



PRESENTS

REBIRTH

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PRODUCED BY	JIM WHITAKER
.....	DAVID SOLOMON
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	THOMAS LAPPIN
EDITORS	KEVIN FILIPPINI
.....	BRAD FULLER
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REBIRTH

Synopsis

REBIRTH is a riveting journey into living history – an act of personal witness to one of the most profoundly consequential events in American history and the healing that has come in its wake.

The result of a decade-long filmmaking sojourn, the inspirational story of REBIRTH follows the transformation of five people whose lives were forever altered on September 11, 2001 – and simultaneously tracks via unprecedented, multi-camera, time-lapse photography the minute-by-minute evolution of the space where the Twin Towers once rose over lower Manhattan. What emerges from the mix is a singular cinematic experience, at once emotionally intimate and spiritually exhilarating – one that provides a direct portrait of how trauma, grief, anger and chaos metamorphose into hope, connection, purpose and rebuilding, as the human spirit transcends unthinkable disaster in time.

In the decade that has passed since 9/11, the media has focused intently on the event's impact in every sphere of American life, from foreign policy to psychology. REBIRTH now turns the focus back to those who so deeply touched the world on that day, whose everyday lives and dreams were shattered, and whose stories of rediscovering strength, optimism and meaning are essential to our understanding. The film has captured a series of gripping, personal dramas as they unfolded, including those of a fireman grappling with guilt after losing his best friend; a construction worker finding solace in new buildings rising from the wreckage; the fiancée of a First Responder whose upended life takes surprising turns; a survivor who escaped from an impact floor but confronts life-changing scars; and a high school student who uncovers new directions after the mother who meant everything to him perished.

Their stories – raw, shifting and unforgettably real -- are each unique. But fused with each other and dynamic images of physical renewal they become an interwoven portrait of human resiliency in action; a lyrical meditation on the nature of time, memory and loss; and a vital reflection on the national yearning to remember, honor and restore our dreams.

Forged through the generous support of hundreds who helped shepherd the epic, ten-year production, REBIRTH is directed by Jim Whitaker and produced by David Solomon and Whitaker, with Danielle Beverly serving as field producer. The director of photography is Tom Lappin and the editors are Kevin Filippini and Brad Fuller. The film's original score is composed by Academy Award® winner Philip Glass.

REBIRTH

About the Production

Inception

How do people confront the most unimaginable adversity yet remain passionate about life?

Can an entire nation heal from a massive and unprecedented tragedy of epic scale?

Is it possible to capture that very moment in time when sudden loss and shocking disaster turn 180 degrees to new hope and revitalized dreams?

These are the some of the most compelling questions of our times – and also the questions that form the heart of the richly moving, one-of-a-kind documentary experience, REBIRTH, directed by Jim Whitaker, who led the production in conjunction with a devoted team over the last ten years. The film tracks the profound changes – both human and architectural, emotional and structural, personal and epic – that have emerged in the days, months and years since the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Yet the film is not about the events of 9/11 (indeed, no violent images from that day are seen in the story). Instead, it is about what has come after, about capturing, in the immediate moment, the extraordinary path of recovery that allows human beings to go on, to aspire to renewal, even when the very fabric of life has changed. In the course of the two-hour drama, audiences witness heart-wrenching debris morph into soaring construction and unthinkable anguish turn to defiant resilience.

The process of making REBIRTH – which would grow algorithmically into something far greater than anyone expected -- began for Whitaker just a month after 9/11, in a time of raw emotion for the entire nation. Whitaker was then an executive at Imagine Entertainment (and would go on to become President of the leading film company and a producer of numerous award-winning Hollywood films), living in California. But when he was invited to a New York wedding that was nearly called off, he felt a strong need to pay his respects at Ground Zero.

It was a trip that would alter the shape of the next decade of his life.

“When I arrived at Ground Zero on that day, you could still smell the awful odor of gasoline,” Whitaker recalls. “I remember staring at this sea of debris, filled with an intense sense of anxiety and dread, yet for some reason the thought that came to me right then was ‘One day, this horrible vision will all be gone and something new and beautiful will have taken its place.’ It was the tiniest, slightest shard of hope, but it was hope. Which made me wonder: would it be possible to capture on film the human passage from dread to hope in real time? I felt very strongly that there had

to be cameras recording whatever happened next to the site, and even more importantly, to the community who had been part of it.”

Whitaker brought the idea to a few trusted friends, including director of photography Tom Lappin, producer David Solomon, and future board members Nick Wood and Pat Ryan, who immediately offered their help, though none of them was sure what could be done or where it would lead.

“All we knew is that this idea that Jim had to record the whole process of rebuilding would be massive, challenging and exciting,” recalls Solomon, who had worked with Whitaker in Hollywood before returning to New York as a pharmaceutical executive in early 2001.

Solomon goes on: “At first, it wasn’t even clear how we could begin. It was such a chaotic time in the city, no one was quite sure who was in charge at the Ground Zero site or who could even grant us the permissions we would need. The logistics were daunting, we had no budget, and it was hard to ask people to be generous in a time of so much suffering. Yet we were consistently amazed and moved by the tremendous support that began to emerge around the project. People wanted to get involved, not only because there was an outpouring of concern, but because it was a cathartic experience for everyone. It gave us the opportunity to create something far bigger and more valuable than what we had foreseen.”

After initial design and testing of the camera systems in Hollywood, their early work began with the placement of a three time-lapse cameras focused on the Ground Zero site, as the rubble was cleared away and the hallowed ground prepared for a then unknown future. Those three cameras would ultimately become 14 cameras strategically mounted in key positions in and around the site, providing multi-angle perspectives of construction in progress 24 hours a day. The cameras continue in operation today, and will record progress at the site until its completion in 2015.

