

"COPPERS"

Directed by: Alan Zweig

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Synopsis

In 2009 director Alan Zweig made A HARD NAME, a film about ex-convicts, and 10 years later comes COPPERS, a film that explores the lives of the men and women who helped convict them in the first place. Hurt people hurt people, as they say. The only thing the men and women in COPPERS have in common is that they're retired and ready to look back. They tell gruesome stories, sad stories and a few funny ones but the gruesome stories dominate — they're just part of the daily grind. Heads indeed can roll and guts can spill. Most cops have seen that happen at least once in their career. It's a profession marked by adrenaline and chaos but also by suicide and marital breakdown. Some coppers feel they can sail past the mayhem and decomposing bodies. But no one leaves the job without a mark, and not everyone bounces back.

Short Summary

The thirteen retired police officer in COPPERS tell stories of fights, shootings, accident scenes and sudden death. There are sweet stories and funny ones but the gruesome stories dominate because this is what cops see everyday. At its heart that's what this collective story is about - the trauma we expect the police to clean up and what that experience does to them.

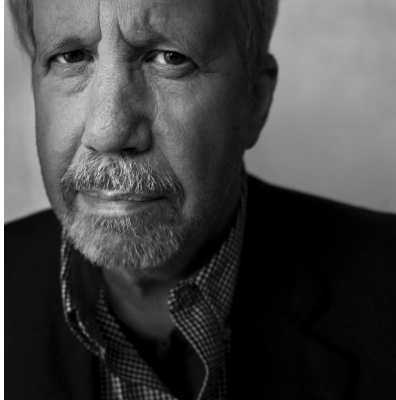
One Sentence Logline

"After three months on this job, what you see and what you do, will change you."

Shorter One Sentence Logline

"The job is pure chaos."

Director Biography: Alan Zweig



Alan Zweig is a Toronto documentary filmmaker known for using film to explore his own life. In his 2000 film *VINYL*, Zweig explores what drives people to become record collectors. Zweig spends a large portion of the film exploring his own life in regard to record collecting, feeling it has prevented him from fulfilling his dreams of a family. *I, CURMUDGEON* is a 2004 film about self-declared curmudgeons, himself included, was shot on a camcorder, with Zweig using a mirror to record his own experiences. *LOVABLE* is a 2007 film about our preoccupation with finding romantic perfection.

Those three films are often referred to as Zweig's "mirror trilogy" and have been shown in retrospectives he's enjoyed at Hot Docs, on TVO and at the Cinematheque in Winnipeg.

In 2009, Zweig moved from autobiographical subject matter to explore the struggle of ex-convicts to lead normal lives in *A HARD NAME*, which received the Genie Award for Best Documentary. He followed that in 2013 with *15 REASONS TO LIVE*, inspired by the book of the same name by Ray Robertson. The film is a series of 15 short stories dealing with the things that make life worth living. That same year, his film *WHEN JEWS WERE FUNNY*, won the prize for Best Canadian Feature Film at the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival. In this film he returned to the autobiographical genre and explored the question of whether Jewish culture was disappearing as it got further away from Eastern European Ashkenazi roots that influenced Zweig and others.

HURT, his documentary film about Steve Fonyo, was released in 2015. It won the Platform Prize at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival and went on to win the Ted Rogers prize for Best Canadian Feature Length Documentary at the Canadian Screen Awards. In 2017, Zweig directed *HOPE*, a follow-up to *HURT*, which premiered in Hot Docs. Also in 2017, his documentary film *THERE IS A HOUSE HERE*, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival.

COPPERS will be Zweig's tenth feature length documentary and his eleventh feature length film.

Filmography

2000 – Vinyl

World Premiere at Hot Docs; TVO and BBC3 broadcasts

2004 – I, Curmudgeon

World Premiere at Hot Docs; TVO broadcast

2007 – Lovable

World Premiere at Hot Docs; TVO broadcast

2009 – A Hard Name

World Premiere at Hot Docs; Genie Award for Best Documentary

2013 – Fifteen Reasons to Live

World Premiere at Hot Docs

2013 – When Jews Were Funny

World Premiere at TIFF (Best Canadian Feature Award); Super Channel broadcast

2015 – Hurt

World Premiere at TIFF; Winner of Platform Prize TIFF, Canadian Screen Award for Best Feature Documentary; Super Channel broadcast

