

development laid down personal guidelines for all that has followed. Wilkerson's online publishing project *Now! A Journal of Urgent Praxis* ("crossroads between film-journal and radical newsreel... digital flint and steel") takes its title from one of Alvarez's films; and his work informs each of Wilkerson's jeremiads against what he sees as a world thrown out of whack by myopic capitalism: Alvarez's films, Wilkerson says, "were born of rage, bitter irony, and an almost limitless spirit of solidarity... They showed the world to be forever changing, and changeable. And they were always made for the here and now."

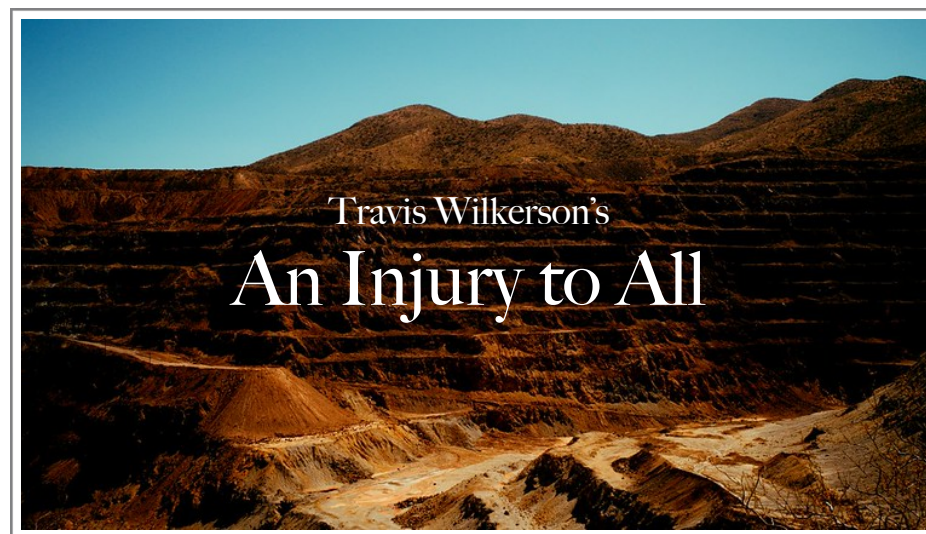
Haunted by the spirits of the doomed Soviet poet Vladimir Mayakovsky and his paramour Lily Brik, *Machine Gun* is a stripped-down love-story unfolding against a Los Angeles where all turf is contested, all political progress is fiercely resisted by reactionary forces, and where broken cemeteries harbour the inspirational ghosts of tormented fellow-travellers (the lovebirds' offbeat trajectory includes a pilgrimage to the grave of Lamed Shapiro, Ukrainian-born Yiddish author of grim pogrom stories, who expired in dire Californian poverty). The director is the sole performer on view, face hidden behind microphone, as a night-owl pirate-radio DJ recounting this highly enigmatic relationship. Wilkerson himself started broadcasting in 1983 - the year Butte's copper-mines closed, plunging the town into decades of social and environmental decline. A 14-year-old Denver-born Coloradan who had lived in Butte for less than a year, Wilkerson debuted on local college station KMSM (MSM standing for 'Montana School of Mines'). "I became an artist through being a radio DJ," he says. "Probably the whole practice of filmmaking is me trying to be a DJ."

Music has always been a crucial element of Wilkerson's aesthetic, softening his bluntness and providing a counterpoint to all the on-screen text: raucously vibrant Cambodian pop bisects *Distinguished Flying Cross*; *Machine Gun* or *Typewriter?* uses sepulchral electronica from the underground outfit Gangs; the interpolation of Silver Mt Zion's "God Bless Our Dead Marines" in the dying moments of *Who Killed Cock Robin?* transfigures melodrama into something sublime. Wilkerson's speaking voice, as often heard in his narration-heavy films, is by contrast a thing of savage, sardonic urgency. The cumulative impact: difficult to embrace, impossible to ignore. ♦

