

Long Time Coming™

A 1955 BASEBALL STORY



Common Pictures Presents

A Strong Films Production

DIRECTOR

Jon Strong

PRODUCERS

Ted Haddock

John King

PRODUCED BY

Tighe Arnold

James Spradlin

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Michael Tollin

WRITTEN BY

Jon Strong, Ted Haddock,
Mike Quinn Jr., John King

EDITED BY

Jon Strong, Drew Tearpak,
Mike Quinn Jr., Andre Bohrer

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Christopher S. Towle

ORIGINAL SCORE

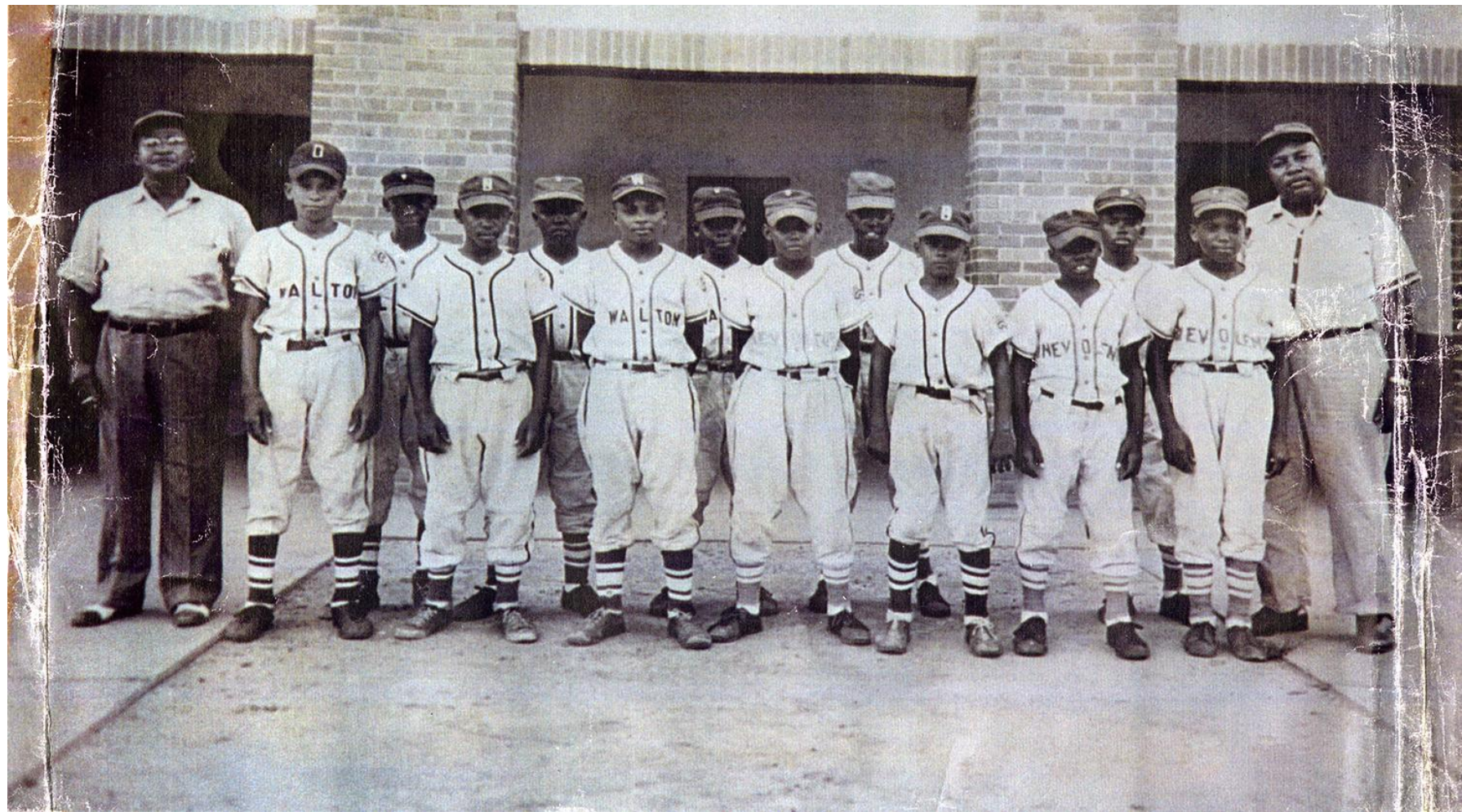
John Arndt

MUSIC SUPERVISOR

Linda Cohen

LINE PRODUCER

Ed Steinberg



CAST

1955 PENSACOLA JAYCEES

Willie Preyer
Admiral "Spider" LeRoy
Willie Stromas
Cleveland Daily
Willie V. Robinson
Rev. Freddie Augustine

