

**Presents**

**DOLORES**

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**Directed by Peter Bratt**

**\*\*Official Selection—US Documentary Competition—Sundance Film Festival 2017\*\***

**\*\*WINNER—Audience Award, Best Doc—San Francisco Intl. Film Festival\*\***

**\*\*Official Selection—Hotdocs\*\***

**\*\*WINNER—Audience Award, Best Doc—Montclair Film Festival\*\***

**\*\*Official Selection—Seattle International Film Festival\*\***

**\*\*Official Selection—AFI Docs\*\***

**Release Date:** September 1, 2017—IFC Center (NY). September 8, 2017—Nuart Theatre (LA)

**Running Time:** 98 minutes

**Languages:** English and Spanish with English subtitles

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| **New York Publicity:**  Cinetic Marketing  Charlie Olsky  [Charlie@cineticmedia.com](mailto:Charlie@cineticmedia.com)  212.204.7979 | **Los Angeles Publicity:**  Acme PR  Nancy Willen  [nancywillen@acmepr.net](mailto:nancywillen@acmepr.net)  310.963.3433 | **Distribution Contact:**  PBS Distribution  Erin Owens  [eeowens@pbs.org](mailto:eeowens@pbs.org)  917.940.1687 |

**SHORT SYNOPSIS**

Dolores Huerta is among the most important, yet least known, activists in American history. An equal partner in co-founding the first farm workers unions with Cesar Chavez, her enormous contributions have gone largely unrecognized. Dolores tirelessly led the fight for racial and labor justice alongside Chavez, becoming one of the most defiant feminists of the twentieth century—and she continues the fight to this day, at 87. With intimate and unprecedented access to this intensely private mother to eleven, the film reveals the raw, personal stakes involved in committing one’s life to social change. Directed by Peter Bratt.

**LONG SYNOPSIS**

History tells us Cesar Chavez transformed the U.S. labor movement by leading the first farm workers’ union.  But missing from this story is his equally influential co-founder, Dolores Huerta, who tirelessly led the fight for racial and labor justice alongside Chavez, becoming one of the most defiant feminists of the twentieth century.

Like so many powerful female advocates, Dolores and her sweeping reforms were – and still are –largely overlooked. Even as she empowered a generation of immigrants to stand up for their rights, her own relentless work ethic was constantly under attack. False accusations from foes and friends alike, of child neglect and immoral behavior from a woman who married three times and raised 11 children, pushed Dolores out of the very union she helped create. Still, she remains as steadfast in her fight as ever at the age of 87.

Peter Bratt’s provocative and energizing documentary challenges this incomplete, one-sided history and reveals the raw, personal stakes involved in committing one’s life to the fight for justice. Interweaving archival footage with interviews from Dolores and her contemporaries, the film sets the record straight on one of the most effective and undervalued civil and labor rights leaders in modern U.S. history.

**DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT**

In 2009, in the days leading up to the commercial release of LA MISSION(my second feature), Latino activists around the nation put out a call asking people and businesses across the country to boycott the state of Arizona for passing SB-1070, a controversial senate bill that essentially gave police permission to racially profile Latinos. Faced with the dilemma of whether or not to go to Arizona to promote the film, I called activist and community elder Dolores Huerta for her advice. Before I could finish explaining my conundrum, Dolores insisted that “Our Latino people need stories like this more than ever. Not only should you go, but I’ll go with you!”

And so – true to her word – she did go with me and helped introduce the film. The primarily Latino audience was nervous about the national conversation surrounding the fate of our culture and our people, and by Dolores' estimation, in need of reassurance that we are immovably, undeniably, permanently here to stay – as we have always been. Of course, they loved her. She was at once calming and inciting, the warmth and charisma of her presence was undeniable. I was, in a word, *amazed*.

