



*A Social Purpose Enterprise*

## **Films Statement**

### **Love Wins Over Hate**

Love Wins Over Hate. Release date: October 2020 (American Public Television.) Produced and Directed by Susan Polis Schutz. Edited by David Emrich. In this documentary, Susan Polis Schutz explores the lives of six former white supremacists and ultraconservatives. Each one of them explains how they went through a transformation from being filled with hate, anger, and rage to acceptance and appreciation of diversity. And they all have gone on to teach many other people to love rather than hate.

They talk honestly and openly about their former beliefs, the pain they have inflicted on others and their fight for a better world devoid of hate.

"We basically thought that we would be agents in the breakdown of society, and that we would be fighting to build this Aryan white state," explains a former Neo-Nazi, Shannon Foley Martinez, who was recruited when she was fifteen years old. "It's always been there. We just have torn the mask off. We've taken the hoods off so to speak. And we live in a time where we're deeply entrenched in polarization." Shannon, now a mother and mentor, provides a solution, "I believe that connection is the antidote to hate. It's really hard to actually connect with somebody, to sit in a room, have a conversation, and share with them and continue to hate them. Once we are reconnected, my hate melts away."

The film includes interviews with a professor and individuals who have been the brunt of hatred revealing the senseless pain and damage done to them and wider communities. We also see instances of reconciliation of the victims with the perpetrators.

Today, prejudice and hate crimes are more prevalent than ever, but so is love. This film is inspirational, because it demonstrates how people can change from a state of hatred and violence to empathy and an appreciation for humanity.

During a rally by a Sikh and a former white supremacist about the importance of accepting diversity, Arno Michealis says, "If we are going to combat hate and violence you can't do it with more hate and violence. You need to do it with Love and that is the way Love Wins."

## **ABOUT SUSAN POLIS SCHUTZ**



Celebrated filmmaker and writer, Susan Polis Schutz is a force in socially conscious filmmaking. Her mission is to shine light on important current topics through honest, vulnerable and impactful storytelling, and her work continues to influence audiences around the world. In her latest film, *Love Wins Over Hate* (2020), Susan uncovers the origins and complexities of hatred and creates a poignant story that is needed now more than ever. In a series of thoughtful interviews with former white supremacists and others who held extreme views, Susan explores how these people, who were filled with hate, bigotry and rage are able to change. They find love and compassion with a greater appreciation for all humanity, regardless of race, faith, or sexual orientation, and they all go on to teach others how to love rather than hate. *Love Wins Over Hate* is a film about hope, the power of redemption, and breaking apart the systems that uphold hate in order to find true peace for a better community.

Susan, and her production company IronZeal Films, have been making culturally, impactful films since 2007 and her films have aired on most PBS stations throughout the United States. Her first release, *Anyone and Everyone* (2007), featured the coming-out stories of gay sons and daughters and their parents. It was, in part, inspired by Susan's own son, Jared Polis, who is the Governor of Colorado, and the first openly gay governor. From there, Susan went on to tackle a series of pertinent issues including homelessness, anxiety, aging, depression and LGBTQ issues. In 2018, Susan won the Christopher Award for work that "affirms the highest values of the human spirit" with her film *The Homeless Chorus Speaks*. Twelve homeless people speak about their backgrounds, why they are homeless and the importance of the Voices of the City Choir in their lives.

In addition to her work as a filmmaker, Susan is a thriving poet, entrepreneur and bestselling author of *To My Daughter with Love on the Important Things In Life* which has sold approximately 2 million copies. Susan, along with her husband, Stephen Schutz, founded Blue Mountain Arts, a popular publisher known for its distinctive greeting cards, gifts, and poetry books. Susan's poetry has been published on over 435 million greeting cards worldwide.

Susan has always been a women's rights activist fighting for gender equality. She is not only a teacher, but a student of the world, who seeks the truth and to impart her lessons. Susan is proud to share her tremendous accomplishments with her loving husband, children and grandchildren.





## **Why I made Love Wins Over Hate**

Every morning I wake up and watch the news or scroll through social media and I see and feel all the hatred, anger and divisiveness.

Every day I am sad and confused that our beautiful world is being ruined.

