

## **A Circle in the Desert**

A Meditation on Place and Time

a film by David P. Crews

### **PRESS KIT**

**Official Film Website:**

[ACircleInTheDesert.com](http://ACircleInTheDesert.com)

**Trailer:**

[vimeo.com/651812514](http://vimeo.com/651812514)

**Contact:**

David P. Crews:

email: [david@acircleinthedesert.com](mailto:david@acircleinthedesert.com)

Phone (USA): 512-663-9669

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**Poster / One-Sheet:**

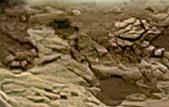
{This image is half-size. Go to the film website [here](http://acircleinthedesert.com) to download a full-size file at 40" x 27"}

<http://acircleinthedesert.com/PRESSKITRESOURCES/ACITD-POSTER.jpg.zip>

# A Circle In The Desert

**A Vision Quest**  
through the magical landscapes  
of the Colorado Plateau

A film by David P. Crews



**"Absolutely beautiful film!"**

**"A courageous sharing of a deeply personal journey."**

**"It was a moving experience. Very moving!"**

**"The music was evocative - perfect! It just belonged to the landscape!"**

**"Universal themes! It will stay with me. That's one of the marks of great cinema."**



**CLEAN VERSION (no laurels) HERE:**

[http://acircleinthedesert.com/PRESSKITRESOURCES/ACITD-POSTER\\_Clean.jpg.zip](http://acircleinthedesert.com/PRESSKITRESOURCES/ACITD-POSTER_Clean.jpg.zip)

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**Logline:**

In pursuit of a vision quest, an explorer draws a medicine circle in remote desert sands, searching for meaning and seeking entry into unknown realms, but the immense landscape's challenges and its response to his quest take mysterious forms.

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**50-word Pitch:**

**A Circle in the Desert** documents a Vision Quest in the spectacular red-rock canyons and arches of the Colorado Plateau. Featuring an original full-orchestral score with poetry, animation, and a search for meaning in one of the most beautiful places on Earth.

A film created entirely by one person, only.

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**A Circle in the Desert**

**Synopsis:**

Writer and poet, David P. Crews, set out to find meaning and purpose in his life by once again entering the magnificent red rock canyons and great stone arches of North America's Colorado Plateau, a special place he has sought throughout his life. Here, he began a spiritual quest to seek a Vision from the immense desert. To empower this, he drew a simple medicine circle in the sands and sat within it for a day, and then two.

Within this seemingly timeless landscape, contemplations of the nature of life and time itself guided him to seek answers, gain a glimpse of the ineffable or, perhaps, an entry into some other realm. This shamanic pursuit drew its energy from the remoteness and grandeur of the high desert and his own focused intent within the Circle.

His initial enigmatic experiments led to a healing and deeper connection with and love for this landscape, and with the ancient pictographs, the desert artwork of those who lived here thousands of years before. He searched deeper, looking for a theory of purpose by moving through this unique land. Near the end of his search, he reconnected to a special world of tall and massive standing stones where a youthful experience first enchanted him.

In the last traces of his journey, he wondered if the universe would honor his quest and provide a true vision. Such requests, he knew, may never be answered, but when they are, the gifts may take unexpected and powerful form.

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**Comments and Reviews:** [Sourced from the initial limited test audiences.]

“This is a courageous sharing of a deeply personal journey.”

“I am blown away. The scenery, the story, everything, is not what I expected at all. Absolutely beautiful film.”

“The music was *evocative – perfect!* It just *belonged* to the landscape!”

“It was thrilling, like you were developing a different kind of art form. The blending of music, photography, and video felt like a new art. I got a sense of the artist in process, like somebody who would have spent a year painting a picture, a watercolor, or a pot.”

“I loved the way you approached the idea of Time. It’s a spiritual journey that you’re sharing with people—one they can actually take part in.”

“You can tell that this is a life’s work, and I love that you can feel the importance of it. Every place that you showed, you described the way that your heart is in it—and I could feel that when I was watching.”

“It’s an important awakening. The way you described certain things, it’s like, “Yes! Yes!”

“It is mind boggling to think that the entire movie presentation is manifest from the mind and actions of one individual.”

