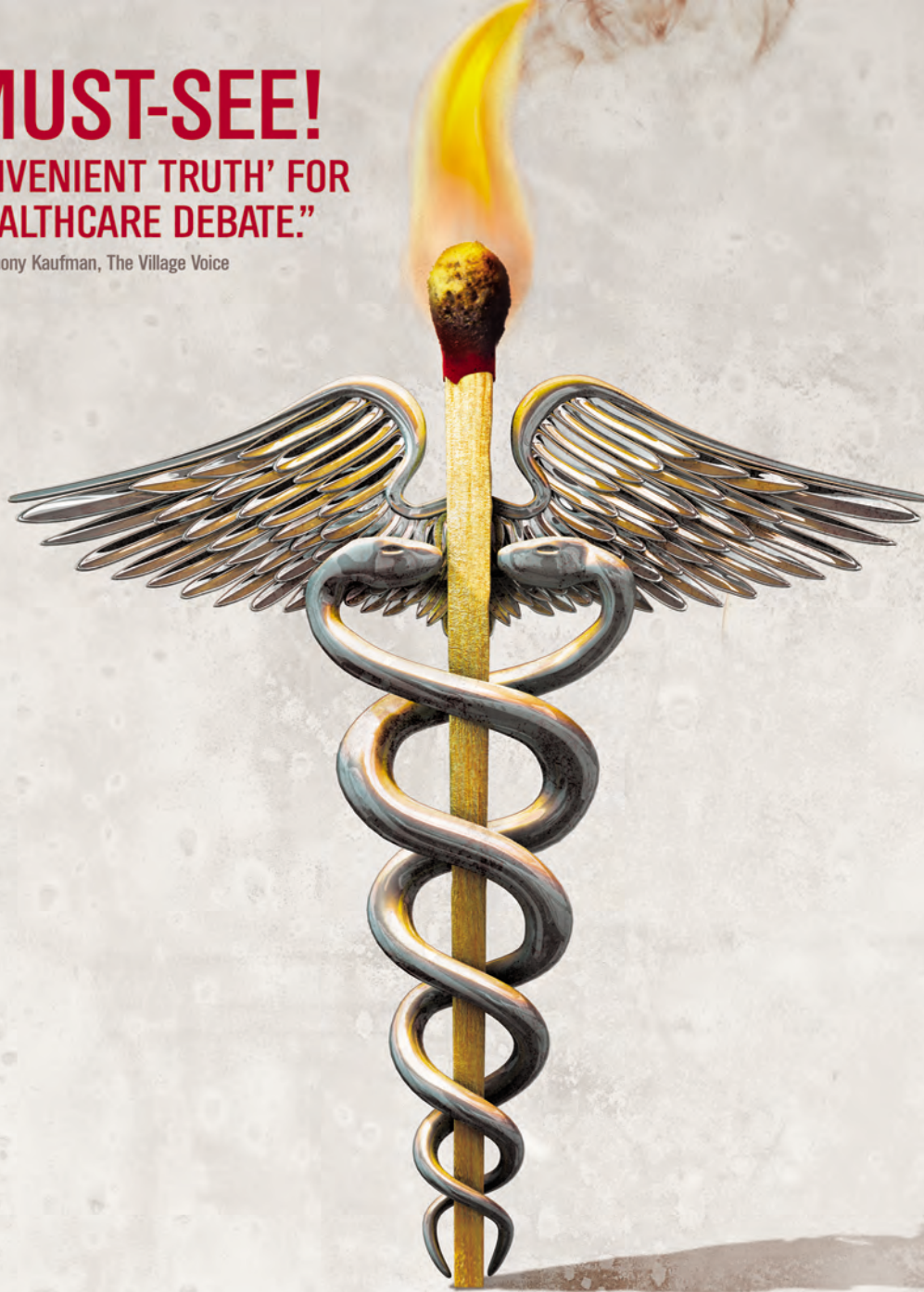


**“A MUST-SEE!  
‘AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH’ FOR  
THE HEALTHCARE DEBATE.”**

—Anthony Kaufman, The Village Voice



A FILM BY MATTHEW HEINEMAN & SUSAN FROEMKE

# ESCAPE FIRE

THE FIGHT TO RESCUE AMERICAN HEALTHCARE



ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS PRESENTS AN AISLE C PRODUCTIONS & OUR TIME PROJECTS PRODUCTION “ESCAPE FIRE” DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY WOLFGANG HELD  
EDITOR BRADLEY J. ROSS ORIGINAL SCORE CHAD KELLY ADDITIONAL MUSIC MOBY CO-PRODUCERS ELYSSA HESS BRADLEY J. ROSS ADAM WHITE  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER DOUG SCOTT PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY MATTHEW HEINEMAN & SUSAN FROEMKE