I wondered why people hate so much. Why are people so vitriolic? Why do they not accept their brothers and sisters?

Then I wondered if people who hate can ever change.

I do not know people who hate but I wanted to understand them.

I interviewed people who were prejudice, but they couldn't see that their views were hateful, and I got nowhere.

Then I read an article about a former violent white supremacist who left the movement and not only changed but helped hundreds of other people to change.

Prejudice to acceptance. Anger to serenity. Hate to love.

I wanted to know more about this individual's life and other extremists to understand how and why they changed.

I wanted to know if there was a common thread among them and if so, to impart these lessons that might shed light on an epidemic that is corroding our society.

My goal for this film is for people to see that love wins over hate and to help those that are struggling with this. Whether it's within themselves, their friends, family or colleagues, there is hope and beauty on the other side.

**Susan Polis Schutz**

## **MEET THE INTERVIEWEES**

### **Chris Buckley**



### **Chris Buckley**

Chris Buckley of LaFayette, GA is an Afghanistan and Iraqi war veteran. When he returned from Afghanistan, he joined the Georgia White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan as an Imperial Nighthawk Arno Michaelis, a former white power skinhead and Dr. Heval Mohamed Kelli, a Kurdish Muslim refugee, were able to teach Chris the error of his ways and help bring him out of the movement. He gives motivational speeches, trying to spread awareness and educate the public about the dangers of white supremacist extremism. Chris now works with Dr. Kelli on a program called Hate Anonymous. Together they work to spread a message of love and healing. He also created a deradicalization program designed specifically with veterans in mind, but he also works with all manners of hate and extremist ideology.

Website: [parents4peace.org](http://parents4peace.org)

Facebook: @parentsforpeace

Twitter: @parentsforpeace

Parents4Peace Support Helpline: (844) 49 PEACE

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## **Christian Picciolini**



### **Christian Picciolini**

Christian Picciolini is an award-winning television producer, a public speaker, author, peace advocate, and a former violent extremist. After leaving the hate movement he helped create, he began the painstaking process of making amends and rebuilding his life. Christian went on to earn a degree in international relations from DePaul University and launched Goldmill Group, a counter-extremism consulting and digital media firm. In 2016, he won an Emmy Award for producing an anti-hate advertising campaign aimed at helping people disengage from extremism. He now leads the Free Radicals Project, a global extremism prevention and disengagement network. He has spoken all over the world, teaching all who are willing to learn about building greater peace through empathy and compassion. Christian chronicles his involvement and exit from the early American white-supremacist skinhead movement in his memoir, *WHITE AMERICAN YOUTH*. He showcases his disengagement work in a second book, *BREAKING HATE: Confronting the New Culture of Extremism*, published in February 2020 by Hachette Books.

Website: [freeradicals.org](http://freeradicals.org)

Twitter: [@FreeRadicalsOrg](https://twitter.com/FreeRadicalsOrg)

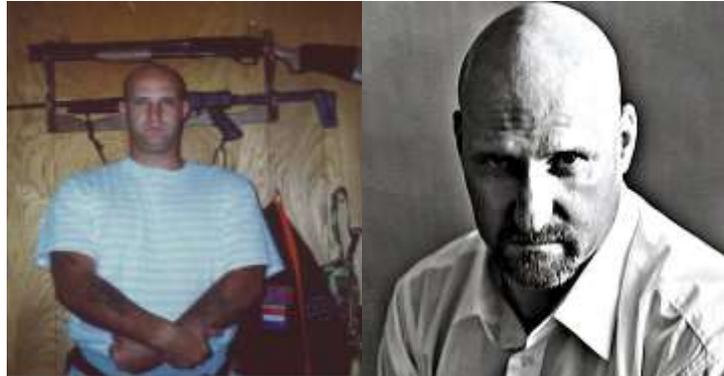
Facebook: [facebook.com/FreeRadicalsProject](https://facebook.com/FreeRadicalsProject)

Instagram: [instagram.com/FreeRadicalsProject](https://instagram.com/FreeRadicalsProject)