2017 – Hope

World Premiere at Hot Docs; Super Channel broadcast

2017 – There is a House Here

World Premiere at TIFF; TVO broadcast

2019 – Coppers

World Premiere at TIFF; TVO broadcast

Director's Notes

"I started driving cab to put myself through film school and kept driving for the next 18 years because filmmaking turned out to be a less-than practical career choice. I was a child of the upper middle class – when police came into my life they were almost always respectful and helpful. But as a cab driver I saw a different side of them. They bullied me and other cabbies, especially if you drove at night as I did and often times the only cars left on the road were cabs and cop cars. We were easy pickings. My attitude to the police didn't change much until I met a guy named Bill, who was the father of a good friend and a retired cop from Vancouver. Nobody should be surprised any time they find themselves feeling affection for another human being but nonetheless becoming friends with an ex-cop surprised me. Shortly after that I met another retired cop but this one had been broken by his experience. It intrigued me that his experience on the police force had brought such a strong and formidable person to his knees. I've explored trauma in several of my films, including one about hard-boiled criminals. One thing I know now is that no matter what side of the law you're on, trauma is part of the package." - *Alan Zweig*

Poster:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tHjiQMYtuUofTt_LIFM1JLOrVpopyv9D?usp=sharing

Stills:

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Trailer:

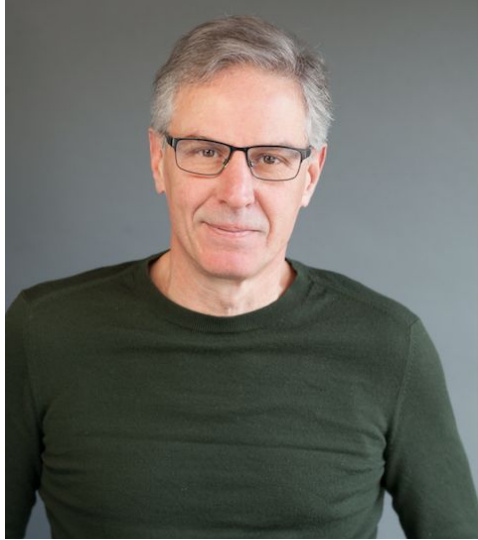
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Producers

[Michael McMahon](#), Executive Producer



Michael McMahon oversees Primitive Entertainment's selection of projects and focuses on the company's relationships with broadcasters, distributors, co-production partners, industry organizations and government agencies. Internationally, Michael has forged partnerships with co-producers and investors in Europe, Australia, the UK and Japan. Michael served as the Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of Hot Docs from 2003 to 2019. He is a board member of DOC Ontario and has served as the Documentary Producer Mentor at The Canadian Film Centre (CFC) and documentary project juror for the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC).

[Kevin McMahon](#), Producer



In his roles as producer and Creative Director for Primitive Entertainment, Kevin McMahon provides creative guidance for the development and production of the company's film and television projects. Kevin began his career as an investigative reporter before shifting to film in the late 1980s. He is the director of over 20 films, which have screened internationally, won many awards and been generously received by critics. The Canadian Film Institute and Hot Docs have both held retrospectives of Kevin's work. He has been a mentor on programs run by Hot Docs, the NFB, the Canadian Film Centre, Ontario Creates and DOC.

Kristina McLaughlin, Producer



As a producer and partner in Primitive Entertainment, Kristina McLaughlin has worked on some of the most critically acclaimed Canadian documentaries of the last two decades. Kristina runs Primitive Entertainment, overseeing all aspects of the company's various film and television productions. Kristina has been involved in supporting the documentary community throughout her career. Generous with her knowledge, she has served as a mentor to a variety of young producers, with a focus on aiding young women entering the film business.

About Primitive Entertainment:

Primitive Entertainment is an Emmy nominated, Webby award-winning producer of documentary feature films, television series and digital media. With 30 years experience producing premium non-fiction content, our work has earned more than 40 awards world-wide.

Recent productions include Equator: A New World View (12 x 60) for Arte/ZDF, NHK, Discovery and ZDF Enterprises; In Search of A Perfect World (1 x 60) for CBC and ZDF; Spaceship Earth (5 x 60) for NHK, Arte/ZDF and History Television; and The Polar Sea (10 x 60) for Arte/ZDF and TVO.

The company's documentary feature films have screened at leading film festivals world-wide, including TIFF, Berlin, SXSW, Hot Docs, IDFA, Vancouver, Bergen, Munich, Sydney, Tokyo, DOXA, and the Museum of Modern Art, amongst others.

Recent awards include the Grimme Online Award for Culture and Entertainment, a Webby Award for Best Individual Documentary, the SXSW Interactive award for Activism, the Toyota Earth Grand Prize at the Tokyo International Film Festival and an Emmy Nomination for Outstanding Nature Programming.

<http://primitive.net/>