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# ESCAPE FIRE

The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare

DIRECTED & PRODUCED BY MATTHEW HEINEMAN & SUSAN FROEMKE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY DOUG SCOTT

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY WOLFGANG HELD

EDITED BY BRADLEY J. ROSS

ORIGINAL SCORE BY CHAD KELLY

ADDITIONAL MUSIC BY MOBY

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IN THEATERS, ON ITUNES, AND AVAILABLE VIA VIDEO-ON-DEMAND ON OCTOBER 5 2012

99 minutes, PG-13 (Some Thematic Material)

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## ESCAPE FIRE

***ESCAPE FIRE: The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare*** tackles one of the most pressing issues of our time: how can we save our badly broken healthcare system?

American healthcare costs are rising so rapidly that they could reach \$4.2 trillion annually, roughly 20% of our gross domestic product, within ten years. We spend \$300 billion a year on pharmaceutical drugs – almost as much as the rest of the world combined. We pay more, yet our health outcomes are worse. About 65% of Americans are overweight and almost 75% of healthcare spending goes to preventable diseases that are the major causes of disability and death in our society.

It's not surprising that healthcare is at the top of many Americans' concerns and at the center of an intense political firestorm in our nation's Capitol. But the current battle over cost and access does not ultimately address the root of the problem: we have a disease-care system, not a healthcare system. The film examines the powerful forces maintaining the status quo, a medical industry designed for quick fixes rather than prevention, for profit-driven care rather than patient-driven care.

*ESCAPE FIRE* also presents attainable solutions. After decades of resistance, a movement to bring innovative high-touch, low-cost methods of prevention and healing into our high-tech, costly system is finally gaining ground. Filmmakers Matthew Heineman and Susan Froemke interweave dramatic personal arcs of patients and physicians with the stories of leaders battling to transform healthcare at the highest levels of medicine, industry, government, and even the U.S. military. *ESCAPE FIRE* is about finding a way out of our current crisis. It's about saving the health of a nation.

**ABOUT THE FILM**



## WHAT IS AN ESCAPE FIRE?

**es-cape fire:** noun, \is-'kɑp\fi'ʊər\

**1. A swath of grassland or forest intentionally ignited in order to provide shelter from an oncoming blaze. 2. An improvised, effective solution to a crisis that cannot be solved using traditional approaches.**

In the research phase for *ESCAPE FIRE*, directors Matthew Heineman and Susan Froemke came across an influential speech delivered by Dr. Don Berwick years before he took office as the head of Medicare and Medicaid. The speech was published as a healthcare manifesto called *Escape Fire: Lessons for the Future of Healthcare*.

Dr. Berwick draws a parallel between the broken healthcare system and a forest fire that ignited in Mann Gulch, Montana in 1949. Just as the healthcare system lies perilously on the brink of combustion, the forest fire which seemed harmless at first was waiting to explode. A team of fifteen smokejumpers parachuted in to contain the fire, but soon they were running for their lives, racing to the top of a steep ridge. Their foreman, Wag Dodge, recognized that they would not make it.

With the fire barely two hundred yards behind him, he did a strange and marvelous thing. He invented a solution. His crew must have thought he had gone crazy as he took some matches out of his pocket, bent down, and set fire to the grass directly in front of him. The fire spread quickly uphill, and he stepped into the middle of the newly burnt area, calling for his crew to join him.

But nobody followed Wag Dodge. They ignored him, clinging to what they had been taught, and they ran right by the answer. The fire raged past Wag Dodge and overtook the crew, killing thirteen men and burning 3,200 acres. Dodge survived, nearly unharmed.

Dodge had invented what is now called an “escape fire,” and soon after it became standard practice. As Berwick says in the film, “We’re in Mann Gulch. Healthcare, it’s in really bad trouble. The answer is among us. Can we please stop and think and make sense of the situation and get our way out of it?”

