

RE-EMERGING  
FILMS

123 West 131<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 3  
New York, NY, 10027

+1 310 869 4686

Info@Re-Emergingfilm.com  
www.Re-Emergingfilm.com



Opening May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The Quad Cinema  
34 West 13<sup>th</sup> Street

Press Inquiries:

Anne Borin - Publicist  
(212) 586-6367 or (917) 328-8534  
[annefilm@aol.com](mailto:annefilm@aol.com)

Jeff L. Lieberman – Writer/Director  
(310) 869-4686 in NYC  
[jeff@re-emergingfilm.com](mailto:jeff@re-emergingfilm.com)

Running Time: 1:33  
Screening Format: DCP  
Film is Unrated

Trailer, Digital Photos & Press Kit at [www.re-emergingfilm.com](http://www.re-emergingfilm.com)

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FILM CREDITS

**WRITTEN, DIRECTED & PRODUCED**

by

Jeff L. Lieberman

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS**

Marquez Andrews

Jamila Fairley

Anna Cheshire Levitan

**CINEMATOGRAPHY/EDITING**

Jeff L. Lieberman

**MUSIC COMPOSED BY**

Jeremiah Lockwood

**EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS**

Yaffa Larea

Elon Dershowitz

Mark Lee Goldberg

Karl Morton IV

Kat Williams

**ADDITIONAL CAMERA**

Emmanuel Ben Israel (Abakiliki)

Steve Golden (Chicago)

Samantha Schutz (New York)

**PRODUCTION CONSULTANTS**

Sean Brown

Sam Hurwitz

Elyse Katz

Steven Wacks

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**PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS**

Merritt Levitan  
Les Rubenstein

**POST-PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS**

Harrison Lee  
Eli Loghavi  
Krystin Weaver

**ADDITIONAL PHOTOS BY**

Yahel I. Herzog  
Remy Ilona  
Natan Okeke  
Sar Habakkuk Nwafor  
Shmuel Tikvah

**THE RE-EMERGING BAND**

Stuart Bogie (Saxophone, Clarinet)  
Anneke Schaul Yoder (Cello)  
John Bollinger (Drums)  
Jeremiah Lockwood (Guitar, Vocals)  
Fay Victor (Vocals)  
Marquez Andrews (Vocals)

**MUSIC RECORDED AND MIXED BY**

Mitch Rackin  
Seaside Lounge Studios  
Brooklyn, New York

**HISTORICAL CONSULTANTS - Jews of Nigeria**

Rabbi Howard Gorin  
Remy Ilona  
Daniel Lis  
Dr. William Miles – Northeastern University  
Elder Elam Ben Moshe  
Sar Habakkuk Nwafor  
Shmuel Tikvah

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### **HISTORICAL CONSULTANTS - Ebo/Ibo Landing**

H.A. (Hal) Sieber  
Anna Cheshire Levitan  
Ed Cheshire  
Judy Cheshire  
Rabbi Capers Funneye  
Julie Custer Altman  
Amy Roberts  
Jody Custer  
Judy Strauss  
Jamal Toure

### **HISTORICAL CONSULTANTS - Atlantic Slave Trade**

Dr. David Eltis – Emory University  
Dr. Michael Gomez – New York University  
Dr. Chima Korieh – Marquette University  
Dr. Ugo Nwokeji – University of California, Berkely  
Queen Quet – Chieftess of The Gullah-Geeche Nation  
Dr. John Thornton – Boston University  
Elder Carlie Towne – Gullah-Geeche Nation



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## DIRECTOR'S BIO

### **JEFF L. LIEBERMAN**

Jeff L. Lieberman is an award-winning Journalist, Producer and Documentary Filmmaker. His TV Specials, News Stories and Documentaries have appeared on **CBS, HBO, CNN, FOX, Starz Encore, Fox Movie Channel, The Discovery Channel, E! Entertainment**, and on the websites of **Yahoo!, The New York Post, CBS Moneywatch**, and **The Huffington Post**.

As a Writer/Producer with **CBS National News** and a Video Reporter with **The New York Post** website, Jeff has covered events all over New York and Washington, DC including the Obama Inauguration, New York's Fashion Week, the Times Square terrorism attack, and The September 11th Anniversary commemoration.

