



AMERICAN ANARCHIST

2016 / USA / English / 80 Min

Feature Documentary

Written and Directed by Charlie Siskel

World Premiere

Selected for the 73rd Venice International Film Festival

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www.americananarchistmovie.com <https://twitter.com/anarchistmovie>

<https://www.facebook.com/americananarchistmovie>

SHORT SYNOPSIS

American Anarchist tells the story of one of the most infamous books ever written, *The Anarchist Cookbook*, and the role it has played in the life of its author, now 65, who wrote it at 19 in the midst of the counterculture upheaval of the late 1960s and early '70s.

LONG SYNOPSIS

In 1970, William Powell wanted to help build a new society, so he taught the world how to blow up the old one. As the heady days of the late 60's counterculture and political upheaval turned darker, Powell, at age 19, wrote one of the most infamous books ever published: *The Anarchist Cookbook*. Part manifesto and part bomb making manual, it went on to sell over 2 million copies. Since then, the *Cookbook* has been associated with decades of violent anti-government attacks, abortion clinic bombings, school shootings and homegrown domestic terrorism.

Now 65, Powell is a man haunted by his own creation, struggling to make sense of the damage it has done. After writing the book, Powell left the US and has lead an itinerant life ever since. He has traversed the globe teaching kids with special needs - committed, ironically, to the kinds of kids who in some cases have turned to violence and the *Cookbook*.

American Anarchist tells a cautionary tale of youthful rebellion and unforeseen consequences, a universal, all-too-human story of a man at the end of his life wrestling with his past, his identity, and coming to terms with who he really is.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*, after a young seaman abandons ship risking the lives of passengers, he is tried in court and publicly disgraced. He hides his past for years, moving from job to job each time his secret is discovered. Conrad observes, "No man ever understands quite his own artful dodges to escape from the grim shadow of self knowledge."

A persistent reminder of his own turbulent past, *The Anarchist Cookbook* is William Powell's secret burden, his "constant companion" as he has called it. We all keep secrets from others and even ourselves. And we tell stories in order to make sense of our past or, for some, to escape it. My hope -- the hope of any filmmaker -- is that my subject, Bill's story with all its artful dodges, might help us better understand one another and ourselves.



Director Charlie Siskel and DP Nina Bernfeld © 2016 Patna Pictures, LLC

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Charlie Siskel

(Director/Writer/Producer)



Charlie Siskel is an Oscar and Emmy-nominated film and television writer, director and producer. His film credits include the Oscar-nominated documentary *Finding Vivian Maier*, and he was a producer of the Oscar-winning film *Bowling for Columbine* with Michael Moore, and *Religulous* with Bill Maher and Larry Charles. In television, Siskel's current credits include *Tosh.0* and *Review* on Comedy Central. He has worked on documentaries and comedies for 18 years, often combining the two. A former lawyer, Siskel lives with his family in Los Angeles.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES PRODUCTION PHOTOS