You see, as a child of the movement, the son of a single Peruvian Indian mother who marched with Dolores and celebrated labor leader Cesar Chavez back in the early 70’s, I chanted “brown is beautiful” at 10 years of age, and held them both in a kind of awed respect for their work and their reputation. And now, here I was, hosting Q&A’s with Dolores Huerta – “Super Chicana” – in an Arizona multiplex. Rapt, I watched her warm interaction and tireless enthusiasm with the audience that day, and I wondered why there wasn’t yet a film about such an important and influential figure. I specifically remember thinking, “If only I was a documentary filmmaker…”

Then one day, some five years later – just like in the movies – the phone rang. The person on the other end was rock music icon Carlos Santana. In a mysterious and quietly urgent voice he whispered, “We need to make a documentary about sister Dolores, while she’s still with us.” There was little doubt in my mind that this was not so much a question as it was a cultural directive, an artist's call to action from one storyteller to another to fulfill a historical obligation. Even in the silence immediately following his words, we both knew there was only one way for me to respond. And yet I panicked, in part because I knew nothing about making a doc – but more to the point, because I knew that a truly worthy story would have to present not simply a courageous iconic figure and her list of triumphs, but a fully fleshed human being, warts and all. With both excitement and trepidation, I replied, "What do you have in mind?" As it turned out, the answer was quite a lot.

In the copious volumes written about legendary civil rights activist Cesar Chavez and how he formed the first farm workers’ union in America, there is comparatively little mentioned about Dolores Huerta, his equal partner and co-founder of the union, an equally formidable labor leader and civil rights organizer who had fought (and to this day still fights) tirelessly for the liberation of workers, women, and immigrants for nearly seven decades. Why was this? What had happened? Was her story lost accidentally, or left out deliberately? Why had she been erased? It didn’t make sense. But it made for a great story.

After interviewing farm workers, scholars, politicians, feminists, labor historians, and 10 of her 11 biological children, one thing became crystal clear: her erasure from the historical record was deliberate. And if Dolores had been excised, then only *she* could tell her story. Directly, calmly. Her voice. Her life. Her words.

As we worked on the film, Dolores’ voice revealed a woman both heroic and flawed. Her courage in speaking without filters deepened the narrative and naturally delivered a framework within which to organize the reams of material I had unearthed. Processing Dolores’ story and attempting to put it into a larger historical context ultimately begged the question—who decides what history is? Who decides which stories are told? And who gets to tell them?

In this consolidated, never-before-seen collection of personal memories, historical documentation and compelling first-person narrative, Dolores Huerta emerges as more than just a footnote to 20th century America - she proves to be a true American hero. And like many great figures held in an equally high regard, she is also revealed to be utterly mortal, a woman whose unconventional choices and personal sacrifices expose her humanity.

My hope is that people might now see Dolores' story as part of their own, one that perhaps allows them to more fully, more honestly, understand the last 50 years in America’s history and how it connects to and informs where we find ourselves today.

*- Peter Bratt, Director*

**HISTORY & ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF DOLORES HUERTA**

**The Feminist Seed Is Planted.** Dolores Clara Fernández was born on April 10, 1930 in Dawson, a small mining town in the mountains of northern New Mexico. Her father Juan Fernández, a farm worker and miner by trade, was a union activist who ran for political office and won a seat in the New Mexico legislature in 1938. Dolores spent most of her childhood and early adult life in Stockton, California where she and her two brothers moved with their mother, following her parents’ divorce.

According to Dolores, her mother’s independence and entrepreneurial spirit was one of the primary reasons she became a feminist. Dolores’ mother Alicia was known for her kindness and compassion towards others. She offered rooms at affordable rates in her 70-room hotel, which she acquired after years of hard work. Alicia welcomed low-wage workers in the hotel, and often, waived the fee for them altogether. She was an active participant in community affairs, involved in numerous civic organizations and the church. Alicia encouraged the cultural diversity that was a natural part of Dolores’ upbringing in Stockton. The agricultural community where they lived was made up of Mexican, Filipino, African-American, Japanese, and Chinese working families.

