

The background of the image is a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a thatched roof of a building. Behind it, several banana trees with large, green leaves are visible. To the left, a large, leafy tree extends its branches towards the center. The sky is a pale, clear blue.

# Companions

LET HIM SPEAK WHO HAS SEEN WITH HIS EYES

Based on true events

## The Film

*Companions* is a feature film based on true events. The film tells the story of a Congolese missionary assigned to proselytize in a community he once fought against as a revolutionary and where he now must train a new missionary from the rural US. Ghosts of his violent past haunt his mind as race and culture collide, ultimately testing the strength of his conversion.



# The Story

*Companions* is based on the experiences of a Congolese missionary who, prior to his mission, trained in revolutionary ideology and was in the process of organizing his own revolutionary group when he converted to Mormonism. Our story begins in the mission field when he is assigned a new companion, an Anglo missionary from rural Idaho, and placed in a community he once despised. Together they deal with universal issues of conflict, revenge, reconciliation, and intercultural connection while facing their prejudices, blind spots, and past misdeeds.

Throughout the world, we are seeing prejudice and racism at the base of murders (hence the campaign of "Black Lives Matter"), random violence, and warfare. We even still hear of "ethnic cleansing." Filmmakers have tackled these issues focusing on stories about "truth and reconciliation"-- many of them (like *Schindler's List*) memorable and impactful. Our film goes deeply into history and faith and presents a specific story with universal implications. In a world where many films show violence as a solution to problems, our film will show the beauty of the path of forgiveness.



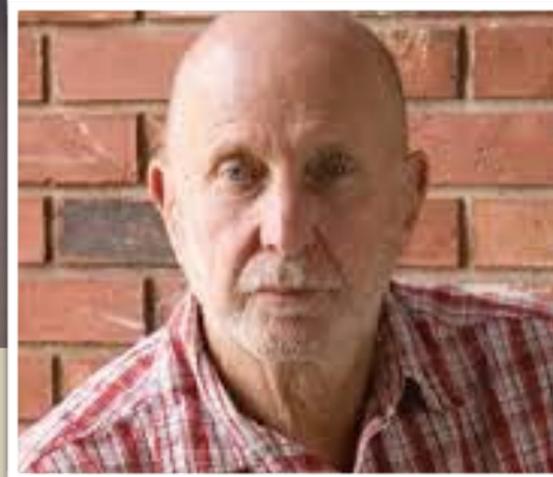


# The Team



DIRECTOR | STERLING VAN WAGENEN is the co-founder of the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, and, in association with Robert Redford, he was the founding executive director of the Sundance Institute. He has directed four feature films and has produced over fourteen documentaries, feature films, and/or television series, including the Academy Award-winning *Trip to Bountiful* with Horton Foote.

He has served on the media arts panels at both the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts, twice chairing the Arts and Television Panel at the NEA. Currently, he is the Producer-in-Residence at the University of Utah, and a partner in Pearl Farm Entertainment, based in Los Angeles.



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER | MICHAEL HAUSMAN is a native New Yorker and critically acclaimed producer. He is best-known for executive producing *Amadeus* (8 Academy Awards, including Best Picture), *Brokeback Mountain* (3 Academy Awards), *Gangs of New York* (10 Academy Award Nominations, including Best Picture), *Places in the Heart* (2 Academy Awards), *The Firm* (2 Academy Award Nominations), *Nobody's Fool* (2 Academy Award Nominations), *Man on the Moon*, *All the King's Men*, and many others. Additional credits include *The People Vs. Larry Flynt* (2 Academy Award Nominations), *Valmont* (1 Academy Award Nomination) and *House of Games*.



SCREENWRITER | MARGARET BLAIR YOUNG is an American author, filmmaker, and writing instructor. She has written six novels and two short story collections. Over the last seventeen years, her work has focused on African American history in the west and has been featured in museum displays and articles. She has recently shifted her focus to the African continent.

Margaret was awarded the "Best in State" for the body of her fiction. She was also honored with the Smith-Petit award for her contribution to Mormon literature, and received the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Whitney Association, honoring excellence in story making. She has also scripted or produced three documentaries on the subject. She has taught creative writing at Brigham Young University for thirty years.

