

THE FIGHT AGAINST STIGMA, SHAME, AND IGNORANCE THROUGH THE HEIGHT OF
THE HIV/AIDS CRISIS IN THE HEARTLAND OF AMERICA'S WEST

QUIET HEROES



“QUIET HEROES IS DULY INSPIRATIONAL,
JUST LIKE ITS CENTRAL FIGURES.”
VARIETY

VAVANI PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS **QUIET HEROES** EDITED BY **PATRICK RYAN GASS** DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
TORBEN BERNHARD MUSIC BY **JEREMY CHATELAIN & MATT MATEUS** EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS **JARED RUGA,**
JONATHAN M. RUGA & SCOTT F. YOUNG PRODUCED BY **JARED RUGA, JENNY MACKENZIE & AMANDA STODDARD**
DIRECTED BY **JENNY MACKENZIE, JARED RUGA & AMANDA STODDARD**

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*This film is dedicated to
Kristen and Maggie, for
sharing their lives with
us, and to all the quiet
heroes making the world
a better place.*



TAGLINE, LOGLINE AND SYNOPSIS

Tagline

One doctor's fight against stigma, shame, and ignorance through the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the heartland of America's west.

Logline

In Salt Lake City, Utah, the socially conservative religious monoculture complicated the AIDS crisis, where patients in the entire state and intermountain region relied on only one doctor. This is the story of her fight to save a maligned population everyone else seemed willing to just let die.

Synopsis

In Salt Lake City, Utah, the religious monoculture severely complicated the AIDS crisis, where patients received no support from — or were cast into exile by — the political, religious, and medical communities. Further, Mormon culture encouraged gay men to marry women and have a family to cure themselves of their “affliction,” counsel which led to secret affairs and accidental marital transmissions of HIV. In the entire state and intermountain region there was only one doctor to serve all HIV/AIDS patients. This is the story of her fight to save the lives of a maligned

population everyone else seemed willing to just let die.

Dr. Kristen Ries came to Salt Lake City with the hope and ambition to set up a medical practice of her own. By chance, she arrived on the exact same day the CDC released a report about a new infectious disease affecting populations of gay men. This intrigued Dr. Ries and she launched her long career as the premier specialist who treated HIV/AIDS patients. What started as hospice care for highly stigmatized individuals became a model for compassionate care at the height of the AIDS epidemic. She faced stigma and blame in a repressive religious culture and had to find creative ways to serve her patients. She and her Physician's Assistant, Maggie Snyder, developed backdoor patient arrangements, underground drug markets, and status confidentiality policies to give their patients the best possible chance at prolonging their lives—or at worst, dying comfortably. When their families, their churches and social circles, their politicians, and even other doctors had abandoned them, Kristen Ries and Maggie Snyder created a safe haven amidst a sea of hate and fear for those who had nowhere else to turn.



Jenny Mackenzie, Director/Producer | Jenny Mackenzie is the director and producer of several award-winning films, motivated by the desire to advance the collective conversation toward social progress. Her notable filmography includes KICK LIKE A GIRL—which aired on HBO and was nominated for an IDA award—and DYING IN VEIN, SUGAR BABIES, and LEAD WITH LOVE.

Jared Ruga, Director / Producer / Executive Producer | QUIET HEROES is Jared's directorial debut. In his day job as Founder + CEO at Vavani, the production company behind QUIET HEROES, Jared is integrally involved with all of Vavani's operations in film/TV, music, live events, and financing. He develops and supervises the strategic vision for the whole company and oversees the operations of its various development, production, and distribution activities, while also managing business development and sales. Hailing from an extensive liberal arts academic background with advanced degrees in law, business, and film (from the University of Utah) and bachelor's degrees in International Business and Philosophy/Communication (from the Honors Program at the University of San Diego), Jared strives to blend multiple perspectives into a more holistic understanding of the key issues. Engaged in his community, Jared serves on the boards of the Lightspark Foundation and Voterise, and on the Development Committee of Sundance Institute's Utah Advisory Board. He is also an advocate for the LGBTQ community and has taught film classes at the University of Utah.

