

# CODE OF THE WEST

**CONTACT:**

Racing Horse Productions  
Cindy Burstein, outreach coordinator  
[info@racinghorsepro.com](mailto:info@racinghorsepro.com)  
[www.codeofthewestfilm.com](http://www.codeofthewestfilm.com)  
+1 (617) 396-7025

**A film by Rebecca Richman Cohen**

76 min. • US • 2013  
HDCam 1080i/59.94fps/16:9 + Stereo/Dolby E  
Shot on: DVCPProHD P2 / 720p-24pN

First premiering at the SXSW Film Festival in 2012, *CODE OF THE WEST* garnered widespread attention as national news headlines charted states' ongoing battle for marijuana legalization. Featured in [IndieWire](#) and [The New York Times](#), the film's story became a viral phenomenon, reaching #2 on reddit.com and inspiring thousands to sign a petition asking for the release of imprisoned film subject and medical marijuana grower Chris Williams. With support from more than 500 backers on Kickstarter, and their passion for the issues and the human lives behind the film, we are pleased to announce a new release of *CODE OF THE WEST* that brings our story up to the present day. Released by Sundance #ArtistServices on iTunes and other VOD platforms April 16, 2013

Called "eye opening and gripping" by *The Nation* and "a must-see for anyone interested in drug reform" by *The Austin Chronicle*, *CODE OF THE WEST* has played in the Independent Film Festival Boston, the Traverse City Film Festival, Camden International Film Festival, DocNYC, and was featured as part of the "Spotlight on Documentaries" program at IFP's Independent Film Week in 2011. *The Drug War Chronicle* hails it as "powerful, beautiful and enlightening, and *Law Enforcement Against Prohibition* speaker, Norm Stamper, praises it as an "inspired, deeply personal look at the battle over medical marijuana that will turn heads and change minds, not just in the battleground state of Montana but throughout the country."



RACING HORSE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS 'CODE OF THE WEST'  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER DAVID MENSCHEL PRODUCERS MIKE KASIC AND IAN KELLETT CONSULTING PRODUCERS JIM BUTTERWORTH AND DANIEL J. CHALFEN  
ORIGINAL SCORE MAX AVERY LICHTENSTEIN NARRATOR CATHERINE TAYLOR-WILLIAMS CO-PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JOSHUA Z WEINSTEIN  
PRODUCED, WRITTEN AND EDITED BY FRANCISCO BELLO DIRECTED, WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY REBECCA RICHMAN COHEN [www.codeofthewestfilm.com](http://www.codeofthewestfilm.com)

## Synopsis

At a time when the world is rethinking its drug policies large and small, one state rises to the forefront. Once a pioneer in legalizing medical marijuana, the state of Montana may now become the first to repeal its medical marijuana law. Set against the sweeping vistas of the Rockies, the steamy lamplight of marijuana grow houses, and the bustling halls of the State Capitol, *CODE OF THE WEST* follows the political process of marijuana policy reform – and the recent federal crackdown on medical marijuana growers across the country. This is the story of what happens when politics fail, emotions run high and communities pay the price.

## Director's Statement

By Rebecca Richman Cohen

This is a film about the legislative process, but it is also the story of how different communities struggle to construct a universe of shared values. *Nomos* is an ancient Greek word meaning “human law.” The term is never uttered in our film, but its meaning underlies much of what our crew documented in Montana. *Nomos* refers not only to the formal laws that legislators draft as legal code, but also the social norms and unwritten codes of conduct that govern our daily life. *CODE OF THE WEST* is a film about what happens when there are conflicting codes: when our formal laws conflict with each other, when our social norms conflict with our laws, and when different segments of our society embrace divergent norms.

My team and I have tried to capture the human story behind the legislative process of state-level marijuana policy reform — a messy, tangled affair that has implications for policy reform in other states and for the democratic process in the nation at large. Though the federal government considers marijuana a Schedule I Narcotic (with no accepted medical use), an increasing number of states disagree. Today eighteen states and Washington DC have legalized medical marijuana use for people suffering from debilitating medical conditions including cancer, epilepsy, severe nausea, multiple sclerosis and chronic pain. But the way in which we regulate a drug that is also widely used by adults and teenagers who don't suffer from these conditions — and that has become a powerful symbol in a much wider debate about cultural values — raises the hard questions that drove me to make this film.

As we followed the trajectory of three medical marijuana bills in Montana, we couldn't help but notice another debate taking place in the Montana Capitol. Halfway through the legislative session, the President of the Senate proposed a bill that would memorialize an archetypal, cowboy-era “Code of the West” as the official Montana state code of ethics. But despite the pleasing nostalgia of the idea, the marijuana debate we chronicled revealed to us that a single code of ethics can't begin to reflect the deep divisions at work in Montana's society. And it forced us to wonder, “Who is more true to Montana's pioneering spirit?” Is it those seeking to guard their communities against marijuana billboards that mar the view of the Rockies? Or is it the drug policy reformers seeking to keep medical marijuana legal?

The question, of course, is not whether Montanans — or any of us — should live by a common code, but rather which code, or whose code, we should adopt. The code of the pious? The libertarian? The entrepreneur? The local government? The regional tradition? The national law?

