

AMERICONNED- SYNOPSIS

AMERICONNED is an award-winning film about income inequality in the US and its tragic destabilizing effects to Americans. Deep inequality has led to radicalization at every level of society, and this powerful documentary depicts what happens when America hits its tipping point, by looking back through our history at similar critical moments of instability. The labor movement of the past was born in times like these. We must restore the path to the once great middle class that now suffers in silence.

Despite an increase in productivity in recent decades, compensation for the American worker has been stagnant. In addition, 47% of American jobs are at high risk of being lost to automation and AI by the mid-2030s.

In the United States, there's been an upward redistribution of over \$50 trillion from the bottom 90% to the top 1% over the last 40 years. Politicians on both sides of the aisle have created a protection racket for the rich, and corporations are deliberately crushing unions.

In this David vs. Goliath story, Chris Smalls leads a movement to unionize Amazon workers for the first time, after the corporation fired Smalls for speaking up for workers' rights. He is inspiring legions of workers to, as the late-great Congressman John Lewis said, get into "good trouble."

DIRECTOR, SEAN CLAFFEY'S STATEMENT

The greatest existential threat to our country today is vast and growing income and wealth inequality. We will never get people to focus on global climate change if they are uncertain that they'll be able to feed or house their families today, tomorrow, or next week. We'll also never be able to eliminate the corrosive divisiveness of our political system.

We decided early on that the best way to approach this film, so that it may inspire change, would be to tell real stories about real Americans who are suffering from this unjust system. In the film, we follow several families who all want the same thing, namely the ability to do well enough to provide for their children so that the next generation can do better. We bring the audience into the lives and struggles of each of our characters, and through the emotional experiences that we all can identify with. We wanted to show that the economy is about people, and that when people do better, the real economy does better.

AMERICONNED sounds the alarm. History has shown repeatedly that countries with extreme levels of inequality usually face increasing levels of instability. Worse, they often devolve into some form of a police state, authoritarianism, feudalism or outright revolution. We are at an inflection point and have a choice. We can choose to back away from the abyss and rebuild a fairer system for our children, or we can do nothing and risk falling into darkness and losing our

democracy. But it won't be politicians who will save us. We must decide to join the fight and shift power back to the people of this country.

This film is about us—the 80% to 90% of us who are struggling and not making it, due in part to an unforgiving and unjust system. Power has been shifted away from us, and with that loss of power, the path to a middle-class life and the viability of the middle class is threatened. The American Dream, long envied in the world, is on life support.

In the film, we rely on top experts to help trace the causes of income inequality and expose the forces and people who have spent the last 45 years pushing for and getting the redistribution of wealth to go from the 80% of us to the 1%. This “trickle up” has resulted in the upward redistribution of over \$50 trillion from the bottom 90% over the past 45 years. We explore the ideology of those at the very top 1% for whom “maximizing shareholder value” is the only commandment. And all this is at the expense of their employees, communities, country, and the environment. We must make the system fairer before automation and AI make large swaths of the job market no longer relevant.

The key to the film is the weaving of emotional personal stories with the careful explanation of experts who take us on a journey through this cycle of inequality. The film makes clear that we have faced these sorts of challenges before, how we have met such challenges before, and how we can beat them again if we all stand up and fight. The time is now!

We've been conditioned to believe that if we're not doing well it must be our fault because others in the past have been able to ascend to the middle class and beyond. This hides the fact that this system is now rigged such that the path to financial security is uncertain or blocked for most. The American Dream is now fading or gone altogether for too many people in this country.

My family's story propelled me to make this film. It's the story of a boy who grew up on a subsistence farm in Ireland whose father died suddenly when he was just a boy—an existential crisis for any farming family. The boy lived in a thatched-roof house with two rooms and a dirt floor and didn't own a pair of shoes until the people of a nearby town pooled their money and bought him a pair of shoes and a suit. He faked his papers when he was 15 years old so that he could come to America and send money back to keep his family from starving. He worked seven days a week, but for the first time in his life wasn't hungry every day. He eventually got a union job, which fueled his rise into the middle class and helped him send his children to college. This is the story of my grandfather and of my family and of how he was blessed to realize his piece of the American Dream.

