

Charlotte Street Films Presents

# THE HOUSE I LIVE IN

A film by Eugene Jarecki



The War on Drugs has never been about drugs.



**Distributed By:** Abramorama

**Running Time:** 108 minutes

**Rating:** Not Rated

**Official Web Site and High-Res Images:** [TheHouseILiveIn.org](http://TheHouseILiveIn.org)

**Press Contact:**

Julia Pacetti

**JMP Verdant**

Phone: 917.584.7846

[julia@jmpverdant.com](mailto:julia@jmpverdant.com)

*Over the past 40 years, the War on Drugs has cost more than \$1 trillion and accounted for over 45 million arrests.*

*The U.S. holds 25% of the world's prisoners, yet accounts for only 5% of the world's population.*

*Black individuals comprise 13% of the U.S. population and 14% of drug users, yet they are 37% of the people arrested for drug offenses and 56% of those incarcerated for drug crimes.*

## **SYNOPSIS**

As America remains embroiled in conflict overseas, a less visible war is taking place at home, costing countless lives, destroying families, and inflicting untold damage upon future generations of Americans. In forty years, the War on Drugs has accounted for more than 45 million arrests, made America the world's largest jailer, and damaged poor communities at home and abroad. Yet for all that, drugs are cheaper, purer, and more available today than ever before.

Filmed in more than twenty states, THE HOUSE I LIVE IN captures heart-wrenching stories from individuals at all levels of America's War on Drugs. From the dealer to the grieving mother, the narcotics officer to the senator, the inmate to the federal judge, the film offers a penetrating look inside America's longest war—a definitive portrait revealing its profound human rights implications.

The film recognizes the seriousness of drug abuse as a matter of public health, and investigates the tragic errors and shortcomings that have meant this symptom is most often treated as a cause for law enforcement, creating a vast machine that largely feeds on America's poor, and especially on minority communities. Beyond simple misguided policy, the film examines how political and economic corruption have fueled the war for 40 years, despite persistent evidence of its moral, economic, and practical failures.

CHARLOTTE STREET FILMS presents an EDGEWOOD WAY production a BBC/ITVS/ZDF co-production "THE HOUSE I LIVE IN" directors of photography SAM CULLMAN DEREK HALLQUIST editor PAUL FROST music ROBERT MILLER executive producers DAVID ALCARO JOSLYN BARNES SALLY JO FIFER NICK FRASER DANNY GLOVER JOHN LEGEND BRAD PITT RUSSELL SIMMONS producers EUGENE JARECKI MELINDA SHOPSIN written & directed by EUGENE JARECKI

## CREDITS

**Director** EUGENE JARECKI

**Writer** EUGENE JARECKI

**Producers** EUGENE JARECKI  
MELINDA SHOPSIN  
SAMUEL CULLMAN  
CHRISTOPHER ST. JOHN

**Executive Producers** DANNY GLOVER  
JOHN LEGEND  
BRAD PITT  
RUSSELL SIMMONS  
NICK FRASER  
JOSLYN BARNES  
ROY ACKERMAN  
DAVID ALCARO  
SALLY JO FIFER

**Editor** PAUL FROST

**Directors of Photography** SAM CULLMAN  
DEREK HALLQUIST

**Music** ROBERT MILLER

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I have been thinking about making this film for over 20 years.

I first met Nannie Jeter, a prominent character in the film, when I was just a few days old coming home from the hospital. From that day on, she became a second mother to me, and her children and grandchildren a second family. I am white and Nannie and her family are black, and growing up in the wake of the civil rights movement, I think I imagined we were all living in a post-racial America—a place of greater equality and justice. Yet, as we grew older, our paths diverged; where I found privilege and opportunity, Nannie's family found a new kind of struggle that re-emerged with a vengeance for black Americans in the post-civil rights era.

When I asked Nannie what had happened, she felt that it was chiefly the rise of drugs in America that had ravaged the lives of people in her family. But the more I talked to experts, the more I heard the same thing: whatever damage drugs do to people has been made far worse by the laws America has enacted to stop them. Suddenly, the so-called “War on Drugs” began rising into view as something I had to investigate and better understand. I wanted to know what it was that had most fundamentally hurt people I love.