1955 ORLANDO KIWANIS

Stewart Hall
Jerry Cowart
Bill Hudson
Danny Rivenbark
Gary Fleming
Ron Homan
John Lane

GUEST STARS

Andrew Young
Hank Aaron
Cal Ripken Jr.
Gary Sheffield
Davey Johnson
John Rivers
Norman Robinson
Chris Lamb
Robin Reshard
Lance Van Auken



SYNOPSIS

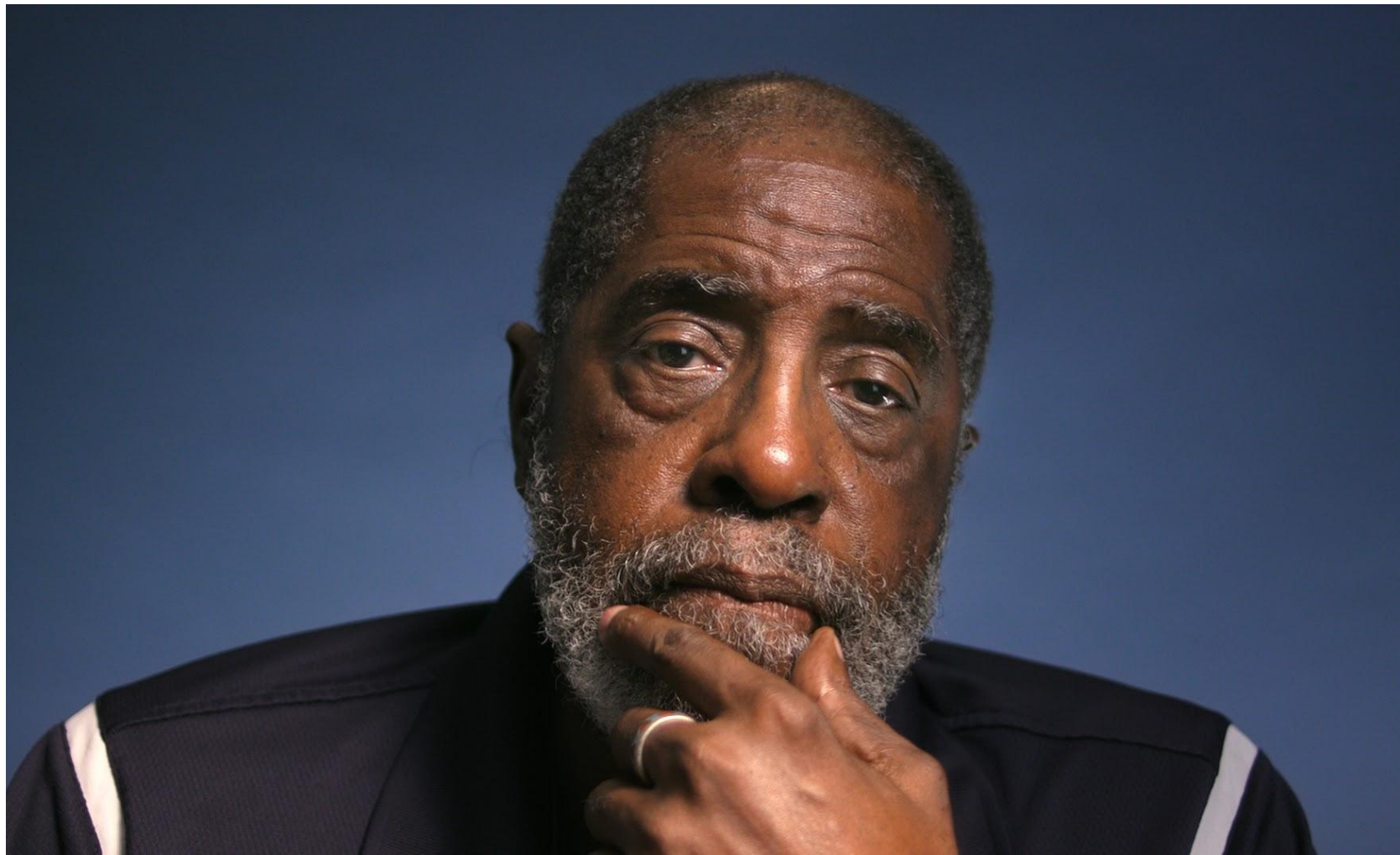
In 1955, when racial segregation defined the South, two groups of twelve-year-old boys stepped onto a baseball field in a non-violent act of cultural defiance that would change the course of history.

Jackie Robinson had broken the Major League color barrier eight years earlier, but segregation still prevailed. Our future hinged upon local Southern communities to either embrace Robinson's pioneering efforts, to redouble its longstanding commitment to segregation, or to remain quietly complicit in a system of racial inequality. Florida's 1955 Little League State Championship represents a shining moment in our nation's history when children led us all toward a better way.