Amanda Stoddard, Director/Producer | QUIET HEROES is Amanda's second documentary feature; her first feature, 1 REVOLUTION (2011), was shown at festivals around the world and won numerous awards. Amanda has been with Vavani since its inception and currently manages Vavani's content pipeline. While at Vavani she has directed and produced documentaries and overseen the development of a robust slate of narrative feature and episodic scripts. Prior to joining Vavani, Amanda worked in many capacities as an editor, assistant director, director, and producer on broadcast and theatrical projects. She has also mentored many young filmmakers as a teacher. The stories that speak to Amanda explore the intricacies of the human condition in a way that lifts voices previously shut out from the conversation. Film, for Amanda, is about story, collaboration, and having the courage to take big risks. Luckily, Vavani agrees.

Torben Bernhard, Director of Photography | Torben Bernhard is a cinematographer, editor, and documentarian who has diverse but connected interests in marketing and the arts, including social media,

branding, photography, language translation and interpretation, design, and performing in a hip-hop group. He is based in Utah where he is a principal at OHO MEDIA.

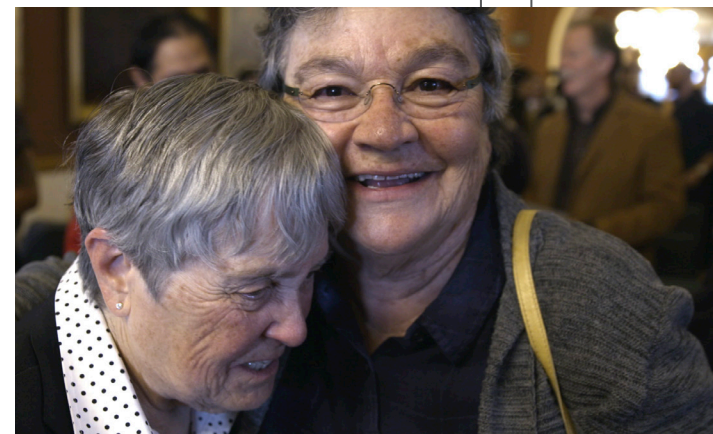
Patrick Ryan Gass, Editor | Patrick Ryan Gass is a classically trained filmmaker and editor with a flair for resonant emotional arcs and seamless transitions. His previous works include editing 1 REVOLUTION (2011); producing, shooting, and editing a variety of short form content, and directing, producing and editing a documentary about pioneering female lawyers in Utah.

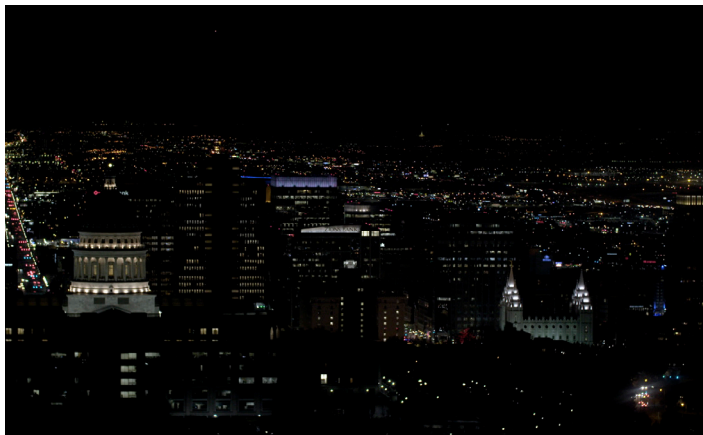
Kristen Ries, MD, MACP | Dr. Kristen Ries is a name synonymous with HIV care in Utah. She arrived in Utah in 1982, just as the first cases of an uncontained, unidentified, deadly illness were surfacing. An infectious disease specialist, and self-proclaimed "lover of detective stories," Dr. Ries was immediately compelled to help. Over the subsequent years, HIV/AIDS would grow into an epidemic and Ries, in partnership with the Sisters of the Holy Cross, would develop a comprehensive HIV program that focused on compassion, touch, and treatment of emotional and physical needs. She has been recognized for both her medical and humanitarian work and as a leader in the LGBTQ community. At the University of Utah, she led the development of a comprehensive award-winning HIV/AIDS medical home and is now a Professor Emerita in Internal Medicine. She remains active on various committees of the University's School of Medicine and volunteers in the community.

