A Place to Stand

a documentary based on the best-selling memoir by

poet Jimmy Santiago Baca

I cannot fly or make something appear in my hand,
I cannot make the heavens open or the earth tremble,
I can live with myself, and I am amazed at myself, my love, my beauty,
I am taken by my failures, astounded by my fears,
I am stubborn and childish,
in the midst of this wreckage of life they incurred,
I practice being myself, and
I have found parts of myself never dreamed of by me,
they were goaded out from under rocks in my heart
when the walls were built higher,
when the water was turned off and the windows painted black.
I followed these signs
like an old tracker and followed the tracks deep into myself
followed the blood-spotted path,
deeper into dangerous regions, and found so many parts of myself,
who taught me water is not everything,
and gave me new eyes to see through walls,
and when they spoke, sunlight came out of their mouths,
and I was laughing at me with them,
we laughed like children and made pacts to always be loyal,
who understands me when I say this is beautiful?

Fundraising Packet

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Daniel Glick, Director/Producer
(862) 215-9900
Daniel@aplacetostandmovie.com

David Grubin, Executive Producer
info@aplacetostandmovie.com

www.aplacetostandmovie.com
A PLACE TO STAND, THE DOCUMENTARY

A Place to Stand is the authorized story of Jimmy Santiago Baca’s transformation from a functionally illiterate convict to an award-winning poet, novelist and screenwriter.

A Place to Stand follows Jimmy’s path from Estancia, New Mexico – where he lived with his indigenous grandparents – through childhood abandonment, adolescent drug dealing, a DEA bust where a federal agent was shot, and a subsequent 5-year narcotics sentence at Arizona State Prison in Florence, one of the most violent prisons in the country. Jimmy survived by exploring deep within himself, discovering poetry at his soul’s core. His writing liberated him from the death and decay that surrounded him, healing the wounds of his childhood and opening him to a new future.

The film will be told through extensive interviews with Jimmy and dozens of friends and family who witnessed his transformation: family, former cellmates, poets, guards and even the DEA agent who busted Jimmy. The story will be complimented by Jimmy’s poetry, animation, artwork, re-creations and historical archives. These visual components will be a celebration of the power of arts in all forms.

A Place to Stand is inspired by Jimmy’s memoir of the same name, which has been called “elegant and gripping” (The Los Angeles Times) and “an astonishing narrative that affirms the triumph of the human spirit” (The Arizona Daily Star). It explores the life and mind of a man whose early life was dominated by sadness, rejection, anger and pain, a man who embraced language as a balm for his battered spirit, a man who - through the power of poetry - finally found his place to stand.

The film is being produced by Catamount Films, LLC and is fiscally sponsored by the Center of Southwest Culture. For over twenty years, the Center of Southwest Culture has been supporting economic development initiatives and educational and cultural work to help develop healthy indigenous and Latino communities.
A PLACE TO STAND, THE BOOK

*A Place to Stand*, the memoir of Jimmy Santiago Baca, was published in 2002 by Grove Atlantic Press (New York) to wide critical acclaim.

It received the prestigious International Prize, has sold over 200,000 copies and is used in educational institutions and writing workshops worldwide.

JIMMY SANTIAGO BACA, SUBJECT OF THE FILM

“I am learning to look at myself differently, to see the scattered remnants of hope and dreams and collect them again.”

Jimmy Santiago Baca, Arizona State Prison, 1977

Every human being knows insecurity, fear, pain, love, darkness and light, but few recognize it with the intensity and focus of Jimmy Santiago Baca. His background is not unique - family dysfunction, homelessness, drug dealing, prison sentence – but it’s rare that a person with Jimmy’s background so ardently, bullheadedly and singularly transcends cultural expectation. He was set up to fail in life, all conditions against him, but he decided early on that his circumstances would not dictate his fate. Even in prison, a place that destroys, he found a way to nourish himself. It may be that poetry saved his life, but only because Jimmy had the courage to let it.

