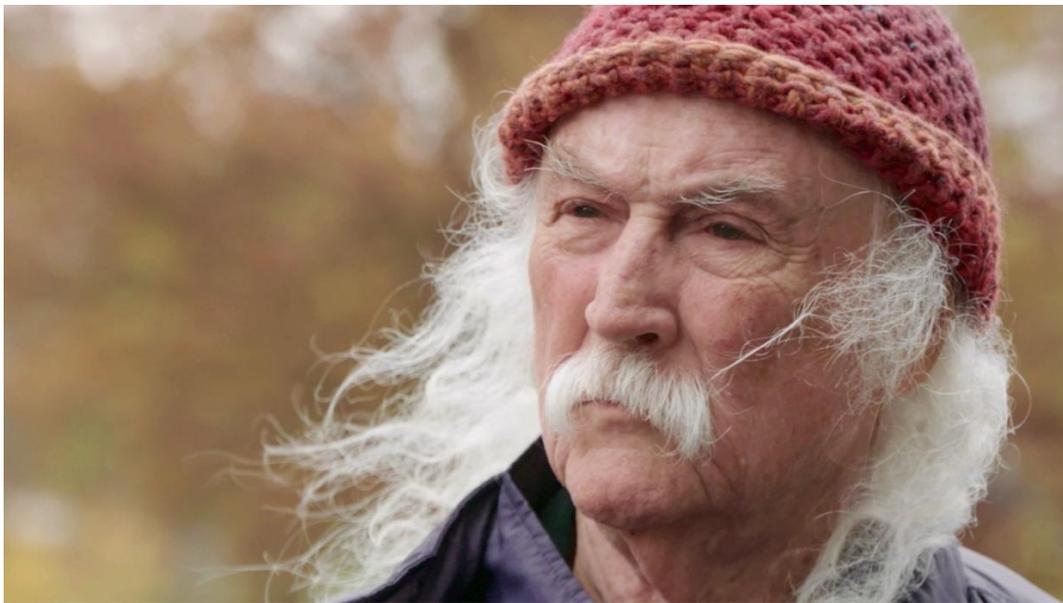

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

BMG Presents

In association with PCH Films, A Cameron Crowe Production

DAVID CROSBY: REMEMBER MY NAME

Directed by A.J. Eaton



Opens 7/19/19 (NY/LA)

Rated R

93 minutes

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SYNOPSIS

A triumph at Sundance, this inspired collaboration between director A.J. Eaton and producer Cameron Crowe coaxes Crosby, member of three major groups in music history (The Byrds; Crosby, Stills & Nash; and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young), into unflinching candor as the singer-songwriter confronts mortality and assesses the damage of earlier days. At the same time, his redemptive journey back to music is universally inspiring and uplifting, bearing an emotional impact that transcends the rock documentary genre.

In the illuminating twilight of his days as a living legend, “Crozz” has chosen living over the legend. He’s making less money but more music than ever, hitting the road despite serious health issues, surrounded by young players who have helped inspire a critically-acclaimed creative streak of fresh songs, albums, and performances. As a troubled talent but uncompromising and principled spirit whose voice has been harmoniously woven into the fabric of pop culture and music royalty since the mid-1960s (first with the Byrds but most famously as a founding member of the supergroup Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young), Crosby finally distinguishes himself as a masterful raconteur and unsparingly self-aware survivor.

Taking viewers through soaring career highs, along with the chemical variety that led to ravaging addictions and serious prison time, DAVID CROSBY: REMEMBER MY NAME explodes myths and sheds profound new light on all the music, politics, and personalities that crossed his incredible — and ongoing — path. Only Crowe and Eaton could have composed a cinematic portrait so intimate and unforgettable.

DAVID CROSBY: REMEMBER MY NAME

The Filmmakers

Director	A.J. EATON
Producer	CAMERON CROWE, P.G.A MICHELE FARINOLA, P.G.A GREG MARIOTTI, P.G.A
Executive Producer	JUSTUS HAERDER KATHY RIVKIN DAUM JAMES KEACH JILL MAZURSKY NORM WAITT
Editor	ELISA BONORA, A.C.E VERONICA PINKHAM
Director of Photography	EDD LUKAS IAN COAD
Original Score	MARCUS EATON BILL LAURANCE

PRODUCTION NOTES

“I was astonished that he was even still going.”

A.J. Eaton remembers the first encounter well — a casual hang some eight years ago that would prove fateful, though it hardly felt so at the time.

Like anyone with even the most cursory American-pop-culture-and-tabloid literacy, Eaton was familiar with David Crosby’s popular hits and personal misses — those predominantly self-inflicted trials and tribulations that tended to overshadow the music. But beyond a basic appreciation for CSNY, Eaton was not particularly a fan.

This would prove helpful down the line. For the time being, the prospect of meeting the folk-rock legend, albeit intriguing, was not especially exciting.