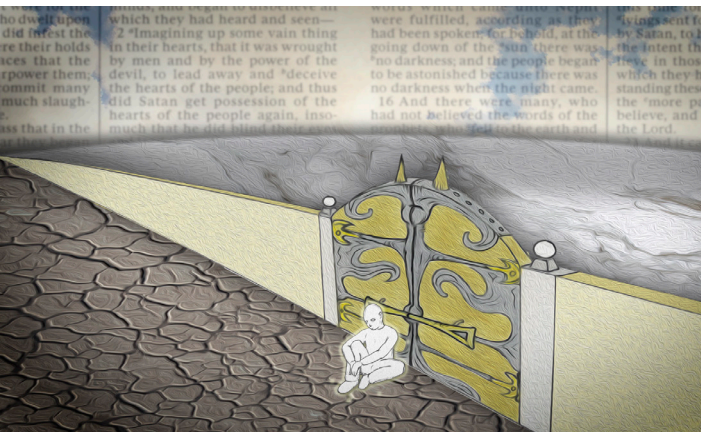
Maggie Snyder PA-C | Maggie Snyder is a valued Physician's Assistant (PA) that worked alongside Dr. Kristen Ries to treat and eradicate HIV and AIDS in Utah. During her practice as a nurse at Holy Cross Hospital, she rose to the occasion when approached by Dr. Ries to attend PA school to advance her abilities to help treat those suffering from HIV. While many intermountain west healthcare providers were fearful to treat these patients in the 1980s, Snyder and Dr. Ries were the only professionals to lend a helping hand. She often spent weekends attending funerals and has kept a scrapbook of the obituaries of every HIV/AIDS patient she has ever lost. Snyder was on the forefront of HIV care and, with Dr. Ries, developed a compassionate care model that became a model for care throughout the country. She continues to volunteer with HIV/AIDS committees, boards, and educational organizations and has served as an instructor for both PA and nursing students at the University of Utah, as well as a lecturer at schools, businesses, and other organizations.











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In January 2015, when I was a law student at the University of Utah, I was approached by a professor helping to assemble a new special collection at the Marriott Library. It was to be comprised of records and memorabilia from the medical practice of Dr. Kristen Ries, the first—and for several critical years, only—doctor in the entire state of Utah to treat HIV/AIDS patients at the advent of the crisis. Having grown up in Utah in the '90s and early aughts, I was well-acquainted with the often parochial (and always patriarchal) dominant Mormon culture. Despite not growing up LDS myself, I still felt the pressure to conform to the heterosexual norm and didn't live openly as a gay man until after I left for college in San Diego.

Dr. Ries and her partner (in both medicine and life), Maggie Snyder, defied this paralyzing social stigma when I was still in preschool. They created a safe space and extended family for their maligned patients, many of whom were exiled from their entire social networks and had nowhere else to go. Over the course of their decades-long practice, they treated thousands of HIV/AIDS patients whom everyone else seemed willing to just let die—particularly in the terrifying early years when survival was the exception.

When I heard their story, I was struck with both admiration and a tenacious desire to share this story

with others, particularly those in my demographic: twenty- and thirty-something gay and bi men who never experienced the AIDS crisis, where an entire generation of us watched most of their friends perish.

After premiering to popular and critical acclaim at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival, we've been honored to share Kristen and Maggie's story with audiences across the globe at a dozen additional festivals, proving that love, compassion, and steadfast commitment are universal traits that transcend geography and culture. We'd all do better to carry that message with us every day.



Jared Ruga
Founder + CEO



QUIET HEROES is the film that truly taught me about love. I came on to the project knowing very little about the HIV crisis of the '80s and '90s, and even less about the people who selflessly gave their expertise and bravery to a generation of terrified, vilified, and extremely sick people. At every turn in the telling of this story, we found personal and community connections that had previously been unrecognized, and these stories all found sure footing in the practice of Dr. Kristen Ries, Maggie Snyder, PA-C, and the Sisters of the Holy Cross Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah. What these women did in simply going to work reverberated through so many lives. It was a pure form of love in a story I was lucky to play a part in telling.

