curriculum Guide



SPECIFIC AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED

Abuses:

What is "homophobia" and why does it exist? Gays as scapegoats for the AIDS epidemic, which led to abusive generalizations about their lifestyle.

The Nazi suppression and annihilation of Gays and their simultaneous assimilation into the Third Reich.

Gays and Lesbians in the military. Despite their brave service, historically and in our day, 100,000 men and women have been discharged from the military since World War II, and branded as undesirables.

The history of anti-gay legislation: How Gays and Lesbians are used as pawns in the political arena. Discrimination in housing and in the workplace. Unjust imprisonment and railroading to mental institutions; abandonment by scandalized families.

Media coverage has contemptuously portrayed Gays as effeminate gossipers, snide villains, tragic victims, victimizers, and Lesbians as aggressive, man-mimicking, man-hating females.

Gay bashing: Homosexuals are the most frequent victims of hate crimes.

Does the Bible really condemn homosexuality? How the "10%" have been excluded from mainstream religion. The Exodus Issue: (the questionable, religious-based, "rehabilitation" of Gays and Lesbians).



Struggles:

The battle for equal rights in all areas of gay and lesbian life. How the “10 per cent” has historically dealt with opposition and continues to do so.

The struggle for visibility. Media perception: How gays and lesbians would like to be presented vs. how mainstream media chooses to portray them to the “mainstream”

Legal problems:
Insurance, inheritance, social security, adoption, marriage, same-sex benefits, etc. Using the Federal Courts for social change.

The “Stay-in-the-Closet-or-Come Out” issue, both for adults and teens. How this has changed in the last 20 years for young people. Are they more willing to come out now? The small town vs. big city mentality.

Gay and Lesbian parenting and family life.

What is it really like for straight children to grow up in a same sex household -- or even with a gay father and lesbian mother?

Gay psychology: How do the problems, concerns and personal desires of Gays and Lesbians compare to those of heterosexuals?

Dealing with demonization for political purposes. Fear tactics used to pass laws and win elections. Gays running for office and the obstacles they’ve historically faced.

The free-love lifestyle before and after AIDS. The evolution from irresponsible behavior to ethics and caring. What it’s like to live and die with dignity and courage. How to function in society with the disease: The creation of fundraising opportunities and heightened awareness (AIDS walks, media campaigns, the red ribbon, celebrities, Meals on Wheels).



Accomplishments:

Gay leaders and public office holders, male and female, have made painful progress via a host of extraordinary routes to power.

Gay and Lesbians have created their own communities within the larger context of modern civilization. The resulting network and support systems impact favorably on society as a whole.

Gay and Lesbians often do business through mainstream venues, and their financial clout makes a real difference.

Gay and Lesbian writers, artists and paradigm breakers have had a profound influence on mainstream culture.

Institutions have been created by Gays and Lesbians to serve society (clinics, youth services, legal services, counseling services and training programs, etc.).

The advent of the Reconciliation Movement: Integration of Gays and Lesbians into mainstream religion.

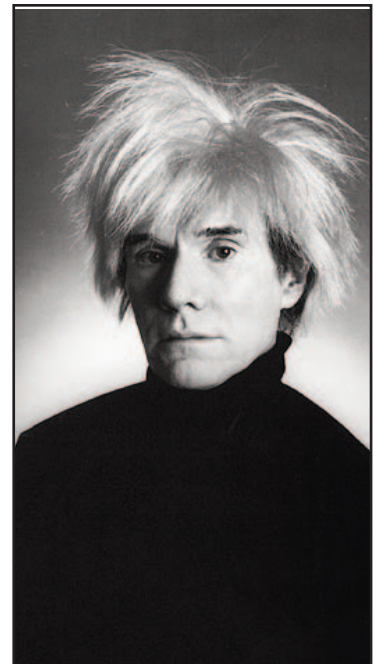
Last year, 300 Gay Pride Festivals were celebrated across the U.S.



Greg Louganis



Allen Ginsberg



Andy Warhol

EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS

Peter J. Gomes

Peter is one of America's greatest preachers and most influential thinkers. He was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1942. A graduate of Bates College and of Harvard Divinity School, he came to Harvard in 1970 as assistant minister to the Memorial Church. Time magazine named him one of the seven best preachers in America and for years he has served as the spiritual head of the greater Harvard community. He is the author of The New York Times bestseller, *The Good Book and Sermons*.

George Chauncey

George teaches American history at the University of Chicago. He received his Ph. D. from Yale University and has taught at Rutgers and New York Universities. He is currently at work on his third book, *The Making of the Modern World*. Chauncey's landmark book, *Gay New York*, won the Los Angeles Times prize for history, and called "A stunning contribution not only to gay history, but to the study of urban life, class, gender and heterosexuality." Frank Rich of the New York Times raved: "One of the most fascinating works of American social history I've ever read."

Lillian Faderman

Author/Historian

A professor of English at California State University, Fresno, she is the author of *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*. She received Lambda Awards for *Odd Girls & Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America*, and for *Chloe Plus Olivia: An Anthology of Lesbian Literature from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*.

HIC- Homosexual Information Center

HIC is a non-profit corporation founded in 1968. Jim Snyder heads the organization today. HIC is one of the largest and oldest archive houses for Gay and Lesbian history. HIC's archives date back to the 1950's. The Center's purpose is to sustain Gay and Lesbian history and present a balanced view of that remarkable "10 per cent."

Christian de la Huerta

Author

Christian hosts a weekly Internet radio program, "Spirit Wave", on PlanetOUT's GLORadio. Founder of Q-Spirit, a national network of gays and lesbians in spirituality, he is also owner of Mercurio Communication, a publicity and promotions firm specializing in Gay and Lesbian authors as well as the psychology/self-help/spirituality genre. He is the author of *Coming Out Spiritually*.

Winston Wilde
Psychotherapist

A clinical psychologist and renowned doctor of human sexuality, Wilde has practiced at the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in San Francisco.

Michelangelo Signorile
Author, Publisher

Queer in America: Sex, the Media and the Closets of Power; Life Outside: The Signorile Report on Gay Men: Sex, Drugs, Muscles, and the Passages of Life; Outing Yourself: How to Come Out As Lesbian or Gay to Your Family, Friends, and Coworkers.