A.J.’s brother Marcus Eaton, however, was very excited. The virtuoso guitarist was thrilled, in fact, about the entirely new, structurally ambitious music Crosby was quietly making in a small studio with his keyboardist son James Raymond (long-lost-to-adoption but now happily reunited) and a crew of young, basically unknown musicians that Marcus had improbably been invited to join after Crosby heard his material.

The young talents seemed to invigorate Crosby. And vice versa. A couple of years later, CSN would fall apart. Though acrimonious breakups had been fairly routine throughout the band’s nearly half-century history, this parting seemed especially venomous. With the supergroup’s 2015 world tour and any hope of comparable paychecks in the rearview mirror, Crosby’s side projects were now his main projects, and the young musicians his main collaborators.

“What I was looking at right there was the dawn of Crosby’s creative reawakening, which we talk about right at the top of the movie in text,” explains Eaton from this year’s Sun Valley Film Festival in his home state of Idaho. “He just decided that he wasn’t done yet.”

HERE IF YOU LISTEN

There was no master plan then, just a filmmaker’s instincts and a brother’s encouragement. Something about Crosby in that moment, that environment, that state of mind, compelled capturing.

When A.J. proposed lending his services (which helpfully included cinematography and editing), Crosby’s initial reaction was a splash of cold water. “We don’t have any money,” he warned the young director. Fortunately, Eaton was not so easily dissuaded.

“Fine, Mr. Director,” Crosby at last relented. “Do it.”

Here was a good-natured challenge as much as an invitation. “And the minute that I pointed the camera at him and started interviewing him, just asked him how he was feeling, it’s like the light bulbs went on. He just lit up. I knew then and there, *this guy can tell a story.*”

“You can’t help but want to hear more.”

Still, they started small, with A.J. turning his intimate access into electronic press kits that, very much like the music they were created to promote, ended up labors of love produced on a relative shoestring.

The notion of attempting a feature-length documentary began to tempt him; Crosby, not so much. At least not at first. But once again, the young director persisted.

“Yeah. He kept at it,” Crosby recalls admiringly from his Santa Ynez Valley home in California earlier this year, shortly before heading east to attend the Asbury Park Music + Film Festival.

“And I finally said, ‘Well, *maybe*.’”

THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE

But what did Crosby see in A.J.?

“I saw intelligence, man. He’s an intelligent guy. Intelligence rings my bell. He’s a nice guy, too. And he loves film *desperately*. His heart was in the right place and he’s smart. And I like him.”

A harder sell was Crosby’s wife, Jan. She had long resented how accounts of her husband’s life and career have tilted heavily towards the drug-casualty narrative despite the now-stunning fact that he has been clean and productive since the 1980s. Plenty of peers suffered even more severe if less-publicized problems; why should he be forever branded as a poster boy for decadence and addiction?

But A.J.’s thoughtful process and polished output made it clear that his sensibilities as a director diverged from the standard-issue sensationalism and clichéd *Behind the Music* approach. Here was the cinematic equivalent of interesting chord changes and tunings.

And with her eventual blessing, the doors to the Crosby home were wide open.

On-and-off filming followed, a balancing act of maintaining high production values with limited resources. Even if Crosby could have covered costs, A.J. didn’t want his subject to become a partner once he committed to making a feature.

Crosby fundamentally agreed. He had no interest in a “paste-up,” being openly disdainful of how so many so-called documentaries about musical acts these days are little more than feature-length promotional videos, “totally self-serving and about as deep as a bird bath,” he adds. If a documentary about his life was going to be completed — something that still remained to be seen at that point — he wanted the finished product to stand on its own. It would need to be credibly objective and honest.

“Brutally honest,” Crosby adds.

“So I was basically financing this on my own,” Eaton explains. And while he can laugh about it now, the bills and the pressure became substantial. “I mean, I almost lost my apartment a couple of times through this process. I was living on fumes.”

Making the rounds in Hollywood, A.J. found his pitch met with reactions ranging from dismissive to tepid. Someone suggested the only commercially viable way to salvage the project would be

to pair Crosby with a rising young hip-hop artist. (“I’m not kidding you.”) Meanwhile, his friend and filmmaking mentor, Michael Hoffman, director of *THE LAST STATION* and *SOAPDISH*, urged A.J. to protect his “independence and objectivity.”

Fortuitously, one industry ally who supported Eaton’s vision early on was producer Jill Mazursky. Visiting her office one day at Bad Robot — J.J. Abrams’ production company in Santa Monica — A.J. happened to spy a shaggy-haired guy in the hallway. Cameron Crowe, *Rolling Stone* magazine’s youngest-ever contributor turned household-name director, producer, and Academy Award-winning screenwriter, was camped out running the writer’s room for his Showtime series *Roadies*, produced by Bad Robot Television.

“And I was like, fuck, *that’s it!*” recalls A.J. “I just could see it. I could see it all right there.”

