



Life & Life

directed by NC Heikin

The hardest person in the world to forgive is yourself.

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LOGLINE

After serving 35 years in prison for murder, musician Reggie Austin faces an uncertain future back on the streets as he tries to rebuild a life, reconnect with his family, and armed with little else but his heart and his music, find a way to survive.

SYNOPSIS

LIFE & LIFE tracks the journey that musician Reggie Austin takes to redeem his life following a murder conviction 40 years ago. With surprising honesty and depth, the film looks at Austin's effect on his fellow inmates and his efforts to reconnect with his family, as well as questioning parole and sentencing practices through his story. Ultimately, the film reveals the steep and dangerous hill ex-prisoners must climb upon release to free themselves and create a positive future. LIFE & LIFE is a story of the struggle for redemption and hope against near impossible odds, accompanied by a soundtrack that comes straight from Austin's heart.

Running Time: 79 minutes



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My deepest passions are stirred by human rights violations, whether at the hands of dictators or as a result of injustice in the U.S.A. The problem of mass incarceration in the U.S. is so huge it often feels overwhelming. Reggie's story is a path into the deepest complexities of the many issues, especially the not often discussed sentencing and parole practices. He is poetic and penetrating about both the mistakes he made in his own life and the inequities of our criminal justice system. Because he defies expectations and easy categorizations, his story has led me to careful reflection. To what degree do our prisons exist to punish perpetrators, protect the public, or reform those incarcerated? How long is long enough? Reggie can never bring back the life he took, but if he can help bring change, that might be a redemption of its own.

Inspired by the serendipity of our meeting, Reggie's long struggle to right his wrong, and the many lifers I've met since I began this, my goal is for LIFE & LIFE to carve out a significant place in the critical national debate on criminal justice.

ORIGIN OF THE FILM

In 2012, I was in the thick of making *Sound of Redemption, The Frank Morgan Story* (100% Fresh on Rotten Tomatoes.) Frank Morgan was an exquisite jazz saxophonist who spent half of his life in and out of prison, derailed by his heroin habit. Word had it, he did some of his best playing with a big band of fellow jazz junkies in San Quentin. With no archival footage of these historic concerts, I decided to capture the feeling by filming a new live concert in San Quentin with jazz stars who had all known or played with Frank. The audience would be the inmates, as they had been in Frank Morgan's day. We raised the roof in the Q.

At the end of this concert, one inmate asked if he could sit in with the band. The warden nodded his OK. So on Oct 12, 2012, Reggie Austin, inmate # B57661 played a tune with the All-Star band in San Quentin. Later I heard he said the night changed his life.

I kept track of Reggie. Inspired by the concert, he was attempting his 13th parole hearing. I thought I might make a short with a happy ending— a long time prisoner gains parole because of the power of music. When I found out what his crime was, though, I had doubts. Reggie did gain parole in 2015 after 35 years, so I went and interviewed him. I discovered a sensitive man who had radically changed from the criminal he once was.

Reggie never denied he deserved to be punished for his crime, but he was able to pinpoint the many overlapping injustices he and so many others have been through at the hands of the criminal justice system. I was convinced the story merited deeper inquiry. And, as hard as prison had been, nothing could have prepared him for the challenges he would face on the outside.

SCREENINGS + AWARDS

Nominee - HBO Max Best Documentary

Brooklyn Film Festival, New York - Best Documentary

New Hope Film Festival, Pennsylvania - Audience Choice Award, Best Documentary

Sedona Film Festival- Best Humanitarian Documentary Award

Minneapolis-St Paul International Film Festival, Minnesota

Portland film Festival

Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival, Massachusetts

Yonkers Film Festival

L'Europe autour de l'Europe, France
DOC-Cévennes - Festival international du documentaire en Cévennes, France
Woodstock Film Festival, New York
United Nations Association Film Festival, California

