

DISCLOSURE

Directed by Sam Feder

Produced by Amy Scholder and Sam Feder

Executive Producers

Laverne Cox, Caroline Libresco, Laura Gabbert,
S. Mona Sinha, Abigail E. Disney, Lynda Weinman,
Michael Sherman, Matthew Perniciaro, Charlotte Cook

WORLD PREMIERE: SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL 2020
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE: CPH DOX FILM FESTIVAL 2020
NEW YORK PREMIERE: TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL 2020
CANADIAN PREMIERE: HOT DOCS 2020

Run Time: 105 Minutes

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LOG LINE

Disclosure shows how the fabled stories of Hollywood deeply influence how Americans feel about transgender people, and how trans people are taught to feel about themselves.

SYNOPSIS

Disclosure is an unprecedented, eye-opening look at transgender depictions in film and television, revealing how Hollywood simultaneously reflects and manufactures our deepest anxieties about gender. Leading trans thinkers and creatives, including Laverne Cox, Lilly Wachowski, Yance Ford, Mj Rodriguez, Jamie Clayton, and Chaz Bono, share their reactions and resistance to some of Hollywood's most beloved moments. Grappling with films like *A Florida Enchantment* (1914), *Dog Day Afternoon*, *The Crying Game*, and *Boys Don't Cry*, and with shows like *The Jeffersons*, *The L-Word*, and *Pose*, they trace a history that is at once dehumanizing, yet also evolving, complex, and sometimes humorous. What emerges is a fascinating story of dynamic interplay between trans representation on screen, society's beliefs, and the reality of trans lives. Reframing familiar scenes and iconic characters in a new light, director Sam Feder invites viewers to confront unexamined assumptions, and shows how what once captured the American imagination now elicit new feelings. *Disclosure* provokes a startling revolution in how we see and understand trans people.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When the now-controversial *Time* magazine cover story, “The Transgender Tipping Point,” hit the newsstands in June 2014, trans people had barely been acknowledged in the mainstream media, let alone celebrated. At first, I was thrilled. Don't we all need to be seen? But then, I became concerned—because whenever a marginalized community gets mainstream attention, backlash ensues. Furthermore, what did this “tipping point” even mean? Trans people were still (and continue to be) disproportionately underemployed, lack access to affordable housing and health care, and face higher rates of hate crimes. The murder of trans women was becoming an epidemic, and the rate of suicide among trans men was surging. And this was all before the Trump administration began targeting the rights of trans people.

I wanted to understand why the mainstream media was declaring a change for a community it had little connection to, why now, and what led to this new wave of trans visibility. I decided to create a history of trans representation from the perspective of this unique moment. With no written source dedicated to the subject, I began my research with nearly 100 oral histories with trans people who work in film and TV. I collected over 1000 film/TV clips from over 100 years of characters who traverse gender expectations. While most of these depictions do not reflect current definitions of trans people, they have informed how many of us have learned to think of ourselves.

In making this film, my producer Amy Scholder and I committed to four rules in our process: 1. Only trans people are featured in the interviews; they are creative consultants and will be paid for their time. 2. All archival footage and ideas will be contextualized by the personal memories and perspectives shared in the interviews. 3. Instead of a chronological history, the structure will follow people's memories as they wrestle with the past. 4. We will prioritize hiring trans production crew; when we can't do that, the non-trans person hired will mentor an emerging trans filmmaker.

We approach all the ideas and footage in *Disclosure* with a nuanced lens. We want audiences to enjoy the nostalgia of archival clips while sitting with complicated feelings. We do not want to tell anyone how or what to think. Rather, ask how can we be critically engaged with problematic material, knowing that change happens over time, is not linear, and often people don't know what they don't know.

What I love most about being trans is that we live at the intersection of every possible trait a human can have—race, class, gender, ability, religion, nationality, immigration status, age, ethnicity, sexuality, and more. Trans people are and always have been part of the fabric of every culture. We invite everyone—trans and non-trans alike—to witness this wild, sometimes beautiful, often disturbing century of trans representation on screen.

—Sam Feder

APPEARING IN THE FILM

Nick Adams is the Director of Transgender Media & Representation at GLAAD. He is a resource for Hollywood creatives writing stories about transgender people.

Tre'vell Anderson is an award-winning journalist, and social curator. They recently served as Director of Culture and Entertainment at *Out* magazine and culture critic at the *Los Angeles Times*.

Ser Anzoategui is an actor with a recurring role on the Starz drama *Vida*. They are an advocate for more nonbinary representation in Hollywood.

Alexandra Billings is an actress, teacher, singer, and activist. She has appeared on *Transparent*, *Eli Stone*, *How to Get Away with Murder* and *Grey's Anatomy*, among many credits. She is Assistant Professor of Acting at USC.