Jimmy is an inspiration, but remains imperfect. He still makes bad decisions, hears old demons laughing on dark days, and exists with pain and suffering. But remarkably, Jimmy refuses to succumb, choosing instead to celebrate life, to evolve with gratitude and move forward in awe.

Jimmy is captivating and vivacious and messy and crazy. He moves souls in his writing workshops. He is a loving father. He has over twenty books of published poetry (see appendix). He has won countless awards. People worldwide fall in love with him and his writing. These qualities alone are extraordinary, but what makes
him so powerful, what allows people to connect with him, is how he faces each moment. He is not afraid to know himself, to inspect difficult and beautiful truths about himself and his fellow men, to embrace the variables of existence, however arduous. It is this fearlessness that makes him and his poetry so grounded, accessible and beloved.

THE GENESIS OF THE PROJECT

In early 2010, Daniel Glick visited Auburn Prison in New York State. This experience transformed him. Shocked by the sheer brutality and inhumanity of the prison experience, Daniel’s first thought was “I have to make a film about this.” Serendipitously, the friend he was visiting, an inmate at Auburn, encouraged him: “Read this book, A Place to Stand, if you want to learn more.”

Jimmy’s story was striking not just because it articulated the dehumanization of prison, but Jimmy’s ability to survive it. If Jimmy could change his life in that horrific place, if he could grow, evolve, transform himself there, then anyone, anywhere could. A Place to Stand is not just a story about prison and poetry, but about the infinite magic and possibility of being human.

Daniel searched for Jimmy, cold-emailed him and asked if he could help make A Place to Stand into a film. After a brief exchange, Jimmy agreed and Daniel quit his job to drive to New Mexico in January 2011. Daniel and Gabriel Baca, Jimmy’s son, started work immediately.

The project began as an informal partnership with Cedar Tree, Inc, a non-profit founded by Jimmy to promote education and literacy. Cedar Tree offers under-served communities the tools to overcome obstacles to learning, conducting literary workshops in prisons, detention centers, community centers and schools for at-risk youth. The mission of the film overlaps with Cedar Tree’s mission, and Cedar Tree sponsored early pre-production and production work for the film.

As the large scope and broader significance of the film became apparent, Gabriel and Daniel connected with the Center of Southwest Culture, a nonprofit with the established capacity to channel larger contributions. They agreed to become the fiscal sponsor of the film.

Cedar Tree has been in full support of the shift and remains a champion of the project. All rights for the film rest with Catamount.
THE PURPOSE OF THE FILM

Our story, Jimmy’s story, aims to demonstrate and inspire the possibility of individual transformation and growth.

Jimmy’s willingness to face his demons through his writing freed him from a tragic past and opened the door to a new, positive future. He did so while held in one of the most violent and dangerous prisons in America, underscoring the scope and potency of his journey. In presenting Jimmy’s metamorphosis, we want to plant the seeds of hope, to illustrate that personal transformation is always possible, even behind bars.

Further, we aim to demonstrate the importance of education and its power to change lives. The United States is plagued by the world’s highest incarceration rates, and they are only rising. At the same time, our educational system is falling farther and farther behind. We are not providing for our children, and when they struggle, when they exhibit their dysfunction, we focus on punitive rather than transformative, empowering solutions.

A Place to Stand directly addresses the connection between these two trends and demonstrates how the acts of reading and writing can reduce street and prison violence, decrease recidivism rates, and help individuals confront trauma, abuse, anger and addiction. Jimmy - himself a product of family dysfunction, homelessness, drug abuse, institutionalization and incarceration - speaks directly to those disaffected segments of society who still languish in their illiteracy and resulting sense of inadequacy.

Latinos are one such group. The fastest-growing ethnic group in the United States, they are neglected by the American schooling system; many Latinos in America are illiterate or read below grade-level and the Latino dropout rate nationwide has never been higher. Jimmy, a proud Chicano, is a role model for affected children and adults. He is a figure with whom they can connect, one who can champion, in a relatable and empathetic context, the importance of literacy and education.

