



A&E IndieFilms Presents
An Our Time Projects and Documentary Group Production
In Association with Whitewater Films

CARTEL LAND

A Film by Matthew Heineman



Sundance Film Festival Award Winner:

Directing Award: U.S. Documentary

U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award for Cinematography

SYNOPSIS

With unprecedented access, CARTEL LAND is a harrowing look at the journeys of two modern-day vigilante groups and their shared enemy – the murderous Mexican drug cartels.

In the Mexican state of Michoacán, Dr. Jose Mireles, a small-town physician known as "El Doctor," leads the Autodefensas, a citizen uprising against the violent Knights Templar drug cartel that has wreaked havoc on the region for years. Meanwhile, in Arizona's Altar Valley – a narrow, 52-mile-long desert corridor known as Cocaine Alley – Tim "Nailer" Foley, an American veteran, heads a small paramilitary group called Arizona Border Recon, whose goal is to stop Mexico's drug wars from seeping across our border.

Filmmaker Matthew Heineman embeds himself in the heart of darkness as Nailer, El Doctor, and the cartel each vie to bring their own brand of justice to a society where institutions have failed. CARTEL LAND is a chilling meditation on the breakdown of order and the blurry line between good and evil.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I was compelled to make CARTEL LAND after reading media accounts of Nailer and El Doctor, the film's main characters. I was immediately drawn to know more about their worlds, in which everyday citizens have been forced to take the law into their hands. I wanted to tell their stories from an intimate, yet action-driven verité perspective, without outside experts or text cards. It took many months to gain their trust and to gain the access that I needed to tell this story.

Over the year that I was embedded with both Nailer and El Doctor and their vigilante groups, the story unfolded in incredible and surprising ways that I could never have predicted when I first got started. Having no experience filming in risky situations, CARTEL LAND pushed me into some pretty precarious places – I've been in shootouts on the streets of Michoacán and in Breaking Bad-like meth labs in the middle of the dark, desert night. Utilizing small crews or shooting by myself, my goal was to be there to capture in real time each chapter of the ever-evolving and arcing stories, with the camera in the action, not observing it from the outside. It was a wild adventure and a grueling film to make.

The more time I spent down there, the more complex the story became: it was partly an ascent of people seeking to fight evil and partly a descent into hell as they took the law into their own hands, with many twists and turns in between. It is about elemental issues of order and chaos, of the desire for law but also of terrifying brutality and lawlessness.

I became even more motivated, almost obsessed, as the lines between good and evil became ever more blurred. The film doesn't offer pat answers and, instead, presents a story that I believe will be interpreted and understood in many different ways.

It is this moral ambiguity that intrigues me, and it emerges naturally in the story and in our characters. For me, it became a timeless story of the conflict between idealism and violence, which has eerie echoes throughout history and across the world today.

-- Matthew Heineman

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

MATTHEW HEINEMAN

Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Editor

Matthew Heineman is an Emmy-nominated filmmaker based in New York. He directed and produced ESCAPE FIRE: THE FIGHT TO RESCUE AMERICAN HEALTHCARE, which premiered at Sundance 2012. After winning numerous festival awards, the film was theatrically released to critical acclaim by Roadside Attractions / Lionsgate before airing on CNN and earning an Emmy nomination. Heineman previously collaborated for two years with a team at HBO on the groundbreaking, Emmy-nominated HBO series, *The Alzheimer's Project*, which aired in May 2009. He also directed and produced OUR TIME – a feature-length documentary about what it's like to be young in today's America. Heineman has directed several short films and commercials and is currently developing a few different projects.

TOM YELLIN

Producer

Tom Yellin is Co-Founder and President of The Documentary Group, an independent production company. The DocGroup's projects include the groundbreaking GIRL RISING, a feature film and a global campaign to support girls' education in developing countries. Other recent projects include AMERICA IN PRIMETIME, a four part PBS series showcasing the creative minds behind the new golden age of television; the Peabody award-winning ABC News Special, TO IRAQ AND BACK; and the Academy Award nominated documentary OPERATION HOMECOMING.