Jeff is the founder of RE-EMERGING Films, which regularly produces documentary programming for **Coca-Cola, Walt Disney Films, Showtime's "Homeland", Entertainment Tonight, The Insider, Macy's, Marlo Thomas and Wine Enthusiast Magazine**. Jeff also directed, edited and produced the hit viral election video, **"Call Your Zeyde"**. Trying his hand at long-form television, Jeff wrote, produced, directed, shot and edited the pilots for the reality shows, **"Beauty Queens"** and **"Mario The Magician"** currently being shopped to TV networks.

Previous to this, Jeff was the Senior Producer at Sam Hurwitz Productions in Los Angeles, where he produced Behind-The-Scenes DVD programming for major motion pictures, like **Troy, The Incredibles, Ratatouille, Akeelah & The Bee, and Charlie & The Chocolate Factory**. His series of programs that accompanied the **Akeelah & The Bee DVD** gained him the prestigious Telly Award in 2007.

A graduate of Ryerson University's School of Radio and Television in Toronto, and UCLA's Professional Program in Producing, Jeff has had a camera in hand since he was 13, growing up in Vancouver, British Columbia.

"RE-EMERGING: The Jews of Nigeria", is his first independent feature-length documentary film. He can't wait to return to Africa.





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## SYNOPSIS

SHORT

Like many in Nigeria, Shmuel consistently heard that the Igbo people were once Jews. When an Internet café opens in his town, he begins to research this further and starts a journey that eventually leads him to a community of thousands of Jews. Yet, despite the Igbo Jews' passionate commitment to Judaism with few resources, they are often met with outside scorn, family rejection and violence.

## SYNOPSIS

MEDIUM-LENGTH

As a young man growing up in Nigeria, Shmuel consistently heard that the Igbo people were Jews. Yet, two centuries of Christian Colonialism prevented him and many other Igbo from exploring that connection further. When an Internet café opens in his town, Shmuel begins by comparing Igbo traditions with Hebrew traditions. What he found starts him on a journey that eventually leads him to a community of thousands of Igbo Jews.

Yet the road to Judaism has been filled with scorn, family rejection and violence. Seeking solace from Western Jews has so far been fruitless, but with an Igbo population of 25 million, the movement has the potential to re-define Judaism. It also raises questions of identity for countless African-Americans, many who were once Igbo.

For Shmuel, life changes dramatically when an American rabbi comes to visit, inspiring him to one day be a leader for his own people.

More information, photos, trailer, and reviews at...

[www.re-emergingfilm.com](http://www.re-emergingfilm.com)





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## SYNOPSIS FULL-LENGTH

When the Internet was introduced into the more rural parts of southeast Nigeria, it opened the eyes of a few young Igbo people and began answering some difficult questions of identity. For Shmuel (who was then called Samuel), the nagging question he wanted answered was whether there was any truth to the long-told lore that the Igbo people were once Jews. He began by comparing Hebrew traditions to Igbo traditions, and what he found astounded him. The similarities were so convincing that it sent him off on a journey in the quest to find other Igbo who might be practicing Judaism.

"**RE-EMERGING: The Jews of Nigeria**" is a journey into the heart of Igboland and into the lives and culture of the Igbo people. The film introduces the world to the many synagogues that dot the land, and a handful of passionate, committed, and diverse people – each striving to fulfill their historical legacy with few resources and unbeknownst to most of the world. Individual stories are woven together with key facets of history, tracing the Igbo from Biblical times up to the brutal 1960s Biafran War, which killed over 1 million Igbo. A wide range of American academics help detail this history, including shedding new light on the Igbo origins of tens of thousands of slaves captured during the Atlantic Slave Trade and brought to American shores. The film delves into this history and travels to the southeast coast of Georgia, where locals still speak of the Igbo spirit at a riverbed called "Ibo Landing".

The individuals featured in the film also demonstrate that incredible Igbo spirit. Shmuel is a young man whose story exemplifies the journey toward finding Judaism. Today, he is a leader in his community who teaches and chants Torah, and has big dreams of one day becoming a rabbi. But like almost every Igbo, he grew up surrounded by Christian colonialism, and the road to discovery has been fraught with misunderstanding, wrong turns into Messianic worship, family exile, violent prejudice from both Muslim and Christian neighbors, scorn from Jews he has contacted in the Western world, and frustration of a lack of funds to further educate himself through Internet access. Yet, it's also been an amazing discovery of community, and furthered with the love of an American rabbi who has been working with both him and the larger community to see their dreams become a reality.

