



Official Selection
WARSAW FILM FESTIVAL

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In Association With



FREEDOM FOR THE WOLF

Written and DIRECTED BY RUPERT RUSSELL

Produced by PATRICK HAMM, CAMILLA HALL

Executive Producers NICK FRASER, STEPHEN R. MORSE, SARENA SNIDER, MARIA SPRINGER,

<http://www.freedomforthewolf.com>

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RUN TIME: 89 minutes

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INTERNATIONAL SALES ENQUIRIES:

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"Epic in scale... Highly original and thought provoking" **Dangerous Minds**

Democracy is in crisis. A new generation of elected leaders are dismantling freedom and democracy as we know it.

Filmed over three years in five countries, *FREEDOM FOR THE WOLF* is an epic investigation into this new regime of illiberal democracy. From the young students of Hong Kong, to a rapper in post-Arab Spring Tunisia and the viral comedians of Bollywood, we discover how people from every corner of the globe are fighting the same struggle. They are fighting against elected leaders who trample on human rights, minorities, and their political opponents.

Donald Trump is the latest and perhaps most dangerous to assume power.

Philosopher Isaiah Berlin warned against this political hijacking long ago, "**Freedom for the wolves has often meant death for the sheep.**"

Now the wolves are on the rise. Can they be defeated?

A ground-breaking original statement on the status quo of global politics, *FREEDOM FOR THE WOLF* is the first film that provides the global context for understanding the Trump phenomenon.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

In 1989, the Berlin Wall fell. It marked the "End of History" and liberal democracy had won. Or so we thought. It wasn't long before democratically elected leaders realized that democratic institutions could be used for authoritarian ends and that the language of "freedom" could be used as instrument of oppression rather than liberation. By 2014, this "new normal" was a global epidemic and I sought to capture this revival of "History." And I think we have succeeded. We show how democracy can be managed, how the language of freedom can be manipulated, and how the police can easily turn against the very people they are supposed to protect. From the failure of the Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong to the victory of Donald Trump in America, we saw first hand the awesome power of this new movement across the world. This film is the first chapter in the History of the rise of "illiberal democracies." The question is, will it be the last?

Rupert Russell

Q+A WITH WRITER AND DIRECTOR RUPERT RUSSELL

Did you anticipate the rise of Donald Trump when you started making this film three years ago?

No. I wrote the first draft of the treatment shortly after the Snowden revelations. The deterioration of civil liberties that began with Patriot Act under George W. Bush was happening at a far greater pace than anybody had anticipated. I anticipated that the crisis of American democracy was really going to be from a slow, institutional erosion of these freedoms and the growing encroachment of federal agencies on ordinary people's lives. The major threat, of course, was what an unscrupulous, autocratic leader would do with these new powers. It remained, at that point, a hypothetical. That hypothetical arrived far earlier than any of us had imagined.

This film is shot all around the world, what struck you about these countries while you were shooting?

There is a saying about anthropologists. Half travel around the world and can't believe how different everybody is. The other travel around the half the world and can't believe they similar they are. I started out expecting to see a huge divergence in how ordinary people conceived of freedom and the threats to their freedom. What shocked me was how similar the responses were for ordinary, whether they were a gay fashion designer in Tokyo or an rapper in Tunisia or a protester in Hong Kong. We heard over and over again anxieties over individual expression, the abuse of police power, and the corruption of elites. The same was true for the politicians we interviewed, whether they were Islamist, nationalist, or pro-China: all professed a deep commitment to "Western" democracy. I learnt that "difference" is overstated and we are far more similar than anybody wants to admit.

Freedom is an idea. How did you going about realizing an idea in a documentary?

I started out by rejecting any philosophical approach to freedom. This film was going to investigation into freedom is lived, how it used in the exercise of power, how, in sociological parlance, it is "practiced." So we set out looking for freedom struggles - places where freedom was a stake in a conflict. Some were small - like Japan's No Dancing law - and some were large, such as sectarian rioting in India before elections. Freedom wasn't an abstract idea to be debated in these instances but something that had a real impact on people's lives. We got to see how the relationship between freedom and power emerged in the real world.

This is an unusual film - how would you define the genre?

I started this film with a set of questions. The film is just the answer to those questions. But I wanted to answer those questions using the language of cinema which, unlike books and essays, is mostly non-discursive; that is to say, without text or spoken word. There are a lot of montages in the film which are not commented upon and instead of supplying information set a certain kind of mood that invites the audience to come up with their own ideas. I've done a lot of test screenings and a frequent comment is that it feels like an "intellectual horror movie." Again, that wasn't my intention. But I think it's a pretty good "answer" to the questions posed by the film on the future of freedom and democracy.

How did your PhD in Sociology play into this film?

This film wouldn't have happened without my former advisor, Orlando Patterson. He's a comparative historical sociologist who has spent his career trying to understand the relationship between freedom and power, from the Ancient Greeks to the present day. We had discussed his most recent, unpublished research, and given our assault on freedoms I thought that his arguments on the decoupling of freedom from democracy in the minds of Americans deserved a cinematic treatment. I'm also a research junkie and how each country consumed as much literature as I could. I love nothing more than finding an obscure study by an academic that maybe a dozen or so people have read and bringing it to a wider audience. I had the pleasure of doing that a number of times in this film.

ABOUT THE FILM MAKERS

WRITER AND DIRECTOR:

Rupert Russell is a director working in documentary, web series, commercials and music video. He has just completed his first feature documentary, *Freedom For The Wolf*, on the state of freedom and democracy across the world. His work has been featured in the New York Times, USA Today, and Mashable.

Starting his career in academia, Rupert received a Double-Starred First from Cambridge University and a PhD from Harvard University, where he was National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow. When he transitioned into film, he kept his academic eye for detail as well as his passion for big ideas with global impacts.

