



From the makers of *Lost In La Mancha* comes *A Tale of Obsession...*

He Dreams of Giants

A film by **Keith Fulton** and **Lou Pepe**

A DARWIN FILMS AND LOW KEY PICTURES PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH CORNICHE MEDIA AND FIKREE FILMS "HE DREAMS OF GIANTS"
CO-PRODUCER ALEX DUNNETT SOUND DESIGN AND MIXING MICHAEL KOWALSKI SAM FAN ORIGINAL SCORE JACASZEK
SUPERVISING EDITOR JANUS BILLESKOV JANSEN EDITORS BILL HILFERTY NYNEVE LAURA MINNEAR CINEMATOGRAPHY LOU PEPE JEREMY ROYCE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS HANI FARSI ALI FIKREE OMAR FIKREE ARI IOANNIDES PRODUCED BY LUCY DARWIN KEITH FULTON DIRECTED BY KEITH FULTON AND LOU PEPE

RUNNING TIME: 84 minutes

United Kingdom, 2019, DCP, 5.1 Dolby Digital Surround, Aspect Ratio 16:9

PRESS CONTACT: Cinetic Media

Ryan Werner and Charlie Olsky



SYNOPSIS

*“Why does anyone create? It’s hard. Life is hard. Art is hard.
Doing anything worthwhile is hard.” – Terry Gilliam*

From the team behind *Lost in La Mancha* and *The Hamster Factor*, **HE DREAMS OF GIANTS** is the culmination of a trilogy of documentaries that have followed film director Terry Gilliam over a twenty-five-year period. Charting Gilliam’s final, beleaguered quest to adapt *Don Quixote*, this documentary is a potent study of creative obsession.

For over thirty years, Terry Gilliam has dreamed of creating a screen adaptation of Cervantes’ masterpiece. When he first attempted the production in 2000, Gilliam already had the reputation of being a bit of a Quixote himself: a filmmaker whose stories of visionary dreamers raging against gigantic forces mirrored his own artistic battles with the Hollywood machine. The collapse of that infamous and ill-fated production – as documented in *Lost in La Mancha* – only further cemented Gilliam’s reputation as an idealist chasing an impossible dream.

HE DREAMS OF GIANTS picks up Gilliam’s story seventeen years later as he finally mounts the production once again and struggles to finish it. Facing him are a host of new obstacles: budget constraints, a history of compromise and heightened expectations, all compounded by self-doubt, the toll of aging, and the nagging existential question: What is left for an artist when he completes the quest that has defined a large part of his career?

Combining immersive verité footage of Gilliam’s production with intimate interviews and archival footage from the director’s entire career, **HE DREAMS OF GIANTS** is a revealing character study of a late-career artist, and a meditation on the value of creativity in the face of mortality.

PRODUCTION STORY

For nearly a quarter of a century, directors Keith Fulton and Lou Pepe have had unprecedented access to the life and career of visionary filmmaker Terry Gilliam. Including their first film about Gilliam, *The Hamster Factor and Other Tales of Twelve Monkeys*, the duo have now made three feature-length documentaries that chronicle the director’s creative process. Each of the three films has gone well beyond the traditional ‘making of’ style of documentary, capturing immersive, visceral, and intimate portraits of Gilliam that revisit him as an artist at different stages of his career. “To my knowledge, this sort of longitudinal study of a filmmaker has never been done,” says Pepe of the decades-long project.

During that time, as Gilliam has developed as a director, so too have Fulton and Pepe. Back in the mid-1990s, when Gilliam hand-picked them to film on the set of *12 Monkeys*, the duo were fledgling film school graduates embarking on their first feature-length documentary. It was also Fulton and Pepe’s first experience of a large-scale Hollywood production.

“It was great to have Terry assume this role as a mentor figure, even a hero figure, for how to make films,” says Pepe. Both understood the privilege of having Gilliam not only as a subject but also as a guiding force as they honed their approach to filmmaking. “If I trace back what I’ve learned about making films, many of those ideas lead back to things Terry said to me,” adds Pepe.

For Fulton, Gilliam was an iconoclast, allowing them to capture footage beyond the realms of the standard behind-the-scenes films.

“We were let into places that people don’t normally want you to go, like capturing reactions to test screenings, attending marketing meetings and documenting the creative struggles that transpire in the edit room.”

Producer Lucy Darwin’s involvement also began with *12 Monkeys*, when Gilliam asked her to coordinate his film’s post-production in London. While the sci-fi film would cement a long-standing relationship between Gilliam and Darwin, it was a fortuitous moment for other reasons. “It was during post-production that I met and began working with Keith and Lou on their film as well as Terry’s,” says Darwin. The producer would later coordinate a small UK theatrical release for the documentary alongside her work on the marketing of *12 Monkeys*.

