

THE PULITZER AT 100

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SYNOPSIS

For a century the Pulitzer Prizes have remained the gold standard of excellence for a nation. The Pulitzers focus attention on what is best in journalism and the arts.

The Pulitzer at 100 explores the importance of words and language in a free democracy. Behind the honors are extraordinary people. Their stories are riveting: power, immigration, race and identity are all central themes. The Pulitzer celebrates storytelling at its best, and this film reveals the courage and struggles to get at truth. Vietnam, Katrina, 9/11; newspapers are indeed the first draft of history.

When Joseph Pulitzer started the School of Journalism at Columbia University 100 years ago and awarded prizes to writers exhibiting the “highest moral and intellectual training,” no one dreamed of how important the prizes would become. If you win a Pulitzer, it will most likely become the first words on your obituary!

Highlights of the film include Nick Kristof, a columnist for *The New York Times*, who has lived on four continents, reported on six, and traveled to more than 150 countries to help us understand deeply our fragile world. His reporting on Tiananmen Square won a Pulitzer. Carl Bernstein remembers the night of threats when it was revealed he was about to break the story that would bring down a Presidency. Bernstein’s reporting along with Bob Woodward showed how even two young reporters in their twenties could change the course of a nation.

Nick Ut never dreamed his photo of a nine-year-old girl running down Highway 1 in Vietnam as her body burned from Napalm would change the course of the Vietnam War. Remarkably, the little girl, now in her fifties tells her story in the film.

A theme of the film is how this country confronts racism: introduced by the work of Toni Morrison in her masterpiece *Beloved*, continued by discussion of Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, elaborated further by musician Wynton Marsalis as he introduces his prize winning work “Blood on the Fields” about a slave family as they prepare to travel from the South to the North and finally a dissection of the events of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans as seen in the reporting of *The Times-Picayune*.

Pulitzer-winning work is read by an impressive list of Hollywood A-listers: Martin Scorsese, Natalie Portman, Helen Mirren, Liev Schieber, Jonathan Lithgow and Yara Shahidi.

The many first person stories, as told by the artists and journalist themselves, with out narration are riveting. We discover the intense stories behind some of the century’s best artistic creations.

Participants

(In order of appearance)

Journalists:

David Remnick – Editor, *The New Yorker*

Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Non-Fiction, 1994

Thomas L. Friedman – Columnist, *The New York Times*

Pulitzer Prize Winner, 1983, 1988, and 2002

Robin Givhan – Fashion Critic, *The Washington Post*

Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Criticism, 2006

Mary McNamara – Television Critic, *Los Angeles Times*

Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Criticism, 2015

Nicholas Kristof – Columnist, *The New York Times*

Pulitzer Prize Winner, 1990 and 2006

Carol D. Leonnig – Reporter, *The Washington Post*

Pulitzer Prize Winner, 2014, 2015

Martin Baron – Executive Editor, *The Washington Post*

Sheri Fink – Correspondent, *The New York Times*

Pulitzer Prize Winner, 2010 and 2015

Carl Bernstein – Journalist

Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Public Service, 1973

Jim Amoss – Editor, *The Times-Picayune*

Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Public Service, 2006

Authors:

Robert A. Caro – *Power Broker and Master of the Senate*

Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Biography, 1975 and 2003

Michael Cunningham – *The Hours*

Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, 1999

Michael Chabon – *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*

Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, 2001

Paula Vogel – *How I Learned to Drive*

Winner, Pulitzer prize for Drama, 1998

Ayad Akhtar – *Disgraced*

Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Drama, 2013

Junot Diaz – *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, 2008

Jeffrey Eugenides – *Middlesex*
Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, 2003

Tracy K. Smith – *Life on Mars*
Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 2012

Toni Morrison – *Beloved*
Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, 1988

Tony Kushner – *Angels in America*
Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Drama, 1993

Yusef Komunyakaa – *Neon Vernacular*
Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1994

Musicians:

Wynton Marsalis – Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Music, 1997

David Crosby – Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young

John Adams – Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Music, 2003

Photographers:

John Filo – Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Photography, 1971

Nick Ut – Winner, Pulitzer Prize for Photography, 1973

Actors:

John Lithgow

Helen Mirren

Martin Scorsese

Yara Shahidi

Natalie Portman

Liev Schreiber

Experts:

Cyrus Patell – Professor, New York University

Theodore L. Glasser – Professor, Stanford University

Roy Harris – Author, *Pulitzer's Gold*

James McGrath Morris – Author, *Pulitzer: A Life in Politics, Print, and Power*

Maureen Corrigan – Book Critic, NPR and Pulitzer Juror, 2012

James English – Author, *The Economy of Prestige*.

Simon + Film

Biography

The Oscar and Emmy-winning Director Kirk Simon has garnered five Oscar nominations, one Academy Award winner, eight Emmy nominations and two Emmy Award winners and the Dupont-Columbia Award for Independent Programming. He has received filmmaking grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, the Ford Foundation, and the American Film Institute. His documentaries have been broadcast nationally on PBS, HBO, MTV and screened at festivals around the world including the New York Film Festival, Sundance, London, Berlin, Montreal and St. Petersburg. He is an active voting member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He has served as a consultant to the National Endowment for the Humanities Media Program, on the Documentary Screening Committee for the Academy Awards and as a judge for the Emmy Awards and the Dupont-Columbia Broadcast Journalism Award.