I came to the team later in the process, after principal photography, but before the story had been created in the edit. I had wonderful conversations and collaboration with my creative comrades, director Jared Ruga and editor Patrick Ryan Gass. We laughed, we cried, and more than once argued about the story we wanted to tell and the way we wanted to tell it. As I got to know these amazing women it became very clear that this story had to maintain the simplicity with which they lived their lives, and we did our best to honor them and their work—without artifice, without embellishment, and without pity.

They are truly heroes. We made a bet that their story would resonate in today's world and it did. We live in a time where we need to know quiet heroes exist among us and be inspired by them to do better, love more, and honor our commitments to one another.

It has been an honor and a privilege to be a part of this film and I am deeply humbled and grateful to these women. May their example be a sliver of sunshine in our dark, stormy world.



Amanda Stoddard



FILM CREDITS

Directed byJenny Mackenzie, Jared Ruga & Amanda Stoddard

Executive ProducersJared Ruga, Jonathan M. Ruga, Scott F. Young

Produced byJared Ruga, Jenny Mackenzie & Amanda Stoddard

Director of Photography Torben Bernhard

Edited by..... Patrick Ryan Gass

Original Score by.....Jeremy Chatelain & Matt Mateus

Interviews & Appearances

(in order of appearance)

Paula Gibbs
Elizabeth Alice “Beth” Clement
Jim Dabakis
Ben Barr
Rocky Anderson
Kristen Ries
Peter Christie
Sister Linda Bellemore
Sister Bernie Mulick
Maggie Snyder
Kim Smith
Beverly Stoddard
Steve Smith
Jackie Biskupski

Crew

Additional Photography

Location Sound
Additional Editing
Finishing Editor
Animation
Graphics
Colorist
Sound Design & Audio Mix
Additional Audio Mixing
Post-production Assistant
Research Assistant
Transcriptionist
Intern
Production Counsel
Clearance Counsel

Publicist
Worldwide Sales

Patrick Ryan Gass
Scott Thornton
Walt Winters
Holly Tuckett
Jenny Mackenzie
J.R. LaFleur
Jeff Kimball
Christine Siegel Elder
Stéphane Glynn
Conor Long
Arthur Veenema
Justin Morris
Mike McDonough
Jordan Clark
Jordan Nelson
Jorden Saxton Hackney
Carla Moquin
Ben Turok
Derek Julio, Esq.
Chris Perez, Esq.
Donaldson + Callif
Adam J. Segal
The Film Sales Company, Inc.
Andrew Herwitz, President



Archival Material

Ballet West
 CBS
 CNN
 Fox
 Holly Tuckett
 KUTV
 LDS.org
 NBC
 The Daily Herald
 The Daily Utah Chronicle
 The Deseret News
 The Marriott Library
 The New York Times
 The Salt Lake Tribune
 The Smith Family
 The Stoddard Family
 Excerpts from "The Smith Family"
 Courtesy of Tasha Oldam

Special Thanks

Utah AIDS Foundation
 Special Collections at the Marriott Library
 The Smith Family
 Tina & Jonathan Ruga

Thanks

Max Borodin
 Frank Castro
 Bob Chase
 Anne Christiansen
 Brian Coburn
 Matt Conway
 Chris Cooke
 Jean Frances
 Karl Gerner
 Stephen E.W. Hale, Esq.
 Lauren Howells, Esq.
 Travis Hutchins
 Terry Kogan
 Daniel Meza
 Alex Moya
 Joe Munsey
 Dat Nguyen
 Ryan Painter
 Matthew Petersen
 Elias Rios
 Austin Riter, Esq.
 Sister Joan Steadman
 Tuscan Thompson
 James Westervelt
 Mark Young



FEATURED PRESS

Lesbian heroines of the AIDS epidemic

Bay Area Reporter | Wednesday, August 22, 2018

During this decade there has been a resurgence of documentaries on the AIDS epidemic. Enough time has passed to look back artistically, somewhat objectively, on the devastation, prejudice, and death during those Holocaust-like years when the disease was the #1 killer of people ages 35-45 (from 1985-96). Yet rarely have films dealt with the perspective of doctors or caregivers. So it is a gift to announce another outstanding entry in Logo-TV's final presentation in its three-documentary summer series. "Quiet Heroes," which premiered earlier this year at Sundance, will be shown on August 23, continuing through the rest of the month, streamable on August 24. Read the rest of the story [here](#).