**ABOUT THE FILM**



# Q&A WITH DIRECTORS MATTHEW HEINEMAN AND SUSAN FROEMKE

## **Q: What was the genesis of the film?**

After an initial conversation with Donna Karan and Doug Scott, our Executive Producer, on the subject of our broken healthcare system, we spent six months researching the topic to try to figure out whether it was possible to take on such a huge topic. In our research we kept hearing from a wide range of sources that we had a disease-care system, not a healthcare system, a system designed to reward quantity over quality, high-tech over high-touch. How did this perverse system come to be? How could we find our way out of this mess? These questions were at the root of why we made the film and we began finding characters/storylines that helped illustrate these ideas. As we started to film on the frontlines of healthcare, we grew more and more excited that there was an important film to be made.

## **Q: Why are you personally interested in making a film about healthcare?**

Healthcare is an issue that affects all of us, but it's so misunderstood. Everyone knows what it's like to get sick and put your trust in your healthcare provider's hands. But most of us don't think about our health unless we're in the hospital or visiting the doctor. We wanted to show that we can empower ourselves to be healthier, as individuals and as a country, even before we get sick. We all have a stake in the health of our nation because we all pay for it. We felt like this was a subject that would hit home for every American, so we made it our goal to reach as wide an audience as possible.

## **Q: What was your single biggest challenge in developing or producing this project?**

Besides the difficulties in gaining the intimate access we needed to tell this story, the biggest challenge we faced was the topic itself: healthcare. It's a hot button issue. But when you scratch beneath the surface, it gets complicated pretty quickly. It's also a polarizing topic – there's a reason politicians dating back to Teddy Roosevelt haven't been able to successfully reform our system.

So, from day one, we have acknowledged these challenges and tried to find storylines and characters that help tell the story in an exciting and interesting way.

**ABOUT THE FILM**



**Q: Where does the title come from?**

For over a year, we struggled to find a title for the film. How could we synthesize this complex problem and potential solutions under one label? We were stumped. Then we came across Dr. Berwick's healthcare manifesto, *Escape Fire: Lessons for the Future of Healthcare*.

Dr. Berwick applies the “escape fire” analogy to healthcare, exploring how our system is “burning,” while there are solutions right in front of us. Upon reading the manifesto for the first time, we realized how perfectly it fit our subject matter. We knew we had our title and soon after we contacted Dr. Berwick about taking part in our film.

**Q: There's been so much coverage of the healthcare debate thus far. What did you feel you could add to the conversation through the medium of documentary film?**

Much of the traditional media attention about healthcare is focused on the partisan politics in our nation's Capitol—from the contentious passage of the Affordable Care Act to the ongoing polarized debate about its impact. There are countless articles, news stories, blog posts, and tweets about this topic. And everybody in America, whether they like it or not, has been affected by our healthcare system in some way.

Yet, our country is still unclear about what is really wrong with healthcare and how to move forward.

*ESCAPE FIRE* addresses what might be done to create a sustainable system for the future. It is our goal to transcend the misinformation, the angry partisan debates and create a clear and comprehensive look at healthcare in America.

**Q: How would you describe the style of your film?**

We knew we had to boil a very complex topic into something accessible, but we also knew that we wanted to put a human face on it as well. We've interwoven interviews, animation, and archival footage with the personal stories in order to show the healthcare system from all angles. It's a hybrid style, but at the film's heart is the tradition of cinéma vérité – the art of capturing life as it unfolds before the camera. The personal stories of patients and physicians are all filmed in this vein, taking inspiration from the drama of human experience, allowing our characters to be themselves.



**Q: What surprised you during the process of making the film?**

In finding subjects for the film, we tried to identify a disparate cast of experts who would look at the healthcare issue through their own unique lenses. So it surprised us, once we started asking our questions, that they all seemed to agree with each other. We've screened the film for all these experts, and they're surprised that they agree with each other, too, no matter which side of the political aisle they're on or what their job title is. It's promising that everyone we talked to sees many of the same flaws in the system and believes that there are attainable solutions. But of course it's also frustrating that with so many important leaders on the same side of the fence, we're still struggling to reform the system.

**Q: What would you like audiences to come away with after seeing your film?**

Our goal with *ESCAPE FIRE* is to provoke a paradigm shift in how our country views health and healing. We hope audiences will come away with a clearer understanding of how and why our system is broken, the barriers to change, and potential solutions, or “escape fires,” that could help fix our system. We hope people – upset by the perverse nature of American medicine – will be empowered to help push for societal change and recognize the “escape fires” around us. We also hope people will walk away inspired to take better control of their personal health, realizing that in many cases they have the power to heal.