Director Charlie Siskel interviews Bill Powell © 2016 Patna Pictures, LLC



Director Charlie Siskel interviews Bill Powell © 2016 Patna Pictures, LLC



Director Charlie Siskel interviews Bill Powell © 2016 Patna Pictures, LLC



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MAIN TITLES CREW

Written and Directed by
Charlie Siskel

Produced by
Charlie Siskel

Executive Producers
Matthew Perniciaro
Michael Sherman

Co-Producer
Chris McKinley

Associate Producer
Abigail Deser

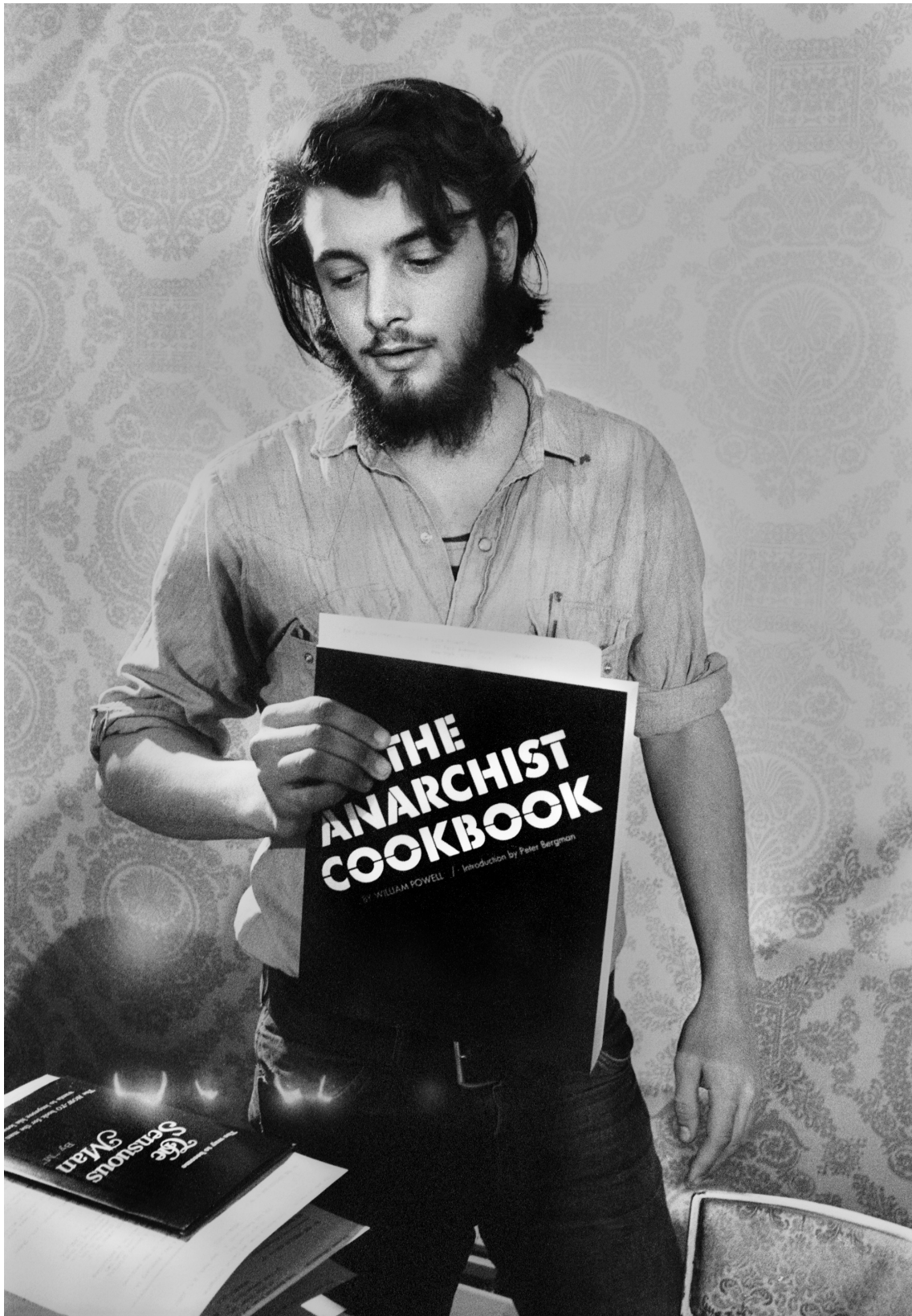
Edited by
Chris McKinley

Original Music
T. Griffin

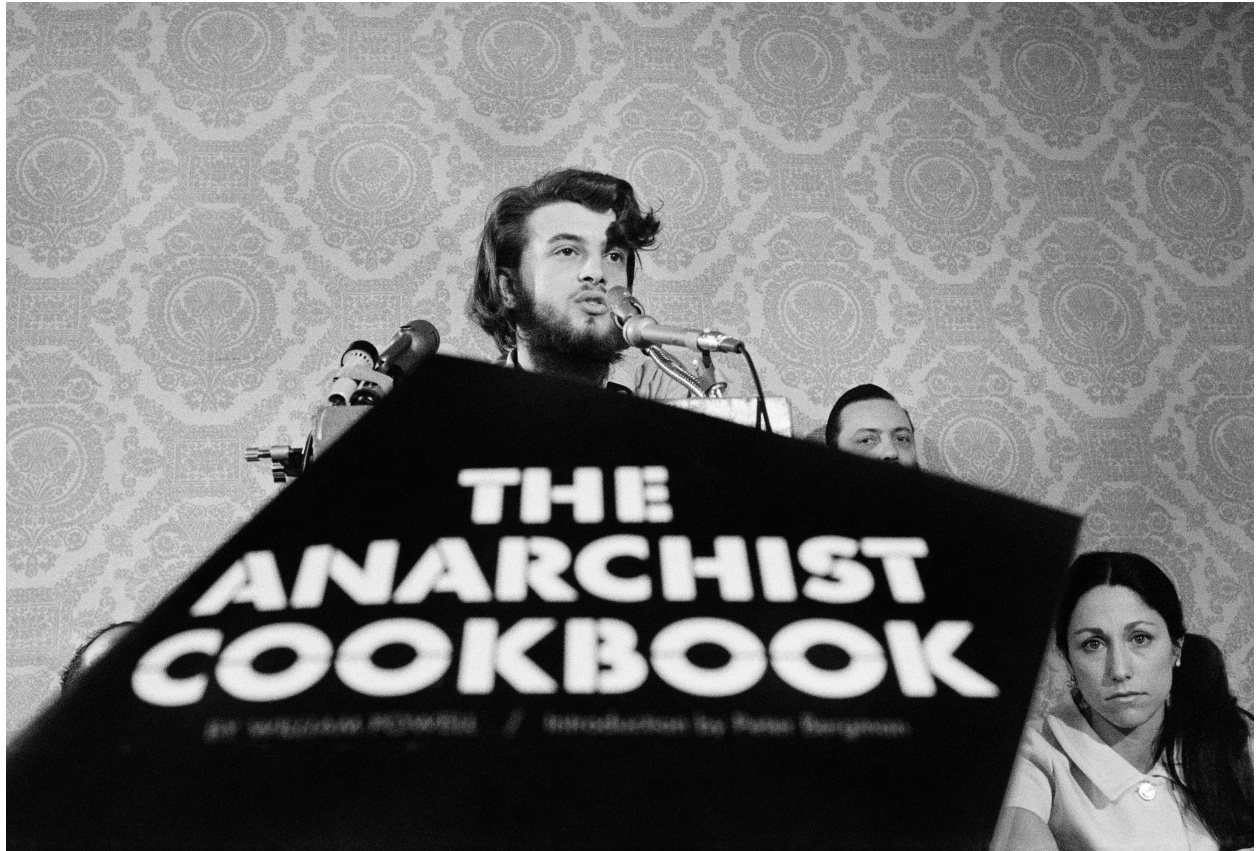
Director of Photography
Nina Bernfeld

Production Sound
Marc Parazon

Production Companies
Patna Pictures
Bow and Arrow Entertainment



William Powell, Courtesy JP Laffont/Polaris © 2016 Patna Pictures, LLC



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