5 Pride Picks Billboard | Tuesday, August 21, 2018

On Thursday (Aug. 23) Logo will premiere Quiet Heroes, a documentary which focuses on two lesbian medical professionals who, during the peak of the AIDS crisis in Salt Lake City, become some of the only doctors willing to see AIDS patients in all of Utah. Logo's parent network, MTV, created a short PSA to connect the film to the modern-day HIV/AIDS epidemic. Read the rest of the story [here](#).

QUIET HEROES Out Front Magazine | Tuesday, August 21, 2018

On Thursday, August 23, the new documentary Quiet Heroes will premiere on Logo at 8 p.m. The 66-minute film chronicles the AIDS epidemic as it affected conservative Salt Lake City during the 80s and 90s. Quiet Heroes was made primarily to pay tribute to Dr. Kristen Ries and physician's assistant Maggie Snyder, who worked together on the front lines as the HIV virus spread across Salt Lake City at the dawn of the epidemic, killing everyone it infected. Read the rest of the story [here](#).

Three Things to Watch This Week

The New York Times, Monday, August 20, 2018

The Times TV critic Margaret Lyons has recommendations below on what you should tune into this week. This documentary tells the story of Kristen Ries and Maggie Snyder, a doctor and a physician assistant who treated HIV and AIDS patients in Salt Lake City, Utah, starting in the early 1980s. Their enduring compassion and determination make the film more hopeful than tragic, even as it captures the catastrophic losses and devastating bigotry that defined the early years of the epidemic. Read the rest of the story [here](#).

Sundance's 'Quiet Heroes' Among Pics Acquired By Logo Documentary Films Deadline | Tuesday, July 3, 2018

Logo Documentary Films has acquired Sundance docu Quiet Heroes ... for premiere this summer as part of its 2018 slate of LGBTQ stories. Quiet Heroes had its world premiere at this year's Sundance Film Festival. Directed and produced by Jenny Mackenzie, Jared Ruga and Amanda Stoddard, Quiet Heroes tells the story of Dr. Kristen Ries, a physician who served the denigrated and largely gay male AIDS population in the socially conservative Salt Lake City area. Quiet Heroes is the story of her fight to save a maligned population everyone else seemed willing to just let die. It premieres Thursday, August 23 at 8 PM on Logo. Read the rest of the story [here](#).

Film Review: 'QUIET HEROES' | Variety, Tuesday, March 13, 2018

As a health crisis that began when inexpensive video equipment was becoming available, the AIDS epidemic was well-chronicled by filmmakers from a fairly early point — at least within the bounds of those living in major "gay mecca" urban centers that got the bulk of alarmist public attention. They [the directors] cast a light on Salt Lake City, a place where general cultural and religious conservatism meant most gays lived their lives in secret, and where the initial response to AIDS sufferers was particularly negative as a result. Read the rest of the story [here](#).

A look at Sundance Film Festival's 2018 lineup

Los Angeles Times, Wednesday, January 17, 2018

"Obsession. Unfetter. Unravel. Unleash. Fantasy. Nightmare." What does it all add up to? Would you believe Sundance 2018? Documentaries can be especially good at illuminating celebrated personalities, and some of Sundance's best this year do just that: "Quiet Heroes." There was once only one doctor who would treat AIDS sufferers in Utah. A low key, moving portrait. See the rest [here](#).



Vavani Productions is a narrative and documentary film and television production house guided by a prosocial agenda to facilitate progress amidst the noise. We believe that there's immense power in determining whose stories get told, and who gets to do the telling. And we want to place that power in the hands of those who've actually lived the experiences they're representing.

Our work gets people talking. Creates controversy. Demands attention. Exposes new ideas and movements that may defy the hegemonic forces that sustain the status quo. All while being entertaining as hell. We know that by changing the conversation, you change the world—and we want our media properties to influence the agenda for good. We tell people what they should be hearing in a way that keeps them coming back for more. We don't pander. We don't sanitize. We don't give up. We tell—and live—the truth: radical honesty, authentically produced.