MOLLY THOMPSON

Executive Producer

Molly Thompson launched and runs A&E IndieFilms, the network's feature documentary division. A&E IndieFilms' productions include the Oscar-nominated, Sundance Award-winner MURDERBALL, the Oscar-nominated JESUS CAMP and the Emmy Award-winners THE TILLMA STORY and UNDER AFRICAN SKIES. Thompson executive produces the division's original productions including: AMERICAN TEEN, THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE and THE IMPOSTER. A&E IndieFilms' most recent productions include SUPERMENSCH THE LEGEND OF SHEP GORDON directed by Mike Myers, and HAPPY VALLEY directed by Amir Bar-Lev. Thompson also EP'd two scripted Lifetime Films' features: LAST OF ROBIN HOOD, which premiered at TIFF in 2013 and released by Goldwyn, and the forthcoming LILA AND EVE, starring Viola Davis and Jennifer Lopez.

MATTHEW HAMACHEK

Editor

Matthew Hamachek began his career working on the Oscar-nominated documentary STREET FIGHT with Marshall Curry and went on to collaborate with Curry again on RACING DREAMS (Best Documentary, Tribeca Film Festival) and IF A TREE FALLS, which won the Documentary Editing award at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary.

Hamachek went on to win the editing award at the 2013 Sundance film festival for GIDEON'S ARMY. Since then he has edited MISTAKEN FOR STRANGERS about the band The National and CONSOLE WARS (executive producers Scott Rudin and Seth Rogen) about the battle between Sega and Nintendo in 90s.

BRADLEY J. ROSS

Editor

Bradley is an Emmy nominated producer and award winning editor residing in New York City. Over the last decade, he has edited and produced a variety of content for Showtime Networks, Ogilvy & Mather, MTV and Amazon Studios. Recently, Bradley co-founded Manhattan Productions, a full service production / post-production company which creates commercials, trailers, network promos, television series and feature films. In 2012, he co-produced and edited ESCAPE FIRE: THE FIGHT TO RESCUE AMERICAN HEALTHCARE, which was a Sundance Official Selection, won numerous awards across the country, and was nominated for a 2013 Emmy Award.

PAX WASSERMANN

Editor

Pax Wassermann is a film editor and producer with twenty years in features, television and documentaries. In addition to CARTEL LAND, his documentary work includes DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND, the Sally Mann documentary WHAT REMAINS, the recent films ELAINE STRITCH: SHOOT ME and THE NOTORIOUS MR. BOUT, and WHICH WAY HOME, which was nominated for an Academy Award in 2009. His fiction work includes Peter Bogdanovich's upcoming comedy SHE'S FUNNY THAT WAY, starring Owen Wilson and Jennifer Aniston, and Noah Buschel's directorial debut BRINGING RAIN.

MYLES ESTEY

Co-Producer

Myles Estey is a journalist, producer and editor based in Mexico City since 2010, covering the drug war, politics and underground economies across Mexico and Central America.

He has produced radio and video documentaries that have aired on Discovery, BBC, CBC, CNN and others. His writing has appeared in publications such as the Times of London, Toronto Star, Global Post, Monocle and the Guardian. And he has produced video and radio news features for CBC, BBC, PRI's The World and Univision, and spot news and commentary for CBS, NPR and France 24.

The co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of the New York-based, award-winning [Makeshift Magazine](#), Myles leads an international, multimedia team covering creativity and ingenuity across the world's informal economies and black markets. Prior to Mexico, Myles lived in Liberia from 2008 - 2010.

MATT PORWOLL

Cinematographer

Matt Porwoll is a documentary cinematographer based in New York. CARTEL LAND is Porwoll's second collaboration with director Matthew Heineman: Emmy-nominated ESCAPE FIRE: THE FIGHT TO RESCUE AMERICAN HEALTHCARE, shot by Wolfgang Held, made its premiere at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

Matt has also served as additional cinematographer on BE HERE NOW: THE ANDY WHITFIELD STORY with Academy Award-nominated director Lilibet Foster, HBO's Emmy-nominated BY THE PEOPLE: THE ELECTION OF BARACK OBAMA, directed by Amy Rice and Alicia Sams, and GUNNIN' FOR THAT #1 SPOT directed by Adam Yauch of the Beastie Boys. Recently Matt worked with cinematographer Tony Hardmon and director Ellen Goosenberg on HBO's CRISIS HOTLINE: VETERANS PRESS 1, which was nominated for an Emmy and recently nominated for the 2015 Academy Awards Documentary Short Subject Category.