With this in mind, I began interviewing people across the country whose families had been pulled into a vicious cycle of drugs and the criminal justice system. Alongside dealers, users, and their family members, I spoke to police, wardens, judges, medical experts, and others to begin to understand how it was that America came to launch a war against its own people.

I interviewed experts who broadened my understanding of the subject in ways I wanted to share with others. I learned that drug abuse is ultimately a matter of public health that has instead been treated as an opportunity for law enforcement and an expanding criminal justice system. I spoke with scientists desperate for a drug policy based on data rather than rhetoric. I saw how this misguided approach has helped make America the world's largest jailer, imprisoning its citizens at a higher rate per capita than any other nation on earth, and how the drug war has become America's longest war, now entering its 40<sup>th</sup> year and costing more than a trillion dollars to date.

For people to understand the scale and urgency of this crisis, I felt that facts, figures, and expert testimony weren't enough, so I sought out individuals whose lives were directly and deeply shaped by the War on Drugs, hoping their stories would reveal some of the everyday tragedies left in its wake. Ultimately, with my beloved Nannie Jeter as inspiration, *THE HOUSE I LIVE IN* grew into a larger examination of race, class, and capitalism in America—of a tragically misguided system that preys upon the least fortunate among us to sustain itself.

—Eugene Jarecki, Director

## WAR ON DRUGS STATISTICS

- Over the past 40 years, the War on Drugs has cost more than \$1 trillion and accounted for more than 45 million arrests.
- Today, there are more people behind bars for nonviolent drug offenses than were incarcerated for *all* crimes, violent or otherwise, in 1970.
- In 2009 nearly 1.7 million people were arrested in the U.S. for nonviolent drug charges.
- Between 1973 and 2009, the nation's prison population grew by 705 percent, resulting in more than 1 in 100 adults behind bars today.
- To return to the nation's incarceration rates of 1970, America would have to release 4 out of every 5 currently held prisoners.
- The U.S. accounts for 5% of the world's population and 25% of its prison population.
- 1 in every 8 state employees works for a corrections agency.
- It costs an average of \$78.95 per day to keep an inmate locked up, more than 20 times the cost of a day on probation.
- In a 2010 survey, 8.9% of Americans over the age of 12 had used illicit drugs in the past month.
- Of the 1,841,182 arrests for drug law violations in 2007, 82.5% were for possession and only 17.5% were for the sale or manufacture of a drug.
- Marijuana arrests make up more than half of all the drug arrests in the U.S., and nearly 90% of those are charges for possession only.
- African-Americans make up roughly 13% of the US population and 14% of its drug users. Yet, they represent 56% of those incarcerated for drug crimes.
- Since 1986, though crack and powder cocaine are chemically the same, there has been a 100 to 1 disparity in the sentencing of crack cocaine vs. powder cocaine offenses. This has accounted for a vast disproportion of crack users going to prison over the past 25 years. In 2010, after decades of protest from judges and activists, this disparity was reduced to 18 to 1.

## SUBJECTS IN THE FILM

**Michelle Alexander** is a civil rights litigator and author of *The New Jim Crow*.

**Shanequa Benitez** lives in Cromwell Towers, a housing project in Yonkers, New York.

**The Honorable Mark Bennett** is a U.S. District Court Judge in Sioux City, Iowa.

**Charles Bowden** is a journalist covering drug war violence on the U.S.-Mexico border.

**Mike Carpenter** is Chief of Security at Lexington Corrections Center in Lexington, Oklahoma.

**Larry Cearly** is the Marshall of Magdalena, New Mexico.

**Eric Franklin** is Warden of Lexington Corrections Center in Lexington, Oklahoma.

**Maurice Haltiwanger** is currently serving 20 years for crack cocaine distribution.

**Dr. Carl Hart** is a tenured Professor of Clinical Neuroscience at Columbia University.

**Nannie Jeter** lives in New Haven, Connecticut, where she first met the film's director when he was a child.

**Anthony Johnson** is a former small-time drug dealer from Yonkers, New York.

**Gabor Maté** is a Hungarian-born physician specializing in the treatment of addiction.

**Mark Mauer** is director of the Sentencing Project and one of the country's leading criminal justice experts.

**Richard Lawrence Miller** is an American historian and expert on the history of drug laws.

**Charles Ogletree** is the Jesse Climenko Professor of Law at Harvard Law School and a former academic advisor to Barack and Michelle Obama.