It's clear to me that the American Dream must be kept alive for those who want to come here and for all of those who are here whose path to their own dream has been blocked. This is who we are making this film for. It is time to rise!

AMERICONNED- CREW BIOGRAPHIES

Director/Writer/Producer Sean Claffey has more than 25 years in the film industry spanning feature films, TV pilots, industry documentaries and commercials. Sean's mission is to tell the stories of the voiceless and oppressed to shine the light into the darkness and expose oppression wherever it may be.

Shine the Light Films was formed in 2020 and is committed to producing quality documentaries that shine a light on injustices around the globe.

More information: <https://shinethelightfilms.com>

Producer/Writer Dave Pederson has been an entertainment professional for over 20 years with expertise in Film & Television production, development, sales and distribution.

Dave's successes include the first internet to television show with MTV's "I Bet You Will", producer of the Oscar nominated film "Super Size Me," and the Cannes Award winning "The Third Wave."

Producer/Executive Producer Jillian Hurley is a media consultant with over 25 years of experience maximizing exposure and optimizing messaging for clients.

Jillian is also a long-time activist for the working poor, focusing her efforts in areas including affordable housing, middle class healthcare, childcare reform, racial equality, and children's rights.

Jillian's previous production experience includes field producer and casting for National Geographic, CBS News, ABC News, Oprah! & news magazines.

Producer/Executive Producer Len Monfredo is an owner of the fifth-generation mechanical contracting company E.M.Duggan. In 1891 the company started out as a mom-and-pop plumbing shop in Boston; they are now leaders in the mechanical contracting industry, employing more than 400 people. Contractor Magazine named them "contractor of the year" and they routinely rank as one of the best/top places to work by both the Boston Globe and Boston Business Journal.

In 2009 Monfredo joined the Duggan team operating all aspects of the business including finances, planning, operations, client relations, management, vendor relations, advertising, marketing, safety and green building. He is also President of Duggan Mechanical Service, a division for E.M. Duggan.

Monfredo has been active in the construction industry for nearly 30 years. He was a former owner of Creative Engineering Inc a film and TV design and set construction company. __

Producer/Executive Producer Jeffrey S. Mann is an amateur economist with 25-plus years in the corporate and entrepreneurial world.

His interest in America's economic bubble and the disparate fates of the very rich, the middle class and the working poor led him on an autodidactic journey studying economic theory.

Jeff's research and the economic experts he helped bring into the project not only define America's current dangerous economic situation but provide the viewer with a clear understanding that the destruction of the middle class is not fate but a clearly defined path designed by big business and their influence on both parties.

Jeff's production experience includes logistics, casting experts, interviews and fact-checking.

Executive Producer Nicholas Cohen is a dynamic business leader, with 20 years of success in the entertainment industry. Overseeing archtainment, studio, and theater projects for venues across the Southeast United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. His clients included Walt Disney, Universal Studios, Sea World, and Miami-Dade County. As a live events producer, he has hosted meetings with many Fortune 500 companies, including Microsoft, Facebook, and Bank of America. Beginning his career as a recording engineer, Nicholas worked with musical artists from Def Jam, Roadrunner Records, and Interscope Records.

Executive Producer Wayne Goldblatt has more than 12 years of experience in the documentary film industry, producing, developing, and managing a variety of films, including "Super Size Me," "Meet Dave," and "Deception." Wayne also worked as an agent, representing talent, writers and directors. He was also involved in production of a number of TV shows, including A&E's Incurable Collector, and also worked on a number of foreign TV commercials.

Additionally, Wayne co-founded the start-up tech company HAZARI.com, an ETSY- or Pinterest-like ecommerce marketplace for tech geeks to buy, sell or share most anything relevant to nerd culture.

Writer Christopher Seward is a documentary filmmaker with over twenty years of experience working on over 40 films. He edited Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 9/11, winner of the Palme d'Or at Cannes, as well as the Oscar nominated Sicko - both earning him nods from the American Cinema Editors Guild as Best Documentary Editor of the year. While he continues to do some finishing editing he has expanded into Producing, Writing and consulting for many other directors including the SXSW Grand Jury winning People's Republic of Desire, and the Sundance Grand Jury winning One Child Nation. Christopher is currently in development on two feature docs he is Writing and Directing.

