

## ALL MAN: The International Male Story



<p><b>Official selection, Tribeca Film Festival 2022</b></p>	<p><b>Official Film Website:</b> <a href="http://www.internationalmalemovie.com">www.internationalmalemovie.com</a></p> <p><b>Production Company Website:</b> <a href="http://www.peterjonesproductions.com">www.peterjonesproductions.com</a></p> <p><b>Promotional Images:</b> <a href="https://tinyurl.com/allmanimages">https://tinyurl.com/allmanimages</a></p>
<p><b>World Premiere:</b> June 12 2022, 8:30pm (ET) at Village East Cinema</p> <p><b>Run Time:</b> 83 minutes</p> <p><b>Rating:</b> Not Rated</p> <p><b>Language:</b> English</p>	<p><b>Written and Produced by</b> Peter Jones</p> <p><b>Directed and Produced by</b> Bryan Darling Jesse Finley Reed</p> <p><b>Executive Producer</b> Peter Jones</p>
<p><b>Publicity Contact:</b></p> <p>Amy Grey</p> <p><a href="http://Dish Communications">Dish Communications</a></p> <p>Phone: 818-508-1000</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:amyg@dishcommunications.com">amyg@dishcommunications.com</a></p>	<p><b>Sales Contact:</b></p> <p>Taylor Vracin-Harrell</p> <p>Phone: 626-825-9090</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:taylor@peterjonesproductions.com">taylor@peterjonesproductions.com</a></p>

## **LOG LINE**

A small-town dreamer with a big idea leads an unlikely band of outsiders to create the *International Male* catalog, changing the way men would look - at themselves, at each other, and how the world would look at them.

## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

*ALL MAN: The International Male Story* journeys across three decades of the catalog's unlikely but lasting impact on fashion, masculinity, and sexuality in America. Gene Burkard, a once-closeted Midwesterner and GI, found freedom in San Diego, where he transformed men's fashion into something cosmopolitan, carefree, and trend-setting. *International Male* reached gay and straight customers alike as it redefined images of masculinity in popular culture, generating revenue and circulation in the millions.

This character-driven documentary crafts a portrait of a band of outsiders who changed the way men would look - at themselves, at each other, and how the world would look at them. This is *their* story - a modern day fairy tale about a dream that really did come true.

## **INTERNATIONAL MALE: ORIGIN STORY**

The catalog debuted in 1976, the year of America's bicentennial. Gene Burkard fittingly chose the slogan "freedom for the male" and declared to his customers, "Today's savvy male assumes a freedom to pick and choose his wardrobe from around the world according to his mood." Gene was assisted by Gloria Tomita, who, like him and all the people Gene hired, had little or no retail experience. "They were just real-world people with a real idea and made it happen," said employee Donn Wilson. "It was a complete ball of family and friends and good feelings," said Tomita.

"My view was that here were a lot of young men - gay young men that had faced a lot of rejection," said buyer Eva Salas. "This is where they landed and Gene and Gloria welcomed them with open arms."

*All Man* traces the catalog's meteoric rise in the cut-throat mail-order business and how the onset of HIV-AIDS devastated the *International Male* family and forced Gene to make the hardest decision of his life.

## **WRITER/PRODUCER'S STATEMENT**

In the summer of 2019, I had wrapped up a 4-part series on the history of aerospace for PBS stations, when one of my editors, Bryan Darling, brought up *International Male*. He and a collaborator, visual artist Jesse Reed, had shot a number of interviews with former models, employees, fashion experts and well-known fans of the iconic mail-order catalog. The catch: Gene Burkard, *International Male*'s almost 90 year-old founder, had turned down their interview request. This meant that Gloria Tomita, Gene's 93 year-old second-in-command, wouldn't talk either. Without them, I told Bryan and Jesse, there could be no film.

In October, 2019, I drove to San Diego to meet with Gene and Gloria at his home. Thirty-three years had passed since he sold *International Male* to Horn and Hardart, the direct-mail and automat behemoth. Gene asked me, "So why the hell would anyone give a damn about a long-gone mail order catalog?" I informed him that an *IM* Instagram account set up by Bryan and Jesse had 12,000 followers. "There are fans that care about the catalog," I told Gene. "But I'm here because this is *your* story; it's Gloria's story. It's about the *International Male* family you created together."

At this point, Gloria reflected, "You know, when I look back on it now, the whole thing is like a real fairy tale." Without missing a beat, Gene, deeply familiar with the Great American Songbook, gently began, "Fairy tales can come true, it can happen to you, if you're young at heart."

I left knowing how this story would be told and what song we would use for the end credits - "Young at Heart".

-Peter Jones

## TIMELINE:

- 1972
  - Gene Burkard starts his company - Brawn of California - from his beach shack in San Diego and sells the “Jock Sock”, inspired by a scrotal support garment he noticed in a London medical supply shop.
- 1973
  - Gene borrows \$5000 and places an ad for the Jock Sock in *Playboy* magazine. He hires Gloria Tomita, a twice-divorced mother in her 40s, newly arrived from Philadelphia, to be his secretary. She later becomes head of sales.
- 1976
  - First issue of the *International Male* catalog is distributed.
- 1977
  - *International Male* stores open in San Diego and West Hollywood.
- 1980
  - '76 Olympics gold-medalist Bruce Jenner (now Caitlyn) appears on the cover of *International Male*.
- 1984
  - *International Male* becomes a sponsor of the Summer Olympics in LA.
- 1986
  - *International Male* is sold to catalog conglomerate Hanover Direct.
  - Gene and Gloria retire.
- 1988
  - Hanover lays off many longtime employees and attempts to “straighten” the catalog’s “gay” reputation.
- 1992
  - Actor/model Shemar Moore appears on the cover of the *International Male* catalog.
- 1993
  - “The Puffy Shirt” episode of *Seinfeld* airs, inspired by IM’s “Ultimate Poet’s Shirt.”
- 1993
  - Cameron Diaz appears on the cover of the *International Male* catalog.
- 2001
  - In *Zoolander*, Ben Stiller, the film’s writer, director, and star, satirizes the world of male modeling.
- 2007
  - The final issue of the *International Male* catalog is distributed as Hanover merges the brand with its subsidiary, *Undergear*.