Buddy Squires is an Oscar-nominated filmmaker and Emmy-winning director of photography. His cinematography credits include six Oscar-nominated films, one Academy Award winner, twenty-two Emmy-nominated productions and ten Emmy Award winners. He has ten personal Emmy nominations and one Emmy Award. In 2007 Squires was honored with the International Documentary Association's Outstanding Documentary Cinematography Award (career achievement). His work is regularly featured at the Sundance, Telluride and Tribeca Film Festivals. Buddy Squires is best known for his work on numerous documentary features and television specials including: *The National Parks*, *The War*, *Masterclass*, *Into the Deep*, *Soundtrack for a Revolution*, *Stonewall Uprising*, *Jazz*, *The Civil War*, *New York*, *Nanking*, *Mark Twain*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Smashed*, *Baseball*, *Lewis and Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*, *The Donner Party*, *Reporting America at War*, *Ansel Adams*, *Ram Dass: Fierce Grace*, *One Survivor Remembers*, *Amato*, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, *Soldiers of Peace: A Children's Crusade*, *Heart of a Child*, *Compassion in Exile: The 14th Dalai Lama*, *Chimps: So Like Us*, *The West*, *Scottsboro: An American Tragedy and Out of the Past*. His producing credits include: *Statue of Liberty* (Oscar nomination with Ken Burns).

Emily Williams is a film editor whose award winning work has been shown extensively on HBO, PBS, MTV and screened at film festivals and museums around the world. Ms. Williams was editor for each of the three Emmy-nominated seasons of HBO's "MasterClass" for the Academy Award winning Simon & Goodman Picture

Company, including the Emmy Award winning episode, "Alan Alda: The Actor Within." Ms. Williams also worked with Emmy Award winning director Ric Burns on "American Ballet Theatre: A History" for American Masters on PBS, and has also worked with the five-time Emmy-winning Peter Kunhardt, editing "Freedom: A History of US" for PBS, as well as "The Kennedy Tapes" for Bravo and "Till the River Runs Clear" for PBS. She was the series editor for the groundbreaking eight-part MTV "Coming Out Stories" which won an Insight Award and received an IDA nomination for Limited Documentary Series, as well as editor for "True Life" and "Wait Til Next Year" on MTV, "Cyndi Lauper: Still So Unusual" for OWN, and artist Lorna Simpson's "31," a multi-media installation that was exhibited at the Whitney Museum.

Marblemen Productions is a newly launched independent production company specializing in high-end documentaries and feature films. The principals are Nikkos Frangos and George T. Lemos.

The Pulitzer at 100 is a production of Simon + Film and Marblemen Productions.

End Credits

Produced and Directed by

KIRK SIMON

Co-Producer

RON SIMON

Executive Producers

NIKKOS FRANGOS

GEORGE T. LEMOS

Editor

EMILY WILLIAMS

Director of Photography

BUDDY SQUIRES, ASC

STEPHEN KAZMIERSKI

Original Music

WENDY BLACKSTONE

Line Producers

CAROL WILSON BALDWIN

CATHERINE MULRY LUDLOW

Additional Photography

STEPHEN MCCARTHY

BOB RICHMAN

GARY GRIFFIN

GREG ANDRACKE

KIRK SIMON

MICHAEL BEUTTNER

Video Post Production

JON FORDHAM

Audio Mix

DAVID WILSON

Sound

DAVID HOCS

JAMES WEIDNER

Assistant Camera/DIT

M'WASI BERKLEY

Researchers

SAMMY FELDBLUM
DA'SHAWN MOSLEY

Assistant Editor

MICHAEL BEUTTLER

Archival Materials

THE NEW YORK TIMES
ASSOCIATED PRESS
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ABC
GETTY IMAGES
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
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NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
THE TIMES-PICAYUNE
HOME BOX OFFICE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
THE PULITZER COLLECTION
THE IMAGE WORKS
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
JOHN SINGER SARGENT PORTRAIT OF JOSEPH PULITZER,
COURTESY OF THE PULITZER COLLECTION

Music

“Ohio”

Written by Neil Young
Performed by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young
Warner/Chappell Music

“Time Has Come Today”

Written by Willie and Joe Chambers
Performed by The Ramones
Warner/Chappell Music

“On the Transmigration of Souls”

Written by John Adams

Performed by The New York Philharmonic
Nonesuch

“Blood on the Fields”
Written by Wynton Marsalis
Performed by Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra
Commissioned by Jazz at Lincoln Center

Special Thanks

LARRY GIANAKOS
EMMANUEL VLAHOS
PANNI XILAS
MARY FIANCE
STAN TINER
ANITA LEE
JOHN FITZHUGH
ADAM ZYGLIS
MIKE PRIDE
DAVID STONE
MARCIA ELY
RODDY MACPHERSON
CAROL ROSEGG
JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER’S FREDERICK P. ROSE HALL
SIKELIA PRODUCTIONS
NATIONAL SEPTEMBER 11 MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM
THE GENERAL SOCIETY OF MECHANICS
THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP
VASSAR COLLEGE AND POWERHOUSE THEATER PROGRAM
CHERRY LANE ALTERNATIVE
MORGANS HOTEL GROUP
DRAYTON HALL
BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH
SHREVE MEMORIAL LIBRARY
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92nd St. Y, NEW YORK, TONI MORRISON LIVE RECORDING
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