Coming soon to Acropolis:

- *An Injury to One - 4K Reconstruction* (Dir. Travis Wilkerson, 2001/2026)—U.S. premiere, June 20 at 2220 Arts + Archives with Wilkerson in person
- *Escape* (Dir. Masao Adachi, 2025)—Los Angeles premiere, June 30 at 2220 Arts + Archives
- *The Misconceived* (Dir. James N. Kienitz Wilkins, 2026)—Los Angeles premiere, July 9 at Brain Dead Studios with Wilkins in person (screening in 35mm)
- *The Misconceived* (Dir. James N. Kienitz Wilkins, 2026)—July 10 and 11 at Now Instant Image Hall with Wilkins in person (screening digitally)
- *The Plagiarists* (Dir. Peter Parlow, 2019)—July 11 at 2220 Arts + Archives with co-writer James N. Kienitz Wilkins in person ♦

Acropolis Cinema presents:



June 18, 2026 – 2220 Arts + Archives



@AcropolisCinema

www.acropoliscinema.com



@acropoliscinema

ABOUT THE FILM

An Injury to All is both the prequel to *An Injury to One* (2001) and its urgent postscript. It traces the life of I.W.W. Organizer Frank Little before his arrival and infamous murder in Butte, Montana. Following his peripatetic, restless journey from his childhood in Oklahoma to his astonishing rise as a visionary organizer criss-crossing the American West, struggling for immigrant rights, for militant labor, for free speech and always and forever against the social catastrophe of war—his is a singular and irreplaceable story of American resistance and the inspiring vision of a different kind of world. Most of all, it restores his incompatible life—rather than the horror of his eventual death—to the place it always deserved to be. A ferocious antidote to the present moment and conscious riposte to the 250th anniversary of the USA. *Screening to be followed by a Q&A moderated by Courtney Stephens (director of Invention and John Lilly and the Earth Coincidence Control Office).*

TRT: 90 min

In person: Travis Wilkerson and Courtney Stephens

Left to His Own Devices by Neil Young

The following is an excerpt of an article originally published by Sight and Sound, December 2015

At the start of his 1927 novel *Red Harvest*, Dashiell Hammett introduces his readers to Personville, known to its inhabitants as ‘Poisonville’: “an ugly city of forty thousand people, set in an ugly notch between two ugly mountains that had been all dirtied up by mining.” Personville is Butte, Montana, where Hammett had worked for the Pinkerton Detective Agency, employed as strike-breakers by local mine-owners: Hammett claimed to have turned down an offer of \$5,000 to murder the union leader Frank Little.

As a proud local, the director Travis Wilkerson provides a more sympathetic, complex, even picturesque view of Butte in his films *An Injury to One* (2002) and *Who Killed Cock Robin?* (2005). The first of these, a 53-minute, 16mm documentary, has become a landmark in the sparsely populated terrain that is American socialist cinema. Hauntingly poetic and fiercely angry, this minor masterpiece proceeds as a twin-track investigation into Little’s 1917 lynching and the area’s manifold woes in the 20th century’s final decades (“The economic crisis here started earlier than it did for the rest of the United States,” notes a character in *Cock Robin*, Wilkerson’s first venture into fiction). Wilkerson traces the roots of Butte’s particular crisis to the pre-World War II exploitation of the land and its people by the Anaconda Copper Mining Company and their hired thugs. His clipped voiceover forensically chronicles Anaconda’s manifold evils, in a picture whose tragic narrative unfolds with thriller-like urgency. The ‘plot’ is punctuated by lyrical interludes in which the present-day landscape is surveyed and instrumental versions of labour-anthems are heard while their text appears line by line across the screen.