THE TEAM

NC Heikin, Director

NC Heikin began her career at La Mama Experimental Theater Club in New York and went on to work on and off Broadway as an actress, singer, dancer, writer and director. She has written screenplays for Disney and Paramount as well as French TV networks. In 2004, she made her directing debut with her prize-winning short, *mañana*, available on Indiepix. Her first documentary, *Kimjongilia*, about North Korean refugees, premiered at Sundance, won the One World Human Rights Best Film 2010, and has been seen by millions of people around the world, including on The Documentary Channel and Netflix. Her most recent film, *Sound of Redemption. The Frank Morgan Story* about a troubled jazz musician, was produced by bestselling author Michael Connelly and premiered at the Los Angeles Film Festival in 2014 and theatrically in NY and LA in 2015. It has a 100% Fresh Five Star rating on Rotten Tomatoes, and recently won the Best Biographical Documentary at the Sound on Screen Festival, South Africa. In 2016 Heikin made a short with Lee Child and roots band Naked Blue about their historic collaboration on a CD with songs about Lee's character Reacher (now an Amazon series.) NC is a Sundance and Film Independent Fellow.

Lee Child, Executive Producer

Lee Child is the #1 internationally bestselling author of the **Jack Reacher thrillers**. His debut, *Killing Floor*, won both the Anthony and the Barry awards for the best first mystery, and *The Enemy* won the Barry and the Nero awards for the Best Novel. "Jack Reacher", the film based on the ninth novel, *One Shot*, starred Tom Cruise, Robert Duval, Rosamund Pike, Jai Courtney, and David Oyelowo and debuted in December 2012. Child, a native of England and a former television director, lives in New York City and Wyoming with his wife and daughter. "Reacher," his series on Amazon, was renewed within days of its premiere. His official website is LeeChild.com.

Nicole London, producer

Nicole London is the Grammy-nominated Producer of *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool*, a major international documentary on the legendary musician Miles Davis. Recent credits include **AMERICAN MASTERS Sammy Davis Jr.: I've Gotta Be Me**, *The Talk: Race in America*, and 16 short films now playing in the Segregation Gallery of the Smithsonian's **National Museum of African American History & Culture** in Washington, DC. Three of her recent films have been nominated for NAACP Image Awards: *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool*, **AMERICAN MASTERS August Wilson: The Ground On Which I Stand** and Firelight Media's *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*, the latter of which was also nominated for a 2016 Primetime Emmy. She is currently co-directing with Stanley Nelson a PBS film on Harriett Tubman.

Jessica Wolfson, producer

Jessica Wolfson is an award winning documentary director and producer. Her work has been broadcast on PBS, IFC, Discovery Channel, TLC, and played film festivals such as Sundance, Tribeca, SXSW, DocNYC, Full Frame and more. Jessica has created content for ESPN, PBS, MTV, CBS All Access, Wall Street Journal, Conde Nast. At IFCTv, Jessica developed and produced documentaries with renowned filmmakers including Kirby Dick, Steve James, John Landis, and Jon Favreau. Her documentaries include **RADIO UNNAMEABLE** (Kino Lorber/PBS), **HOT GREASE** (DISCOVERY CHANNEL) and **THE KANSAS EXPERIMENT** (PBS Independent Lens). Jessica has acted as a consultant and impact producer for many documentary projects, a mentor for The Gotham (formerly IFP) and Tribeca Film Institute and teaches at New York Film Academy and Austin Community College.

LINKS

Website <https://lifelifeilm.com/>

Trailer <https://vimeo.com/547790111>

Twitter <https://twitter.com/LifeLifeFilm>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/lifeandlifefilm/>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/LifeLifeFilm/>

PRODUCTION STILLS







CREDITS

Written and Directed by
NC Heikin

Executive Producer
Lee Child

Produced by
NC Heikin
Nicole London
Jessica Wolfson

Co-Executive Producer
James Egan

Edited and Co-Produced by
Michèle Hollander

Additional Editing
Joel Plotch

Directors of Photography
Mike Seely
Don Starnes
David Aubrey

Director of Photography, Recreations
Alejandro Mejia, AMC

Field Producer
Marcia Jarmel

Additional Photography
NC Heikin
Kyle Saylor
Zak Boyle

Motion Graphics
Wilhelm Ogterop

Original Music
Noah Kellman

Additional Music
Paul Brill

Sound
James Becker
Emile Bokaer
Jim Granato
Claudia Katayanagi
Greg Miller

Rob Weiner

Camera Assistants

Anton Corba
Vincent Pate

Gaffers

Makoto Matsuo
Collin Chiuccini

Set Design

Malcolm Pépin
Château Brooklyn

Associate Producers

Steve Heikin
Robert Pépin

Actors

Charles C. Ferguson
Danielle Fraboni LaRauf
Monique Thomas

Voice Actors

Brian D. Coats
Stephanie Ittleson
Jon Lillian
Daniel Marcus
Stuart Richel
Liz Wisan