# Companions

# The Team



PRODUCER | RUSS KENDALL is a partner in Kaleidoscope Pictures, who has traveled the world, capturing the human experience in both documentary and narrative work including the stories of Stone Kyambadde, Ugandan soccer hero turned humanitarian; Nobel Peace Prize winner, Muhammed Yunus; and three-time Olympic gold medalist, Kerri Walsh Jennings. He is currently producing films on the lives of Helmuth Hübener, a teenage Nazi resistance fighter; and the sports drama *Skeleton*, based on Sochi Winter Olympic Medalist Noelle Pikus-Pace. Kendall has produced music videos featuring The Killers, Brandi Carlile and BB King and co-created the Emmy Award-winning television series *The Song That Changed My Life*, which he produces and directs.



DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY | REED SMOOT (ASC) is a Kodak Vision Award Recipient and a three-time Giant Screen Cinema Association Award Winner for Best Cinematography. His cinematography includes Academy Award-winner, *The Great American Cowboy*, as well as numerous features films, commercials and concerts; including U2, Miley Cyrus, Jonas Brothers and Justin Bieber. Reed is an active member of the American Society of Cinematographers, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and the International Cinematographers Guild.



OUT OF AFRICA PRODUCTIONS | KWEKU MANDELA is president of Out of Africa Productions, based in Cape Town, South Africa. As the grandson of philanthropist and social revolutionist Nelson Mandela, Kweku has continued to advocate social change. He is the co-founder of Africa Rising, which works to change Africa's image and fosters young leadership and partnerships around the world. His film production company believes in the enormous contribution that Africa can offer the world's film industry. Their work is of the highest international standards, constantly raising the bar on production quality in South Africa.

# Companions



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## Comparable Films

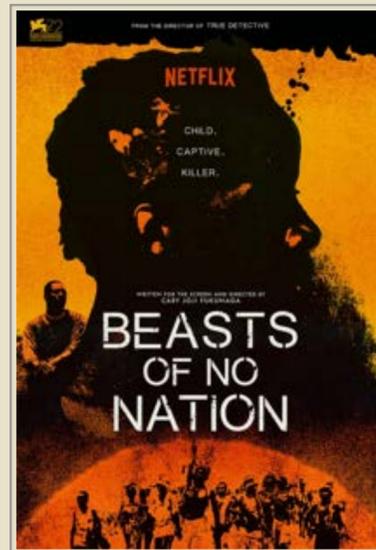
The below films contain similar themes, genres, concepts, and/or budgets. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but generally introduces how comparable films perform at the box office.



### HOTEL RWANDA (2004)

The true story of Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager who housed over a thousand Tutsi refugees during their struggle against the Hutu militia in Rwanda.

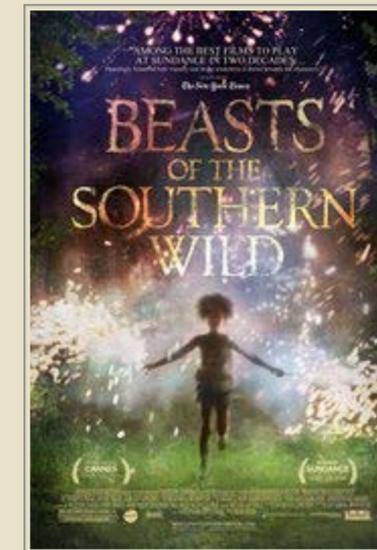
Budget: \$17.5M  
Domestic B.O. \$23.5M  
Worldwide B.O.: \$33.8M



### BEASTS OF NO NATION

(2015)  
A drama based on the experiences of Agu, a child soldier fighting in the civil war of an unnamed African country.

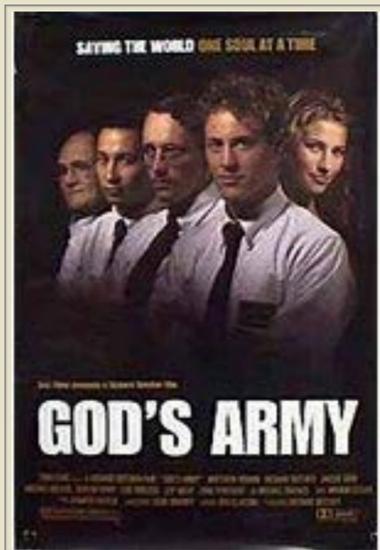
Budget: \$6M  
Domestic B.O. \$90K\*  
*\*Day-and-date release on Netflix*



### BEASTS OF SOUTHERN WILD

(2012)  
Faced with both her hot-tempered father's fading health and flooding bayou community, six-year-old Hushpuppy must learn the ways of courage and love.