## KEY STATISTICS

Roughly 75% of healthcare spending goes to preventable diseases.

- *Centers for Disease Control*

American healthcare costs are rising so rapidly that they could reach \$4.2 trillion annually, roughly 20% of our gross domestic product, within ten years.

- *Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services*

The average per capita cost of healthcare in the developed world is \$3,000. In the U.S., it's around \$8,000.

- *Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development*

30% of healthcare costs (roughly \$750 billion annually) are wasted and do not improve health.

- *Institute of Medicine*

Approximately 187,000 people die each year from medical error and hospital infection. Based on these numbers it would be the 3rd leading cause of death.

- *Health Affairs/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

20% of patients account for 80% of costs.

- *Department of Health and Human Services*

If trends continue through 2020, up to 1/5 of healthcare spending, or up to \$1 trillion annually would be devoted to treating the consequences of obesity.

- *RAND*

**ABOUT THE FILM**



## QUOTES FROM THE FILM

The American healthcare system, it's generating rivers of money that are flowing into very few pockets, and those are the pockets of the manufacturers of medical devices, the big insurers, the pharmaceutical companies. And the owners of those pockets do not want anything to fundamentally change.

- *Dr. Andrew Weil*

People often think it has to be a new drug or a new laser or something really high tech and expensive to be powerful, and they have a hard time believing that these simple choices that we make in our lives each day can make such a powerful difference.

- *Dr. Dean Ornish*

I'm a redneck, south Louisiana boy. Just an old hillbilly, you know. I don't believe in that stuff, you know? Eastern medicine. Anybody else would laugh, you know? They'd be like, what's that boy? Hold my beer while I shoot this gator, you know? But I decided to give it a shot.

-*Sgt. Robert Yates*

Safeway employees will be less of a burden on Medicare of the future because we have adapted to this culture of health and fitness. You allow and encourage your employees to become healthier, they become more productive, your company becomes more competitive. I mean, I can't think of a single negative in doing this. Making money and doing good in the world are not mutually exclusive.

- *Steve Burd*

What I'm arguing for is not to make things tough on industry, it's to make things safe for patients, putting patients first. We have a motto in medicine, Primum Non Nocere. In Latin it means above all do no harm.

- *Dr. Steven Nissen*

If I think about what healthcare could be like, it would have a lot more care in it. It would be a very different system that probably would be less high tech. And more high touch. We have a lot more power over how healthy we are than we are willing to take credit for or willing to take responsibility for. And that's part of what a really great healthcare system would do. It would empower patients.

- *Shannon Brownlee*









## ESCAPE FIRE



### **DR. DON BERWICK**

#### **Head of Medicare and Medicaid, 2010 – 2011**

Prior to his appointment at Medicare and Medicaid, Dr. Berwick was President of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and practiced as a pediatrician. As a professor at Harvard's Schools of Medicine and Public Health, Berwick has published over 129 articles in professional journals and is co-author of several books on improving healthcare quality while lowering costs. Upon leaving his post as head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the New York Times wrote that Dr. Berwick "was the most qualified person in the country to run Medicare at this critical juncture, and the fact that he is no longer in the job is the country's loss."



### **SHANNON BROWNLEE**

#### **Medical Journalist**

Award-winning medical journalist and author of *Overtreated: Why Too Much Medicine is Making Us Sicker and Poorer*, Shannon Brownlee is also the director of the New America Health Policy Program in Washington D.C.. Her writing has appeared in the New York Times Magazine, The Washington Post, Slate, Time and several other national publications.



### **STEVE BURD**

#### **President and CEO of Safeway, Inc.**

A business leader in health promotion, Steve Burd is the President and CEO of Safeway, the national grocery chain. In 2005, he implemented the Safeway Healthy Measures Program to incentivize his workers to lose weight, quit smoking, and adopt other healthy behaviors. While most companies' healthcare costs rose by 40% between 2005 and 2009, Burd says that Safeway's healthcare costs remained flat for the 30,000 employees enrolled in the program.





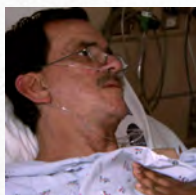
**GENERAL DAVID FRIDOVICH**  
**Deputy Commander of the US Special Forces**

Recently retired Deputy Commander of US Special Forces, General David Fridovich, was also a Green Beret in the US Army and a three-star lieutenant general. After suffering a back injury, General Fridovich was prescribed pharmaceutical drugs to manage his pain. After recognizing his growing dependence on the drugs, he decided to go public with his story in an effort to help other soldiers suffering from chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder.