Production Coordinators

Justine Rose Armen
April Schroer
Nora Elisabete Zubizarreta

Production Assistants

Jesse Anderson
Anne Casper
Joshua Edwards
Mollie Moore
Shelah Moody
Wanda Sabir

Props

Laurence Miller

Hair and Makeup

Sammy LaCombe

Sound Design

Corinne Rozenberg
Bruno Tarriere

Re-recording Mixer

Bruno Tarriere

Color Grading

Eric Salleron

Graphics

Matthew Baldwin

Creative Consultants

Cynthia Kane

Su Kim

Additional Editing

Sophie Brunet

Aaron Warren

Eugene Yi

Trailer Editor

Joel Plotch

Assistant Editors

Jaime Magnard

Emily Chao

Steve Dabal

Pauline Archange

Clémence Prost

Promotional Materials Editors

Matthew Cohn

Emily Chao

Emmanuel Dayan

Kurt Feldhun

Rémi Villon

Transcriptions

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Legal & Business Affairs

Juliette Lauber

Accounting

Boris Geiger Accounting

Music Supervisor

Brooke Wentz, The Rights Workshop

Featuring

Reginald Austin

John Austin

Margaret Austin

Maxwell Austin

Greg "Dee" Dixon

Darryl Farris

Eric Gladstone
Ricky Hayes
Rebecca Katz
Grace Kelly
Rick Jackson
Nyree Austin Monroe
Gail Muldrow
Dr. Daniel Nagin
Gilbert Rivera
Lt. Samuel Robinson
Wilbert "Rico" Rogers
Tom Sawyer
Robin Shakely
Allen "Squirrel" Ware
Keith Wattley

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Anne Sills
Alan Teder
David Vidal-Dupuy
Faroukh Virani
Ellen Weber
Nancy Wiese
Elizabeth Winthrop
Leah Wolchok & Davina Pardo

Stills and Footage Archives

Apple of Discord - Tamara Perkins
Reginald Austin
Margaret Austin

Backbone Media - Noel Schwerin
California Department of
Corrections & Rehabilitation
Budget Films
Pond 5
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Oddball Films
Shutterstock

MUSIC CREDITS

Sugar

Written by Stanley Turrentine
Performed by
Reggie Austin: piano
Mark Gross: sax
Grace Kelly: sax
Delfeayo Marsalis: trombone
Ron Carter : bass
Marvin Smitty Smith: drums
Courtesy of Hal Leonard

By the Grave

Written by Grace Kelly
Performed by
Grace Kelly: alto sax, vocals
Tim Lefebvre: bass
Henry Hey: piano
Lemar Carter: drums
Courtesy of PAZZ Publishing

A Moment Alone

by Buster Williams
Courtesy of Soroka Music Ltd
Universal Music Enterprises
Performed
by Buster Williams

Begin Again

Written by Grace Kelly
Performed by
Grace Kelly: saxophone
Giulio Carmassi: all other instruments
Courtesy of GK Entertainment

Lullaby

Written by George Cables
Performed by
Mark Gross: sax
George Cables: piano
Courtesy of Concord Music Group, Inc.

Ballad for MC

Written by Grace Kelly
Performed by
Grace Kelly: saxophone
Jeff Babko: piano
Steve Hass: drums
Dan Lutz: bass
Courtesy of PAZZ Publishing

Sunshine of My Heart
Written by Allen. K. Ware
Performed by
Allen K. Ware : piano and vocals

Slow Dancing
Written by Wilbert Rogers, Jr.
Performed by
Wilbert Rogers, Jr.: piano and vocals
Darryl Farris: bass
Greg Dixon: drums

Oscar's Tune
Written by Reginald Austin
Performed by
San Quentin Inmates

LOGOS
New York State Council on the Arts
Independent Film Project
Avidia
Solo & Co
Chateau Brooklyn
Green Garnet Productions