“It was like these rocks had been waiting for David Crews to come along and tell their story and remind us that Time is. . . you gotta slow down! Ohh, I’m not used to being this slow. OK. This is good! I never thought about time in the rocks and ripples!”

“Universal themes! It will stay with me. That’s one of the marks of great cinema.”

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**Producer/Director Bio:**

**David P. Crews** is a filmmaker, broadcast television production director, and on-air radio host and voice talent. He is a master editor, a motion graphics animator, and a broadcast cameraman, all skills

developed over a fifty year career.

Along with extensive audio production experience, David is also a long-time electronic musician and composer, currently working extensively with virtual symphony orchestra instruments including the BBC Symphony Orchestra Pro, which he used in the creation of the music for *A Circle in the Desert*, which has won eight awards for Best Original Score.

His films and commercial productions have won many other commendations including six Telly Awards, a Pixie Award, a Communicator Award, and a Calypso Award from the Moondance International Film Festival for his music score to his film, “Big Bend—A Landscape Romance.” He also placed as a finalist in 2019 in the same festival for his score to his film, “A Photographic Travel Adventure—England & Scotland.” David is a member of the Silver Telly Council, judging the Telly Awards.

David helped design and guide multiple new television production studios and stations in west and central Texas over his career. As Production Manager and Senior Producer-Director for Time Warner Cable for 24 years in Austin, he was instrumental in starting and designing Uptown Studios, an in-house commercial production studio and edit facility. David also taught television production at the university level at the University of Texas Permian Basin in Odessa, Texas.

In 2007, David started his own award-winning post-production editing business, CrewsCreative, which he still owns and operates. For eleven years, his voice was heard world-wide as an on-air host for KMFA, the highly regarded classical music radio station in Austin, Texas.

David is a poet and author of books, essays, and blogs on religion and shamanism, especially on topics concerning the great spirit plant medicines like ayahuasca, with which he has personally worked during two trips to the Upper Amazon jungle in Peru. He compiled a life-collection of his poetry in 2020 into a volume titled, “A Path of Poems.” Some of these are presented in *A Circle in the Desert*.

David has recently resettled in Las Cruces, New Mexico, beginning a new chapter of music and filmmaking, based in the beautiful Chihuahuan high desert.



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**Director Photos:**

Full size [here](#):

<http://acircleinthedesert.com/PRESSKITRESOURCES/ACITD-DC in STUDIO WITH MIC-fx.jpg>

Crop version [here](#):

<http://acircleinthedesert.com/PRESSKITRESOURCES/ACITD-DC in STUDIO WITH MIC crop1-fx.jpg>



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### **Cast and Crew information:**

This is a highly unusual film in that it has been created *entirely* by one single person, only: David P. Crews.

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### **Q&A's:**

**Q: Most films require at least a minimal crew. Why and how did you create this film all by yourself?**

**David P. Crews:** Several factors led to me working solo: predilection, technology, economic necessity, a broad set of interests and talents, and a suitable project. I have worked professionally with many groups and have been a part of and even managed large television production crews, but when functioning as an artist, I have a strong predilection to do things entirely on my own. Much of film art is collaborative by *necessity*. I found ways to make this film myself so that it represents only my own artist's vision.

The technology to make quality imagery using only small mostly hand-held cameras has entirely changed what is possible. To accomplish cinema quality motion imagery only a few years ago, I had to use my bulky DSLR camera and an even more bulky and fiddly computerized slider rig. Today's gimbaled, motion-stabilized, surprisingly high quality for size, hand-held cameras are truly empowering and democratizing, and not really that expensive. For aerial shots, the newer drone AI technology makes it possible to fly it myself, hands-free, while also being the subject of the shots.

I could never afford to hire a crew to do this kind of long-term, open agenda filming, only when nature's opportunities allow, kind of shoot. It would not be the same film if I did. This film also did not require any on-site audio recording like an actor's voice, only my studio narration. So I did not need to worry about microphones or natural sound acquisition on location. Also, I could certainly never afford to hire an orchestra to play my music compositions, and I actually cannot even compose or score in the traditional manner for them. I'm only able to compose and record through working at it in the computer DAW using today's incredible virtual instruments – a technology that has vastly improved over the twenty or more years I've been engaged with it.