**Kevin Ott** is currently serving life without parole on drug charges at the Lexington Correctional Center in Lexington, Oklahoma.

**Susan Randall** has worked as a private investigator in Vermont for over a decade.

**David Simon** is creator of the acclaimed HBO series *The Wire*.

**Julie Stewart** is president and founder of Families Against Mandatory Minimums, a national organization working to change mandatory sentencing laws.

**Dennis Whidbee** is a former drug dealer and the father of Anthony Johnson.

## FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

**Eugene Jarecki (Director, Writer & Producer)** is an award-winning filmmaker, public thinker, and author. His recent film REAGAN, which examines the life and legacy of the 40<sup>th</sup> president, received wide critical acclaim after premiering at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and on HBO for the occasion of Reagan's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. In 2010, Jarecki worked alongside Morgan Spurlock and Alex Gibney as director of a documentary film inspired by the bestselling book FREAKONOMICS. Earlier that year, he directed MOVE YOUR MONEY, a short online film encouraging Americans to move their money from "too big to fail" banks to well-rated community banks and credit unions. The film went viral, becoming an online sensation with over 7 million hits in just its first three weeks online.

Jarecki's 2005 film, WHY WE FIGHT, winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and a Peabody Award, has been broadcast in over 40 countries and released theatrically in over 250 U.S. cities. In 2009, Simon & Schuster published Jarecki's acclaimed book, *The American Way of War: Guided Missiles, Misguided Men, and a Republic in Peril*, which explores how militarism disfigures America's foreign and defense policies as well as her broader national priorities.

Jarecki's prior film, THE TRIALS OF HENRY KISSINGER, was released in over 130 U.S. cities, won the 2002 Amnesty International Award, was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award, and has been broadcast in over 30 countries. In 2002, TRIALS was selected to launch BBC's prestigious digital channel BBC4 and the Sundance Channel's documentary division.

In addition to his work in film, Jarecki is also a thinker on international affairs, and has appeared on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, *Charlie Rose*, *The Colbert Report*, FOX News, CNN, PBS NOW, BBC World, NPR, MTV, *The Tavis Smiley Show*, Current TV, Clear Channel, Pacifica Radio, and Sirius Radio, as well as having been featured in the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Financial Times, the Daily News, the Village Voice, the New Yorker, the New York Observer, Vanity Fair, GQ, and Newsday.

**Melinda Shopsin (Producer)** began her production experience working at Radical Media in London. She served as Production Coordinator for THE TRIALS OF HENRY KISSINGER (2002) and as head of development for the 2005 film WHY WE FIGHT (winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and a Peabody Award). She Co-produced REAGAN (2011) as well as FREAKONOMICS (2010), and currently serves as Executive In Charge of Production at Charlotte Street Films.

**Robert Miller (Composer)** is a prolific composer of film, concert, and commercial music. His distinctive style has made its mark on over 1800 commercials, a growing body of film scores, as well as on works for concert and the stage. Over the years, his talent and passion have garnered him six CLIO awards, an AICP award, and three Emmy nominations. His film work includes the Lionsgate/Weinstein company release TEETH; the 2005 Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner WHY WE FIGHT; and the 2005 Tribeca Film Festival Best Feature winner RED DOORS. His newest film work includes the score for Richard Bowen's CINDERELLA MOON, a cinematic re-telling of the

original Cinderella story from 768 A.D. China; HBO Films' REAGAN, directed by Eugene Jarecki; and another fruitful collaboration with Jon Hock on THE REZ, the story of an American Indian basketball star named Shoni Schimmel that premiered at the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival.