As A.J. was aware, few, if any, journalists know Crosby better or for longer than Cameron Crowe. The prodigy behind *FAST TIMES AT RIDGEMONT HIGH* was just sixteen when he first began interviewing the CSNY superstar. “We introduced Cameron to girls,” quips Crosby. “I don’t think his mom was too happy about that.”

“We also stuck a joint in his mouth. His mom was *definitely* not happy about that.”

In fact, the movie that earned Crowe his Oscar, the semi-autobiographical “love letter to rock music” *ALMOST FAMOUS*, was based largely on his experiences hanging out with CSNY and Led Zeppelin, among other bands, in the early-to-mid-1970s. As Eaton points out, you can tell that certain lines in the film are pure Crosby.

“Cameron knows me inside and out,” admits Crosby. “We spent *long, long* times together, doing interviews for *Rolling Stone*.”

Darting into Mazursky’s office, A.J. couldn’t believe he hadn’t thought of the idea sooner. Who in Hollywood could possibly appreciate, and elevate, an uncompromisingly honest documentary portrait of David Crosby more than Cameron Crowe?

Practically levitating with excitement, he implored Mazursky for an introduction. Careful not to inflate his frazzled hopes, she agreed to see what she could do.

DÉJÀ VU

Later that same day, after A.J. had left, Mazursky tentatively popped her head into Crowe’s office.

The writer-director of *JERRY MAGUIRE* nearly fell out of his chair: “You’re doing a movie with *Crosby?!?*!”

Crowe just happened to have a vinyl copy of *If I Could Only Remember My Name*, Crosby’s 1971 solo debut, in his bag at that very moment — totem of the truest Croz fans.

Smack in the middle of mounting his first television series, Crowe couldn’t have been busier, but, at a bare minimum, he wanted to meet A.J. and hear more about what was going on.

Mazursky brought Eaton back the next day.

There, in the kitchen area of Bad Robot, A.J. found himself face-to-face with one of his biggest filmmaking idols. Crowe seemed incredulous. “So Crosby, he really wants to do this, huh?”

“I’ll tell ya, of all my favorite artists growing up, Crosby was towards the very top, and often at the top, of my favorite musical influences,” Crowe explains from his Vinyl Films office during a break from working on the stage musical adaptation of ALMOST FAMOUS — not long before flying to New York for a celebratory 30th anniversary screening of his directorial debut, SAY ANYTHING, at the Tribeca Film Festival.

“When I started doing rock journalism, I wanted to interview Crosby, *badly*, but he didn’t do interviews.”

Not entirely unlike a thirty-something A.J. Eaton, sixteen-year-old Cameron Crowe was doggedly persistent. “So when I finally got the opportunity to talk with him, I think it was before the 1974 CSNY tour, he answered every one of my *many* questions just like, *beautifully*,” Crowe recalls with a laugh. “Explosively honest. And I kind of... I couldn’t stop interviewing him. It was so fun, and satisfying, and he was so respectful to a kid, because I had loved his stuff and had all my homework done.”

At the time, Crosby was high atop the pinnacle of his fame, in every sense of the term — but the irrepressibly cocky singer-songwriter still couldn’t help recognizing the prodigious talent and intelligence across the notepad, even if it was contained in an awkward teenager.

“Cameron is extremely smart, and everybody loves him,” says Crosby. “I don’t know anybody who *doesn’t* love him. People who don’t like me, *at all*, love him.”

What Crowe loved was Crosby’s spitfire eloquence and candor — qualities not exactly overabundant in the realm of rock stars then or now. “He just was a gift of an interview subject. So I just kept interviewing him, pretty much ever since then,” says Crowe. “Every few years, I’d find some way to be interviewing Crosby, because he’s one of the great storytellers and he does not have a bullshit filter.”

Getting filled in at Bad Robot, Crowe was impressed with A.J.’s account of the project’s progress, and certainly glad to hear his old pal was thriving. He offered up some friendly advice from the overlapping perspective of an experienced director and veteran Croz-whisperer:

“Listen, this is going to be a fun project for you guys,” he recalls telling Eaton and Mazursky, who would become an Executive Producer on the film. “In my humble opinion — possibly worthless opinion, but I *do* know about this guy as a subject — you don’t need a bunch of talking heads. Put the camera on this guy and let him tell his own story, because there are very few storytellers as charismatic and entertaining as Crosby. So just have him tell the story like he’s telling you his life’s tale over dinner, just to you. Not to a bunch of people, but just to one person.”

Eaton was ecstatic. Cameron was endorsing the intimacy that was A.J.’s natural impulse and, to some extent, a byproduct of operating with meager resources. A.J. all but blurted it out: Would Crowe get involved, help them finish the film?

Cameron figured the question was coming. And the answer was definitely no-can-do, not with a big-budget ensemble TV series and many other projects consuming his time. So he politely

begged off with a heartfelt variation on that well-worn Hollywood sentiment that their project was something he couldn't make but definitely wanted to see.