Alicia’s community activism was reflected in Dolores’ involvement as a student at Stockton High School. She was active in numerous school clubs, was a majorette, and a dedicated member of the Girl Scouts until the age of 18. Upon graduating Dolores continued her education at the University of Pacific’s Delta College in Stockton earning a provisional teaching credential. During this time, she married Ralph Head and had two daughters, Celeste and Lori. While teaching, she could no longer bear to see her students come to school with empty stomachs and bare feet, and thus began her lifelong journey of working to correct economic injustice.

**An Organizer is Born.** Dolores found her calling as an organizer while serving in the leadership of the Stockton Community Service Organization (CSO). During this time, she founded the Agricultural Workers Association, set up voter registration drives and pressed local governments for barrio improvements. It was in 1955 through CSO founder Fred Ross, Sr. that she would meet a likeminded colleague, CSO Executive Director César E. Chávez. The two soon discovered that they shared a common vision of organizing farm workers, an idea that was not in line with the CSO’s mission.

As a result, in the spring of 1962 César and Dolores resigned from the CSO, and launched the National Farm Workers Association. Dolores’ organizing skills were essential to the growth of this budding organization. The challenges she faced as a woman did not go unnoted and in one of her letters to Cesar she joked, “Being a now (ahem) experienced lobbyist, I am able to speak on a man-to-man basis with other lobbyists.”

The first testament to her lobbying and negotiating talents were demonstrated in securing Aid For Dependent Families (“AFDC”) and disability insurance for farm workers in the State of California in 1963, an unparalleled feat of the times. She was also instrumental in the enactment of the Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975. This was the first law of its kind in the United States, granting farm workers in California the right to collectively organize and bargain for better wages and working conditions.

While the farm workers lacked financial capitol, they were able to wield significant economic power through hugely successful boycotts at the ballot box with grassroots campaigning. As the principal legislative advocate, Dolores became one of the UFW’s most visible spokespersons. Robert F. Kennedy acknowledged her help in winning the 1968 California Democratic Presidential Primary moments before he was shot in Los Angeles. Throughout the years, she has worked to elect numerous candidates including President Clinton, Congressman Ron Dellums, Governor Jerry Brown, Congresswoman Hilda Solis and Hillary Clinton.

**Women’s Liberation.** As much as she was Cesar’s right hand, she could also be the greatest thorn in his side. The two were infamous for their blow out arguments, an element that was a natural part of their working relationship. Dolores viewed this as a healthy and necessary part of the growth process of any worthwhile collaboration. While Dolores was busy breaking down one gender barrier after another, she was seemingly unaware of the tremendous impact she was having on not only farm worker women but also young women everywhere.

While directing the first National Boycott of California Table Grapes out of New York she came into contact with Gloria Steinem and the burgeoning feminist movement who rallied behind the cause. Quickly she realized they shared much in common. Having found a supportive voice with other feminists, Dolores consciously began to challenge gender discrimination within the farm workers’ movement.

**Non-Violence Is Our Strength.** Early on, Dolores advocated for the entire family’s participation in the movement. After all, it was men, women and children together out in the fields picking, thinning and hoeing. Thus, the practice of non-violence was not only a philosophy but a very necessary approach in providing for the safety of all. Her life and the safety of those around her were in jeopardy on countless occasions.

At age 58, Dolores suffered a life-threatening assault while protesting against the policies of then presidential candidate George Bush in San Francisco. A baton-wielding officer broke four ribs and shattered her spleen. Public outrage resulted in the San Francisco Police Department changing its policies regarding crowd control and police discipline and Dolores was awarded an out of court settlement.

Following a lengthy recovery, she took a leave of absence from the union to focus on women’s rights. She traversed the country for two years on behalf of the Feminist Majority’s “Feminization of Power: 50/50 by the Year 2000” campaign encouraging Latinas to run for office. The campaign resulted in a significant increase in the number of female representatives at the local, state, and federal levels. Dolores also served as National Chair of the 21st Century Party founded in 1992 on the principles that women make up 52% of the party’s candidates and that officers must reflect the ethnic diversity of the nation.