Vavani's documentaries illuminate history through an unexplored angle, or challenge the status quo to be better. While our work isn't confined to the social impact genre, our ethos-driven approach to content creation aims to inspire audiences to improve our world. We focus on strong subjects who light the path of progress with their speech and actions.

Please read more at www.vavani.com.

Vavani is a subsidiary of Sentry Financial (www.sentry.financial).

For interview requests and general inquiries, please contact:

Amanda Stoddard



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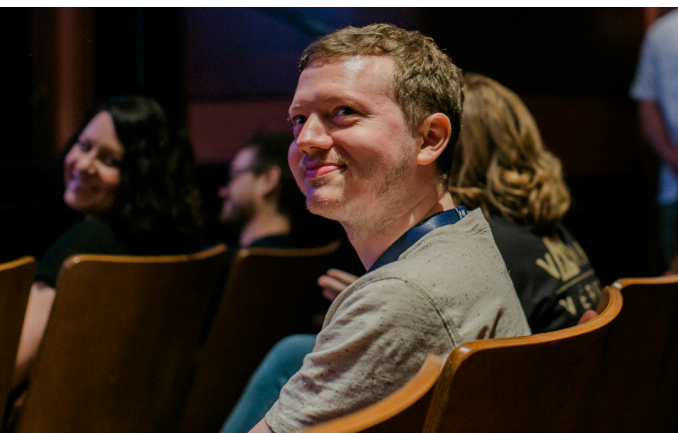


IMAGE CREDIT

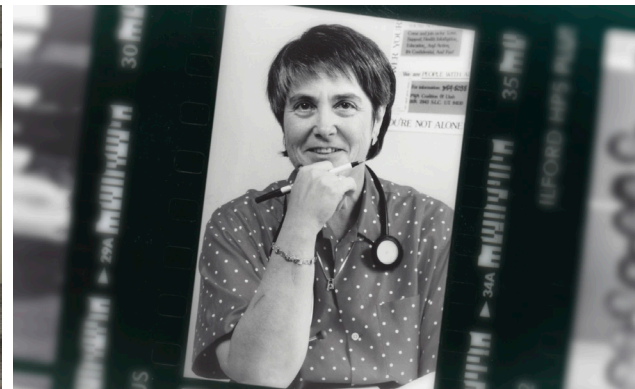
*Full resolution images available upon request.



From left: Peter Christie, a former patient of Dr. Kristen Ries and Maggie Snyder, PA-C, pictured right. Photo credit/copyright: unknown



From left: Maggie Snyder, PA-C and Dr. Kristen Ries in the hallway of their former practice, Clinic 1A at the University of Utah. Photo credit: Torben Bernhard; copyright: Vavani Vérité



Dr. Kristen Ries in the 1980s. Photo credit/copyright: unknown



Kim Smith, one of Dr. Kristin Ries and Maggie Snyder, PA-C's patients Photo credit: Torben Bernhard; copyright: Vavani Vérité



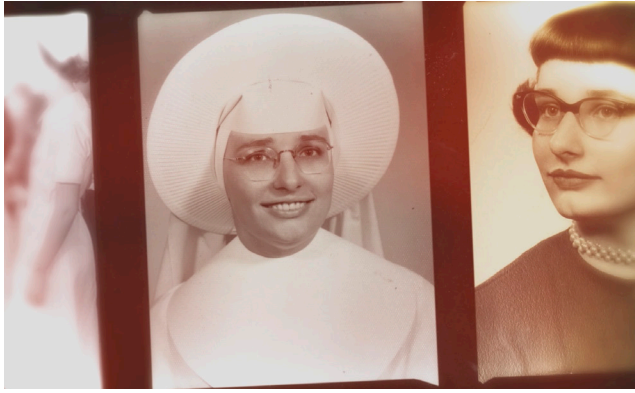
From top: Maggie Snyder, PA-C and Dr. Kristen Ries partaking in a favorite retirement hobby: birding. Photo credit: Torben Bernhard; copyright: Vavani Vérité