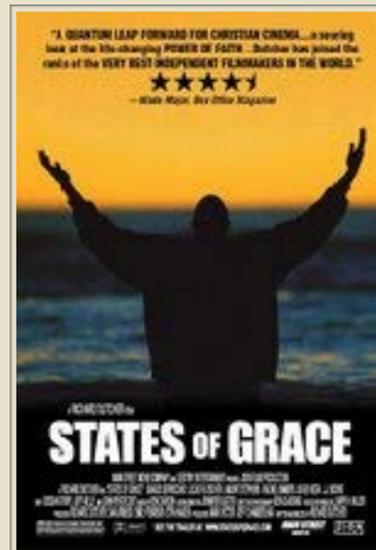
Budget: \$1.8M  
Domestic B.O. \$12.7M  
Worldwide B.O.: \$21.1M



### GOD'S ARMY (2000)

Life as a Mormon missionary isn't what 19-year-old Brandon Allen expected. So many rules and so few successes, but discovers a faith he didn't know he had.

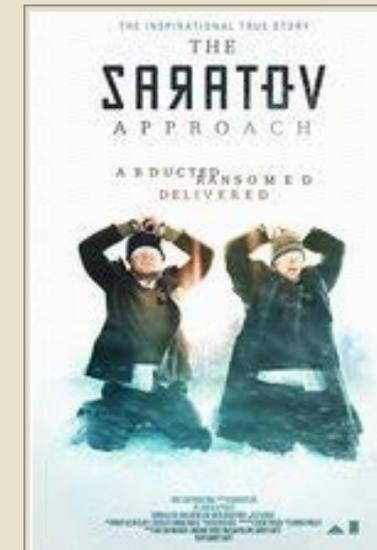
Budget: \$300K  
Domestic B.O. \$2.6M  
Worldwide B.O.: \$0



### STATES OF GRACE (2005)

the lives of a street preacher, an aspiring actress, a Mormon missionary, and a young gang banger intersect in this ensemble drama set in present-day Santa Monica, California.

Budget: \$800K  
Domestic B.O. \$200K  
Worldwide B.O.: \$0



### SARATOV APPROACH (2013)

the true story of two young American Mormon missionaries held captive and brutalized for a week in a remote part of Russia.

Budget: 150K  
Domestic B.O. \$2.1M  
Worldwide B.O.: \$0

## Location

The vast majority of the movie will be filmed on location in DR-Congo and South Africa. The political climate within the Congo makes it difficult to stage a full-scale production. Fortunately, South Africa offers a lot of comparable scenery that would meet the location needs of the film. A preliminary location scout was completed in fall 2015 through DR-Congo and South Africa.





# Companions

## Budget

Filmmakers are actively raising production financing for a projected budget of \$1.2 million. While low, the budget is sufficient to tell a quality story and mitigate financial risk, increasing potential gain when the picture is released.

## Production Schedule

Development has already begun and is expected to be completed by fall of 2016. We anticipate that preproduction will last two to four months beginning shortly after 2017 and that principal photography will begin Spring of 2017. Post production will begin immediately after the camera stops rolling with the aim to have a completed film by end of Summer 2017. This will be in time for film festival submission and aligning ourselves with a distributor for a 2018 release.