## **SELECTED QUOTES:**

“*International Male* really capitalized on putting masculine guys in pretty not masculine outfits. And it was that *yin* and *yang* that made it so alluring and made you think, ‘What’s going on here?’” -Carson Kressley, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*

“I have friends who would look at the gorgeous models and it would make them feel bad about themselves, that they could never attain that - they could never be that. They weren’t comfortable being around people who were so good looking.” - Frank DeCaro, comedian and author

“You know, there was still so much internalized homophobia among gay men. When you look at *International Male*, the men basically look straight. Gay men are quite happy to look at pictures of men who look straight, and straight men are *only* going to look at pictures of men who look straight. So it’s a win-win situation.” -Simon Doonan, fashion commentator

“There was a model that I had photographed, he’s also a psychologist, and when I told him that I had photographed for *International Male*, he said that the gay men that were his clientele, “There’s an astounding number that *International Male* was the bridge to them coming out.” -Dennis Covey, photographer

“I think the easy way to the men’s market was military clothing because that didn’t threaten them. You know a man in a uniform, you can’t beat that.” - Gloria Tomita, head of sales, *International Male*

“The people that were shopping through *International Male* were looking for style. A lot of these people didn’t live in major metropolitan areas. *International Male* had a wide reach across middle America - people who thought, ‘I can wear that shirt and I can rock it!’ - Deon Brown, telephone sales

“I might be dressing a lawyer or a hairdresser who was very flamboyant, and I was so comfortable with people that I often just introduced them to each other. The store’s customers became part of the sale and it didn’t matter about anyone’s sexuality or social status.” - Christopher Garcia, retail sales, *International Male* store

“The universal acceptance of the metrosexual has just opened up the whole world. I honestly feel the *International Male* catalog and those clothes were a part of that education.” - Dale Johnson, stylist, *International Male*

## **FILMMAKER BIOS**

### **PETER JONES**

Writer, Producer, Executive Producer

Peter Jones has been nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award five times, winning twice: for his A&E Biography special *Judy Garland: Beyond the Rainbow*, and for *Stardust: The Bette Davis Story*. His Peabody Award-winning film *Inventing LA: The Chandlers and Their Times* premiered as a primetime special on PBS; and Emmy-nominated *Johnny Carson: King of Late Night* remains the highest-rated film in the nearly four decade history of the PBS series, *American Masters*.

Peter Jones Productions has created more than 120 hours of programming for outlets such as PBS, TCM, A&E, Showtime, The Movie Channel, and American Movie Classics (AMC).

Peter is a graduate of Stanford University (BA, American Studies) and Northwestern University (Masters, Medill School of Journalism). He has twice been the recipient of the Producer of the Year Award from The Producers Guild of America.

### **BRYAN DARLING**

Director, Producer, Editor

Bryan Darling's work as a director and editor focuses on crafting stories that explore the social issues around marginalized communities. He served as editor on *Her Story*, a series following the intersecting lives of trans women navigating love. The series was nominated for a 2016 Emmy and won both a Gotham Award and GLAAD award.

His other works include James Franco's docu-drama *I Think You're Totally Wrong* and *Seed Money* about Chuck Holmes, pornographer turned philanthropist who funded Bill Clinton and the gay rights movement of the 1990s. *Seed Money* sold at the 2016 Cannes Market. As a director, Bryan's short films have screened in festivals worldwide, including Frameline, Seattle International, and BFI London.

### **JESSE FINLEY REED**

Director, Producer

Jesse Finley Reed's work as a visual artist, filmmaker, and art director passionately engages with social welfare issues, the LGBT experience, and pop-culture. His artwork has been exhibited internationally at galleries, museums, and public art sites.

As an art director, Jesse has worked with ad agencies in New York and Los Angeles, crafting campaigns for Pepsi, Chrysler, and UCLA. He served as creative director at the Los Angeles LGBT Center — the largest LGBT organization in the world — where he created a multi-platform campaign to promote PrEP and safer sex strategies. *ALL MAN: The International Male Story* is his first documentary film.

**MAIN CREDITS:**

A Peter Jones Production  
In Association with Bright Eyes

---

Written and Produced by  
PETER JONES

---

Directed and Produced by  
BRYAN DARLING  
JESSE FINLEY REED

---

Executive Producer  
PETER JONES

---

Supervising Producer  
TAYLOR VRACIN-HARRELL

---

Narrated by  
MATT BOMER

---

Edited by  
BRYAN DARLING  
CARL PFIRMAN

---

Motion Graphic Design and Animation by  
MEGAN TOENYES

---

Cinematography by  
GABRIEL BIENCZYCKI  
JONATHAN INGALLS  
BRYAN DARLING

---

Original Music by  
BRIGHT LIGHT BRIGHT LIGHT