Editor Meghan Sims is an award-winning editor and filmmaker whose work has been recognized by the Brooklyn Arts Council, Midwest Film Festival, NY Times Op-Docs, and Vimeo Staff Picks Best of the Year Awards. Her feature film credits include BIG STAR: NOTHING CAN HURT ME (SXSW 2012), as well as TICKLING GIANTS (TriBeCa 2016) as an assistant editor.

She also assisted Academy Award-winning director Laura Poitras (CITIZENFOUR) and editor Melody London (STRANGER THAN PARADISE, HEART OF A DOG) on RISK, Poitras' film about Wikileaks and its founder, Julian Assange, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival's Directors' Fortnight in 2016. In 2020 she edited OUT OF DARKNESS for director Tanaz Eshaghian (BE LIKE OTHERS, Sundance 2009). In 2021 she edited POOR, a feature documentary about income inequality in America from The New Deal to today, working closely with story consultant Christopher Seward (FAHRENHEIT 9/11, ONE CHILD NATION). Starting in January 2021 she has been working with Nadav Kurtz on UNTITLED SAM PROJECT.

Editor Marissa Gouverne is a New York City based documentary and commercial video editor. Hailing originally from Corpus Christi, Texas, she studied story structure and technique at the University of Pennsylvania. She specializes in topics ranging from arts & culture to social justice, having worked on such documentary productions as Finding Babel, Into the Night: Portraits of Life and Death, Like Any Other Kid, Jane Fonda in Five Acts, and Lenox Hill.

AMERICONNED- SUBJECT BIOGRAPHIES

Christian Smalls is the founder and president of the Amazon Labor Union, an independent, democratic, worker-led labor union at Amazon in Staten Island. He is also the founder of The Congress of Essential Workers (TCOEW), a nationwide collective of essential workers and allies fighting for better working conditions, better wages, and a better world. Smalls was formerly an Amazon warehouse supervisor, helping open three major warehouses in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut during his five years with the company, but he was fired in 2020 after organizing a protest against the company's unsafe pandemic conditions. Smalls has been profiled by media outlets worldwide, including The New York Times, USA Today, The Guardian, The Wall Street Journal, CNBC, CBC Radio, Salon, and Jacobin. He lives in Hackensack, New Jersey.

AMERICONNED- CAST AND CREW LIST

Directed by
Sean Claffey

Written by
Sean Claffey
Dave Pederson
Christopher Seward

Producers
Sean Claffey
Jillian Hurley
Jeffrey Mann
Leonard Monfredo
David Pederson

