

EVERY ACT OF LIFE



“Terrence McNally receives a warm salute as a vital voice in the American theater and an LGBT activist who made the personal political. Jeff Kaufman's briskly entertaining film will be met with heartfelt applause from theater-lovers and LGBT audiences.”

– THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

Featuring: Terrence McNally, F. Murray Abraham, Lynn Ahrens, Jon Robin Baitz, Christine Baranski, Dominic Cuskern, Tyne Daly, Edie Falco, Stephen Flaherty, John Glover, Anthony Heald, John Benjamin Hickey, Sheryl Kaller, John Kander, Roberta Kaplan, Tom Kirdahy, Larry Kramer, Nathan Lane, Angela Lansbury, Paul Libin, Joe Mantello, Marin Mazzie, Audra McDonald, Peter McNally, Lynne Meadow, Rita Moreno, Jack O'Brien, Billy Porter, Chita Rivera, Doris Roberts, Don Roos, John Slattery, Micah Stock, Richard Thomas, John Tillinger, and Patrick Wilson, plus the voices of Dan Bucatinsky, Bryan Cranston, and Meryl Streep

“Riveting and revealing.”
– ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

“Poignant & incredibly inspiring.
Indispensable.” – THE VILLAGE VOICE

“Really entertaining and illuminating.
Bravo.” – EDGE MEDIA

“Wonderful . . . I wasn't prepared for the emotional release of this film.” – The Paper

“Lively and moving.”
– THE BOSTON GLOBE

“An affectionate and intensely personal portrait.” – THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

Four-time Tony-winning playwright Terrence McNally's six ground-breaking decades in the theatre, the fight for LGBTQ rights, triumph over addiction, the pursuit of love and inspiration at every age, and the power of the arts to transform society.

SYNOPSIS:

The son of an alcoholic beer distributor in southern Texas, Terrence traveled the world as tutor to John Steinbeck's children (Steinbeck's only advice was, "Don't write for the theater. It will break your heart"); suffered an infamous Broadway flop in 1965 at age 24; and went on to write dozens of groundbreaking plays and musicals about sexuality, homophobia, faith, the power of art, the need to connect, and finding meaning in every moment of life. He's won four Tony Awards; had long relationships with Edward Albee and Wendy Wasserstein; lost a lover and many friends to AIDS; stopped drinking through the intervention of Angela Lansbury; helped launch the careers of Nathan Lane, F. Murray Abraham, Audra McDonald, Doris Roberts, Patrick Wilson, and Joe Mantello; was an early champion of marriage equality and faced violent protests for his play *Corpus Christi*; survived a brutal fight with lung cancer; and finally found lasting love with his now-husband, producer Tom Kirdahy.

Terrence's plays, musicals, operas, and screenplays include: *And Things That Go Bump in the Night* (1964), *Next* (1969), *Bad Habits* (1974), *The Ritz* (1975), *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* (1982), *It's Only a Play* (1986 / 2014), *Andre's Mother* (1990), *The Lisbon Traviata* (1989), *Lips Together, Teeth Apart* (1991), *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1992), *A Perfect Ganesh* (1993), *Love! Valour! Compassion!* (1994), *Master Class* (1995), *Ragtime* (1996), *Corpus Christi* (1998), *Dead Man Walking* (2000), *The Full Monty* (2000), *Mothers and Sons* (2014), and *Anastasia* (2017).

“The stakes are really high now, higher than ever. We need to bring barriers down, not build walls. We need to love one another more, and see how connected we really are. I think that's the message of art.”

– TERRENCE MCNALLY

“Terrence gets to the truth in a way that makes you laugh and cry in all different areas – musical theatre and plays. I defy you to name another playwright who can do that. You cannot tell the history of American theatre without celebrating his life and work.”

– AUDRA MCDONALD

“Terrence started so early to show Americans who gay people are. He did it before anyone else. He did it better than anyone else.”

– ROBERTA KAPLAN

“Terrence shows that it's worth living, it's worth being an authentic human being, and above all that it's worth loving.”

– CHRISTINE BARANSKI

EVERY ACT OF LIFE

(TRT: 92 minutes)

Produced, Directed, and Written by: JEFF KAUFMAN

Produced by: MARCIA S. ROSS

Executive Producers: JAY ALIX & UNA JACKMAN, SUZI DIETZ, TOM KIRDAHY, MARK LEE, TED SNOWDON & DUFFY VIOLANTE, BUDDY STEVES & ROWENA YOUNG

Editor: ASHER BINGHAM

Music: LAURA KARPMAN & NORA KROLL-ROSENBAUM

Cinematography: JORDAN BLACK, AUTUMN EAKIN, ANTHONY LUCIDO

Jeff Kaufman produced, directed, and wrote the documentaries *The State of Marriage*, *Father Joseph*, *The Savoy King: Chick Webb and the Music That Changed America*, *Brush With Life: The Art of Being Edward Biberman*, and *Education Under Fire*, plus programs for The Discovery Channel and The History Channel, and a half-dozen short films for Amnesty International. He also contributed cartoons to *The New Yorker*, and illustrations to *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*, wrote / illustrated several children's books, and hosted radio talk shows in Vermont and Los Angeles. In October 2018, Smith & Krauss is publishing an illustrated and expanded version of the *Every Act Of Life* script, edited and designed by Jeff Kaufman.