During the production of *12 Monkeys*, Gilliam had generously refused to put limits on what Fulton and Pepe could film. “Terry felt that people often self-censor,” says Pepe, who knew how important it was to capture the difficulties of the film production process in order for their first documentary to come alive. “Stories don’t work without conflict, so you have to find a way to capture it. Even if that brings you to uncomfortable places.” Gilliam agreed to the unprecedented level of access for *The Hamster Factor* because, if Hollywood had taught him anything, it was good to have witnesses to the real battles waged behind the scenes.

Intimate access led to the most uncomfortable places when the team began to document Gilliam’s 2000 attempt to adapt *Don Quixote* – what would become the subject of their cult disaster movie *Lost in La Mancha*. Whether it was cast injuries, flash floods, over-running schedules or a rapidly diminishing budget, Gilliam told them to keep shooting. “Terry goaded us on. Some of the crew felt we were like vultures descending on this film that was falling apart,” says Fulton. “But Terry told us to keep going. ‘You may be the only ones to get a film out of this,’ he said, ‘So you’d better keep shooting.’”

For **HE DREAMS OF GIANTS**, Gilliam was willing to give Fulton and Pepe even more intimate access. However, the filmmakers were initially concerned that there was no new ground to cover. Gilliam had proved to be a compelling subject for the first two films, but a third? “I had to be persuaded to do it at all in the beginning,” explains Darwin about coming back as a producer. One fundamental concern was the very fact that *Lost in La Mancha* had become a cult classic – the first verité chronicle of the collapse of a major motion picture. It has for many years been taught in film schools as an unparalleled examination of the reality of filmmaking. Ultimately, Darwin was swayed by the team’s reference to Michael Apter’s *Seven Up!* Series and their enthusiasm about the opportunity to complete a unique documentary trilogy that spanned such a long stretch of Gilliam’s career.

As Fulton explains, “What we discovered was that while *The Hamster Factor* was ‘man against the system,’ and *Lost in La Mancha* ‘man against nature,’ the new film explores perhaps the most painful conflict of them all, ‘man against himself.’” **HE DREAMS OF GIANTS**, shot while Gilliam was making *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote* in 2017, does indeed wrestle with more existential themes. “You can see Terry has a greater sense of his mortality here,” says Fulton of their documentary.

The change in Gilliam’s spirit prompted Pepe to recall his different readings of Cervantes’ novel over the years. “I first read *Don Quixote* when we made *Lost in La Mancha*,” says the director. “Back then it felt like the story of a valiant dreamer raging against the forces of reality, but when I read it in my fifties, I saw it in a very different light.” He adds, “Now, for me, it’s the story of a man knowing that he’s heading towards the end of his life, wondering what legacy he’s leaving behind.”

For Pepe and Fulton there's an intertextual reading here. They felt that the Gilliam they first documented in 1995 was the valiant dreamer, whereas now, at the end of a three-decade quest, they witnessed him struggling with the very meaning of life and art.

At the outset of **HE DREAMS OF GIANTS**, both Fulton and Pepe were surprised to find that the director was not as excited as they had imagined he would be, even though he was resuming the supposed film of his dreams. Instead, Gilliam was exhausted, worn down by the weight of his thirty-year quest. "There was a sense of how compromised the process was. Nothing was to his standard. He was kicking and screaming a lot, and there was very little good cheer," recalls Fulton.

At this point, Fulton knew that **HE DREAMS OF GIANTS** would be different from the previous two documentaries. This time the team sought to convey something more intimate about a filmmaker they both consider to be a mentor. "We've spent a lot of time with Terry, and we wanted to go beyond his gallows humour and cynicism, as charming as it is," explains Fulton. "We wanted to capture the subtext there – the kernels of truth that Terry offers up."

Cinematically, the duo chose to focus on long takes of Gilliam's face, with all his frankness of expression – as he works, as he falls ill and as he perseveres to finish his dream project. "Terry is at his most honest as well as his most vulnerable here," says Pepe. This cinematic strategy pushes the film beyond a simple reality-based format into the realm of immersive character study. "When we sat down in London to watch three hours of these 'mindscreens,' as we call them, we thought, 'This is the movie. The drama and conflict all play out on Terry's face!'"

Despite Gilliam's struggles, **HE DREAMS OF GIANTS** demonstrates that, for all the suffering involved in the dogged pursuit of creating a film, what matters most is being engaged in the process: making art and believing in the seemingly impossible. "Terry and I had an interesting conversation about this," says Fulton. "He said, 'If the end product isn't what you wanted to achieve, what's the point in doing it?' But conversely, he would also say, 'The only thing that matters is the doing of it.'" Fulton describes this paradox as a bitter conflict that he and Pepe have wrestled with themselves. For a director, the love of a film is in the labor, even when the birth is a painful and complicated process.

