

# **The Making of *Love, Work and Knowledge – The Life and Trials of Wilhelm Reich***

It was a combination of inspiration and disgust that motivated me to make this film.

The inspiration, of course, came from Wilhelm Reich himself whose books I began reading in 1972 when I was 18 years old.

The disgust came from the continual distortions and false narratives about Reich that persist to this day in books, articles, museum exhibits, art exhibits, academic lectures, television programs and films. Among the more recent examples, which finally moved me to action, were two poorly researched films from Vienna a few years ago that recklessly and irresponsibly played fast and loose with the facts, with some shameless self-promotion tossed in.

Which begs the obvious questions that I've been asking for decades: Why have all films and TV segments about Reich been so careless with the facts? Why have all previous filmmakers and TV producers squandered their opportunities to create accurate and intellectually-honest narratives about Reich, when the facts about his life and work are publicly available in thousands of pages of primary sources and other credible materials?

These are rhetorical questions, of course, for which I can offer no definitive answers in terms of personal motivations. But I feel perfectly justified in describing all of these filmmakers and TV producers as intellectually lazy and guided by reasons and agendas other than simply presenting the truth.

For those of us who are profoundly touched in any way by Reich's life and work, the inevitable question arises: "What can each of us do—given our individual skills and talents—to present factually accurate narratives about Reich to new and younger audiences?"

My background and skills are in film, writing and teaching. And so, in 2010 at the age of 56—having spent 38 years studying Reich, *plus* eight years as a director of the Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust (from which I would resign six years later in 2016), *plus* three years helping to manage Reich's archives at Harvard's Countway Library of Medicine (from which I would also resign in 2016)—I decided that there needed to be at least one factually-accurate documentary film about Reich, a film that could be used as an intellectually-honest learning tool for all kinds of audiences today and in future generations.

And since no one had ever made such a film and it didn't look as if anyone was ever going to make such a film, I decided that I would do it. This became a process and a journey that would take seven years, starting in November 2010 and ending in December 2017.

In November 2010, I began to research and write the basic storyline—what was essentially my road map and my “Bible”—for a factually-accurate documentary about the life and work of Wilhelm Reich. And I did this for several years with absolutely no idea of how or where or if I could ever get the money to make this film.

This, I think, is what sets this film apart from all other films about Reich: the extensive research and writing I did prior to raising a single penny, prior to going out with camera crews to shoot a single frame.

This included re-reading over 7,500 pages of Reich’s published books and research journals, studying hundreds of pages of the U.S. government’s files on Reich (State Department, FBI, Immigration & Naturalization Service, and Food & Drug Administration); and reading hundreds of pages of Reich’s archival materials at the Countway Library of Medicine. I also listened to dozens of Reich’s original voice recordings from the 1940s and 1950s, all of this to write out a comprehensive storyline and chronology, a roadmap that would guide me through the production and post-production of this project.

From 2010 to 2014, I stayed motivated by one single thought: If somehow I *could* get the money to make this film, then I needed to be completely prepared to take that money and start production.

During this time I also spoke with many people in the documentary film world, seeking any kind of financial or institutional support for this project. I was turned down by all of them, which really came as no surprise.

The turning point came in early 2013, and quite by accident: During a routine visit to my local library to peruse the shelves of new books that had recently come in, I found a small yellow paperback entitled ***The Kickstarter Handbook: Real-Life Crowdfunding Success Stories***. While I had vaguely heard of Kickstarter, I knew nothing about crowdfunding.

I took the book home and read it. And immediately I thought, “Maybe, just maybe, this is the answer.”

That summer I put together a group of six or seven people whom I trusted completely. I sent each of them a copy of ***The Kickstarter Handbook*** before we actually met. And we subsequently spent a week together analyzing numerous Kickstarter campaigns and discussing the possibility of planning our own campaign to raise the money for the film that I was researching and writing.

Over the next year, what I now called the Kickstarter Group spoke regularly every month in telephone conference calls. And we met again for a week in July 2014 to put our final plans in place. Three months later—in October and November 2014—we ran a successful 31-day Kickstarter campaign that raised \$187,000 from over 30 countries for “Phase One - Production” of this film.

And because of my research and writing over the past four years, I was fully prepared to start the film almost immediately. Less than two months later, in January 2015, we filmed our first interview for this documentary with Dr. Morton Herskowitz, who was then 96 years old.

Throughout 2015 my co-director Glenn Orkin and I filmed interviews and locations in six states in America—Arizona, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania—and in three countries in Europe: Austria, Germany and Norway. After which I ran two more crowdfunding campaigns in 2016 and 2017, which again brought in money from over 30 countries for the editing and final post-production of this documentary.

Also in 2016 and 2017, Glenn and I and our film crews did additional filming in Rangeley, Maine and we spent several days filming materials in Reich's archives at the Countway Library of Medicine in Boston.

This documentary was officially completed in December 2017, and we screened it for the first time in New York City on January 13, 2018.

Since then, the film has had public screenings in Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Israel, South Africa and the United States (in California, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon and Pennsylvania).

It's now being digitally streamed on Vimeo-on-Demand (<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/wr1897>) while we try to find a permanent home for it on one of the major digital film platforms.

**Kevin Hinchey – Writer/Co-Director  
South Glastonbury, Connecticut (USA)  
September 2019**