In short, Jimmy embodies the hope for a positive future, not just for disenfranchised populations, but for all Americans. This film will introduce and make him accessible to many who would never encounter his story, his accomplishments, or his transformation.
WHERE THE PROJECT STANDS

The film commenced production in January 2011.

As of December 2011, we have conducted seventy hours of interviews (see below), gathered hundreds of articles, photos, letters and early writings of Jimmy, completed principal production, drafted the film’s narrative, and have edited a rough assembly.

COMPLETED INTERVIEW LIST

We have completed over 20 hours of interviews with Jimmy and over 50 hours of interviews with friends, family, peers and others connected with Jimmy's story:

Collaborators and Contemporaries (Present)
Taylor Hackford – Oscar-winning director
Dame Helen Mirren – Oscar-winning actress
Jesse Borrego – Noted actor, leading role in Blood In Blood Out.
Luis Valdez – Acclaimed playwright and director of La Bamba.
George Evans – Noted poet
Ishmael Reed – Poet and publisher
Dianne Dennish – Former Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico
Diane Luby Lane – Literacy advocate and founder of Get Lit!
Miguel Algarin – Poet and founder of Nuyorican Poets Café
Jakes Drake – Noted artist
Jim Mafchir – Publisher, Red Crane Books

Scholars (Present)
Mona Lynch – Author of Sunbelt Justice: Arizona and the Transformation of American Punishment
Robert Perkinson – Author of Texas Tough: The Rise of America’s Prison Empire

Prison Veteran Friends (Present)
Jesse de la Cruz – Served 30 years, former gang leader, currently getting his doctorate
Jahney Hererra – Served 3 years, completed one of Jimmy’s writing workshops
Acharya Fleet Maul – Served 14 years, founded the Prison Dharma Network

Florence Prison (1973-1978)
Emeterio “Tello” Hinojosa – Jimmy’s cellmate, former Mexican Mafia boss
Donald “Wedo” Barnett – Jimmy’s cellmate
Robert “Bonaﬁde” Stewart – Jimmy’s neighbor in the dungeon of Florence
Richard Shelton – Celebrated author, corresponded with Jimmy
Rex Veeder – Exchanged letters with Jimmy
Joseph Bruchac – Published Jimmy’s prison writings
Shirley “Cash” Terrell – Fellow inmate
James Leone – Fellow inmate and jail-house lawyer
Ray Ring – *Arizona Daily Star* reporter who went undercover as an inmate
John Martinez – Former Corrections Officer
Duane Vild – Former Director of Education at Florence
Frank Lewis – Lawyer for Harris v Cardwell, a class action lawsuit brought against the prison
Donna Hamm – Prison reform activist

**Jimmy’s Drug Dealing (1972-1973)**
Robert Wadman – DEA agent who was shot in the drug bust that sent Jimmy to prison
Brenda Stanley – Robert Wadman’s daughter
Linda Williams – Widow of Carey Williams, Jimmy’s driver and dealer

**Jimmy’s Early Life (1952-1972)**
Martina Baca – Jimmy’s sister
Richard Beller – Jimmy’s brother
Peter Baca – Jimmy’s cousin
Patrick Padilla – Jimmy’s cousin

**THE FUNDING GOAL**

We are looking for $249,470 to complete the film (for a full budget breakdown, see page 11).

Daniel Glick and Gabriel Baca have worked without compensation for over a year to get the film to this point. There exist no contracts, obligations or claims for repayment of their sweat equity. All monies raised will go towards future work on the project.

**HOW THE MONEY WILL BE USED**

The budget can be roughly broken down into three phases. We project the film will be completed and in phase three within six months of securing funds.

**PHASE ONE: FINISHING PRODUCTION ($50,000)**

As stated, we have completed over 70 hours of interviews and they have been compiled into a rough assembly.
The next step in production is to film all of the visual compliments to the story: re-creations, animation storyboards, portraits, etc. We will be filming in the Santa Fe Prison and all around New Mexico and Arizona. The key members of our production team have been assembled (see filmmaking team on page 13).