If Montana's medical marijuana debate tells us anything, it is this: There are many codes of the West. And the way in which they are reconciled — or not — has profound implications for the way we live.

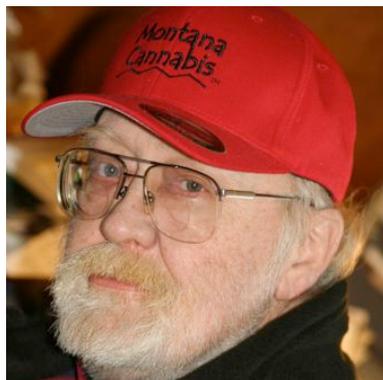
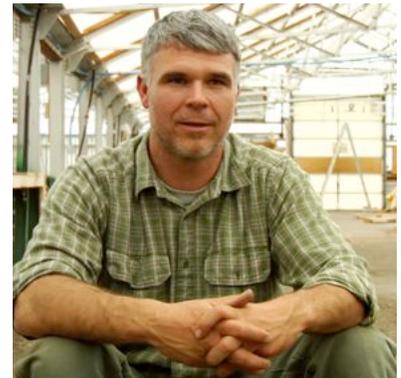
## Update on the medical marijuana growers at Montana Cannabis 3/1/2013



**Tom Daubert** was indicted on the charge of Conspiracy to Maintain a Drug Involved Premise—and pled guilty. As a matter of federal law, Tom was prevented from submitting a defense, which argued that his company had complied with Montana’s medical marijuana law. In early September, our crew returned to Montana to film Tom’s sentencing. As the judge read Tom’s sentence, we had some reason to celebrate: Tom is not going to federal prison. On September 6, 2012, he was sentenced to five-years’ probation and \$50,000 in federal forfeiture fines for his role as an owner of Montana Cannabis. “I’m grateful for the judge’s leniency but I will never stop believing that patients deserve to

live under a law that recognizes true science,” he said. Tom’s defense team submitted *CODE OF THE WEST* to the federal judge and highlighted the scenes of Tom’s growhouse tours. The judge watched the film in its entirety.

**Chris Williams** decided to take his case to a jury. Like Tom, he was prevented from presenting his compliance with state law as a defense against the federal charges. On September 27, 2012 he was convicted on marijuana and related gun charges. Two months after his conviction and tens of thousands of petition signatures later – in an incredibly rare, some say unprecedented move – federal prosecutors dropped six of the eight charges. Many supporters attributed the US Attorney’s decision to public pressure. Chris is currently behind bars serving a mandatory minimum sentence of 5 years in prison.



**Richard Flor** died in federal custody in August 2012. Unlike Tom, Richard was not given probation. He was sentenced to five years in prison despite a long history of serious health problems. He was held in a private prison in Montana for months, and authorities delayed his transfer to a federal prison where he could have received appropriate medical care. U.S. District Judge Charles Lovell wrote in his August 7 order that it was “unfortunate” that Flor’s transfer to a Bureau of Prisons medical facility was delayed, but “it is not factually or legally significant.” Richard’s family is working to file a wrongful death claim.

## Key Creative Personnel

**DIRECTOR / PRODUCER / WRITER Rebecca Richman Cohen** is an Emmy Award nominated filmmaker and a lecturer on law at Harvard Law School. *WAR DON DON*, her first film, won the Special Jury Prize at the SXSW Film Festival and was nominated for two Emmy awards: Outstanding Continuing Coverage Of A News Story (Long Form) and Outstanding Editing. Rebecca has been adjunct faculty at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and American University's Human Rights Institute. She graduated from Brown University with a B.A. in Portuguese and Brazilian Studies and with a Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School, where she now teaches two classes on law and film. In 2010 Rebecca was profiled in *Filmmaker Magazine's* 25 New Faces in Independent Film as an "up-and-comer poised to shape the next generation of independent film." She is a 2012-2013 Soros Justice Fellow.

**PRODUCER / EDITOR / WRITER Francisco Bello** is an OSCAR® and EMMY Nominee. He studied at the Cooper Union School of Art, and has worked in the post-production of films by Kevin Smith, Michael Moore, and George Butler among others. His recent editorial work includes *SUMMER SUN WINTER MOON* (ITVS), *NEITHER MEMORY NOR MAGIC* (MoMA Documentary Fortnight), *BETTY LA FLACA* (HBO), and *JULIETA Y RAMON* (Showtime). He launched Ropa Vieja Films in 2007 with *SALIM BABA* (HBO, Canal+, EBS), which he shot and produced in Kolkata, India. *SALIM BABA* has screened in over 75 festivals worldwide including Sundance, Telluride, IDFA, Woodstock and Tribeca, and in 2008 was Nominated for an ACADEMY AWARD® for Best Short Documentary, followed by a News & Documentary Emmy Nomination in 2009. Most recently, Francisco was awarded the first Karen Schmeer Award for Excellence in Documentary Editing at IFFBoston, and an Outstanding Editing EMMY Nomination for his work on *WAR DON DON*. Francisco also recently completed his directorial debut commissioned by HBO Documentary Films, *THE SPIRIT OF SALSA* which premiered at the 2010 Tribeca Film Festival. He has been awarded fellowships from the PBS/WGBH Producers Academy, the NALIP Producers Academy, grants from the Urban Arts Initiative, the Tribeca Film Institute, and the Estela career achievement award from NALIP.