**Her Second Wind.** At 83, Dolores Huerta continues to work tirelessly developing leaders and advocating for the working poor, women and children. As founder and president of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, she travels across the country engaging in campaigns and influencing legislation that supports equality and defends civil rights. She often speaks to students and organizations about issues of social justice and public policy.

Dolores also assists working poor immigrants in the agriculture rich San Joaquin Valley of California. Many of these individuals are unfamiliar with laws or agencies that can protect them and benefits that they are entitled to. They are at times preyed upon by unscrupulous individuals who take advantage of them and often feel hopeless and unable to remedy their situations. Dolores teaches them that they have personal power that needs to be coupled with responsibility and cooperation to create the changes needed to improve their lives.

These methods of instruction are rarely practiced today because it is tedious and time consuming. However, Dolores believes the results are long lasting and that these individuals, in the process of building organizations of their own, are learning lessons they will never forget. She believes that it is during this time that the transformative roots are planted and the fruit of her labor can be seen in the leadership that is developed and the permanent changes that manifest in the community. In other words, this is how grass roots democracy works.

**Recognitions and Awards.** There are now four elementary schools in California, one in Fort Worth, Texas, and a high school in Pueblo, Colorado named after Dolores Huerta.

Dolores was inducted into the California Hall of Fame in March of 2013. She has received numerous awards: among them The Eleanor Roosevelt Humans Rights Award from President Clinton in l998, Ms. Magazine’s “One of the Three Most Important Women of l997,” Ladies Home Journal’s “100 Most Important Woman of the 20th Century,” The Puffin Foundation’s “Award for Creative Citizenship: Labor Leader Award 1984”, The Kern County Woman of The Year Award from the California State Legislature, The Ohtli Award from the Mexican Government, The Smithsonian Institution James Smithson Award, and Nine Honorary Doctorates from universities throughout the United States.

In 2012, President Obama bestowed Dolores with her most prestigious award, The Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States. Upon receiving this award Dolores said, “The freedom of association means that people can come together in organization to fight for solutions to the problems they confront in their communities. The great social justice changes in our country have happened when people came together, organized, and took direct action. It is this right that sustains and nurtures our democracy today. The civil rights movement, the labor movement, the women’s movement, and the equality movement for our LGBT brothers and sisters are all manifestations of these rights. I thank President Obama for raising the importance of organizing to the highest level of merit and honor.”

**THE FILMMAKERS**

Written and Directed by PETER BRATT

Produced by PETER BRATT

BRIAN BENSON

Executive Producers CARLOS SANTANA

REGINA K. SCULLY

JANET MacGILLIVRAY WALLACE

Co-written and Edited by JESSICA CONGDON

Archival Producer JENNIFER PETRUCELLI

Associate Producer ANGELICA SANTANA

Consulting Producer BENJAMIN BRATT

Director of Photography JESSE DANA

Music by MARK KILIAN

Sound Design BOB EDWARDS

Music Supervisor BROOKE WENTZ

**FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

**PETER BRATT, Producer, Writer & Director**

Peter Bratt is an award-winning screenwriter and independent filmmaker whose first feature FOLLOW ME HOME premiered in competition at the 1996 Sundance Film Festival and won the Best Feature Film Audience Award that same year at the San Francisco International Film Festival. In 2009, he and his brother Benjamin produced LA MISSION, a feature film shot on location in their hometown of San Francisco. The film*,* which Peter wrote and directed, premiered at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival and was the opening night film at the 2009 San Francisco International Film Festival, the 2009 New York International Latino Film Festival, and the 2009 Outfest Film Festival in Los Angeles. For his work on LA MISSION, Peter received the prestigious Norman Lear Writer’s Award and was one of ten American independent filmmakers selected by Sundance and the President’s Committee on Arts and Humanities to launch Sundance Film Forward, a program that uses film and conversation to excite and introduce a new generation to the power of story.  Peter is a San Francisco Film Commissioner and a long-time consultant for the Friendship House Association of American Indians, a local non-profit serving the Bay Area’s Native population.