Chaz Bono is a writer, musician, and actor. He had a recurring role in *American Horror Story*, danced on ABC's *Dancing With the Stars*, and produced the Emmy-nominated documentary film, *Becoming Chaz*.

Sandra Caldwell is an actress and writer. She has been in over forty films, television shows, musicals, and plays. She's performed at the Moulin Rouge in Paris, played a small part in Maya Angelou's *Down in the Delta*, and had a role in the BET mini-series *The Book of Negroes*, as well as *Murder at 1600*, *Serendipity*, *Shall We Dance*, *The Cheetah Girls*, and *Charm*.

Candis Cayne is an actress. She had a recurring role as Carmelita in *Dirty Sexy Money*. She has appeared in films such as *The Magicians*, *Wigstock: The Movie*, *Stonewall*, *Drag Time*, *Charlie!*, *Groom's Cake* and *Crazy Bitches*; and on the reality television show *I am Cait*.

Jamie Clayton is an actress and model. She starred as Nomi Marks in the Netflix original series *Sense8*, and is featured in *The L-Word: Generation Q*, *Designated Survivor*, and *Chain of Death*.

Michael D. Cohen is a Canadian actor. He is best known for his role as Schwoz Schwartz in *Henry Danger* and its spin-off, *The Adventures of Kid Danger*. He served as co-chair of the SAG-AFTRA Hollywood Conservatory at the American Film Institute, and is an acting coach.

Laverne Cox is a three-time Emmy-nominated actress, an Emmy-winning documentary film producer, and a prominent equal rights advocate and public speaker. Her groundbreaking role in the critically acclaimed Netflix original series *Orange Is the New Black* brought her to the attention of diverse audiences around the world.

Zackary Drucker is an Emmy-nominated producer for the docu-series *This Is Me*, as well as a Producer on Golden Globe and Emmy-winning *Transparent*. She starred in the short experimental documentary *Framing Agnes*, which is being made into a feature film.

Elliot Fletcher is an actor known for his roles in *Shameless*, *The Fosters*, *Faking It*, and *Young Hollywood*.

Yance Ford is an Oscar nominated, Emmy winning director and producer. His debut film, *Strong Island*, was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature at the 90th Academy Awards. Ford is a former Series Producer at the PBS documentary series *POV*. His curatorial work there was recognized with 5 Emmy Awards and 16 Emmy nominations.

Alexandra Grey is an actress and musician. She is best known for her role as Melody Barnes in the Fox television series *Empire*. She also had recurring roles on Amazon's *Transparent* and *Chicago Med*.

Jazzmun is an actress. She has been working in film and television since the 1980s, appearing in over fifty roles including *The John Larroquette Show*, *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, *Desperate Housewives*, and *Glee*.

Bianca Leigh is an actress, singer, writer, and educator. She is best known for her roles in *Transamerica*, *Hurricane Bianca*, and *Redirecting Eddie*.

Trace Lysette is an actress. She has appeared in several television shows and films including *Hustlers*, *Transparent*, *Pose*, *Drunk History* and *Blunt Talk*.

Mickey R. Mahoney is a media maker, educator, and performer. Mahoney teaches at the Art Institute of Chicago, and in the Television Department at Columbia College Chicago.

Tiq Milan writes about pop culture, inclusive leadership, transgender rights and equity. A journalist for over a decade, his work has appeared on MIC, Buzzfeed, NBC and CNN among others.

Jen Richards is a writer, actress, producer, and advocate. She has a recurring role in the HBO series *Mrs. Fletcher*, and has appeared in 2019 mini-series *Tales of the City*, *I Am Cait*, *Nashville*, *Doubt* and many more. In 2016, Jen co-directed, co-wrote, and co-produced the web series *Her Story*, which was nominated for an Emmy Award.

Mj Rodriguez is an actress and singer. She is known for her role as Bianca Rodriguez-Evangelista in the television drama *Pose*. She also appeared in roles on television series such as *Nurse Jackie*, *The Carrie Diaries*, and *Luke Cage*. Mj is a newest beauty ambassador for Olay.

Angelica Ross is an entrepreneur, actress, and advocate. She is the CEO of *TransTech Social Enterprises*, a firm that helps employ transgender people in the tech industry. She appeared in the television drama *Pose*, and has a recurring role in the current season of *American Horror Story*.

Hailie Sahar plays Lulu Abundance in the television drama *Pose*, and starred in the Off-Broadway production of *Charm* in 2017.

Leo Sheng is an activist, public speaker, writer, and artist. He appeared in the feature film *Adam*, and has a recurring role in *The L Word: Generation Q*.

Brian Michael Smith is an actor. He is in the cast of *The L Word: Generation Q*, and has appeared in *Queen Sugar*, *Chicago P.D.*, *Girls*, and *Homeland*.