In one of the first integrated Little League games in the South, the all-Black Pensacola Jaycees and the all-White Orlando Kiwanis moved beyond fears, threats and the unknown to break with tradition and show the world what was possible.

More than 60 years later, team captains Will Preyer (Pensacola) and Stewart Hall (Orlando) embark on personal journeys back to the game 1955 and find that the forgotten event becomes a bridge to embracing the turbulence of today's social landscape.

In addition to interviews with surviving members of the 1955 Pensacola Jaycees and Orlando Kiwanis, the film includes personal conversations with Major League Baseball and Civil Rights icons Hank Aaron, Cal Ripken, Jr., Gary Sheffield, Davey Johnson and Ambassador Andrew Young who offer insight linking the past, the present, baseball and human dignity.



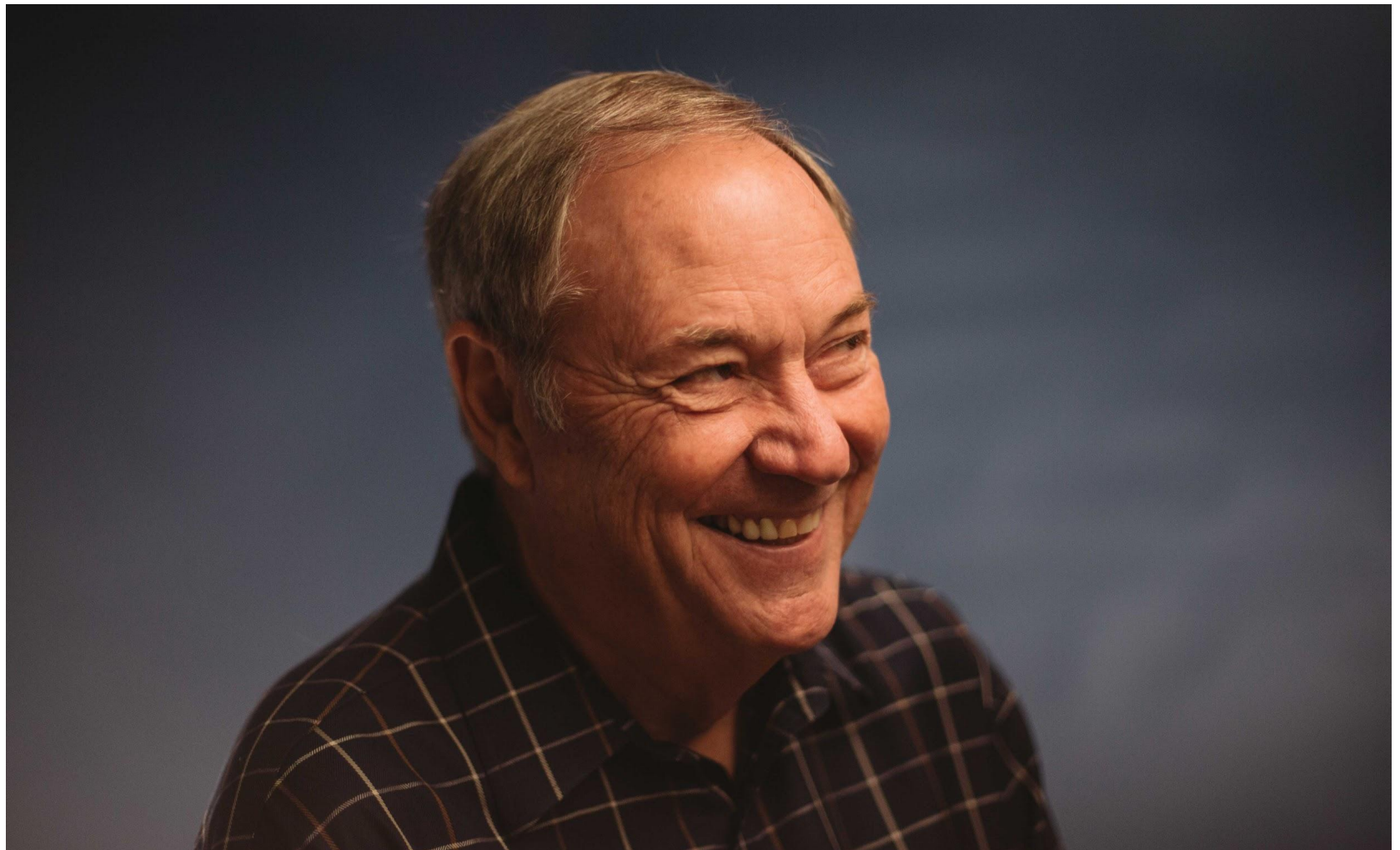
SYNOPSIS

Short

In 1955, when racial segregation defined the South, two teams of twelve-year-old boys stepped onto a baseball field in a non-violent act of cultural defiance that would change the course of history. Florida's 1955 Little League State Championship between the all-black Pensacola Jaycees and the all-white Orlando Kiwanis represents a shining moment in our nation's history.