More information, photos, trailer, and reviews at...

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## PRESS QUOTES

*"Every so often a documentary comes along  
and changes the way you view the world.  
RE-EMERGING: The Jews of Nigeria is just such a movie."*

-The Jewish Advocate

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*"This documentary provides a remarkable view of a dedicated population's  
zeal to pursue religious freedom; It's hard not to be caught up in the sincerity  
and joy that these pious believers bring to their faith.  
Highly recommended."*

3.5 Stars

- Video Librarian

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*"The film sheds light on a little-known Jewish community in Africa."*

- BBC Radio

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*"The doc aims to reveal a rich Igbo history unbeknownst to African descendants  
all over the world, especially African Americans,  
many of whom are of Igbo ancestry."*

- Indiewire

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*"Their little-known story is stoking fascination and enthusiasm."*

-Newsday

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Complete list of press coverage available on the "Press" page at [www.re-emergingfilm.com](http://www.re-emergingfilm.com)





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## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT** **JEFF L. LIEBERMAN**

One Spring day in 2005, I got an email from a synagogue in Los Angeles. It was an invitation to a lecture from a Maryland-based rabbi who would be speaking about his recent visit to the Igbo Jewish communities of Nigeria. On a lark, I went. I thought the subject might be fascinating as I always had an interest in different expressions of Judaism, as well as a curiosity about Africa. As Rabbi Howard Gorin presented his few pictures that night, I was mesmerized. One picture still stands out: a photo of a hut in the forest with a Star of David above the door. Howard explained that this was a synagogue. Approaching him after the presentation, I asked him why he didn't have more pictures and especially why he had no video. He said it had just been him on his travels with a small disposable camera. I told him that the next time he returns, I would love to join him and film some of what he experienced. After following up several times on the possibility, Howard finally called to say that if I was really serious, I should go get my shots and my visa. We would be going in 2 months. He later told me he didn't think I was serious... but the two of us soon touched down in Nigeria to the largest welcome I have ever experienced.

I went with the intension of having an adventure, and potentially exploring the idea of making a documentary. By the end of the first week, I knew I had the beginnings of an amazing film. The people I met were passionate and eloquent, beautiful and humble. They spoke of simple desires, and exhibited deep commitments to practicing a faith with few resources. On the first Sabbath afternoon, I was honored with an Igbo name. In that ceremony, I was asked to help tell the Igbo's story. And it is that responsibility that has driven me to this day.

It is that same responsibility that pushed me through a frightening ambush near the Niger River Delta... and the same responsibility that propelled me further when I returned home and was denied grants and funding. I ultimately completed the film by learning how to edit, create motion graphics, score, and post-produce a feature-length film. Up until that point, I was a seasoned film/TV producer with strong storytelling skills, but I didn't know much more than some basic editing. I also applied my Journalistic training and experience to the project, going beyond just the Nigerian Jewish experience, and delving deeper into Igbo history. I interviewed a wide range of Academics, and explored the little-known history of the large number of Igbo enslaved during the Atlantic Slave Trade. From screenings I have had for African American audiences, many are amazed that their story factors into something happening today across the Atlantic in a seemingly far-away place. For audiences of all races, and all religions, the connection is even larger – one of trying to determine one's history, ancestry, identity and community. Presenting that story is the responsibility that makes me the most proud.



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## HISTORY OF PROJECT

May 2012 – Premiered at The 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y in New York

Aug 2012 – Gullah-Geeche Nation Music & Movement Festival, Charleston, SC

Nov 2012 – Boston Jewish Film Festival

Nov 2012 – Vancouver Jewish Film Festival

Dec 2012 – New York's International African Diaspora Film Festival

Jan 2013 – Washington, DC Jewish Film Festival

Jan 2013 – San Luis Obispo Jewish Film Festival

Feb 2013 – Greater Phoenix Jewish Film Festival

Feb 2013 – Tropic Cinema, Key West, FL

April 2013 – Toronto Jewish Film Festival

May 2013 – Quad Cinema, New York City – Theatrical Debut

June 2013 – Sheba Film Festival, New York City

June 2013 – Buffalo Jewish Film Festival

June 2013 – Laemelle Theatres, Los Angeles – Theatrical Debut