The flurries of onscreen text - key words and slogans - in both his fiction and his non-fiction epitomise Wilkerson’s maximalist instincts. His aesthetic is confrontational, mistrustful of anything resembling slickness or sugar-coating; his films have one foot in the present but seek answers and parallels in the recent, often misrepresented past. Not for him the commercially-minded compromises of more ballyhooed American cinema leftists such as John Sayles, Michael

Moore and Oliver Stone, who successfully navigate commercial channels between ‘indie’ rivulets and the mainstream.

A one-man band who always takes care of editing and cinematography, Wilkerson has insisted on ploughing his own ornery furrow. He can be called, with only slight exaggeration, the political conscience of 21st-century American independent cinema. But at 46, his career epitomises the practical hazards facing left-wing artists in the USA. Those who can, teach: in the mid-2000s Wilkerson had a spell at CalArts, where he had previously been a student, making *An Injury to One* as his MFA thesis, and he has also done stints at the University of Colorado and Pomona College, California, where his tenure ended this summer: “The experimental program I was running ran out of grant,” he told me in a recent email. “It was wonderful while it lasted. Unemployed.”

Notwithstanding encomiums from the likes of *Film Comment* (“the anti-Ken Burns”) and *Reverse Shot* (“a cinematic poetics uniquely his own”), Wilkerson has been a prophet accorded only occasional honour in his own country and little more abroad. *Cock Robin* - a stark three-hander examining how wider socio-economic forces warp the lives of intelligent individuals - received a largely hostile reception when it premiered at Sundance a decade ago. It is a rough-edged affair in which Wilkerson struggles to adapt his ideas to fictional formats (unsurprisingly, he has only just returned to narrative, with this summer’s noir-ish, paranoid Los Angeles anti-romance *Machine Gun or Typewriter?*).

Re-edited by Wilkerson in 2007 and again in 2010, it is undergoing a belated reappraisal: Dennis Lim included it in his list of Top 10 Overlooked Sundance Films (“a bold and unfashionable film in every sense, not least its earnest political stand”). That second - and presumably final - re-edit of *Who Killed Cock Robin?* sparked a productive spell for Wilkerson. 2011 yielded *Distinguished Flying Cross*, an hour-long near-monologue by his war-veteran father - flanked by his sons Travis and Dylan, the trio happily sipping on beers - about his time as an army pilot in Vietnam; *Sand Creek Equation*, a 25-minute juxtaposition of a 19th-century massacre of Native Americans and the current situation in Palestine; and *Pluto Declaration*, a tongue-in-cheek four-minute Marxist defence of Pluto’s planetary status (“the term ‘dwarf planet’ betrays its blatant chauvinism... Imperialist science distilled to its barbaric essence!”) which neatly showcases Wilkerson’s dry, often hidden sense of humour.

Around the same time, Wilkerson made the bluntly accusatory 25-minute *Fragments of Dissolution* for the portmanteau project *Far from Afghanistan* (released 2012), giving voice to four American women whose bereavements highlight governmental negligence and/or perfidy at home and overseas. The damaging activities of the US government’s various militarised arms have been a focus of Wilkerson’s ire since *National Archive Vol 1* (2001), a simple, devastating 15-minute-long collage of footage shot from bomber-planes dropping lethal cargo on Vietnam.

In 2011, too, Wilkerson received a retrospective from the Slovenian Cinematheque, alongside a focus on his primary influence, Cuba’s newsreel/agit-prop maestro Santiago Alvarez (*Now*, 1965; *79 Springs*, 1969), whom he adoringly profiled in his 65-minute debut *Accelerated Under-development: in the Idiom of Santiago Alvarez*. A chance meeting with Alvarez in Cuba in 1995, three years before his death, was the turning-point in Wilkerson’s artistic life. Alvarez - himself radicalised in the coal mines of 1930s Pennsylvania - opened the doorway to Third Cinema, the grassroots cinematic movement associated with Glauber Rocha, Fernando Solanas and Med Hondo, and with which Wilkerson proudly identifies.

A breathless paean still relatively neglected even by Wilkerson admirers. *Accelerated Under-*