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## **Timothy Zaal**



### **Timothy Zaal**

Timothy Zaal is a former racist skinhead and works as a consultant to the Simon Wiesenthal Center. He has been the program facilitator of "From the Depths of Hate" for 17 years. This program is presented on a weekly basis to general audiences at the Museum of Tolerance. Additionally, he facilitates to educators, professional groups, and school groups both at the Museum of Tolerance and off-site. Some of Mr. Zaal's past racist/political associations include; Los Angeles area recruiter and propagandist for the White Aryan Resistance, and Co-founder and former Co-director of the Southern California Chapter of the Hammerskin Nation. His life has been portrayed in the book "Freaks and Revelations," and in the 2014 Oscar nominated documentary short "Facing Fear." Mr. Zaal has earned a degree in alcohol and drug counseling and works primarily for a postsecondary academic institution.

Websites: [museumoftolerance.com](http://museumoftolerance.com) [changememphis.org](http://changememphis.org) [lightuponlight.online](http://lightuponlight.online)

Twitter: [@tzh82hope](https://twitter.com/tzh82hope)

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## **Arno Michaelis**



### **Arno Michaelis**

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Arno Michaelis was a leader of a worldwide racist skinhead organization, and lead singer of the hate-metal band Centurion. Single parenthood, love for his daughter, and the forgiveness shown by people he once hated all helped to turn Arno's life around. After spending over a decade as successful information technology consultant and entrepreneur, Arno is now a speaker, author of *My Life After Hate*, co-author of *The Gift of Our Wounds*, and is an educator working with Serve2Unite. Serve2Unite engages students creatively with a global network of peacemakers and mentors. Arno's customizable keynotes and workshops leverage noble qualities of compassion, curiosity, and kindness to engage all human beings, building foundations for diversity appreciation and cultural agility. He also enjoys spending time with his daughter, art, music, and all forms of fearless creative expression, along with climbing things, being underwater, and the wonderful natural beauty of our planet Earth.

Websites: [giftofourwounds.com/serve2unite](http://giftofourwounds.com/serve2unite) [parents4peace.org](http://parents4peace.org)

Facebook: @parentsforpeace

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## **Timothy Kurek**



### **Timothy Kurek**

Timothy Kurek, a Nashville, Tennessee based Author/Storyteller, is tackling the front burner issues of our day. His unrestrained style of immersion lends a uniquely empathetic perspective, engaging his audience with empathy, humor, and refreshing candor. Having been raised in the strict confines of his conservative Christian upbringing, Timothy is now an ally of the LGBT community, working for equality all over the world. His first book "The Cross in the Closet" became an international best-seller, lauded by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu as, "A gift to us all." Timothy's next book, "Mile 0 And Other Stories", will be released Christmas 2020, and he is currently working on the book based off his 2015 TEDx University of the Aegean talk, entitled, "Practicing Intentional Empathy: Relearning Civility in an Uncivilized Society", which will be released Winter 2021.

Website: [Timothy-Kurek.com](http://Timothy-Kurek.com)

## Shannon Foley Martinez



### **Shannon Foley Martinez**

Shannon Foley Martinez, a former violent white supremacist, has two decades of experience in developing community resource platforms aimed at inoculating individuals against violence and extremism. Foley Martinez now works as a consultant, speaker, and educator in the prevention & disruption of targeted identity violence and ideologies. She has worked with such organizations as the UN Office of Counter Terrorism, the National Counterterrorism Center, Department of Homeland Security, Hedayah, The Center for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence, UN Women, Google, and Twitter. As the mother of seven children ages 22 down to 3, she feels passionately about building empowered, deeply connected families and communities.

## Dr. Edith Eger



### Dr. Edith Eger

A native of Hungary, Edith Eva Eger was just 16 years old in 1944 when she experienced one of the worst evils the human race has ever known. As a Jewish person living in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe, she and her family were sent to Auschwitz. Her parents lost their lives there. She and her sister survived the camp and the Death March from Poland to Austria. In 1949 she and her young family moved to the United States. In 1969 she received her degree in Psychology from the University of Texas, El Paso. Dr. Eger has a clinical practice in La Jolla, California where she uses her past as a powerful analogy to inspire people to reach their potential and shape their destinies. In the fall of 2017 at the age of 90, her memoir **The Choice, Embrace the Possible** was published. The award-winning book focuses on moving forward in light of hardship. The New York Times Book Review wrote: "Eger's book is a triumph and should be read by all who care about both their inner freedom and the future of humanity." Her second book, **The Gift, Twelve Lessons to Save your Life** will be released in September 2020.