Though that first meeting fell short of the ninth-inning home run Eaton was hoping for, he and Mazursky were still encouraged — and grateful. As things wound down with some small talk, Crowe clocked the disappointment in A.J.'s eyes, but his thoughts turned to Crosby.

"I did feel like, 'Man, I remember when I was sixteen and that dude gave me the greatest interview I'd ever gotten. I want to give back. My first thought had been, 'Okay, I'll just give them this idea I have,'" Crowe recounts, taking a pause in the reenactment of his inner monologue. "But then it's like, 'No. You can give back more. Tell them you'll do an interview.'"

"Tell you what," he turned to A.J. "Let me do the next interview as a gift to Crosby."

"Yeah! Absolutely," Eaton gushed. "Done!"

LOOK IN THEIR EYES

Months passed before the schedules aligned, but true to his word, Crowe finally made the drive north to take his position beside the cameras, armed with a "huge notebook full of questions."

By this point in the project, A.J. had pushed Crosby to some deep areas of self-examination, and Crowe admiringly noted as much. But Eaton still recognized, as a director, that the dynamics of his personal relationship with Crosby let his subject push back at times, and even push him around a little bit (whether consciously or otherwise) in ways that undercut what the film was reaching for.

Crowe's presence on set was a palpable game-changer.

"Oh, wow, now we're tapping into something deeper," Eaton remembers thinking that first time they were rolling without him having to hold down the interviewer's seat.

Crowe, for his part, responded immediately to the way Eaton set up the shot. "A.J. mics Crosby very personally, so it's warm," he explains. "There is a way that an *interview* can sound, and then there is a way that a *personal conversation* can sound."

Crowe was after the essence and aesthetics of the latter.

"And in classic Crosby style, the toughest question he wants to answer first. 'How did you get here, how do you feel being here, and why are you still alive? Why do *you* think you're still alive?'"

"And that's where we began."

TRACTION IN THE RAIN

Every so often during that first interview with Crowe, there would be a moment so purely, powerfully, or hysterically Crosby that Crowe would glance back at A.J. to share an amazed expression.

But *Roadies* wasn't going to write and produce itself. "So after that, I'm like, 'Good luck, take care,'" recalls Crowe.

A week later the call came: will you please do another interview, will you *please* produce this?

Cameron laughs at the memory of ending up on the firing end of A.J.'s scrappy persistence. "I said, 'Look, I *can't* produce it, but down the line I'll do another interview for you. Okay? Good luck.'"

For that interview, the filmmakers came to Cameron, setting up at the Bad Robot offices.

And Crosby went even deeper.

Turning to A.J., Crowe's expression said it all. They were hitting the documentary filmmaking version of a gusher.

Still, when the calls inevitably came again to produce, Crowe's song remained the same. "Listen, in Hollywood, people say all the time, ah, just slap your name on it and do your other stuff. But no producer that I've had admiration for ever worked like that," Crowe explains. But just as it always had been, interviewing Crosby was its own reward. So Crowe kept coming back for "one more."

"So now we've done three or four of these interviews, basically as a gift for Crosby. And finally it became apparent that they were going to have a hard time getting financing unless I came on as an official producer."

To A.J., that had been apparent for years. More meetings, calls, emails, budgets, and bills than he cared to add up underscored the point. From the town's perspective — and not without reason — he was an unproven quantity at that level.

A glimmer of hope emerged after Crosby signed a deal with BMG to handle his publishing and release some new music. BMG exec Kathy Rivkin-Daum was close to Crowe. "She had been with me at Vinyl Films before. We had a great history of working together."

And BMG held a rich archive of Crosby material. The company was also ramping up their film production output. Stars seemed to be aligning. But without Crowe fully attached, the light was stuck at yellow. With help from Michele Farinola at PCH Films, A.J. kept revising budgets, looking for a way to make the numbers work. "It was a Hollywood roller coaster," he says.

Crowe, meanwhile, felt his resolve eroding. "It's like quicksand," he laughs. "Suddenly, one day, it's Crosby on the phone saying, 'You have to do this or I have no documentary.' For a guy who's got the most counterculture sensibilities, *still*, of anybody you know, he's also a pragmatic businessman," Cameron adds with a laugh. "And you can see where this story is going."

At the time, though, A.J. couldn't.

The struggling director had simply accepted that Crowe could only do so much. And so, on one of those punishingly hot LA summer days in 2017, about \$60,000 in the hole, Eaton decided that maybe the time had come to get off the roller coaster and cut his losses.

It was like the Hollywood version of a spiritual release. "I finally said, 'I think I'm over with this.' If I don't make this movie, I'll be cool. I'll be fine," he told himself. He could bank the footage and someone else could hopefully make good use of it one day.

The only other strategy still on the table, *maybe*, was a prior low-ball offer from BMG. There was a remote chance that, with that budget, Eaton could take a lo-fi version of the film to a festival and garner completion funds from another source if it screened well. At peace with wherever the chips would fall, he took a deep breath for one last call to BMG, ready to "sell his soul," as he mentions with a laugh.