Rather than focusing deeply on just one or two things in life, I have always had a broad set of interests and talents. I'm not by any means an expert in all of them, but the set of talents needed for this project all clustered and centered on the things I do best: video, photography, music, narration, post-production, writing, and poetry.

So, why not step forward and make a film of my own, based on my own true experiences and my writings and philosophies, set in a rugged land that I love? A project I can actually do from start to finish on my own talents and within my own timelines? A project I can be flexible with as the situation changes on the ground (which it did many times)? And, a project I can actually afford to do at this stage of my life?

### **Q: What was your Director's intention?**

**David P. Crews:** This film is a poem. It is a poetic expression of my deep philosophies about the nature of time and of life itself, and my life in particular. It began with a reflection about my relationship to the amazing landscapes of Utah as I sat in a valley surrounded by thousands of stone goblin figures—a place I've returned to again and again for four decades and more. I started with that and then I realized I already had a rough outline of the yet unmade film based on an old website I had created some twenty years ago. It was called "A Circle in the Desert" and was centered on that very real experience of creating a medicine circle and asking the universe for a vision. It was the story of my vision quest!

This was all I needed to begin a formal script, pulling from more of my own written resources going back even longer in time. With the writing and the actual traveling I've done, this film became a kind of an analysis of and tribute to my literally life-long relationship with this grand and mysterious landscape. The shamanic aspects of the film also reflect my deep interests and adventurous pursuits of knowledge and spiritual experiences later in life that have taken me twice to the Amazon jungle and to other wondrous places.

My intention, then, was to sing this song. Relate this story. Speak these poems. Take others with me on this journey and, perhaps, inspire or teach or show an open doorway that may otherwise remain unseen. If nothing else, I hope to inspire people with that incredible and fragile landscape of the high desert with all its amazing formations and its senses of vast space and infinite time.

**Q: How did you create the symphonic score all by yourself?**

**David P. Crews:** This is through the technology now referred to generally as “virtual orchestra.” This is based on digital sampling of the instruments of the orchestra or of any instrumental or natural sound, tonal or not, that could be useful to create music or soundscapes of any sort. For the orchestra in my film, I used the BBC Symphony Orchestra in its professional, virtual form from Spitfire Audio in London. The members of that esteemed ensemble were digitally recorded, each instrument separately and also in groups. Every note of an example of every instrument was captured, and in various articulations and styles. These massive data files are then made available to a digital keyboard through a standard DAW (digital audio workstation) like the one I use, Apple’s Logic Pro. Here, the composer (me) can play the sounds, arranging them in layers to coordinate like a true live ensemble would. It’s kind of like programming a “player piano” but with vastly more control.

These are the real sounds of the actual instruments, so when carefully done, this does not sound like a synthesizer or “fake” strings. It can seem quite real and convincing. It is tricky, though, for I end up “playing an orchestra” by playing *every* note of *every* instrument and mixing it together so it sounds right. It’s an amazing thing and very fun to do, but also quite challenging! There is still no substitute for a real orchestra, but this tech has come a long way in a short time and will continue to improve. It made the scoring of my film possible.

**Q: How long were you shooting on location?**

**David P. Crews:** I made two trips specifically for cinematography. I went in September of 2021, and then back again in the Spring of 2022, for a total of seven weeks on-location. This landscape is vast and it was a lot of ground to cover in even that much time. I was shooting and hiking every day, all day for all of those weeks. I also drove over 7,000 miles during these two trips.

**Q: What cameras did you use?**

**David P. Crews:** I had five cameras with me for the trips. I had an excellent DSLR camera, a Fujifilm X-T4 with three lenses, a GoPro Hero5, a DJI Osmo Pocket gimbaled camera, and an iPhone 12-Pro, which became a primary camera for this film. The fifth camera was my Skydio 2 drone. It has a 4k main photographic camera and six other cameras (!), all of which are dedicated to creating a continuous 3D map of its surroundings for reliable obstacle avoidance!