The sentiment is shared by Darwin. "This film, for me, shows the antithesis of the Hollywood myth of filmmaking," she explains. "Making films isn't glamorous. It's really hard work. Each day is really hard. It's a miracle when a film gets made."

At the heart of **HE DREAMS OF GIANTS** is an artist at work, demonstrating that filmmaking is as much about the approach to the work as the finished result -

an attitude of persistence and perseverance. This intimate portrait shows Gilliam, not as a tyrannical auteur, but as a creative and passionate innovator, spurred on by a willingness to sacrifice everything - even his own health - to see his dreams realized.

“Over the years, I learned that Terry identifies with the Biblical story of Job,” says Pepe. “He takes a lot of pride in how hard he works, and how much he’s willing to suffer to get a film made.” Pepe adds, “Terry also admits to identifying with a certain chaser of white whales.”

BIOGRAPHIES

Keith Fulton & Lou Pepe – Directors

Keith Fulton and Lou Pepe are directors of both documentary and fiction films and have made movies together for over 20 years. Fulton is a native of Boston, Massachusetts and holds a B.A. in Art History from Haverford College and an MFA in Film Production from Temple University. He is a fellow of the Sundance Institute’s Writers and Documentary Labs.

Pepe was born in Philadelphia and holds B.S degrees. in Computer Science and Film Studies from M.I.T. and an MFA from Temple University. He is a fellow of the Sundance Institute’s Directors and Documentary Labs. Pepe is also an Associate Professor at Temple University and directs Temple's Los Angeles Study Away Program.

Fulton and Pepe’s documentary feature *LOST IN LA MANCHA* stands as the first and only verité chronicle of the collapse of a major motion picture. It was nominated for the European Film Award for Best Documentary and won the Evening Standard’s Peter Sellers Award for Best Comedy.

Their fiction film debut *BROTHERS OF THE HEAD* was winner of the Michael Powell Award for Best British Feature in 2006. For AMC, the team created the original documentary special *MALKOVICH’S MAIL*. They are also the authors of numerous screenplays, including *THE WIZARDS OF PERFIL*, which made the Hollywood Black List in 2007.

Fulton and Pepe’s last documentary release *THE BAD KIDS* received a Special Jury Prize at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival and was selected for the American Film Showcase. It was nominated for both a Peabody Award and an Emmy.

Lucy Darwin – Producer

Lucy Darwin (Producer) first worked with Terry Gilliam on *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* and *The Fisher King*. She joined Gilliam for the post production of *TWELVE MONKEYS* and collaborated with Fulton and Pepe as a producer on the documentary *THE HAMSTER FACTOR AND OTHER TALES OF TWELVE MONKEYS*. Darwin was Associate Producer on Rocket Pictures' *WOMEN TALKING DIRTY* and Executive Producer on the Irish romantic comedy *THE HONEYMOONERS*. As Producer of *LOST IN LA MANCHA* she received BAFTA and European Film Awards nominations and won with Fulton and Pepe the Evening Standard's Peter Sellers Award for Best Comedy. Darwin went on to produce Woody Allen's Oscar, Golden Globe and BAFTA nominated *MATCH POINT*.

Michal Jacaszek - Composer

Michal Jacaszek (Composer) creates electroacoustic music combining electronically prepared sounds with acoustic instruments. Jacaszek collaborates with filmmakers to compose original scores and with directors and producers for live theatre. He also works with other artists, writers and poets in a variety of media including video, visual art, choreography and photography. He has performed his work in festivals across the world including China, Russia, the USA and across Europe. Accolades for his work include the International Documentary Association prize for Best Documentary Soundtrack for *THE BAD KIDS*. Jacaszek is a member of the Polish Society for Electroacoustic Music and lives in Gdansk, Poland.

Janus Billeskov Jansen - Supervising Editor

Since 1970, Janus Billeskov Jansen (Supervising Editor) has edited a great many internationally acclaimed feature films and documentaries, and directed numerous Danish documentaries. He has worked with many of the most influential Danish directors of the past 30 years. Most significant has been the lifelong creative relationship with the Academy Award-winning director Bille August. Collaborations include *LES MISERABLES* (1998), *THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS* (1993), *THE BEST INTENTIONS* (1992, Palme d'Or, Cannes) and *PELLE THE CONQUEROR* (1988, Palme d'Or, Cannes; Academy Award for Best Foreign Film; Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Film). Recent work includes *STRONG ISLAND* (2017, Dir. Yance Ford), *THE ACT OF KILLING* (2012, Dir. Joshua Oppenheimer), *THE HUNT*, (2012, Dir. Thomas Vinterberg), *THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO* (2009, dir. Niels Arden Oplev) and *BURMA VJ: REPORTING FROM A CLOSED COUNTRY* (2008, Dir. Anders Østergaard; awarded a.o. the World Cinema Editing Award at Sundance 2009, Joris Ivens Award 2008, Grierson Award 2008, nominated for Academy Award). He teaches editing and narrative development at The National Film School

of Denmark. He won The Danish Film Academy Award in 1984, 1988 and 1995 and a Bodil Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005.