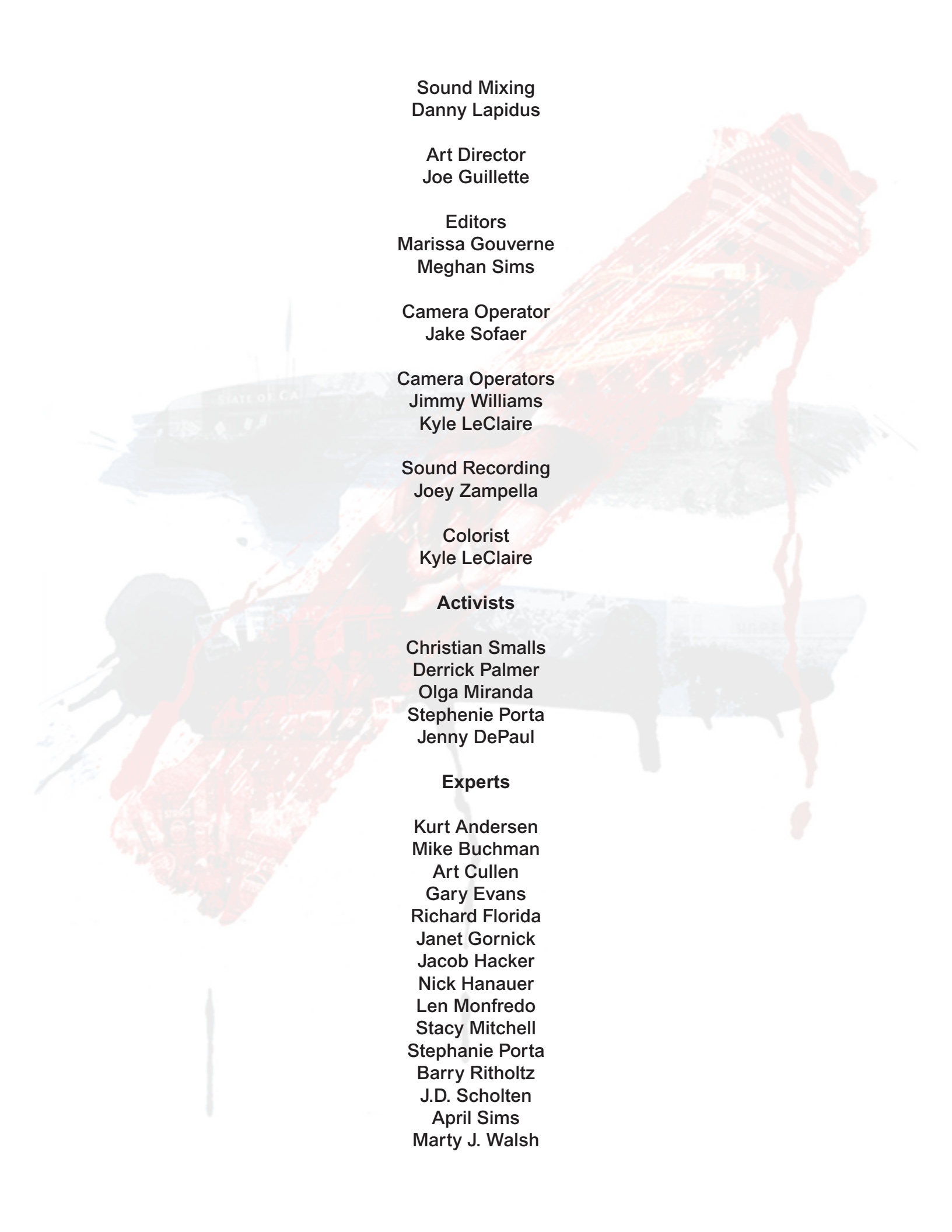
Executive Producers
Leonard Monfredo
Sean Claffey
Jillian Hurley
Jeffrey Mann
David Pederson
Wayne Goldblatt
Nick Cohen

Associate Producers
Josh Frankel
Jake Sofaer

Composer
Maxim Molsen

Composers
Dan Cornelius
Kevn Kinney "Preapproved Predenied"
Danny Lapidus
Rodger Sader
Gina Volpe
Joey Zampella

Music Supervisor
Danny Lapidus



Sound Mixing
Danny Lapidus

Art Director
Joe Guillette

Editors
Marissa Gouverne
Meghan Sims

Camera Operator
Jake Sofaer

Camera Operators
Jimmy Williams
Kyle LeClaire

Sound Recording
Joey Zampella

Colorist
Kyle LeClaire

Activists

Christian Smalls
Derrick Palmer
Olga Miranda
Stephenie Porta
Jenny DePaul

Experts

Kurt Andersen
Mike Buchman
Art Cullen
Gary Evans
Richard Florida
Janet Gornick
Jacob Hacker
Nick Hanauer
Len Monfredo
Stacy Mitchell
Stephanie Porta
Barry Ritholtz
J.D. Scholten
April Sims
Marty J. Walsh



Families

Florida:
Ana

Pennsylvania/New York:
Christina
Sean

California:
Melissa
Jeff
Avery

Boston:
Eiane

Second Unit Boston

Producer
Laura Clarizio

Camera Operator
George Horemiotis

Assistant Editor
Kayni Narcisse
Chelsea Searles
Jake Sofaer

Art Department
Joe Guillette
Bond Hurley

Archival Consultant
Christine Fall
Michael Getto

Archival Producer
Lauren Ospala

Archivist
Vivian Johnson

Fair use Legal Team
Peter Jaszi
Brandon Butler

**Fixers
Millsaps Dye
Noah Burgess**

**Dedicated to all those who try their best and are still struggling.
To those we lost while making this film.**

**A Mother, Patrica Feeney
A Father, James A McKinnon
A Friend, David Lanphier**