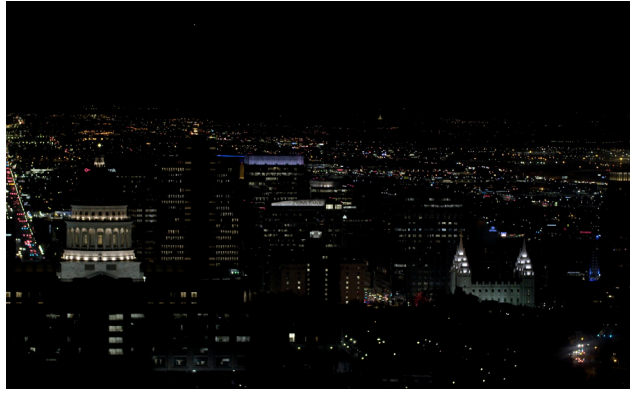
From left: Dr. Kristen Ries hugging a friend at the Mayor's Proclamation Ceremony of Kristen Ries & Maggie Snyder Day on March 29, 2016. Photo credit: Torben Bernhard; copyright: Vavani Vérité

IMAGE CREDIT

*Full resolution images available upon request.



Sister Linda Bellemore, a nun from the Sisters of the Holy Cross who worked at Holy Cross Hospital with Dr. Kristen Ries and Maggie Snyder, PA-C. Photo credit/copyright: unknown



Salt Lake City, with views of the State Capitol and Temple Square. Photo credit: Patrick Ryan Gass; copyright: Vavani Vérité



From left: Utah State Senator Jim Dabakis and his friend, Tim Hoover, in the 1980s. Photo credit/copyright: unknown



Center: Maggie Snyder, PA-C in the 1980s. Photo credit/copyright: unknown



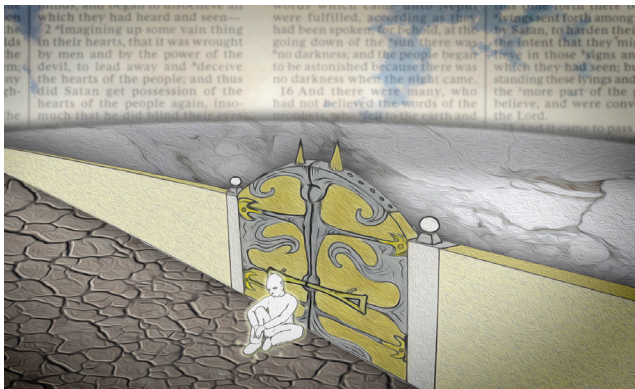
Beverly Stoddard, the daughter of former HIV/AIDS activist Cynthia Kidd. Photo credit: Patrick Ryan Gass; copyright: Vavani Vérité



Animation showcasing religious beliefs in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Credit: Conor Long; copyright: Vavani Vérité

IMAGE CREDIT

*Full resolution images available upon request.



Animation expressing the tension between religion and homosexuality in Utah in the 1980s. Credit: Conor Long; copyright: Vavani Vérité



From left: Kim Smith and Steven T. Smith, patients of Dr. Kristen Ries and Maggie Snyder, PA-C. Photo credit/copyright: unknown



The family of Beverly Stoddard and former HIV/AIDS activist Cynthia Kidd. Photo credit/copyright: unknown



Dr. Kristen Ries hugs a patient in her medical practice. Photo credit: Torben Bernhard; copyright: Vavani Vérité



Peter Christie, a former patient of Dr. Kristen Ries and Maggie Snyder, PA-C, looks over downtown Salt Lake City. Photo credit: Patrick Ryan Gass; copyright: Vavani Vérité



From left: Dr. Kristen Ries and Maggie Snyder, PA-C speak about their experiences with the HIV Crisis Photo credit: Torben Bernhard and Scott Thornton; copyright: Vavani Vérité

IMAGE CREDIT

**Full resolution images available upon request.*



From left: Dr. Kristen Ries and Maggie Snyder, PA-C at the Mayor's Proclamation Ceremony declaring March 29th Kristen Ries and Maggie Snyder Day. Photo credit: Torben Bernhard; copyright: Vavani Vérité



Sister Linda Bellemore of the Sisters of the Holy Cross comforting an HIV patient. Photo credit: unknown