Development - 4 to 6 months

Preproduction - 2 to 4 months

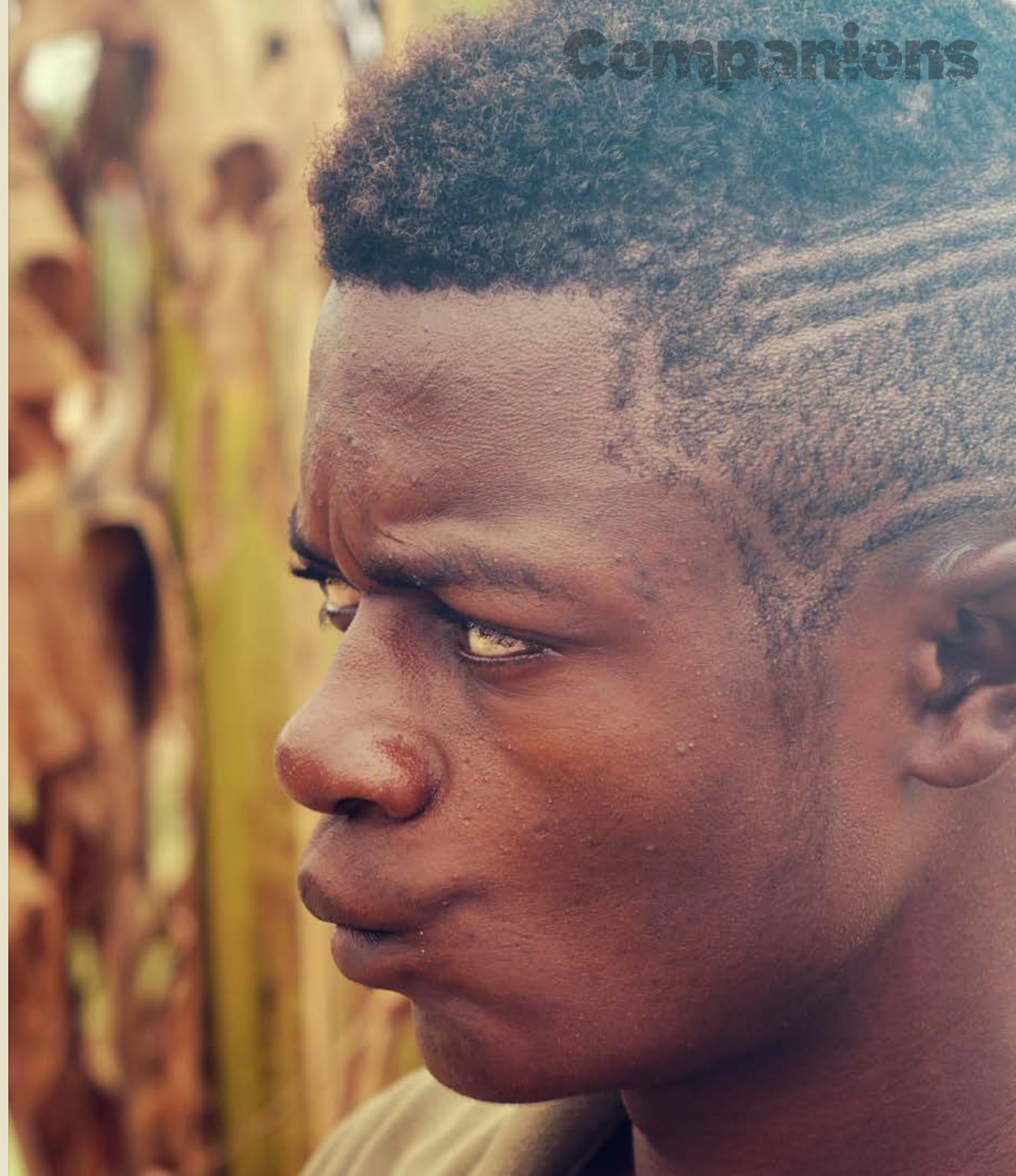
Production - 1 to 2 months

Post Production - 4 to 6 months

Theatrical Release - 3 to 6 months

## Distribution & Marketing

*Companions* will target film festivals to garner attention and credibility where it may put the film in a good position to negotiate with larger distribution companies to maximize bargaining strength for a significant release. We are in discussions with Excel Entertainment, distributor of the widely popular *Saints and Soldiers* series and whose films have collectively earned over \$30 million in box office receipts and home video sales. We intend a "platform" release, in which *Companions* would be given a build-up by opening initially in a few regional or limited local mainstream and art house theaters to build positive moviegoer awareness throughout the country. *Saratov Approach*, a recent missionary film that turned heads at the box-office, relied on word-of-mouth and social media posts to promote their film. "74% of people in the 18-65+ age range are on social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Pinterest... Social Media is lucrative for movie marketers for the same reasons it appeals to many: the ability to measure and interact with your audience on a two-way street of communication, and the lucrative allure of going viral. If you can convince fans and movie-goers to talk about your movie on social media, your audience expands." (<http://www.tintup.com/blog/movies-and-social-media-marketing-films-with-new-media/>)



# Companions

## Contact

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