"Oh, we're so excited," gushed Rivkin-Daum, jumping on the line. Thrown by her cheerfulness, Eaton didn't have a chance (luckily) to start his pitch.

"*Excited about what?*" he thought to himself.

Crowe was in. All-in.

"And I was *literally* the last person to know," Eaton cracks up at the memory. "I had fully resigned myself to the fact that maybe this movie just can't be made."

But larger benevolent forces were at work. "This whole project has been a number of serendipitous circumstances," he reflects. "You didn't get what you *want*, but you got the thing that was better. I mean, imagine. You meet one of your all-time director heroes. I love JERRY MAGUIRE. And I just love the fact that Cameron makes movies that live in this romantic world."

"And now you're going to *work* with one of your director heroes. Well, that's a tremendous compliment to you and the project, but it's also incredibly daunting because you *don't want to fuck up*."

Far more significant than financing, then, Cameron brought to the table a steady hand and collaborative spirit that quickly put Eaton at ease while focusing and elevating every frame.

"Once I said okay, it became a very creative, wonderful process of shaping this film with A.J.," says Crowe. "Basically, it was about executing that original idea from J.J. Abrams' office. *Let Crosby be Crosby*, and just be diligent about the music, and make the documentary that his truest fans would watch and go, 'Man, I didn't know that they had a camera on when that happened.' 'Man, I didn't know that you'd have footage of him making *If I Could Only Remember My Name*.' 'Holy shit, I can't believe he's talking to you about x,y, and z!'"

Even now, Crowe's zeal is infectious.

"The three of us all agreed on going deep with this film. Totally," notes Crosby. "There was a unity of purpose and approach." That said, the musical legend is quick to emphasize that it's not

his film. “I didn’t have final cut. There’s stuff still in there that I told them *not* to put in there,” he adds, laughing for a moment.

What would he cut given the chance? “Oh, I’m not going to tell you. The point is, I did not *shape* that film, I did not *write* that film. I did not *control* that film. *At all.*”

“This is A.J. and Cameron. *They* shaped it.”

Cameron carried over a philosophy that served him and Vinyl Films well from producing and directing the documentaries PEARL JAM TWENTY and, in the same year, HBO’s UNION, examining a collaboration between Elton John and Leon Russell:

“You don’t apply an outside POV on the artist. You go from the artist inside out.”

“Give the fans the most amazing gift of Crosby, unvarnished, real, true, authentic. And we stay true to that the whole time,” Crowe summarizes. “Getting there, and getting it right in the edit, was a lengthy process because we needed to put a lot of care and tenderness into this.”

Accordingly, producer Greg Mariotti went extra deep into the archival crates. “Greg worked diligently to fulfill my goal of really getting it all,” notes Crowe. “We got *everybody* to open up the vaults for us. Crosby is not going to get more than one film, so I said, ‘Let’s make this absolutely definitive — and *emotional.*’”

SET THAT BAGGAGE DOWN

“Cameron was always looking for the most authentic and honest way to tell the story,” says Mariotti. “Balancing the humor, joy, and emotional punch was always difficult, but Cameron made sure that we stuck to the themes of the story we were trying to tell.”

Eaton, meanwhile, credits Mariotti for developing one of the film’s most emotional, and hauntingly formative, elements: the untimely loss of Christine Hinton, Crosby’s beloved girlfriend, in 1969.

“I become obsessed with his relationship with Christine Hinton early on,” Mariotti explains. “Crosby had talked about her death in the past, and how it rocked his world, but I never had a sense of who she really was.”

“Along with the help of Associate Producer Gabriel Caste, we dug through every website, every photographer’s archives, and reached out to everyone we knew who could help shed light on Christine.”

“I’m very proud of that sequence,” Mariotti adds. “You can feel her impact on Crosby, both when she was alive and after she died.”

“As the interviews and the filmmaking continued, Crosby deepened,” Crowe agrees. “The stakes rose. He went for deeper waters with every interview, and the film got richer as we went.”

On set and in the editing bay, Mariotti, who is also Crowe's producing partner at Vinyl Films, recognized something powerful taking shape.

"Cameron's interviews were intense, and we knew we struck an emotional chord with David many times during the process," he explains. "Our job was to make sure to use David's amazing storytelling skills to take the audience on a journey with him through some of the pivotal moments in his life."

"Cameron asked me some of the hardest questions I've ever been asked by *anybody*," concedes Crosby. "Maybe *the* hardest. Really difficult places in my life where I had to look at something that was extremely painful to look at."

Even though he willingly signed on for "brutally honest," was Crosby ever surprised by things he heard himself saying?

"Yes," he replies quietly. "Yeah. That happened."

"If you step back from it, the thing that is hard to live with, man, is being naked," Crosby declares. "You've deliberately taken your clothes off in public. Now, when you're a young, handsome kid and your body is all good, that's kind of fun. When you're like me, yeah, it's embarrassing. But it's also *healthy*."