**DR. WAYNE JONAS**  
**President and CEO of the Samueli Institute**

Former director of the Medical Research Fellowship at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Dr. Wayne Jonas is now the President and CEO of the non-profit Samueli Institute. There he oversees the Samueli Institute's research efforts, including a project conducted in partnership with the US Military, to study the effectiveness of acupuncture on Medevac flights back to the US.



**ROY LITTON**  
**Short-order Cook**

As a cook in Orange, VA, Roy makes too much money to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to buy insurance. He suffers from chronic heart pain and resorts to using the Emergency Room as his primary care provider. He describes his diet of grits, sausage, and bacon as “regular food” and says that trying to follow a “heart healthy” diet would be prohibitively expensive.



**DR. ERIN MARTIN**  
**Primary Care Physician**

Erin Martin is a primary care physician in Oregon and Washington, in addition to being a fellow in Dr. Andrew Weil's Integrative Medicine program. Dr. Martin worked at La Clinica, a low-income primary care clinic in Oregon, before leaving to find a practice that would allow her to spend more time with patients and introduce them to the preventive methods of healing she learned at the Fellowship.





**DR. STEVEN NISSEN**

**Chairman of Cardiovascular Medicine at the Cleveland Clinic**

Dr. Nissen is one of the leading cardiologists in the country and an outspoken critic of the pharmaceutical industry. His research into Vioxx and Avandia led to severe FDA restrictions and reductions in usage for both drugs. In 2007, he was named one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World by Time magazine.



**YVONNE OSBORN**

**Chronic Heart Disease Patient**

After receiving an extraordinary amount of treatment for her chronic heart disease – open-heart surgery and stent after stent – Yvonne is literally and figuratively scarred by her care. Fed up and frustrated, she goes to the Cleveland Clinic to seek a more coordinated approach. The procedures have taken more than just an emotional toll. According to her cardiologist, Yvonne's treatment has cost an estimated \$1.5 million.



**DR. DEAN ORNISH**

**Founder and President of the Preventive Medicine Research Institute**

For over thirty years, Dr. Ornish has directed clinical research demonstrating – for the first time – that comprehensive lifestyle changes may begin to reverse even severe coronary heart disease without drugs or surgery. His recent studies focus on the impact lifestyle changes can have on prostate cancer. He is the founder and president of the non-profit Preventive Medicine Research Institute and a Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. LIFE magazine called him "one of the fifty most influential members of his generation."



**WENDELL POTTER**

**Former Director of Communications, CIGNA**

As a highly compensated health insurance executive at CIGNA, Potter saw how his company prioritized profits over patients. He was part of the effort to block a Patient's Bill of Rights during the Clinton administration. After a crisis of conscience, Potter left his position as Director of Communications and quit the industry to speak out against its practices. He is currently a fellow at the Center for Media and Democracy.





**DR. ANDREW WEIL**

**Founder of the University of Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine**

A healthcare pioneer and popular author, Dr. Weil coined the term “integrative medicine” and has been called America's most famous doctor by the New York Times Magazine. Dr. Weil is currently a professor of medicine and public health, and the founder of the University of Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine. Through its innovative Fellowship program, the Center is now training doctors and health professionals from around the world. Dr. Weil hopes to get medical schools to do more to educate doctors in prevention, nutrition and healthy lifestyles.



**SGT. ROBERT YATES**

**Infantry, US Army**

Sergeant Yates is a soldier rehabilitating from severe combat injuries. Upon returning from Afghanistan, Yates is wheelchair-bound and heavily reliant on pharmaceutical drugs – 32 of them in total. At Walter Reed Army Medical Center, he attempts to wean himself off the drugs with the help of an innovative health program.





## ESCAPE FIRE



### **MATTHEW HEINEMAN**

#### **DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER**

Heineman directed and produced *Our Time* – a feature documentary about what it's like to be young in today's America, which premiered on the Documentary Channel in 2011 and simultaneously on numerous digital platforms. He has directed a number of short films and commercials, and for two years he collaborated with Susan Froemke and a team at HBO on the groundbreaking, Emmy-nominated HBO series, *The Alzheimer's Project*, which aired in May 2009.