Bill Hilferty - Editor

Bill Hilferty (Editor) is based in Los Angeles and graduated from Temple University in 2013 with a degree in Film and Media Arts. HE DREAMS OF GIANTS is his feature documentary debut. His first fiction film as editor was the children's narrative, A TIGER'S TAIL (2014). At only 23-years old, he became the go-to editor for Illuminate Media, a boutique production house producing TV pilots and internet comedy. Hilferty was the full-time assistant editor on Fulton and Pepe's THE BAD KIDS. He also edited the documentary short, SUMMER'S CHOICE, which was commissioned by The New York Times' Op-Docs and the web series RAGE ROOM which premiered at the Slamdance Film Festival in 2019.

Nyneve Laura Minnear - Editor

Nyneve Laura Minnear (Editor) is an award-winning film editor and producer. Her recent feature-length work includes 306 HOLLYWOOD, Sundance 2018, the first documentary to premiere in the Next section for Innovative Filmmaking, airing on PBS-POV in 2019; (T)ERROR - winner of a Sundance 2015 Special Jury Award, an Emmy for Outstanding Investigative Documentary and a Grand Jury Award at Full Frame. FARMER/VETERAN, ITVS funded and premiering on PBS-Independent Lens in 2017. GIRL WITH BLACK BALLOONS, winner of a Grand Jury Prize at DocNYC and chosen "Best of Fest" at its premiere at the Edinburgh Film Festival. THE LULU SESSIONS, which screened at over 20 festivals worldwide, winning six Best Documentary awards. Nyneve began her career in documentaries working on productions for PBS-Frontline and Nova.

CREDITS

A **Darwin Films** and **Low Key Pictures** Production

In Association with **Corniche Media** and **Fikree Films**

“HE DREAMS OF GIANTS”

Directed by **Keith Fulton** and **Lou Pepe**

Produced by **Lucy Darwin Keith Fulton**

Executive Producers **Hani Farsi Ali Fikree Omar Fikree Ari Ioannides**

Cinematography **Lou Pepe Jeremy Royce**

Editors **Bill Hilferty Nyneve Laura Minnear**

Supervising Editor **Janus Billeskov Jansen**

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Gerald Slocock Tamara Stezhka Malcolm Weir

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Andres De La Torre Jackie Katzman

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Gaffer **Maarten Alexander**
Dolly Grip **David Bradshaw**
Hair & Make Up **Almut Gramer-Thornton**
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Violin arranged and performed by **Stefan Wesolowski**
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Diego Lopéz Calvin
François Duhamel
Kettledrum Lownes Productions
The Terry Gilliam Archive

"Lost in La Mancha"
Quixote Films/Keith Fulton & Louis Pepe/2002

"Brazil"
Universal Studios Licensing LLC/New Regency/Terry Gilliam/1985

"Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas"
Universal Studios Licensing LLC/Terry Gilliam/1998

"The Adventures of Baron Munchausen"
Columbia Pictures/Terry Gilliam/1988

"Tideland"
Recorded Picture Company/Terry Gilliam/2005

"8 1/2"
Gaumont/Intra Movies/Corinth Films/Federico Fellini/1963

"Time Bandits"
Handmade Films/Terry Gilliam/1981

"The Fisher King"
TriStar Pictures/Terry Gilliam/1991

Songs
"And Now For Something Completely Different"
Performed by Javier Barón
Courtesy of Original Future Sounds Ltd.
Written by Taketo Tomoshige and Manuel Salado
Published by Original Future Sounds Ltd.

"Flamenco Bulerías con Baile 234"
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"Ricordo d'Infanzia"
Performed by Michael Kamen
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"Venus Rising"
Performed by Michael Kamen
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"Fondue Song"
Performed by Michael Moran
Courtesy of Jack Russell Music Ltd.
Written by Michael Moran
Published by Jack Russell Music Ltd.

"La Conferenza Stampa del Regista"
Written and performed by Nino Rota
From the soundtrack "8 1/2"

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HE DREAMS OF GIANTS

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