**BRIAN BENSON, Producer**

Brian Benson is an award-winning Bay Area producer and assistant director with over three dozen films and hundreds of commercial projects under his belt. After his film HAIKU TUNNEL (Sony Pictures Classics) screened at the Sundance Film Festival in 2001 he was awarded the prestigious Sundance Producing Fellowship. In 2002, Brian attended the Sundance producer's lab attached to DOPAMINE, Mark Decena’s debut feature, which premiered in competition at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival and was awarded the Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize. Brian produced Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman’s film HOWLwhich opened the 2010 Sundance Film Festival and assistant directed Peter Bratt’s LA MISSIONand Marielle Heller’s DIARY OF A TEENAGE GIRL, starring Kristen Wiig and Alexander Skarsgård. Brian is currently writing, producing and directing his 10th film in an award-winning short film series and he teaches a course in Film Production and Financing at San Francisco State University.

**CARLOS SANTANA, Executive Producer**

Carlos Santana is a Mexican American musician who pioneered a fusion of rock and Latin American music. He is a multi-Grammy Award winner and recognized as one of the greatest guitar players in the world. He is a native San Franciscan and DOLORES is the first film he helped produce.

**JESSICA CONGDON, Co-writer / Editor**

Jessica Congdon produced, co-wrote & edited the documentary films MISS REPRESENTATION and THE MASK YOU LIVE IN with Jennifer Siebel Newsom, which premiered at Sundance in 2011 and 2015. Other editing highlights include the documentaries RACE TO NOWHERE, DESERT RUNNERS, SPEED AND ANGELS, MOTHERLAND, THE BRONZER and the narrative features BIG GIRLS DON’T CRY and Sundance award-winner DOPAMINE. Jessica is a founding editor of Umlaut Films in San Francisco and her commercial work has received numerous editing awards, including the Cannes Lions award. She grew up in Washington, D.C., received her degree from UC Berkeley, and studied film at the Art Institute of Chicago.

**BENJAMIN BRATT, Consulting Producer**

Benjamin Bratt’s diverse career has successfully spanned film and television for more than 25 years. In 2010, Bratt won Cinequest's Maverick Spirit Award for his work as producer and star of the San Francisco indie hit, LA MISSION. Written, directed and produced by his brother Peter Bratt, the locally produced film garnered much critical praise, winning a Best Indie Film nomination from the NAACP, a GLAAD award nomination, and multiple Imagen Awards, including two for Best Picture and Best Actor. Bratt’s distinguished filmography includes the critically acclaimed films PINERO, for which he was lauded for his striking, haunting, and “career defining” performance as the poet-playwright-actor Miguel Piñero; Steven Soderbergh’s TRAFFIC, which received five Academy Award® nominations and a Screen Actor’s Guild Award for Ensemble Cast. Television audiences perhaps best recognize Bratt from his Emmy-nominated role as “Detective Rey Curtis” on NBC’s long-running drama *Law & Order*. He recently starred in *24: Live Another Day* alongside Kiefer Sutherland, and the A&E drama series *The Cleaner*, for which he also served as Producer. A veteran of nearly 30 films, Bratt’s other work of note includes Curtis Hansen’s THE RIVER WILD opposite Meryl Streep; BLOOD IN, BLOOD OUT for director Taylor Hackford; CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER opposite Harrison Ford; the beloved comedy MISS CONGENIALITY with Sandra Bullock; and the theatrical adaptation of the acclaimed novel LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA, co-starring Javier Bardem. Bratt can currently be seen starring in THE INFILTRATOR with Bryan Cranston, the Marvel Comics hit DOCTOR STRANGE and the TV drama from Lee Daniels, *Star*, for Fox midseason 2017.