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER David Menschel** is a lawyer and a director of the Vital Projects Fund, a charitable foundation located in New York City with an interest in human rights and criminal justice reform. Formerly, Menschel was an attorney and the Arthur Liman Fellow at the Innocence Project in New York and the legal director of the Innocence Project of Florida in Tallahassee. He is the author of *Abolition Without Deliverance: The Law of Connecticut Slavery, 1784-1848*, published in the *Yale Law Journal*. He is also the executive producer of several documentary films, including: *NO IMPACT MAN* (2009) about a New York City family's year-long experiment in carbon neutral living; *THE OATH* (2010), a portrait of a cab-driving Yemeni jihadist and his Guantanamo-imprisoned brother-in-law; and *WAR DON DON* (2010), an examination of international efforts to try and punish an alleged war criminal in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Before attending law school, Menschel taught American history to high school students. He received a B.A. from Princeton University and a J.D. from Yale Law School.

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Joshua Z Weinstein** is a director and cinematographer. *FLYING ON ONE ENGINE*, his feature documentary debut, premiered at SXSW 2008 and was featured at Best of the Fests at IDFA. *FLYING ON ONE ENGINE* was broadcast in Germany, Sweden, Poland, Estonia, and Israel. The film won the Estonian Peoples Award, the Audience

Award at the South Asian International Film Festival, and Best in Scene from the Brooklyn Arts Council. Joshua was a field director and cinematographer for Morgan Spurlocks' film *COMIC-CON EPISODE IV: A FANS HOPE*. He was the Director of Photography for the ITVS/BBC/Sundance Institute film, *GIVE UP TOMORROW*. Joshua worked on Romana Diaz's Journey film, *DON'T STOP BELIEVIN: EVERYMANS JOURNEY* and Martin Scorsese's Rolling Stone documentary, *SHINE A LIGHT*. His camerawork has aired on Discovery Channel, ZDF, VH1, and Food Channel. Joshua is an alumnus of the CPB/PBS Producers Academy.

**COMPOSER Max Avery Lichtenstein** is a film composer whose melodic sensibilities, understated arrangements and creative recording techniques infuse a special character into the movies his scores accompany. His music can be heard in critically-acclaimed films such as *WAR DON DON*, *TARNATION*, *THE KING*, *JESUS' SON*, *LOOT* and *FAR FROM HEAVEN*. He recently completed scoring *BORN SWEET*, directed by Academy Award winner Cynthia Wade. Max is also a member of the band Timesbold and writes and performs his own songs under the name Camphor.

**CONSULTING PRODUCER Jim Butterworth** is the founder and president of Naked Edge Films, where he has served as executive producer for films including *The Revisionaries*, *Gone*, *Donor Unknown*, *War Don Don*, *The Disappearance of McKinley Nolan* and *Cape Spin*. Jim's own film *Seoul Train*, which he produced, directed and shot, has been translated to more than twenty languages and broadcast on TV globally. In 2007, *Seoul Train* was bestowed the Alfred I. duPont – Columbia University Award for excellence in broadcast journalism and investigative reporting, and also was runner-up for the National Journalism Award. Jim also is a successful technology entrepreneur and investor, and an advisor to a number of nonprofits, startup companies and investment funds. He was one of the pioneers in the streaming of audio and video over the Internet, and holds 12 issued U.S. and foreign patents in this field.

**CONSULTING PRODUCER Daniel J. Chalfen** is a founder of and producer at Naked Edge Films. His most recent documentaries include "Donor Unknown" (produced with ARTE, More 4 and VPRO), which premiered at the 2010 Sheffield Doc/Fest then went on to screen at IDFA, Tribeca and Silverdocs (the latter two at which it won an Audience Award), and broadcast in the U.S. on the PBS series *Independent Lens*; "GONE," which premiered at Tribeca in 2011, and was broadcast on Discovery ID in the U.S.; "War Don Don," which premiered at SXSW, where it won a Special Jury Mention, and was broadcast in the U.S. on HBO, and was nominated for two Emmys; and "Budrus," which premiered at Dubai then screened at Berlin, Tribeca and Silverdocs, among other festivals, each of which where it won an award. Earlier credits include "The Disappearance of McKinley Nolan," Executive Produced by Danny Glover; "Meeting Resistance," which won the Golden Award at the Al Jazeera International Documentary Festival; "Encounter Point"; "39 Pounds of Love," which was produced with HBO Documentary Films and was short-listed for an Academy Award; and "Pulled from the Rubble," which became an ABC Special. Daniel's non-fiction television series include "Happy France" for ARTE and "Ordinary People," which was broadcast worldwide. His forthcoming films include "Pretty Old," Executive Produced by Joe Berlinger and Sarah Jessica Parker, "Cape Spin," "The Revisionaries," and "The Life and Mind of Mark DeFriest."