In addition, Jimmy is going to be revisiting Arizona State Prison for the first time in thirty five years, meeting with a group of inmate GED graduates and sharing his experiences and poetry with them. Our crew will travel with him and film the entire experience.

**PHASE TWO: POST PRODUCTION ($150,000)**

Daniel Glick and Gabriel Baca have already edited a rough assembly of the entire film. As production resumes and is completed, they will return to the editing room with Executive Producer David Grubin to complete a full rough cut.

Thereafter, what remains is music, sound design, voice over, color correction, compositing, rights and permissions and final polish. We have already lined up most of the personnel to help complete these tasks.

**PHASE THREE: PROMOTION, DISTRIBUTION AND OUTREACH ($50,000)**

The film is currently independent and will seek distribution upon completion.

Our first step will be to submit the film to as many relevant, high profile film festivals as possible, starting with Sundance. While film festival acceptances are never guaranteed, festival screenings do lead to reviews, press, buzz and increased interest and project value.

Simultaneously, we will pursue DVD and VOD distribution outlets, a limited theatrical release and television broadcast. David Grubin, our Executive Producer, has produced dozens of PBS documentaries and we will utilize his connections and expertise to facilitate our strategy.

Last, we will build partnerships with like-minded organizations and networks. We have already been in conversation with several non-profit and educational organizations who have expressed interest in the project. We will tap into their extensive networks to spread word of the project, build buzz and grow our audience.
MAXIMIZING THE FILM’S IMPACT

There are millions of at-risk youth travelling down the same path that Jimmy did: street-life, adolescent dysfunction, drug dealing, prison. Many of these kids are functionally illiterate or simply are not being inspired or encouraged to read, write, study and think. There is a desperate need for films like *A Place to Stand* especially in the world of education. It will make Jimmy’s story accessible to those who need to hear it most.

The primary way that we intend to maximize the impact of the film is to develop programming, curriculum and a companion poetry book for schools, prisons and writing groups.

As a component of this strategy, we will give the film, free of charge, to any prison, detention center or school for at-risk youth that commits to screen it.

Initially, we will fund this programming in two ways:

**First** is through the New Mexico Film Incentive Program. At least 85% of the budget will be eligible for a 25% rebate (see page 12). We will receive the rebate check from the state of New Mexico upon completion of the film. 100% of the rebate will go to support our programming.

**Second** is from commercial revenue (DVD, VOD, television, etc). 50% of all revenue from this stream will be used to support programming. The second 50% will help fund future projects by Catamount Films and its production team members.

HOW TO DONATE

To make your tax-deductible donation, write a check to Center of Southwest Culture, put *A Place to Stand* in the memo and mail the check to:

Center of Southwest Culture  
500 Copper Avenue NW  
Suite 103  
Albuquerque, NM 87102

We are deeply grateful for any level of support. Every dollar raised will go directly towards the completion, distribution and programming of *A Place to Stand*. 
## BUDGET BREAKDOWN

### A Place to Stand, Documentary

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### TOTAL TRAVEL

$9,000.00

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**TOTAL POST-PRODUCTION**

$78,000.00

### Insurance & Emergency Funds

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**TOTAL INSURANCE AND CONTINGENCY**

$21,000.00

### Promotion

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**TOTAL PROMOTION**

$15,250.00

### Subtotal

$233,150.00

### CRS Taxes

| 7.00%                   | $16,320.50  |

### Total

$249,470.50

### Max. Potential NM Film Incentive Rebate

| 25.00%                   | $62,367.63  |
FILMMAKING TEAM

David Grubin, Executive Producer

A director, writer, producer, and cinematographer, David has produced over 100 films, ranging from history to art, from poetry to science, winning every award in the field of documentary television, including 2 Alfred I. Dupont awards, 3 George Foster Peabody prizes, 5 Writer’s Guild prizes, and 10 Emmys.