H. SCOTT SALINAS

Composer

Award-winning composer, H. Scott Salinas has contributed towards an impressive variety of notable projects including the Academy Award nominated documentary film THE SQUARE, HBO and Aaron Sorkin's smash hit *The Newsroom*, World of Coca-Cola's 4-D ride *In Search of the Secret Formula*, and the wildly popular *Spider-Man 3: The Video Game*.

Along with accolades such as the prestigious Cannes Lion, Clio and Turner Classic Movies Young Film Composer awards, Scott's accomplishments have earned him esteem and recognition as a highly versatile yet specialized talent.

Scott resides in Los Angeles where he is currently working on NBC's new spy thriller, *Allegiance*, premiering in 2015.

JACKSON GREENBERG

Composer

Jackson Greenberg is a composer, singer, songwriter and producer based in Los Angeles, California. Originally from Philadelphia, Greenberg's collaboration with award winning composer H. Scott Salinas on CARTEL LAND marks his first appearance at The Sundance Film Festival. Since moving to Los Angeles, the 24-year-old Greenberg has worked with legendary artist Randy Newman, written songs for numerous others and can be seen performing his own work at venues around town. He has scored multiple festival award winning short films and composed music for national television commercials. He received his undergraduate degree in music from Princeton University and his graduate degree in composition from The Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California.

Press:

"A vibrant, electrifying work" - [Indiewire](#)

"Remarkable", "daring" - [Huffington Post](#)

"Matthew Heineman break[s] the mold" - [Screen International](#)

"An astonishing journalistic achievement", "both timely and timeless" - [Twitch Film](#)

"The 15 Sundance 2015 films you need to know" - [LA Weekly](#)

COMPLETE PRODUCTION CREDITS

A&E INDIEFILMS Presents

An OUR TIME PROJECTS and DOCUMENTARY GROUP Production

In Association With WHITEWATER FILMS

A Film By MATTHEW HEINEMAN

Executive Producers

MOLLY THOMPSON
DAVID MCKILLOP
ROBERT DEBITETTO

Music by

H. SCOTT SALINAS
JACKSON GREENBERG

Cinematography by

MATTHEW HEINEMAN
MATT PORWOLL

Edited by

MATTHEW HAMACHEK
MATTHEW HEINEMAN
BRADLEY J. ROSS
PAX WASSERMANN

Co-produced by

MYLES ESTEY

Produced By

TOM YELLIN

Directed and Produced By

MATTHEW HEINEMAN

----end credits----

Directed, Produced, and Filmed By

MATTHEW HEINEMAN

Produced By

TOM YELLIN

Co-produced by

MYLES ESTEY

MATTHEW HAMACHEK
MATT PORWOLL
BRADLEY J. ROSS

Editors

MATTHEW HAMACHEK
MATTHEW HEINEMAN
BRADLEY J. ROSS
PAX WASSERMANN

Music by

H. SCOTT SALINAS
JACKSON GREENBERG

Co-Executive Producers

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DONNA AND KEVIN GRUNEICH
GABRIEL ROSENZVIT

Executive Producers

MOLLY THOMPSON
DAVID MCKILLOP
ROBERT DEBITETTO

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REBECCA STERN

Assistant Editors

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JACOB GERVICH

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BRIAN FELIX
ROBERT ROOK

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MATT PORWOLL

Sound by
ANDRÉS ARIAS
GLENN MICALLEF
PETER MILLER

Production Assistants
ZACH HEINEMAN
REBECCA STERN

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JOSHUA LAMBETH
NOEL LAMBETH

Arizona storyline inspired by Damon Tabor's Rolling Stone article "Border of Madness"

México Unit

Cinematography By
MATTHEW HEINEMAN

Local Co-Producer
MYLES ESTEY
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HANS MAXIMO-MUSIELIK

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ROSS MCDONNELL
DANIEL CARTER

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ANDRES ARIAS

MYLES ESTEY
MATT PORWOLL

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Orchestrated by
JACKSON GREENBERG
H. SCOTT SALINAS

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MATTHEW ATTICUS BERGER

Vibraphone, Percussion, Bass, Mandolin, Nylon, Piano
JACKSON GREENBERG

Charango, Mandolin, Nylon, Percussion, Bass
H. SCOTT SALINAS

Violins
CLAUDIO OLACHEA

Cellos
ARTYOM MANUKYAN

Accordion
MARITO

Title Song
"En Las Calles"
Written by H. Scott Salinas and Jose Cancela
Courtesy Salinas Music

Translations, Subtitles, and Transcripts by
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