### **SUSAN FROEMKE**

#### **DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER**

Froemke is a four-time Emmy Award winner with more than 30 documentary films to her credit, from the classic *Grey Gardens* (1976) to *Lalee's Kin* (2001), an HBO film on poverty that earned her an Academy Award nomination. *The Audition*, a film commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera, played in theaters nationwide in April 2009 and premiered on PBS in early 2010. Froemke was the principal filmmaker at the legendary Maysles Films in New York for over two decades. Well-known as a leader in documentary film, she has made 7 films for HBO and 13 films for PBS. Four films have been theatrically distributed and 11 have had worldwide TV distribution.





**DOUG SCOTT**  
**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Scott is the founder of Aisle C Productions, an independent production company focused on documentary films and unscripted television. Over the course of his career, he has developed and produced high visibility integrated entertainment programs including Diddy Runs the City for Sean Combs, the Lohas Conference, and Blender Sessions concert series in Park City, Utah. In 2001, Doug was Executive Vice President of Marketing and a Creative Director at Hypnotic where he developed and produced the Chrysler Million Dollar Film Festival in partnership with Universal Pictures, as well as Terry Tate, Office Linebacker. Doug is the honorary U.S. Chairman of the Connected TV Marketing Association, International Director of the Branded Content Marketing Association, and a member of the Producers Guild of America and International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.



**WOLFGANG HELD**  
**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

Emmy Award-winning director of photography Wolfgang Held has assembled an extensive filmography in both narrative and documentary genres. He has photographed feature films for directors Larry Charles, Gary Winick, Rob Morrow and Mitchell Lichtenstein. Held's award-winning documentaries include Edit Belzberg's Oscar-nominated *Children Underground* (2001), Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky's *Metallica: Some Kind of Monster* (2004), Marilyn Agrelo's *Mad Hot Ballroom* (2005), Nanette Burstein's *American Teen* (2008), Deborah Dickson's PBS series *Carrier* (2008), Marshall Curry's *Racing Dreams* (2009), and Brett Morgan's NBC documentary *Truth in Motion* (2010).



**BRADLEY J. ROSS**  
**EDITOR**

Ross is an award-winning editor specializing in broadcast documentary work, commercials, network promos and television series. Ross has cut multiple episodes of the Emmy Award winning series, "True Life" on MTV. He also worked on MTV's "I Won't Love You to Death: The Story of Mario and His Mom," winner of a 2008 PRISM award. Bradley recently won a 2009 New York Festivals TV Programming and Promotion Award for the "Freedom Writers" theatrical trailer on Showtime.





**CHAD KELLY**  
**COMPOSER**

Kelly is a New York-based composer who has written music for numerous award-winning and critically acclaimed films and documentaries, including Starz' *The Big Bad Swim*, ESPN Films' *The Zen of Bobby V*, and HBO Documentary Films' *Andrew Jenks*, *Room 335* and *The Alzheimer's Project*. Kelly has also composed music for a number of commercials, television programs, interactive media projects and video games.



**MOBY**  
**ADDITIONAL MUSIC**

Moby began as a DJ while attending college. He released his first single, "Go," in 1991 (listed as one of *Rolling Stone's* best records of all time), and has been making albums ever since. His own records have sold over twenty million copies worldwide. Moby has also had his music used in numerous films, including *Heat*, *Any Given Sunday*, *The Beach*, and most recently the 2011 Oscar-Nominated documentary *Waste Land*.

---

## CREDITS

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DOUG SCOTT

Director of Photography  
WOLFGANG HELD

Editor  
BRADLEY J. ROSS

Co-Producers  
ELYSSA HESS  
BRADLEY J. ROSS  
ADAM WHITE

Original Score  
CHAD KELLY



ADDITIONAL MUSIC

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Contributing Editor and Cinematographer

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The Filmmakers Want To Give A Special Thanks To The Inspiration Of

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Producer: ADAM WHITE  
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Jib Operator: JIMMY DUNN  
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Grip: MARK BASSETT  
Wardrobe: AERIELLE LEVY  
PAs: CALE ELLIOT, BEN GRINNELL, ZACH HEINEMAN  
Water Truck: MICKEY MEYER  
Firemen/Stuntmen: GABRIEL MICHAEL, CHRIS  
BLACK, JOHN GOODWIN, BILL REED  
Fire Safety: ERIC WATSON  
Ranch Owner: THOM REINSTEIN

THE FILMMAKERS



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international documentary association



A Film By Matthew Heineman & Susan Froemke

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