**Paul Frost (Editor)** is an editor working in narrative and documentary film as well as in television. Beginning in 2009, Frost worked on a number of Jarecki's projects, including MOVE YOUR MONEY (featured on the Huffington Post and The Colbert Report), FREAKONOMICS, and REAGAN. Frost got his start in documentary working on DOUBLETIME with director Stephanie Johnes. He has also worked on a handful of narrative films, including one by legendary auteur Melvin Van Peebles. Prior to his work in the U.S., Frost lived in Germany for a year where he worked on syndicated television, capping off his international experience by presenting the German Bundestag with a documentary short he produced and edited, which is included in the German National Archives. Frost's television editing includes work for the Style Network, the Discovery Channel, and Logo.

**Sam Cullman (Director of Photography)** is a cinematographer, producer, and director of documentaries. He recently partnered with director Marshall Curry to co-direct, shoot, and produce IF A TREE FALLS (2011), an Academy Award-nominated feature-length documentary that offers a behind-the-curtain look at the Earth Liberation Front, the radical environmental group that the FBI calls America's "number one domestic terrorist threat." Cullman's other cinematography credits include KING CORN (2006), a Peabody award-winning documentary for ITVS, Eugene Jarecki's WHY WE FIGHT (2005) and REAGAN (2011); WHAT WOULD JESUS BUY? (2007), LOCKUP: INSIDE ANGOLA (2008) and THE FARM: 10 DOWN (2009), both follow-ups to Stacks' THE FARM: ANGOLA, USA (1998). He is also starting post-production on BLACK CHEROKEE, a short he also shot and directed (with Benjamin Rosen) about a self-taught New York City street artist.

**Derek Hallquist (Director of Photography)** began his professional career as a camera operator for numerous television shows on networks such as Discovery Channel, Travel Channel, and TLC. After four years in Los Angeles and his first season as a Director of Photography on TLC's "My First Home," he moved back to Vermont where he founded his production company, Green River Pictures, LLC, and it is in Burlington that he has rekindled his love for journalism and documentary. He has worked as a Camera Operator and Director of Photography on numerous Jarecki films, including REAGAN and FREAKONOMICS. Concurrently, he has spent the past three years working on his first feature documentary about energy, which follows the path to our 21st century energy grid.

**Danny Glover (Executive Producer)** is the Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Louverture Films. In addition to being one of the most acclaimed actors of our time, with a career spanning 30 years—including such films as PLACES IN THE HEART, THE COLOR PURPLE, THE LETHAL WEAPON series, and the award-winning TO SLEEP WITH ANGER—Danny Glover has also Produced, Executive Produced, and financed numerous projects for film, television, and theatre. Among these are GOOD FENCES, 3 AM, FREEDOM SONG, GET ON THE BUS, DEADLY VOYAGE, BUFFALO SOLDIERS, THE SAINT OF FORT WASHINGTON, and TO SLEEP WITH ANGER, as well as the series *Courage* and *America's Dream*. Since co-founding Louverture Films, Glover has

executive produced BAMA KO, AFRICA UNITE, TROUBLE THE WATER, SALT OF THIS SEA, SOUNDTRACK FOR A REVOLUTION, DUM MAARO DUM, BLACK POWER MIXTAPE, and THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MCKINLEY NOLAN. He has associate produced THE TIME THAT REMAINS and the 2010 Cannes Palme d'Or winner UNCLE BOONMEE WHO CAN RECALL HIS PAST LIVES.

**John Legend (Executive Producer)** is a recording artist, concert performer, and philanthropist who has won nine Grammy awards and was named one of Time magazine's 100 most influential people. Throughout his career, Legend has worked to make a difference in the lives of others. In 2007, he launched the Show Me Campaign (ShowMeCampaign.org), an initiative that uses education to break the cycle of poverty. Legend sits on the Boards of Teach for America, Stand for Children, and the Harlem Village Academies, and co-chairs the Harlem Village Academies' National Leadership Board. He serves on the Advisory Council for Turnaround and is an IRC Voice for the International Rescue Committee. In 2007, Legend was named spokesman for GQ Magazine's Gentlemen's Fund, an initiative to raise support and awareness for five cornerstones essential to men: opportunity, health, education, environment, and justice.