**Q: What technical or other challenges did you have to overcome?**

**David P. Crews:** There were several. My truck battery failed when I was in a quite remote place and I had to have someone come rescue me. I had to deal with a lot of weather situations, primarily high winds that prevented me from flying my drone camera when I really wanted to do so. I also had not anticipated the second trip up to Utah, but during my first trip, the roads to Cathedral Valley in Capitol Reef National Park and the surrounding area were closed due to a complete washout and destruction by heavy rains, so I had to return in the Spring! All such things just go hand-in-hand with that landscape and environment. One prepares as best one can and then you have to be open and flexible to change things in order to stay safe and to accomplish your goals.

**Q: With the medicine circle, you seemed to take a Native American approach. Are you Native American yourself?**

**David P. Crews:** I do not consider myself a Native American in the bloodline sense although I do have some traces of Cherokee, Creek, Shawnee, and Delaware in my family history. It is not strong enough to claim it and I do not, but I do feel a connection to native tribal spirit and philosophies of many kinds and from many places and I've enjoyed honoring and learning from all of them.

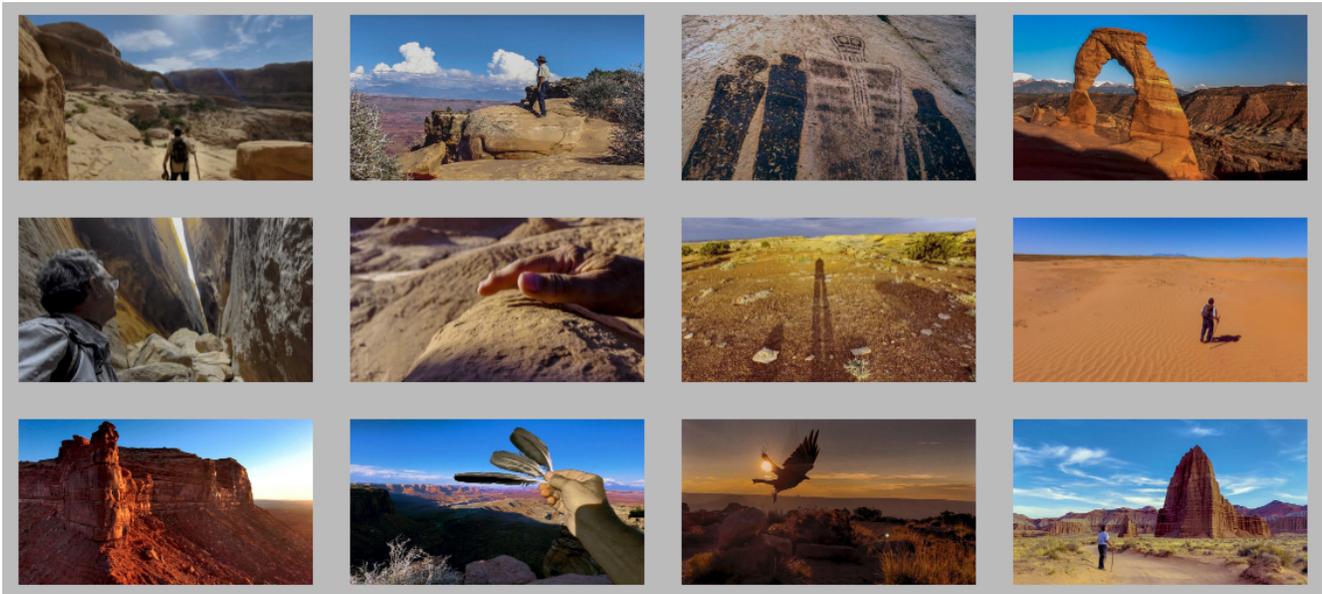
As for the Circle, though, that is a much more universal practice or theme. I am interested in and work with techniques we generally refer to as "shamanism" in the intellectual West. These techniques, ceremonies, and rituals are still in use by tribal and native peoples all over the world, not just in North America. The word itself is derived from the Sámi people of Sápmi or Lapland, stretching from Norway to Russia.

Shamanism is "for" and available to anyone, anywhere. Ceremonial shamanic circles are common in cultures around the world from England's Stonehenge to instances in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East and beyond. My particular version was one I created for myself, only loosely based on other examples. I believe this is the best way for an intellectual like me to approach this kind of raw vision quest, as I can "make it my own" and relate to it more directly and fully. It allows me to control my "set and setting," which is so critical to the success of a venture of this kind.

