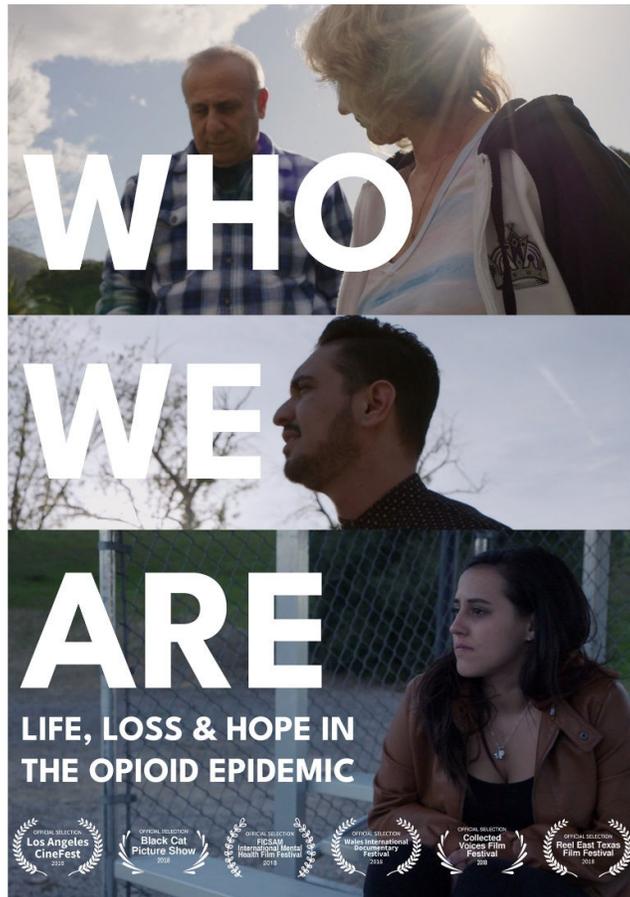


WHO WE ARE



A FILM BY

NICHOLAS MANTING BREWER

27 mins / Color / 2018 / English



EPF MEDIA

324 S. Beverly Drive, PMB 437

Beverly Hills, CA 90212

(323) 301-3663

Website: www.epfmedia.com

Email: larry@epfmedia.com

FILM FESTIVALS

Wales International Documentary Festival

Collected Voices Film Festival

FICSAM International Mental Health Film Festival

Los Angeles CineFest

Reel East Texas Film Festival



SYNOPSIS

In the United States, at least 91 people die every day from an opioid overdose. The ripples of these deaths linger in the memories of those who survive and those who they leave behind. *Who We Are* takes us on an immersive journey that provides an intimate and meditative portrait of life, loss, and hope through the eyes of families confronting the opioid epidemic.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

Opioids, including painkillers and heroin, kill 91 people every day in this country. From the 1990's to the mid 2000's prescription painkillers were overprescribed by doctors out of concern for pain management. 80 percent of those addicted to Heroin today began using these drugs as legal prescriptions. *Who We Are* is an exploration of the aftermath within the family unit. The film focuses on the memories of a family who has lost their oldest son to a heroin overdose, but finds a combination of grief, solace, and hope in his memories.

In late September 2016, I found myself in the suburban oasis of Simi Valley, California. Most Californians know Simi as the town of the Rodney King Trial, the Reagan Library, and the home of many LAPD officers. For decades, Simi Valley was considered America's Safest City in an annual FBI listing. However, in this traditionally conservative small town, many people were overwhelmed with the realities of drug overdoses. And this phenomenon extended further across Southern California into blue-leaning communities like Agoura Hills. Through a network of parents from community organizations like Not One More and The Liberty Crew, we began to find people who would speak to us.

In Agoura Hills, I met Joyce and Rick Isaac. I remember the first night they told me the story of the day their son Josh died. He was on his way to rehab. His Dad left him with a friend and Josh promised them he was going to rehabilitation. But later that day, the police arrived on their doorstep to inform them that their son had died from an overdose. What I came to realize in speaking with the Isaacs was that the last few days and the disease that took him away were not the entirety of his life's story. It became clear early on in the course of researching that this film would have to be both immersive and reflective. And thus, I continued to explore a hybrid of cinema verité with flourishes of the poetic. When I reflect on the experience, I see a film about memory, coping, hoping, loving, and trying. It's an invitation to empathize and acknowledge the universality of pain from loss.

After meeting many families affected by this epidemic—after sitting down and listening to their stories, I no longer see it as a purely tragic issue. There is sadness, no doubt. Yet underlying every interaction I have discovered deep and sincere courage. It is this attribute that we can grasp from one another. It is my hope that sharing people's stories will inspire another direction in someone else's life. And it is my determination as a filmmaker to show those moments of levity and lightness in the midst of darkness that will emphasize our uniquely human similarities. With that recognition comes the hope of understanding that the people affected by this epidemic are not morally flawed. I hope to demonstrate that we are more alike than we are different. *Who We Are* is a film about the Heroin Epidemic, but much more than that, it is a universal story of how we find meaning and hope in our lives against great odds.

I was fortunate to work with 7 other intensely collaborative filmmakers. I'm proud to call each of them my friend. We came from all regions of the Globe, from The Democratic Republic of Congo to Beijing, China to Wisconsin, USA. Our producers, Julia Davis and Monica Johnson Harris, found infinite ways to support our crew and subjects throughout the process. Feixue Tang, our fearless cinematographer, allowed her gentle spirit to immerse herself into any situation. Michael Gil and Qianni Tang, our wonderful editors, helped to craft the sensational balance of poetic and verité and immerse them into a cohesive story. Andy Gladbach and Muhasani Joshua Kasomo brought great humor and constantly ensured we connected to the aural world.

This is Who We Are

- Nicholas Manting Brewer

DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

Nicholas Manting Brewer is an award-winning documentary storyteller and film editor based out of Los Angeles, CA by way of Augusta, GA. His work has screened at several film festivals, including Sundance, South by Southwest, and the Cleveland International film festival. Nicholas earned his B.A. in Anthropology from New College of Florida and his MFA from the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts. In 2018, Nicholas co-founded Standard Deviation Productions. He hopes to make films that connect people in an increasingly polarized world.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

A Standard Deviation Film

Director **Nicholas Manting Brewer**

Producer **Julia Davis & Monica Johnson Harris**

Cinematographer **Feixue Tang**

Editor **Michael Gil & Qianni Tang**

Sound Production & Design **Andy Gladbach & Muhasani Joshua Kasomo**

Composer **Brett Holman**

The filmmakers would like to thank the Isaac Family, the Cornes Family, the Aliyar and Aliyar Kazimi Family, the Montoya Family, Not One More, and The Liberty Crew