More than 60 years later, team captains Will Preyer (Pensacola) and Stewart Hall (Orlando) embark on personal journeys back to the game 1955 and find that the forgotten event becomes a bridge to embracing the turbulence of today's social landscape.

In addition to interviews with surviving members of the 1955 Pensacola Jaycees and Orlando Kiwanis, the film includes personal conversations with Major League Baseball and Civil Rights icons Hank Aaron, Cal Ripken, Jr., Gary Sheffield, Davey Johnson and Ambassador Andrew Young who offer insight linking the past, the present, baseball and human dignity.



DIRECTOR BIO

Jon has spent the past eleven years directing films that have reached hundreds of millions of people, directing and editing both original and advertising-based projects. To date, his most successful work is The Thank You Project, which has more than 150 million views online and was featured on The Today Show on Thanksgiving morning. In addition to Long Time Coming, his first feature-length film, Strong is also in the process of making a documentary (shot in Iraq in March 2017) about the stories of Iraqi and Syrian refugees.



DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Long Time Coming actually didn't start out as a feature film. But the more we filmed, and peeled back new layers of the story, we realized feature length was the only way to tell it completely and in a way this story deserved to be told.

In making "Long Time Coming: A 1955 Baseball Story," I wanted to dig into the uncomfortable, real stories that many find difficult to share—disagreements on race and how to deal with it. Black and white children who grew up in the South, now grown men in their 70s—how can we see them, know them, and most importantly, what can we learn from them for our own lives? Through conversation, I wanted to learn the histories, experiences, and truths in their lives. What do they have in common? What makes them drastically different? And how do you bridge that gap in the real world, and not just angrily disagree?

We went where their stories took us.

Cinematically, I wanted an intimacy with these people — long, closely cropped takes. I want the audience to be close enough to look into their eyes as if they were a part of the conversation. To see the histories shaped on their faces.

As most families in 1955 didn't have movie cameras, finding supporting footage was obviously a challenge, and we wanted to use it when it felt needed. To fill in gaps, we used newspaper clippings, popular archival footage, and other images of the day.

I'm very proud of this film, and how it turned out.

PRODUCER STATEMENT

Ted Haddock

Having spent the past two decades as a photographer engaging people and families gripped in the jaws of the world's most troubled human conditions, *Long Time Coming* became a natural bridge for me to better understand the legacies of segregation in my own backyard.

As a White American in his mid-forties, I've come to see that White Privilege is a real thing. For me, the question becomes, "What do I do with this privilege and the opportunities it affords?" Rather than condemning it, I believe my job is to use the resources at my disposal for the sake of better understanding and serving others, particularly those who are repeatedly marginalized. Privilege affords us the opportunity to look away and to justify a detached and insulated life, but if I'm to love my neighbor I will choose genuine relationship and solidarity. Let's sit down and talk over a plate of warm food at the local diner.

For me, *Long Time Coming* makes the historic conversation of segregation in the American South a personal thing. No longer do I see the inspiring tension of a lunch counter sit-in as a black and white photograph, but I see it as my friend Admiral LeRoy with burn marks on his arms from Whites who pressed the glow of their cigarettes into his skin. Likewise, I see racial violence in the face of Mr. Cleveland Dailey as a 12-year-old boy (the same age as my oldest son) threatened at knifepoint for the same crime for which Emmett Till was brutally murdered – a White man thought that Cleve might have whistled at a White girl. What would I not do to protect my son or the young Cleveland Dailey from such violence?

Long Time Coming shows us the historic context for segregation and sports as a catalyst for the courage toward embracing healthy change for the common good. The story might also help expose the little, unspoken biases in our own hearts and offer an opportunity to lay it down (whether right, wrong, understandable or indefensible) for the sake of something better – coming to know "the other," making a friend, learning something that we didn't know before and finding a fuller and richer life on the other side of the dinner table.



SELECT MEDIA CLIPPINGS

[Orlando Sentinel](#) (was 4/11/18 Front Page) "Orlando Little League reunion offers perfect pitch of colorblind history"

[News 6](#) "Players from South's first racially integrated Little League baseball game reunite"

[Spectrum Bay 9 News](#) "All-Black little league team reunites where they made history"

[WEAR Pensacola](#) "New documentary shows how a Pensacola little league team made history"

[Pensacola News Journal](#) "Pensacola Little League team's historic game is subject of new documentary"



Contact Info

For distribution, screening and media inquiries, please contact Jacquelyn Zinck:

jzinck@eehff.org

407.919.9906

