
THE GREAT
AMERICAN LIE
A film by JENNIFER SIEBEL NEWSOM



SYNOPSIS 1

TEAM BIOS 2

FILM SUBJECTS 5

FILM EXPERTS 6

PRODUCTION STILLS 7

FILM TEASER 9

SYNOPSIS

The Great American Lie is a documentary film that examines what inequality looks like today and traces its roots to our long-revered promise of the American Dream. It's a story about how the ideas that are imbued in the Dream dominate our society and create and perpetuate inequality, deepening our social, economic, and political chasms. The film looks at what Americans are told - through all aspects of our culture - about who and what is valued, based on how we "gender" people and things. The reality we now face is that we are a society divided and out of balance - where the cultural pendulum has swung too far towards a masculine world view, where we revere those things considered stereotypically "masculine", like money, power and individualism, over things considered stereotypically "feminine", like empathy, collaboration, and community. This point of view has created the worst economic and social inequality since the Great Depression. And, the more unequal we become, the deeper our crisis of connection.

This film brings the reality of America's vast inequality to life through the stories of five people: a public school principal fighting for better opportunities for her disadvantaged students; a social justice advocate shining a light on the plight of low-wage women workers; a public interest lawyer fighting for criminal justice reform that prioritizes care over punishment; a steelworker who knows firsthand the toll of layoffs, economic disillusionment and addiction; and a Southern, conservative, single mother who takes us on a journey from disconnection and judgement to connection and empathy. All of these stories reveal ways that gendered values play out in our society, privileging few and oppressing many. These stories are interwoven with expert voices who help give historical, political, and economic context to the film.

The Great American Lie is incredibly timely because of the staggering state of inequality today, but this film is also important because it is new. By bringing the unique perspective of gender to this story, this film expands the conversation around the causes of and solutions to America's inequality and division.

With our history and experience in illuminating and challenging limiting gender narratives in our society, our documentary team is uniquely qualified to tell this story. Our first two films, *Miss Representation* and *The Mask You Live In*, lay the groundwork for understanding the impact of gender on individuals and communities in American society. We view *The Great American Lie* as the critical last film in this trilogy that will address the role of our gendered values on American society at large.



TEAM BIOS



Jennifer Siebel Newsom (Director, Producer, Writer)

Jennifer Siebel Newsom is a filmmaker, CEO, advocate, and thought leader. After graduating with honors from Stanford University and Stanford's Graduate School of Business, she wrote, directed, and produced the 2011 award-winning documentary *Miss Representation*. As a result of *Miss Representation*'s powerful impact, she launched The Representation Project, a nonprofit organization that uses film and media as a catalyst for cultural transformation. Her second film as a director, *The Mask You Live In*, had its world premiere at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival and explores how America's narrow definition of masculinity is harming boys, men, and society at large. She also executive produced the Emmy Award-Winning and Academy Award-Nominated documentary *The Invisible War*, and the Emmy Award-winning documentary *The Hunting Ground*. Newsom is the First Partner of California and lives with her husband and their four children in Sacramento, California.



Amanda Mortimer (Producer)

Amanda Mortimer is a Northern California-based journalist and Director of Production at The Representation Project where she oversees the production of feature-length documentaries as well as short-form content. She has a Master's degree in Journalism from Columbia University and a Bachelor's degree in Government from Cornell University. She cultivated years of experience in field production and writing for tape and live television from her tenure at NBC's *Today* show in New York City and, later, as the Co-Executive Producer of an entertainment program for HGTV. In addition, she has worked extensively in politics on campaigns from California, to Wisconsin, to Pennsylvania.



Jessica Congdon (Editor, Writer)

Jessica Congdon has been a filmmaker for nearly 20 years. Most recently, she co-wrote and edited the film *Dolores* about Latina civil rights icon Dolores Huerta with director Peter Bratt. The film premiered in the documentary competition at Sundance 2017. She produced, co-wrote and edited the documentary films *The Mask You Live In* and *Miss Representation* with Jennifer Siebel Newsom. The films premiered at Sundance in 2011 and 2015. Prior to that, she co-directed and edited the documentary *Race To Nowhere*. Other editing work includes the documentaries *Speed and Angels*, *Motherland*, *The Bronzer*, and the narrative features *Big Girls Don't Cry* and Sundance 2003 award-winner *Dopamine*.



Sade McDougal (Co-Producer)

Sade McDougal brings a broad base of video production and communications experience to her role at The Representation Project. She has a knack for artfully utilizing video storytelling to spotlight individuals who are creating social impact in their community. Prior to joining the organization, she produced an online interview series featuring nonprofit thought leaders from across the country. She has also worked in print and digital journalism and was a media producer for a major textbook publisher. She graduated with honors from Cornell University and earned a Master of Journalism degree from the University of California, Berkeley.



John Behrens (Director of Photography)

Oakland based cinematographer John Behrens has a multi-disciplinary background in narrative feature, live music, commercials, TV documentary, live theater and documentary feature. He uses techniques from the different disciplines to bring richer visual style to the documentary form. His most recent documentary features are *The Mask You Live In* and *Racing Extinction*. Other documentary features include: *Watershed: Exploring a New Water Ethic for the New West, Spark: A Burning Man Story, Frontline: Death by Fire,* and *Miss Representation*. John has focused his career on socially conscious and environmental documentaries.