Still, why do so to that extent? And why now?

"Two or three strong emotional needs in me fell into it," Crosby confides. "One was wanting to talk to all of the people that I used to work with who don't seem to like me now, and are taking shots at me now. Or at least avoiding me now."

"Some of them are really, actively angry at me," he adds. In terms of addressing those damaged relationships, Crosby doesn't see the film as a "mea culpa" per se. "I don't necessarily feel guilty. I feel like a lot of the bad behavior...."

He takes a moment to compose his thoughts.

"I just want you all to understand who I am and what was going on, and that I bear you no bad feelings at all. And I *don't*, man. I don't have any beef with any of them. Even Nash who really has been pretty awful. I don't, because I've gone on and made the best music I could and made the best stab at being a decent guy that I could work out. That's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to be a decent guy, pull my weight, take care of my family, and... not be an asshole." With an air of relief, Crosby cracks up at the succinct destination that train of thought reached.

"It's a pretty simple program that I'm working here."

"And I feel good about me because of the *art*," he clarifies. "Songs that come out of a singer-songwriter are a pretty good barometer of that singer-songwriter's soul. And, man, this music is telling me that I'm a happy guy. That I made the right choice. That in spite of the fact that I'm not making *any money*, I am making really good art. And that's what I was put here to do. So I wanted to express that. That was the second need."

“And I also wanted to say, look, yes, I made a bunch of mistakes. I’m sorry for when I hurt *anybody*. That’s the third part of this thing, man. Not the musical partners, but the women that I hurt.” Crosby’s voice rises emphatically: “And *I did*.”

“And I gotta look at it.”

These were “good human beings”, Crosby states. “And I need them to know that there was some love there, and there was a desire in me not to hurt them and to do right by them. And that if I did hurt them, I apologize, ‘cause I was pretty crazy. I was very selfish as a lover and as a guy. And I think it’s... it’s stuff I wanted to get off my chest. This film has been good for that.”

“I always saw it like his version of the Neil Young song ‘One of These Days’,” says Crowe. Featured on the *Harvest Moon* album, the plaintive track opens with the line: “One of these days I’m going to sit down and write a long letter.”

“And the long letter is his song, to all of his friends. To the people he’s let down. To the people he’s loved, lost.”

“Mostly subconsciously, but a little consciously,” Crowe suspects that Crosby was setting his sails towards that objective. It’s the notion that, through the filmmaking process, as Crowe characterizes the motive: “I got you to help me write my letter to all of these people.”

“Crosby says in the film, ‘I don’t know where Neil’s doorstep is.’ But the film kind of became the thing that he could put on Neil’s doorstep,” Crowe realized.

A need to get things off his chest may have been the underlying motivation, but the output, A.J. Eaton recognized, was a vivid, moving narrative.

“Crosby would talk about a topic, and we would go, ‘Holy shit, we’ve got to go there and keep pushing that.’ Thus we held his feet to the fire. We didn’t let him hide.”

PAINT YOU A PICTURE

“This is something my dad taught me, man. My dad was an Academy Award-winning cinematographer, and he knew how to do it,” Crosby weighs in. “And he said the person that makes the film is *the editor*. And those guys spent a lot of time in the edit bay, man. They absolutely did. And they had good editors who did good work.”

Without question, much of what makes DAVID CROSBY: REMEMBER MY NAME so exceptional was achieved through a long, painstaking process of crafting between Eaton, Crowe, Mariotti, and their editing team: Elisa Bonora (GLEN CAMPBELL: I’LL BE ME) and Veronica Pinkham (LINDA RONSTADT: THE SOUND OF MY VOICE).

“I had such a wonderful time with Elisa and Veronica,” notes Crowe. “They’re fantastic editors who really put their hearts into this.”

“I call Elisa Bonora an eccentric sculptor,” praises Eaton. “She’s an artist who helped us sculpt our narrative.”

Crowe had such a great experience in the editing bay on this film, in fact, he now wants to “save up and put one in my house. Seriously. This experience made me want to edit at home and have an *even more* personal editing process next time, because this one felt very personal, and that’s a cool way of filmmaking.”

A.J., in turn, effusively credits Crowe’s patience and perceptive note-giving throughout the entire process, but especially in the edit. “Cameron helped me see things in the movie that I had missed, even though I had shot it.”

There’s certainly no shortage of subject matter or drama. “With Crosby, there is so *much* life,” Crowe exclaims. “To cover it in ninety minutes, you end up having the most absurd conversations you can imagine in the editing room. You’re like, ‘Well, we don’t even have room for the liver!’,” he laughs.

Crosby received a highly-publicized liver transplant in 1994, financed by his friend and collaborator Phil Collins.

A lot of friends have generously come to Crosby’s aid over the years, and he recognizes well that the amount of time Crowe invested in this film was personal before it was professional.

“Yeah, he loves me. That’s the only way you can read it,” Crosby remarks. “And I think it was incredibly kind of him to do it.”