Marcia S. Ross produced *The State Of Marriage*, *Father Joseph*, and *The Savoy King*. As a casting director and executive, she has worked on hundreds of feature films, TV series, pilots, and movies for television. She also served for 16 years as EVP of Casting for Walt Disney Motion Pictures, and 5 years as VP for Casting and Talent Development at Warner Brothers Television. Her credits include *Clueless*, *thirtysomething*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, *The Princess Diaries*, *Romy and Michele's High School Reunion*, *The Lookout*, *The Muppets*, *Parental Guidance*, and *Oblivion*.

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EVERY ACT OF LIFE DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT - JEFF KAUFMAN

In his interview for *Every Act of Life*, Terrence McNally said, "The need to connect that my characters feel is everything in my work." Terrence and I come out of very different backgrounds and experiences, but the way we've connected says a lot about how the arts can lift people, and bring them together.

I was born in St. Paul, Minnesota but grew up in ultra-suburban Bellevue, Washington. I dropped out of college with the notion of doing cartoons for *The New Yorker*, moved to New York City, got a job as a messenger at the magazine, and after a few years of delivering packages, I sold them a few cartoons. However, the defining moments in our lives often aren't the goals we set for ourselves, but things that happen along the way. When I was a kid, I fell in love with old movies by going to Saturday matinees, and discovering the films of Howard Hawks, John Ford, Preston Sturges (and others) on television. When I worked at *The New Yorker*, I always volunteered to carry the bags of film critic Pauline Kael when she walked to Grand Central Station. I was kind of a bumpkin, but she befriended me, recommended favorite movies (*The Shop Around the Corner*), invited me up to her home in Great Barrington, and gave me my first sense of the transformative power of the arts. Much as John Steinbeck inspired Terrence, Pauline impressed me with her passionate (sometimes contentious) interest in art, music, history, film, politics – for her, it all wove together. She set me on the somewhat zigzagging direction of my life.

After briefly working as a struggling cartoonist, I did illustrations for *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*, wrote and illustrated several children's books, wrote for magazines and newspapers, exhibited paintings, and hosted daily talk radio programs in Vermont and Los Angeles. I finally jumped from radio to working on nonfiction TV, and then slid, pushed, and wangled my way into directing, producing, and writing feature documentaries.

First on my own, and then with my producing partner Marcia Ross, I've done documentaries about: swing jazz and dance in 1930s Harlem and the discovery of Ella Fitzgerald, the persecution of the Baha'i Faith in Iran, a pioneering Los Angeles artist in the McCarthy era, a courageous priest and champion of women's rights in Haiti, and the three women who helped launch the national marriage equality movement. The subjects may seem quite different, but they're all about visionary people with a sense of community and public purpose.

It was during our last film, *The State of Marriage*, that Marcia and I filmed a short sequence with Terrence and his husband, theatre producer Tom Kirdahy. They shared their story of getting a Civil Union in Vermont, which at the time was as close to marriage as possible for same sex couples. It was really moving to hear one of America's greatest and most influential writers speak so openly about love, need, trust, commitment, being true to oneself, and the importance of making life matter. We thought, "Why hasn't anyone made a documentary about this man?" A few months later we floated the idea to Terrence and Tom, they said yes, and that's what started *Every Act of Life*.

Marcia began her career in the theatre, then worked as a casting director and executive on dozens of films and television series, including *Clueless*, *Ten Things I Hate About You*, *The Princess Diaries*, *Romy and Michele's High School Reunion*, and *thirtysomething*. We were both divorced when we started seeing each other, and after a few years we decided to work together, as well. Midway through filming *Every Act of Life*, Marcia and I got married. The power of connection that Terrence believes in has certainly affected our lives.

Terrence says in *Every Act of Life*, "Speaking in your own voice, realizing who you are, is a complicated process . . . When people aren't willing to look at the truth about who they are, I think it's going to corrode their souls, their hearts." That call for honesty and openness is what makes his plays so universal and lasting, and it's a big part of what makes me want to tell his story. *The Hollywood Reporter* said, Terrence makes "the personal political." *Every Act of Life* shows what it means (in Terrence's words) to be "an authentic human being," the importance of having respect for others and for oneself, the power and responsibility of the arts to push society forward, and that individuals can find inspiration, meaning, and love at every stage of their life.

- Jeff Kaufman
director, producer, writer