His biographies for American Experience on PBS have set the standard for television biography. He is a member of the Writers Guild and Directors Guild, and is a former chairman of the board of directors of The Film Forum. He teaches documentary filmmaking at Columbia University’s Graduate Film Program.

David first encountered Jimmy’s poetry while directing The Language of Life, a PBS series hosted by Bill Moyers.

Daniel Glick, Director/Producer

Daniel is an award-winning filmmaker from Brooklyn, NY. He has been working in broadcast television, film and video since 2004. Collaborating with such talent as Emmy and Golden Globe-winning actor Edward Asner, Newsweek Editor/Author Jonathan Alter, and Emmy-winning NBC Sports Producer Darryl Love, Daniel Glick has completed films that have been shown at several international festivals, from New York to Greece and Malaysia. Through his production company, CG Productions, Daniel has written, produced, directed and edited content for a wide range of clientele, from The Willow Tree Center, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation non-profit, to the world famous Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum in Times Square. His portfolio includes documentaries, narrative shorts and feature films.

Dyanna Taylor, Director of Photography

Dyanna Taylor is a filmmaker and director of photography for hundreds of films, including Pumping Iron II, academy award winning Common Threads and Annapurna, an ABC special on the first American women's expedition to the Himalayas. She has won many awards including a lifetime achievement award from the New York Women in Film and Television, a Peabody Award and five Emmys. She has shot for HBO, National Geographic, and is proud of her numerous environmental and social issue documentaries.

In addition to A Place to Stand, she just completed production on HBO’s “Weight of the Nation” as Director of Photography and is currently in production on “Dorothea Lange: Grab a Hunk of Lightning” as Producer/Director for the PBS American Masters fall 2013 schedule.

Gabriel Baca, Producer

Gabriel, a New Mexico-born filmmaker, began his career as a boom operator at age 15, but his first introduction to film came earlier during the production of Blood In Blood Out (Hollywood Pictures, 1993). Gabriel's father, Jimmy Santiago Baca, was the writer and executive producer of the film and brought Gabriel on-set, planting the seed of his future endeavors. At 17 years old, Gabriel started taking film courses at the Technical Vocational Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Soon after, he began filming, editing, writing and producing documentaries.

Gabriel’s credits include: Moving the River Back Home, Lost Voices, Rising from the Ashes and El Poeta. Through Gabriel's production company, New Future Productions, he has additionally directed and produced a dozen music videos on shoestring budgets. In 2008, he became a member of the West Coast 700 Editors Guild as an assistant editor.
APPENDIX: JIMMY’S BIBLIOGRAPHY

Breaking Bread with the Darkness: Book 1: The Esai Poems – Poetry (Sherman Asher, 2011)

Adolescents on the Edge – Curricula/DVD/Short Stories (Heinemann, 2010)

A Glass of Water – Novel (Grove, 2010)

Selected Poems – Poetry (New Directions, 2009)

Rita and Julia – Poetry (Sunbelt, 2008)

Spring Poems Along the Rio Grande – Poetry (New Directions, 2007)

The Importance of a Piece of Paper – Short Stories (Grove, 2005)


C-Train and Thirteen Mexicans – Poetry (Grove, 2002)

Healing Earthquakes – Poetry (Grove, 2001)

A Place to Stand – Memoir (Grove, 2001)

Set This Book On Fire! – Poetry (Cedar Hill, 1999)


Working in the Dark: Reflections of a Poet of the Barrio – Essays (Red Crane, 1992)

Black Mesa Poems – Poetry (New Directions, 1989)

Martin and Meditations on the South Valley – Poetry (New Directions, 1987)

Poems Taken From My Yard – Poetry (Timberline Press, 1986)

What’s Happening – Poetry (Curbstone, 1982)

Immigrants in Our Own Land – Poetry (New Directions, 1979)

Fired Up With You! – Poetry (Border Press, 1978)