

BY SIDNEY LUMET

A documentary by Nancy Buirski



A **RatPac Documentary Films** presentation

An **Augusta Films production** | co-produced by **THIRTEEN PRODUCTIONS LLC's**
"American Masters" for **WNET** | in association with **Anker Productions, Inc.**

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An Augusta Films production, co-produced by THIRTEEN PRODUCTIONS LLC's "American Masters" for WNET in association with Anker Productions, Inc.

Produced by Nancy Buirski and Christopher Donnelly

Special Advisor: Martin Scorsese

Executive Producers: Brett Ratner, James Packer, Michael Kantor

Producers: Scott Berrie, Robyn Yigit Smith, Joshua Green, Thane Rosenbaum

In association with RatPac Documentary Films and Matador

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Running Time: 103 Minutes

TAGLINE

In a never-before-seen interview made a few years before his death, Sidney Lumet guides us through his life and his work - the powerfully dramatic and wildly entertaining movies that make up the canon of one of the most socially conscious directors in the history of cinema. With candor, humor and grace, he reveals what matters to him as an artist and as a human being.

SYNOPSIS - BY SIDNEY LUMET

By SIDNEY LUMET, the documentary film, is a portrait of the work and life of one of the most accomplished and influential directors in the history of cinema. Peabody and Emmy Award- winning filmmaker Nancy Buirski (*Afternoon of a Faun*, *The Loving Story*) has Lumet to guide us through his world; the documentary film features clips from Lumet's films - he made 44 films in 50 years - including *Serpico*, *Dog Day Afternoon*, *12 Angry Men* and *Network*. Though spiritual and ethical lessons are at the core of his work, they are not didactic. His films are both powerfully dramatic and wildly entertaining for Mr. Lumet was first and foremost a storyteller. In a rare never-before-seen interview, we are privileged to have Sidney Lumet tell his own story just a few years before his death. With candor, humor and grace, he reveals what matters to him as an artist and as a human being. His strongly moral tales captured the dilemmas and concerns of a society struggling with essentials - how does one behave to others and to oneself?

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Has there ever been a more honest filmmaker than Sidney Lumet? Given that imagination is intrinsic to the making of movies, honesty is not a term one first associates with this art and craft. It is also a fiercely private enterprise, in spite of the collaborative work ethic. Lumet was different - he loved the collaborative process, and he cherished candor. When one speaks of morality in movies, certainly one thinks of Lumet; so many of his films deal with corruption and fairness, individuals going up against an unjust system. Inherent in this sense of morality is the way we dissemble, the way we lie to each other and to ourselves. As this is crucial to his world view, Lumet is big on not lying to us either.

We are privileged to hear Lumet speak the truth in this documentary. In 2008, he devoted five days of his time to record an interview with the late filmmaker Daniel Anker for *American Masters* - to talk about what matters. He pushed back on the idea that his films had an agenda, that preaching morality was his aim. But growing up in a stern Jewish household engendered a moral sensibility in the soul of first Sidney, the child actor, then Lumet, the director. It was also a poor household, and the important ethos was work. "You work," said his father, and Lumet did, putting food on the family table from the time he was five.

He felt there is nothing sacred about the stories he told; indeed, the only thing sacred was having a job. And being fair - a lesson he learned growing up on the Lower East Side of New York, one that would stay with him through his lifetime.

Lumet gave generously to this interview - it lasted over 14 hours. It was my job to distill what I felt were the crucial threads, the story he most wanted to tell. Movie-making lore - and technique - are found here, just as they are in his book *Making Movies* - a filmmakers' bible. But this interview happened much later in life and has the sensibility of an artist looking back. He speaks of an incident that impacted him deeply, one he had not discussed in previous interviews, and he is painfully honest in doing so. I have used this incident to frame his story as I believe he would have wanted. It may not be his "rosebud," but it appears to have been a potent, albeit, unconscious motivator of the stories in his most lasting films, the films that are with us today.

Lumet may have believed his messages were unintentional, but he was also the first one to say that the filmmaker, the person, is revealed in the work. Lumet loved nothing more than to make movies, and those movies emerged from who he was. I hope he would be happy with this movie.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Nancy Buirski

Nancy Buirski (Director, Producer - By SIDNEY LUMET) is the Director, Producer and Writer of *Afternoon of a Faun: Tanaquil Le Clercq* that had its World Premiere at the 51st New York Film Festival and International Premiere at the 64th Berlinale. It was co-produced by THIRTEEN'S American Masters and broadcast in June 2014. It was released theatrically by Kino Lorber in the U.S. She is the Director, Producer and Writer of the Peabody and Emmy Award-winning *The Loving Story* (2011) (HBO). The film was a recipient of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. It was included in the shortlist for the 2011 Academy Awards and received the WGA Screenwriters Award at Silverdocs. It was selected for Sundance's Film Forward, the U.S. State Department's American Film Showcase, and has screened at The White House.

Buirski is a Producer of *Harlem Woodstock* (Director Alex Gibney), *Althea* (Director Rex Miller) and Consulting Producer of *Private Violence* (Director Cynthia Hill). She is a producer of *Loving*, a narrative version of *The Loving Story* documentary directed by Jeff Nichols with Colin Firth's Raindog Films and Big Beach. Buirski will next direct *Endangered*, a live-action/animated narrative based on Eliot Schrefer's award-winning book of that title.

Buirski founded and was the Director of the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival for 10 years. Prior to her work in film, Buirski was the Foreign Picture Editor at *The New York Times*, garnering the paper its first Pulitzer Prize in photography. Her photo book *Earth Angels: Migrant Children in America* was published by Pomegranate Press. Prints from the collection were exhibited at the Smithsonian and traveled throughout the U.S. She serves on the Full Frame Board of Advisors and is a member of the Television Academy of Arts and Sciences.