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**Production Stills from the Film:**

Go to the film website [here](#) to download a zip file with these images and many more:

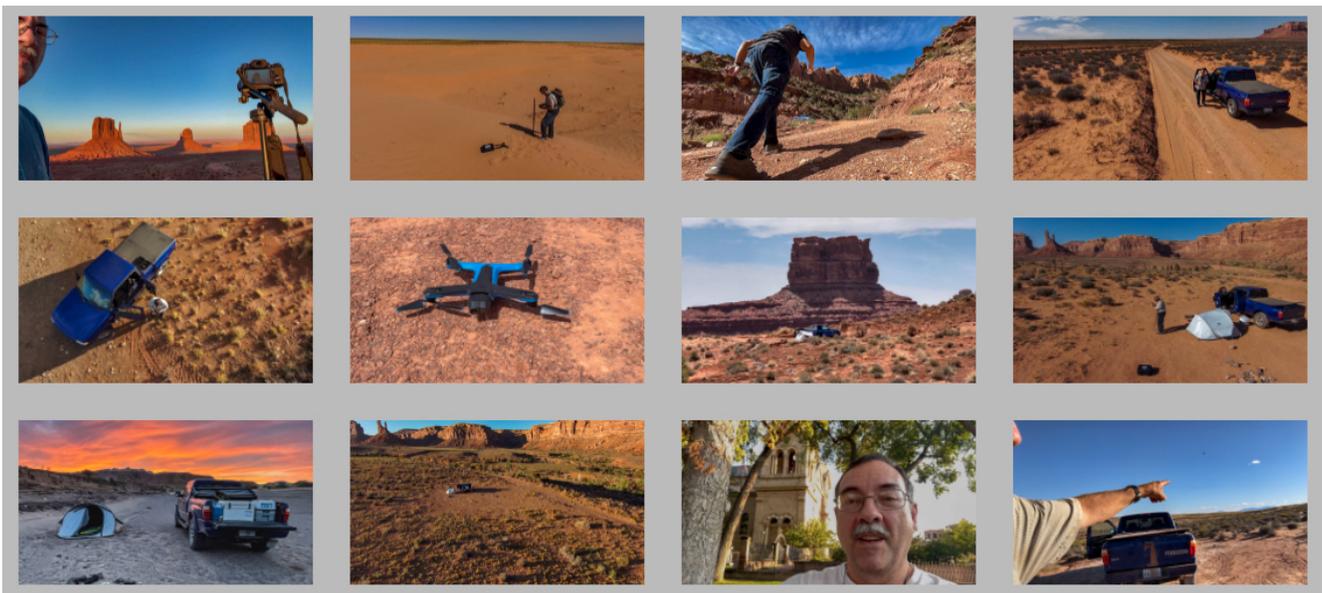
<http://acircleinthedesert.com/PRESSKITRESOURCES/•ACITD--PRODUCTION STILLS.zip>



**Behind-the-Scenes Stills:**

Go to the film website [here](http://acircleintheDesert.com) to download a zip file with these images and many more:

<http://acircleintheDesert.com/PRESSKITRESOURCES/ACITD--BEHIND THE SCENES STILLS.zip>



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**Credits:**

Essential credits from the Film:

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# A Circle in the Desert

Written, Photographed,  
and Directed by  
**David P. Crews**

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**Music**  
by **David P. Crews**

Created with the BBC Symphony Orchestra-Pro  
from Spitfire Audio, London  
Samples recorded at Maida Vale, AIR Lyndhurst, and Abbey Road One Studios, London

~  
Eric Whitacre Choir from Spitfire Audio

~  
Joshua Bell Stradivarius Violin from Embertone

~  
Steinway B Grand Piano from Pianoteq

Produced and Recorded at  
JaguarFeather Studios, Austin, Texas

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# A Circle in the Desert

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An Independent Film from  
JaguarFeather Studios  
Austin, Texas, USA  
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**ACircleInTheDesert.com**  
Music: JaguarFeather.com  
Photography: DavidPCrews.com

=====*[The End]*=====

## **Technical:**

Duration: 1 hour, 25 minutes  
Format: HD (1920x1080p)

Aspect Ratio: 16x9  
Shooting format: Digital  
Language: English

~~~~~End of Press Kit~~~~~