His work has taken him to six countries, filming stories on democracy, human rights, and economic inequality. He is the son of British film director, Ken Russell.

PRODUCERS:

Patrick Hamm is a filmmaker, producer, and founder of Bulldog Agenda, a Berlin-based production company. His debut as documentary producer, *Freedom For The Wolf*, took him to the frontlines of protest movements around the world. Bulldog Agenda's first narrative feature, *The Man Who Was Thursday* (directed by Balazs Juszti), premiered on the festival circuit in 2016. Patrick holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Harvard University and a B.A. in Ethics, Politics & Economics from Yale University. He is also an affiliated faculty member at Cambridge University.

Camilla Hall is a documentary director and producer based in Los Angeles. Her directing debut *Copwatch* premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival 2017. She left her award-winning career in journalism at the *Financial Times* in 2014 to produce *Freedom For The Wolf*, travelling to Tunisia, India and around the United States. She has also created a docu-web series titled *Uber Lives: LA* and produced various music videos in Los Angeles.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:

Nick Fraser is the founder and editor of Yaddo, an international, subscription-based online documentary platform. He was formerly the editor of Storyville, the BBC's successful and long-running series of international documentaries. Awards won by Storyville programmes include an Oscar, Sundance prizes, Peabody awards, IDFA trophies and Griersons. Nick has written five non-fiction books, including *The Voice of Modern Hatred: Encounters with the European Far Right*, and is a contributing editor of *Harper's* magazine, New York. His latest pamphlet, *Why Documentaries Matter*, is published by Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Nick was the series editor of the global documentary project *Why Democracy?* and executive producer of *Why Poverty?* Nick is the Honorary President of Sheffield Doc/Fest.

Stephen R. Morse has worked for technology startups (Seamless, Shapeways, Appboy) and co-founded Skillbridge, which was acquired by Toptal in 2016. While working in technology, Stephen created and produced *Amanda Knox*, the Netflix global hit. His previous career in journalism has taken him to countries from Abkhazia to India, and many in between. He cut his teeth in journalism in the Ben Bagdikian Fellowship Program at Mother Jones magazine, where he professionally fact-checked many stories that helped win Mother Jones the National Magazine Award. Stephen also founded MyTwoCensus.com, a watchdog organization of the 2010 US Census. Stephen began his filmmaking career while at the University of Pennsylvania, directing and producing the feature political documentary *Ain't Easy Being Green*. Stephen holds an MBA from the University of Oxford.

Maria Springer has both investment and entrepreneurial experience. She co-founded LivelyHoods, a national distribution network that brings clean-energy technologies to slums across Kenya, where twelve branches are currently in operation. While working in Liberia, Maria sourced and conducted diligence on commercial impact investment deals for The IGNITE Fund. After the devastating Ebola crisis, Maria helped create UNIFORM, a factory-direct clothing brand exclusively manufactured in Africa. UNIFORM is now available in Bloomingdale's department stores across the United States. Maria is a graduate of the University of California – Los Angeles, where she graduated Summa cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa. She was also named a Skoll Scholar for her work in social entrepreneurship, and received a full-tuition merit scholarship to attend the University of Oxford's MBA program.

Sarena Snider serves on the board of the Snider Foundation. She is experienced in both the production and development of digital media, documentaries, narrative films, and nonfiction television. She has served as a producer and production coordinator on dozens of National Geographic shows.

CREDITS

Writer & Director: Rupert Russell
Producer: Patrick Hamm, Camilla Hall
Executive Producers: Nick Fraser, Stephen R. Morse, Maria Springer, Sarena Snider
Editor: Bobby Good, Rupert Russell, Anthony Stadler
Additional Editing: Atsuko Atake, Steph Zenee Perez
Consulting Editor: Doug Blush
Composer: Alex Williamson
Colorist: Rebecca Goodeve
VFX Supervisor: Andrew Ceperley
DCP: Breakwater Studios
Archival Producer: Megan Geier

Animation Services by DARE studio
Production Supervisor Borys Piasny
Animation and VFX;
Borys Kubiak
Pawel Maslanka
Magdalena Parszewska

JAPAN UNIT

Camera: Nelson Hernandez-Torrealba, Rupert Russell, Patrick Hamm
Field Producer: Takenori Nagatani
Field Producer: Yuka Uchida

HONG KONG UNIT

Camera: Patrick Hamm, Rupert Russell, Nelson Hernandez-Torrealba, Tobias Reeuwijk
Field Producer: Joyce Lau, Benny Kwok
Executive Production Assistant: Rio Fung
Production Assistants: Kanok Chan, Melanie Ko, Hong Tsun-Lai, Jerra Chan, Eros Kwok
Aerial Videography: Dickson Lok

TUNISIA UNIT

Camera: Rupert Russell
Field Producer: Myriam Ben Ghazi
Field Producer: Sana Abdeljalil
Transportation: Walid Rmedi

INDIA UNIT

Camera: Rupert Russell
Field Producer: Mehboob Jeelani
Transportation: Maneesh Inc.
Fixer: Dev Desai

US UNIT

Camera: Rupert Russell, Andrew Ceperley
Aerial Videography - Drone Brothers
Sound Recorder: Seb Blach
Sound Recorder: Frank Coakley

FEATURING

EXPERTS

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Lawrence Lessig
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Shadi Hamid

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Bart Warshaw
Sewell Chan
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Raphael Korn
Ratko Jovic
Damir Zhandossov
Alex Kurz
David A. Korn (in memoriam)
Joshua March
Grant Gittlin
Dakota Gruener
Zander Rafael
Spencer Lazar
Alex Hall
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