Zeke Smith is a writer and advocate. In 2017, he participated as a contestant on *Survivor*, where he was outed as transgender by another cast member. Since then, Zeke has worked with GLAAD and helps raise awareness about transgender representation.

Chase Strangio is a lawyer and transgender rights activist. He is a staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union.

Susan Stryker is Associate Professor of Gender and Women's Studies, as well as Director of the Institute for LGBT Studies at the University of Arizona. She won an Emmy Award for the documentary film *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria*.

Rain Valdez is an actress and award-winning filmmaker. She has appeared in TV Land's *Lopez* and in *Transparent*. She wrote and stars in the seven-part web series *Razor Tongue*. Her rom-com short *Ryans*, which she stars in and co-created with Natalie Heltzel, screened in dozens of film festivals worldwide.

Marquise Vilsón is an actor and activist. He acted in a critically acclaimed episode of *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* that addressed the issues faced by transgender military service members. He has also acted in *Ben is Back*, *The Kitchen*, *The Blacklist*, and *Tales of the City*.

Lilly Wachowski is a writer, producer, and director. She is co-creator of *The Matrix* film franchise, *V for Vendetta*, *Speed Racer*, *Cloud Atlas*, and the Netflix series *Sense8*. She is a writer and executive producer for the current Showtime series *Work in Progress*.



FILMMAKER BIOS

LAVERNE COX, Executive Producer

Laverne Cox is a three-time Emmy-nominated actress, an Emmy-winning documentary film producer, and a prominent equal rights advocate and public speaker. Her groundbreaking role in the critically acclaimed Netflix original series *Orange Is the New Black* brought her to the attention of diverse audiences around the world. This role led to Laverne becoming the first openly transgender actress to be nominated for a primetime acting Emmy. Laverne also holds two SAG Awards, with her *Orange Is the New Black* cast mates. An artist and advocate with an empowering message of moving beyond gender expectations to live more authentically, Laverne is the first openly transgender person to appear on the covers of *Time*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue*, and *Essence* magazines. She is the executive producer of *Free CeCe!* and the Emmy-winning documentary *Laverne Cox Presents: The T Word*.

SAM FEDER, Director

Cited by Indiewire as an “exciting trans filmmaker shaking up Hollywood,” Sam’s work explores the power dynamics and politics of media-driven identity connecting urgent issues in the trans community to the struggles of the past. The *Advocate* named Sam’s feature, *Kate Bornstein is a Queer & Pleasant Danger*, one of the best LGBT documentaries of 2014. Feder’s work has been supported by the Ford Foundation, Fork Films, the Jerome Foundation, the MacDowell Colony, and Yaddo.

AMY SCHOLDER, Producer

Amy Scholder is a leader in independent publishing and LGBT activism. She produces events, conferences, and festivals; and has been managing imprints in the nonprofit and independent publishing worlds for over two decades. She currently serves as president of the Board of Directors for Lambda Literary. *Disclosure* is her first producing credit.

ELIZA LICHT, Co-Producer, Impact Producer

Eliza Licht is an industry leader in developing and implementing community engagement strategies to maximize the impact and visibility of documentary films, recent and current projects include *Roll Red Roll*, *Water Warriors*, and *Abortion Helpline: This is Lisa*. She served as a member of POV’s senior management team, working closely with POV’s executive producers and other senior staff to set priorities and direction for the series and spearheaded broadcast campaigns for over 200 films.

STACY GOLDATE, Editor

Stacy Goldate is an award-winning documentary editor. Her credits include episodes from *The Nineties*, *1968: The Year That Changed America*, and *The 2000s* for CNN and executive producers Tom Hanks, Gary Goetzman, and Mark Herzog. She co-edited World of Wonder’s Emmy-winning film *Out of Iraq* and the award-winning feature documentary, *hillbilly* directed by Ashley York and Sally Rubin.

AVA BENJAMIN SHORR, Director of Photography

Ava Benjamin Shorr has shot music videos, commercials, and feature narratives and documentaries. Ava is a member of the ICFC (International Collective of Female Cinematographers) and is currently in pre-production on a third feature. Ava spent two years assisting famed stop-motion animator PES.