**JESSE DANA, Director of Photography**

Jesse grew up in art classes. He was drawing and painting from before he can remember. By high school his love of visual arts grew to include printmaking, graphic design and photography, leading to national recognition. When he was 20, Jesse discovered filmmaking. Soon after, he dropped all other pursuits, becoming immersed in the world behind the lens. Since then Jesse’s work has focused on the transformative power of images. His commercial works have earned four Emmy Awards, and his documentary work has garnered a national News and Documentary Emmy nomination. Many of his projects have appeared in festivals all over the world including Sundance, Tribeca and Cannes. Jesse has always been drawn to filmmaking that inspires change. Among his other projects, he has spent 8-years co-producing and shooting, [LIFE AFTER LIFE](http://www.jessedana.com/project/life-after-life-trailer-documentary/), a documentary on the impact of mass incarceration. This work led him to co-found a film school in San Quentin Prison and a pilot program that empowers at-risk youth with filmmaking tools in Oakland California.

**JENNIFER PETRUCELLI, Archival Producer**

Jennifer Petrucelli has worked as a producer in film and television for nearly 20 years. Most recently she wrote, produced and conducted extensive archival research on a series of historical documentaries for LucasFilm. Topics of the LucasFilm documentaries ranged from Pablo Picasso to General Patton to the Tuskegee Airmen. Jennifer earned a Master’s degree in Documentary Film from Stanford University and a BA in History from Cornell University.

**BOB EDWARDS, Sound Design & Re-recording Mixer**

Robert C. Edwards is a sound designer, editor and re-recording mixer at Skywalker Sound. In his twenty-seven years at Skywalker, Bob has contributed his audio engineering and mixing skills to major motion pictures, independent films, documentaries, television, internet projects and film scores. Bob supervised, sound designed and mixed the soundtrack for the 2015 Sundance Film Festival U.S. Dramatic selection SONGS MY BROTHERS TAUGHT ME, as well as two feature-length documentaries selected for Sundance 2014 – MARMATO and THIS MAY BE THE LAST TIME. For Sundance 2013, he supervised, sound designed and mixed the narrative feature FRUITVALE STATION*,* which won both the Grand Jury Prize for Dramatic Filmmaking and the Audience Award. He also supervised the sound for BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD, which won the Grand Jury Prize for Dramatic Filmmaking at Sundance 2012. For both the Redford Center and James Redford's KPJR Films, Bob sound designed and mixed a variety of documentary and narrative films, including WATERSHED: EXPLORING A NEW WATER ETHIC FOR THE NEW WEST, PAPER TIGERS, TOXIC HOT SEAT, THE BIG PICTURE: RETHINKING DYSLEXIA, QUALITY TIME and SPIN.

**MARK KILIAN, Original Music**

South African born Mark Kilian has had a successful and eclectic film scoring career since moving to Los Angeles in 1994. He is most known for his ethnic flavored scores like the Oscar- winning TSOTSI, TRAITOR, RENDITION, BLESS ME ULTIMA and BEFORE THE RAINS. His most recent scores include REVENGE OF THE GREEN DRAGONS (executive produced by Martin Scorsese,) John Carpenter’s THE WARD, TRUST ME (Clark Gregg, Felicity Huffman, Sam Rockwell, William H Macy,) SEAL TEAM 8 (Tom Sizemore,) REPENTANCE (Forest Whitaker) and PITCH PERFECT for which he has a platinum album for soundtrack sales. His TV work includes HBO’s *41*, ABC’s *Killer Women* and *Daybreak*. He has also written music for many TV commercials including Apple, Toyota, Budweiser, American Express and Microsoft. He has three albums out under the name ‘The Gravy Street’ which have received airplay in Los Angeles and also two albums with the electronica duo ‘Ape Quartet.’