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## Matthew Boger



### Matthew Boger

Matthew Boger was the target of a brutal attack in a Los Angeles alley carried out by a group of Neo-Nazi skinheads. He now has the dual perspective of being a victim while also being capable of embarking on a journey of forgiveness and compassion. In early 2005, Boger made the life-changing decision to leave his high profile career as one of L.A.'s premier celebrity colorists and became the Museum of Tolerance's Manager of Operations. In that same year, while working at the museum, he ended up in a chance meeting with former Neo-Nazi skinhead, Timothy Zaal. The two quickly discovered that Zaal had been one of the Neo-Nazis who had nearly killed Boger in the alley in West Hollywood 25 years previously. Through his program 'Unlikely Allies', presented at the Museum of Tolerance, the two embarked on a journey of forgiveness and reconciliation. Matthew also speaks outside the museum to students, law enforcement agencies, Juvenile detention centers and prison inmates as well as Colleges and Universities. His goal is to "simply give them the information and hope they will realize that the power to change and forgive is within us all."

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## **Reverend Nicole Garcia**



### **Reverend Nicole Garcia**

The Reverend Nicole M. Garcia, MA LPC (she/her/hers) is the Pastor for Mission Development at Westview Church in Boulder CO. Pastor Nicole earned a Master of Divinity from Luther Seminary in St. Paul MN and a Master of Arts in Counseling from CU Denver. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Colorado and continues to work as a therapist and clinical supervisor with the Umbrella Collective in Boulder. Pastor Nicole is currently serving as the president of the outside council of New Beginnings Worshipping Community, an ELCA congregation within the Denver Women's Correctional Facility. Pastor Nicole has been on the board of directors of several local, national, and international organizations and has been a keynote speaker, preacher, and has participated in panels concerning gender identity, sexual orientation, and faith.

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## **Representative Leslie Herod**



### **Representative Leslie Herod**

Representative Leslie Herod was elected in 2016 as the first LGBTQ African American in the Colorado General Assembly. Since then, she has passed 68 bills, addressing criminal justice reform, mental health, addiction, youth homelessness, and civil rights protections. Some of her signature work includes: ending cash bail for minor offenses, de-felonizing drug possession, giving every Colorado newborn a \$100 college kickstarter account, providing free menstrual hygiene products to inmates in Colorado's prisons and jails and passing a comprehensive police accountability bill following the highly public murder of George Floyd, and the nationwide movement that followed. Herod is the Chair of the House Finance Committee, Vice Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, Chair of the Committee on Legal Services, and the Chair of the Colorado Black Democratic Legislative Caucus.

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## **Nadeem Ibrahim**



### **Nadeem Ibrahim**

Nadeem is a partnership specialist and community organizer. Her professional portfolio includes being a Muslim community organizer, commissioner to the Denver Immigrant and Refugee Commission, partnership specialist for the US Census Bureau, and Congressional District IV Representative to the Colorado State Board of Health. She holds a Masters of Public Policy from the University of Oxford and Bachelors of Science in Public Health from CU Denver. She is very passionate about community organizing and works to ensure she does her part.

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## **Dr. Vickie M Mays**



### **Dr. Vickie M Mays**

Vickie Mays is a Professor in the Department of Psychology in the College of Letters and Sciences, as well as a Professor in the Department of Health Services at UCLA. She is also the Director of the UCLA Center on Research, Education, Training and Strategic Communication on Minority Health Disparities. She teaches courses on health status and health behaviors of racial and ethnic minority groups, research ethics in biomedical and behavioral research in racial/ethnic minority populations, research methods in minority research, as well as courses on social determinants of mental disorders and psychopathology. She holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and an M.S.P.H. in Health Services, with postdoctoral training in psychiatric epidemiology. She has received a number of awards including one for her lifetime research on women and HIV from AMFAR, a Women and Leadership Award from the American Psychological Association and several Distinguished Contributions for Research awards.