Not that the shoot was always a love fest. One of the most memorable sequences in DAVID CROSBY: REMEMBER MY NAME captures its subject unhappily corralled back to storied Laurel Canyon and its central landmark, the Canyon Country Store.

“He actually came out of the store and was kind of a dick to me that day in the parking lot,” Crowe recalls. “And this is the journey that you take with Crosby. I was kind of like, ‘Wow. He bites.’ You know? *Shit*. So much for the goodwill of knowing him since I was a teenager,” Crowe laughs.

“He has no problem with giving me fucking *hardcore shit* about taking him to Laurel Canyon. Next time I saw him, he apologized, and talked about his feelings, and how he was surprised that he pushes away people, sometimes, that he loves. ‘Yeah, that hurt,’ I told him. And that private conversation then led right into the next interview, where he talked about difficulties with people he loves.”

“The filmmaking became the film, and that was powerful.”

“And I think Jim Morrison did live behind the Country Store, by the way,” Crowe interjects for the record.

(8021 Rothdell Trail, according to most accounts.)

FIND A HEART

When A.J. Eaton learned that the film had been accepted into Sundance, representatives from the festival made a point of telling him that they saw DAVID CROSBY: REMEMBER MY NAME not just as an excellent rock documentary, but as an excellent documentary period.

“And that was, by far, one of the greatest compliments I’ve received on this project.”

A subsequent flood of praise has substantiated the Sundance assessment, with audiences at numerous festivals connecting emotionally to universal elements and themes within the story, like friendship, family, fear, loss, regret, heartbreak, love, and forgiveness. Even viewers who had never previously heard of Crosby or his music have left the film moved and inspired.

But that first Sundance screening was a powerful revelation — and not just for the audience.

“I was nervous as hell,” Eaton admits. Crowe fully believed in the film, but knew all too well from experience that you can never be sure how an audience will react.

Crosby, meanwhile, was finding himself in the surely peculiar position of being simultaneously before an audience and in that audience.

“Well, there is a very strong cathartic effect to *making* the film, right? Because you have to look at your life as you work with it, and then you get to learn from it, and then set it down and move on. That’s the catharsis.” “But then there’s a reaction that happens to you when other people experience it,” Crosby reflects on that night in Park City. “And it *works*.”

No one present from the team behind DAVID CROSBY: REMEMBER MY NAME will ever forget that standing ovation and gale of applause — especially since it provoked a phenomenon they hadn’t witnessed before or since: a speechless David Crosby.

“He, for the first time, was overwhelmed by the whole thing,” Eaton recalls.

“It was intense, man,” says Crosby, lowering his voice. “It was... it was almost shocking. It was intense.” Even now, he seems to be slightly at a loss.

His self-possession bounces back after a moment of reflection. “They fucking loved it.”

“Look, I’m a connoisseur of applause, man,” he adds with a laugh. “I’ve heard a lot of people applaud, a lot of times, for a lot of different stuff. This was intense. These people were moved. And Cameron, A.J., we all looked at each other and knew we had succeeded.”

“Everyone sees something different in it,” Eaton realizes now. Numerous people cornered him after that first screening to say how much the movie meant to them. “They come up to you and they’re crying,” he recounts, still amazed. “So that became a really emotional thing for me. I had to go take a couple of walks just to kind of process what people had shared.”

That spirit continued on into the night. Cameron remembers when Sony Classics co-president Tom Bernard walked into their afterparty. “Tom said, ‘I just had to come here because I experienced something watching your film, and I don’t even know what it is, but I just had to stay with it. So I came here to your party.’”

“We loved him instantly,” Cameron laughs. “But it was kind of that thing of, like... there’s an *elixir*. And we didn’t know that the film was able to produce that extra thing until we screened it at Sundance. You can never be confident about it, but sometimes you’re lucky enough to catch something. And Tom, that night, made us feel like there was something in the air about the movie.”

As Greg Mariotti adds: “Tom Bernard was clearly struck by the film and you can feel his passion with every conversation we had. Sony Pictures Classics track record speaks for itself and we are honored that they responded to the film and wanted to release it in theaters. That was always our goal, to have a communal experience in theaters with the audience. It’s amazing to watch people laugh, cry, and feel that musical joy while watching the film together.”

Cameron observes that there’s something about “the wonder of life, and the gift of honesty when you’ve outlived most of your fears” captured in DAVID CROSBY: REMEMBER MY NAME that “resonates with people of all ages.”

“This project just had a very strong beating heart among the filmmakers. So what I was left with was personal filmmaking is the best. And there’s no more personal subject than David Crosby talking about his life over fifty years in the white-hot spotlight,” says Crowe.

“Joel Bernstein’s photos and Henry Diltz’s photos were so evocative, and tell so much story visually. That helps a lot,” he adds. “Everybody who worked on this film cared. Really cared. Right down to when Tom shows up and then ultimately says he does want to put the movie out.”