BOW AND ARROW ENTERTAINMENT was founded in 2014 by Matthew Perniciaro and Michael Sherman to create a focus on artist driven narrative and documentary motion pictures. Recent films include Rashid Johnson's *Native Son*, an adaptation of Richard Wright's famed novel for HBO, which premiered as the Opening Night selection of the 2019 Sundance Film Festival; and Alex Ross Perry's *Her Smell*, starring Elisabeth Moss, which has been named by the *New York Times*, *Vanity Fair* and Indiewire as "one of the best films of 2019." Bow and Arrow will next premiere Elyse Steinberg and Josh Kriegman's *The Fight*, Michael Dweck and Gregory Kershaw's *The Truffle Hunters*, Sam Feder's *Disclosure: Trans Lives On Screen*, and the multi-filmmaker created *Omniboat: A Fast Boat Fantasia* at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. The company has additionally produced the 2018 Sundance Film Festival entries Crystal Moselle's *Skate Kitchen* and Josephine Decker's *Madeline's Madeline*, and 2017 Sundance entries Jeff Baena's *The Little Hours*, Alex Ross Perry's *Golden Exits*, and Dustin Guy Defa's *Person To Person*.

FIELD OF VISION is a filmmaker-driven visual journalism unit that commissions filmmakers and artists with developing and ongoing stories around the globe. Field of Vision is committed to advocating for the rights and needs of filmmakers and supporting cinematic innovation and diversity. Founded in 2015 and led by Executive Producers Laura Poitras and Charlotte Cook, Field of Vision has commissioned, produced, and/or supported more than 110 films, including over 75 short films, 4 episodic series, and 15 features. 50% of FOV-supported films have been directed by women and 42% by filmmakers of color. This work has premiered at Sundance, Cannes, Toronto, Berlin, SXSW, Hot Docs, Tribeca, and IDFA, among many other festivals, winning multiple Grand Jury and other awards and nominations. Distribution partners represent a wide range of media, from publishers like the *New Yorker*, *The Intercept* and *Teen Vogue*; distributors NEON, Showtime, BBC, PBS, Hulu; and exhibitors New York's IFC Center and London's Institute for Contemporary Arts.

GABBERT/LIBRESCO PROJECTS is a partnership between documentary film director/producer Laura Gabbert and curator/program director/producer Caroline Libresco, Gabbert/Libresco Projects develops and executive produces cinematic, emotionally-electric nonfiction films. As executive producers, we act as day-to-day strategists and deep-dive story advisors. Laura Gabbert, AMPAS, directed the feature documentaries *City of Gold* (Sundance 2015), *No Impact Man* (Sundance 2009), *Sunset Story* (Tribeca, Independent Lens), and the short film *Monument/Monumento* (Field of Vision). She recently completed the feature documentary, *Ottolenghi and the Cakes of Versailles*, premiering spring 2020. Caroline Libresco was Senior Programmer for the Sundance Film Festival from 2001-2019. She was also Founding Director of Sundance Institute's Women's Initiative and the Catalyst Program, which, under her leadership, raised \$30 million for 89 projects in its first six years. Among her projects as creative producer are *Sunset Story* (Tribeca Jury Prize) and Peabody Award-winner *American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs*. She serves on the board of IDA and is a member of AMPAS.

FOR MORE INFO ABOUT ANY OF OUR EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS, PLEASE CONTACT disclosuredocumentary@gmail.com

A Note About the Making of DISCLOSURE from Director SAM FEDER & Executive Producer LAVERNE COX

We all need to be seen, and often, being seen is what puts marginalized people in harm's way. It is that paradox of visibility which inspired us to make *Disclosure*. We looked to one of the most compelling modes of storytelling—Hollywood film and TV—to consider how trans people have learned to think about ourselves, and what non trans people have been taught to think about us.

For three years, we worked together researching, producing, and editing *Disclosure*. Along the way we collaborated with over 100 other trans filmmakers, assembling a history of trans representation in mainstream film and TV. While sharing footage, articles, and ideas, we wrestled with the stereotypes, tropes, dehumanization and sometimes empowering aspects of this history. It's often been painful to confront some of this material, but we think it's meaningful to show it here and now. Together we were able to acknowledge and sometimes find humor in the absurdity, which has been cathartic.

We did not want to demonize any one person or any one story; we wanted to construct a nuanced film that includes many, often conflicting ways of seeing. We can love something *and* look at it critically.

There are so many more people, materials, and stories to tell and ways to tell them, which didn't make it into this film. There is more within and outside of Hollywood that is crucial to trans audiences. There are so many trans filmmakers who have created pivotal stories.

Disclosure won't be the only history of trans representation. It's just a start. We can't wait to see how it is received, built upon, and grappled with. And we can't wait to see what comes next.



CREDITS

DISCLOSURE
IN ASSOCIATION WITH **FIELD OF VISION** AND **BOW & ARROW**

A FILM BY **SAM FEDER & AMY SCHOLDER**

DIRECTED BY
SAM FEDER

PRODUCED BY
AMY SCHOLDER
SAM FEDER

CO-PRODUCERS
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LISA REMINGTON

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MUSIC BY
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LAVERNE COX

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FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
LANE STROUD
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PRODUCTION DESIGNER
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