Jason Blalock (Director of Photography)

Jason Blalock works as a cinematographer on a variety of non-fiction and documentary projects. In 2007, he completed the documentary filmmaking program at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, Since then he has filmed on documentary series for Al Jazeera, CNN, Discovery, HBO, Netflix, Time, and Vice. Recent feature documentary credits include *Nobody Speak: Trials of the Free Press, Happening: A Clean Energy Revolution, On The Sly: In Search of the Family Stone, Marathon: The Patriots Day Bombing, The Mask You Live In*, and *XY: The Chelsea Manning Story*, as well as films currently in post-production directed by award winning directors David France, Alex Gibney, Brian Knappenberger, and Jeff Orlowski. He is a regular contributor to the HBO series Vice News Tonight.



Jeremey Lavoi (Director of Photography)

Jeremey Lavoi is a Director and DP with a more than a decade of work in non-fiction including television, documentary film, and the digital space. He was part of the Emmy awarding-winning staff at Al Gore's Current TV in 2007. He became a lead Producer at the web video start-up Seesmic in 2008. Since 2009, he has been a partner at Lavoi Creative, LLC (formerly TeamJADED Productions), a creative video agency. His clients include Google, Youtube (Corporate), Netflix, Pandora Internet Radio, TuneIn Radio, COMPLEX, Discovery Digital, ESPN.com, Squarespace, Autodesk, MindBodyGreen, Keen, SFMOMA, Sierra Club, and many others. Editing, Producing and Cinematography film credits include, "Make it Happen: Lowcard" (2009), "Supercharged, the Life and Times of Tim Brauch" (2009), "Rolled" (2012), "It's a Rough Life" (2014).



FILM SUBJECTS

Ruby De Tie is a dedicated public school principal fighting for better opportunities for some of Oakland's most vulnerable and underserved youth. Through Ruby's work, we see the effects of trauma on an entire community, particularly on a growing population of immigrant children, newly arrived, in search of the American Dream.

Saru Jayaraman is a social justice advocate who travels the country working to raise awareness about the experiences of low-wage workers. Saru's story shines a light on the crisis of economic inequality in America, in particular the struggle of so many women and people of color in the restaurant industry who face poverty wages, sexual harassment, and job insecurity.

Zachary Norris is a human rights advocate fighting for criminal justice reform. Zachary's story unveils the impact our criminal justice system has on women and communities of color, in particular the emotional and economic costs of incarceration. Zachary's work highlights the importance of valuing care and community-building over punishment and separation.

Scott Seitz is a steelworker in Trumbull County, Ohio, who works seven days a week to provide for his family in a region where many feel abandoned economically. Scott's story illustrates the real-life impact of globalization and changing labor needs on a small, working-class town where entire industries have disappeared, leaving families in despair and vulnerable to the opioid epidemic.

Sharon Galicia is a hardworking, Southern conservative whose hardened exterior softens when she meets pastor Tony Bourque and begins an empathy journey that awakens her to poor people's struggles in achieving the American Dream. Through Sharon's eyes, we see what intergenerational poverty and systemic homelessness really looks like when experienced by people in her own community.

FILM EXPERTS

David Adler
Constitutional Scholar, Alturas Institute

Angela Glover Blackwell
Lawyer & Economic Equity Advocate, PolicyLink

Charles M. Blow
Journalist, New York Times

Prudence Carter
Dean, UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education

Raj Chetty
Professor of Economics, Harvard University

Kimberle Crenshaw
Professor of Law, Columbia Law School and UCLA

Riane Eisler
Historian & Systems Scientist, Center for Partnership Studies

Robert Friedman
Economic Justice Advocate, Prosperity Now

Linda Darling Hammond
Professor of Education, Stanford Graduate School of Education

Caroline Heldman
Professor of Political Science, Occidental College

Jackson Katz
Educator & Advocate, Mentors in Violence Prevention

Nicholas Kristof
Journalist, New York Times

Ian Haney Lopez
Professor of Law, UC Berkeley School of Law

Heather McCulloch
Economic Justice Advocate, Closing the Women's Wealth Gap Initiative

Gavin Newsom
California Governor

Ai-jen Poo
Labor Activist, National Domestic Workers Alliance

Steve Schmidt
Political Strategist

Raj Sisodia
Professor of Global Business, Babson College

Bryan Stevenson
Public Interest Lawyer, Equal Justice Initiative

Joseph Stiglitz
Nobel Laureate Economist, Columbia University

Niobe Way
Professor of Applied Psychology, New York University



PRODUCTION STILLS














"Washington's Best Tour"
Lobby
Lettuce


VOICE LEVELS

FILM TEASER



OFFICIAL WEBSITE
http://thegreatamericanlie.org

SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES
http://www.facebook.com/representationproject
http://www.twitter.com/TheRepProject
http://www.instagram.com/TheRepProject

PRESS CONTACT

Amanda Mortimer
Amanda@TheRepresentationProject.org
(415) 233-4056