OH YES I CAN

Now what remains to be seen is how the film’s reception might influence the next chapter of David Crosby’s life and career.

It’s safe to say no one is planning a retirement party.

“Great films have great stories and David Crosby has one hell of a great story,” said Rivkin-Daum, Senior Director, BMG Films. “Crosby has given us all an extraordinarily candid and unflinchingly honest look into his remarkable life and BMG is honored to have partnered on the critically-acclaimed, definitive, career-spanning documentary about him as an artist. The combination of A.J. Eaton’s fresh perspective and the genius of Cameron Crowe made this a win-win for everyone involved. From being Crosby’s music publisher to also being his record label home, we are grateful for the opportunity to continue illuminating his iconic legacy, financing and executive producing the film.”

Reunions are another matter, albeit hard to call. Crosby says he doesn’t have any idea how former colleagues will react to the film, though he is “fascinated to find out.”

“This whole wave he’s been riding for the last five-plus years, I’m telling you, it’s making him younger and more prolific,” insists Crowe.

“It’s an amazing story to tell. I like to quote Billy Wilder, who said, ‘You’re always one great idea away from your best work.’ And Crosby is an example of that.”

Given the health ordeals alone, his resilience is impressive. As Eaton points out, Crosby has kept on truckin' through "a liver transplant, eight stents in his heart, diabetes, hepatitis," and the list goes on.

Back in the '90s, Crowe remembers visiting an exhausted, fragile-looking Crosby backstage at a benefit concert and making an entry in his journal about how "this might be the last time I'm going to see David Crosby alive." Many people have had that kind of experience.

"Now, I can tell you from having seen Crosby a couple weeks ago, he's got more energy than anybody I know. Including *my kids!*" Crowe says, laughing.

That energy is there in a John Coltrane story that opens the film. Eaton noticed early on that Crosby tends to "perform a lot of his anecdotes." Having heard that memorable recollection one previous night of socializing, Eaton prompted Crowe to ask about it on camera.

Crosby likes to claim his original ambition was to become an actor, but that he hit a brick wall of ineptitude. The visceral way he commands the screen in that first scene and other moments in DAVID CROSBY: REMEMBER MY NAME, however, suggests that perhaps this self-appraisal was uncharacteristically modest.

"Seriously. It is like you're working with a great actor," insists Crowe, who has encountered more than a few in his career. "You know why? I'll tell you why. He knows rhythm. And he knows the rhythm of dialogue and speech."

"Just watching his thought-process is fascinating."

Looking back at the film and the entire journey of making it, Eaton is "really proud of the way that we were able to put the end of the movie together, how it leads you out with hope."

We see a content Crosby, creatively and personally present in a redemptive, life-affirming way.

"I think he's really fulfilled and grateful now," says Eaton.

And the director has plenty of gratitude as well. "I want to pay homage to Cameron's brilliance, his generosity throughout our collaboration, and how deeply engaged he was with making this movie — and making it work," he says.

Perfect three-part harmony.

Still pretty hard to beat.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

A.J. Eaton, Director:

Born in Idaho, A.J. Eaton is a filmmaker with a unique background in narrative, documentary, and music production. He fell in love with the marriage of music and moving image after watching his folk musician father write a song for a PBS documentary. Later, Eaton earned a degree in political science and became interested in stories of activism and democracy, working on a number of progressive political campaigns. *David Crosby: Remember My Name* is his first feature documentary.

Cameron Crowe, Producer:

Award-winning writer and director Cameron Crowe credits include such films as *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Say Anything...*, *Jerry Maguire*, *Almost Famous* and *Vanilla Sky*. His documentary work includes *Tom Petty's Heartbreakers Beach Party*, *The Union*, a making of the Elton John-Leon Russell record of the same name and *Pearl Jam Twenty*, the acclaimed career-spanning documentary chronicling the birth, rise and remarkable survival of one of America's greatest rock bands.

Michele Farinola, Producer:

Michele Farinola has been working in documentary features and television for over twenty years. She is currently the executive producer at PCH Films, overseeing production and operations. Prior to that, she served as Co-Head of Documentary Features at Spitfire Pictures, a unit of Exclusive Media, where she was an executive producer of the 2012 Academy Award winning documentary, *Undefeated* released by The Weinstein Company and the 2012 Grammy Award winning documentary, *Foo Fighters: Back and Forth*. In addition, Michele was the executive in charge of production of HBO's 2012 Emmy winning documentary, *George Harrison: Living in the Material*, directed by Martin Scorsese; and *The Last Play at Shea*, released by Lionsgate and Showtime.

Greg Mariotti, Producer:

Greg Mariotti has been working with Cameron Crowe's production company Vinyl Films for the past four years. His most recent projects include Showtime's *Roadies* and the *Jerry Maguire* 20th Anniversary Blu-ray and DVD. Prior to joining Vinyl Films, Greg had a prominent career at some of the leading financial institutions in Seattle, Washington.