CHRISTOPHER DONNELLY (Producer)

Christopher Donnelly is a manager at LBI. Previously, he was partner at WME in the motion picture literature department. His clients include Martin Scorsese (*The Departed*, *Goodfellas*); Jonathan Demme (*The Silence of the Lambs*, *Philadelphia**); Jonathan Glazer (*Sexy Beast*); Michael Mann (*Heat*, *Collateral*); Oliver Stone (*Platoon*, *Wall Street*); Mark Romanek (*Never Let Me Go*); Fernando Meirelles (*The Constant Gardener*); William Monahan (*The Departed*); Jason Moore (*Pitch Perfect*, *Avenue Q*); and Patrick Marber (*Closer*, *Notes On A Scandal*).

Having joined Endeavor's mailroom shortly after the agency was founded, he was promoted to agent two years later. His promotion to partner culminated his nine-year journey from mailroom to partnership of the former agency. Donnelly was honored by The Hollywood Reporter in its 2004 Next Generation of Hollywood leaders feature. He supports such organizations as Autism Speaks, and is a member of the LA Conservancy. He is also on the Board of the Noreen Fraser Foundation, a national, non-profit, philanthropic organization based in Los Angeles that raises funds for breakthrough research that advances precision medicine for the prevention and treatment of women's cancers.

Donnelly graduated from Boston University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, and spent a year studying abroad at Oxford University. Born and raised in Philadelphia, he currently resides in Los Angeles.

Brett Ratner (Executive Producer)

Brett Ratner is one of Hollywood's most successful filmmakers. His diverse films resonate with audiences worldwide and have grossed over \$2 billion at the global box office. Brett began his career directing music videos before making his feature directorial debut with *Money Talks*, starring Charlie Sheen and Chris Tucker. He followed with the blockbuster *Rush Hour* and its successful sequels. Brett also directed *The Family Man*, *Red Dragon*, *After the Sunset*, *X-Men: The Last Stand*, *Tower Heist* and *Hercules*.

He produced *Horrible Bosses* and its sequel, *Mirror Mirror*, and the documentaries *Catfish*, the Emmy®-nominated *Woody Allen - A Documentary* for the *American Masters* series, *Electric Boogaloo: The Rise And Fall of Cannon Films*, *Chuck Norris vs Communism*, and *Night Will Fall*, the story of Alfred Hitchcock's never released Holocaust documentary. Brett executive produced and directed the Golden Globe-nominated television series *Prison Break*, which ran for four seasons on Fox.

Brett, along with his business partner James Packer, formed RatPac Entertainment, a film finance production and media company, in 2013. RaPac has a first-look deal with Warner Bros. and joined with Dune Capital to co-finance over 75 films including *Gravity*, *The Lego Movie* and *American Sniper*. Internationally, RatPac and Warner Bros. have formed a joint venture content fund with China's Shanghai Media Group to finance local Chinese content. In partnership with New Regency, RatPac also finances the development and production of Brad Pitt's Plan B Entertainment.

Upcoming RatPac projects include *Truth*, starring Robert Redford and Cate Blanchett, *I Saw the Light*, starring Tom Hiddleston, and the untitled Howard Hughes project, written, directed, produced, and starring Warren Beatty.

In addition to strongly supporting ADL, Brett is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and Museum of Tolerance and serves on the Dean's Council of the NYU Tisch School of the Arts. He also sits on the boards of Chrysalis, Best Buddies and Do Something.

James Packer (Executive Producer)

James Packer is the Chairman of Crown Limited, one of Australia's largest resort and entertainment groups. Crown has properties and investments in Melbourne, Perth, Macau and London with a market capitalization of approximately \$12 billion. He is also Co-Chair of Melco Crown Entertainment.

Packer is the former Executive Chairman of Publishing and Broadcasting Limited (PBL) and Consolidated Media Holdings, which predominantly owned media interests across a range of platforms.

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Shanghai Media Group to finance local Chinese content. In partnership with New Regency, RatPac also finances the development and production of Brad Pitt's Plan B Entertainment.

Packer is also a major shareholder in Australia's Network Ten, the South Sydney Rugby League Football Club, the Chinese online employment company, Zhoapin Pty Ltd, amongst other productive investments.

Through the Packer Family Foundation and the Crown Resorts Foundation, he has contributed significantly to the arts, community welfare, education, health care and the environment in Australia.

Anthony Ripoli - Editor

Ripoli is an editor and filmmaker. His short film *Sex Ed* screened all over the United States and won multiple awards, including Best Editing. After graduating from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Anthony worked with editors David Tedeschi, Jake Pushinsky and Christopher Tellefsen. The first feature film he cut was the award-winning *Poundcake*, directed by Rafael Monserrat. He also has edited with Leon Ichaso (*El Cantante*), Dito Montiel (*Fighting*), Matthew Petock (*A Little Closer*), Martin Scorsese (*Shine A Light: Featurette*), and Kenneth Lonergan (*Margaret: the Extended Cut*).

Michael Kantor - Executive Producer (American Masters)

Michael Kantor joined *American Masters* as the series' executive producer in April 2014 during its 28th season on PBS. An Emmy and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker, Kantor has worked on projects for PBS, HBO, Bravo and 20th Century Fox. His PBS series include *Broadway: The American Musical* (hosted by Julie Andrews), *Make 'Em Laugh* (hosted by Billy Crystal) and *Superheroes* (hosted by Liev Schreiber). He served as executive producer of *Give Me the Banjo* with Steve Martin, and distributes the American Film Theatre series including Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance*, starring Katharine Hepburn, and Chekhov's *Three Sisters* with Laurence Olivier. Kantor has co-authored three books and teaches producing at the School for Visual Arts in NYC.