**Brad Pitt (Executive Producer)** is the Founder of Make It Right, Co-Chair of the Jolie-Pitt Foundation, and an award-winning actor and film producer. Pitt received Academy Award® nominations for his performances in Bennett Miller's MONEYBALL, David Fincher's THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON, Terry Gilliam's TWELVE MONKEYS, for which he won a Golden Globe Award. He has starred in and produced Andrew Dominik's KILLING THE SOFTLY as well as Terry Malick's THE TREE OF LIFE "which won the Palme d'Or at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival. His production company, Plan B Entertainment, has thus far produced many films such as Martin Scorsese's THE DEPARTED, Robert Schwentke's THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE, Matthew Vaughn's KICKASS, and both Ryan Murphy's RUNNING WITH SCISSORS, and EAT PRAY LOVE. Pitt won the 2012 New York Film Critics Circle award, National Society of Film Critics award, Desert Palm Achievement award, and was listed at the top of TIME Magazine's Best Movie Performances of the Year, for his work in THE TREE OF LIFE and MONEYBALL. He has recently wrapped Steve McQueen's 12 YEARS A SLAVE and is currently starring in and producing Marc Forster's WORLD WAR Z for Paramount Pictures.

**Russell Simmons (Executive Producer)** is the Chairman and CEO of Rush Communications. USA Today named him one of the "Top 25 Most Influential People of the Past 25 Years," calling him a "hip-hop pioneer" for his groundbreaking vision that has influenced music, fashion, finance, the jewellery industry, television and film, as well as the face of modern philanthropy. From creating his seminal Def Jam Recordings in 1984, to his fashion industry-changing brands and founding of UniRush in 2003 to provide instant access to a set of basic financial services for over 48 million Americans who could not previously establish traditional banking relationships, Russell is recognized globally for his influence and entrepreneurial approach to both business and philanthropy. Russell also leads the non-profit division of his empire, Rush Community Affairs, and its ongoing commitment to empowering at-risk youth through education, the arts, social engagement, and promoting racial harmony and strengthening inter-group relations.

**Nick Fraser (Executive Producer)** has been editor of BBC Storyville since it started in 1997. His published works include a biography of Eva Peron and *The Voice of Modern Hatred*, a study of extremism and race hate in contemporary Europe. He is proud of being a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine in New York, "the best magazine in the world," in which his essays about the BBC, Isaiah Berlin, and anti-Americanism have been published. In recent years films shown on Storyville have won many major awards, including an Oscar, a Grand Jury prize at Sundance, multiple Griersons, and Emmys. A sampling of films Fraser has produced while at Storyville are as follows: CONTROL ROOM, THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED, WHY WE FIGHT, THE LIBERACE OF BAGHDAD, ENRON, THE TRIALS OF HENRY KISSINGER, THE AMERICAN RULING CLASS, PEACE ONE DAY, and NEVERLAND: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SYMBIONESE LIBERATION ARMY.

**Joslyn Barnes (Executive Producer)** is a screenwriter and Emmy-nominated producer. She is the author or co-author of numerous commissioned screenplays for feature films, including the upcoming epic TOUSSAINT and the award-winning film BÀTTU, directed by Cheikh Oumar Sissoko (Mali), which she also Associate Produced. Among the films Barnes has executive produced or produced since co-founding Louverture Films are the award-winning features BAMAKO and SALT OF THIS SEA, Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner and Oscar- and Emmy-nominated TROUBLE THE WATER, Oscar-shortlisted SOUNDTRACK FOR A REVOLUTION, Bollywood thriller DUM MAARO DUM, and the award-winning BLACK POWER MIXTAPE. Barnes also wrote and directed the short film PRANA for CinéTévé France as part of an internationally distributed series of 30 short films to promote awareness of environmental issues.