Whitaker’s idea would next expand outwards, as he began to mirror the same multi-angle process on a human level. His vision was to create a kind of “human time-lapse” experience by patiently following the lives of a diverse group of survivors and family members directly impacted by the disaster. He would record their efforts to cope and rebuild their lives over the same period as the physical re-construction, witnessing the incremental changes erupting beneath their surfaces until the turning point of healing kicked in and changed everything.

Both portions of the project were headed into entirely unexplored film territory and Whitaker knew he was in for an unpredictable ride. But he was driven not only by the gravity of 9/11 for the nation and the world, but by his own recent personal encounter with grief. Having just lost his mother six months before, Whitaker had already been thinking about how human beings move forward, slowly, dizzily, in their own ways after a tremendous loss. The film became part of his

journey to understand how loss and trauma rock us, change us, and yet never quite halt life's continuous stream of beauty, wonder and joy.

"I started this project at a time when I was open to feelings I'd never experienced before," Whitaker explains. "As I began working at Ground Zero day after day on the film, I entered this intense world of loss even more deeply. Yet, I knew it wasn't static. It was changing for me and for those around me, and would continue to change over time. That was something I felt had never really been seen on film before – how those small changes accumulating over time become the process of healing. I realized I had the chance to do the same thing with people that I was already doing with the site – record this incredibly hard but important journey step by step."

Whitaker was also struck with a sense of responsibility to get this living history on film before it was lost, as too many stories have been after so many other historical disasters. Having always been drawn to history, and having cut his teeth as a young filmmaker working on museum documentaries, he now saw that these skills could contribute something necessary to the world. He felt he was presented with a rare opportunity to not only make a meaningful feature film for the nation, but to aid one of the most critical human inquiries of the 21st Century: how we can best repair the many lives unraveled by war, conflict and disaster across the globe.

"I've always had a fascination with the power of history," Whitaker notes. "My father used to work in Washington D.C. and I loved hearing him talk about the events he was part of personally, especially Martin Luther King Jr.'s I Have a Dream Speech, which he saw live at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963. Listening to his memories of that gave me a sense of how inspiring first-hand reports of history can be, and how important it is that they are passed from generation to generation. After 9/11, I told my wife, 'Some day we'll have children and one day they'll want to know what our experience was of this event' and that was also a primary motivation for the film – to give the next generation an honest, human record they can appreciate and learn from."

As the ground where the World Trade Centers once stood and the hearts of the film's subjects both underwent astonishing changes, so too did the film over its marathon production.

"The film started from the events of 9/11 but it became about much more," summarizes David Solomon. "It became about the strength that human beings of all background are able to find when facing adversity. It became a very hopeful, optimistic piece that's about the qualities we all seek to have: fortitude, courage, endurance and a desire to move towards happiness even in the face of loss. It is a very serious film, but it celebrates how we as individuals and a community came through an American tragedy with our spirits intact."

Mission

As production of REBIRTH began, it was clear to all involved that it was far more ambitious in scope and also in potential to contribute to the social good than your usual feature film. Simultaneous to the start of filming, a Board of Directors was recruited and the group formed a non-profit entity known as Project Rebirth, which would manage both the production and a broader philanthropic mission to honor and address the vital living history of those coping with disaster.

A few years into the process, Jim Whitaker met Brian Rafferty, co-founder of the global investor relations firm Taylor Rafferty, who would join the Project Rebirth team as Chairman of the Board and focus on helping to complete the film, but also to leverage as much positive social impact as possible from the film and Project Rebirth's unique film library. The needs of the project dovetailed perfectly with Rafferty's entrepreneurial skill sets in global business and communications. Rafferty and Whitaker met in intensive sessions over six months to develop a long term strategy that would best respect the events of 9/11 and resonate most powerfully with the film and the filmmaker's vision. Project Rebirth's strategy and tactics were the outcome of these sessions, and since then, have served as a clear map for steadily advancing the overall project, which includes:

- The creation of REBIRTH, the not-for-profit feature film that tells the story of the resilience of the human spirit in the face of the damage and destruction of 9/11, the proceeds of which would be reinvested to advance projects that educate people about the lessons learned from our response to 9/11
- The preparation of a permanent, multi-screen installation at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum located at Ground Zero and short films about all nine of the subjects filmed by Project Rebirth
- Founding the Project Rebirth Center to develop and provide new multi-media tools to aid the therapists, academics, First Responders and others working with people recovering from disasters and violent conflict, as they confront the trauma of the past and build new futures.

Explains Rafferty: "One of the things that instantly attracted me to Jim and to this project is that he said, whatever happens with the film, I want to reinvest any profits into helping people and especially so that younger generations would remember and learn the lessons that would emerge from responding to 9/11. That was a goal I strongly supported and one to which I knew I could apply my entrepreneurial skills. We began looking into all the people who are out there trying to better understand mass traumas like 9/11— psychologists, doctors, fireman, police, researchers, military, academics. What we found is that people and communities were recovering from the trauma and grief

of mass disasters, but there was very little information being shared about how it was done and what had been learned. We also learned that Jim's interviews were absolutely unique in terms of a public film record of individuals recovering from grief and trauma."

The team saw that they had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help people dealing with grief and trauma by combining the powerful narratives of the film with the professional expertise of first responders, health professionals, researchers, and educational technologists. "I kept hearing from different types of professionals that with all this unique footage we had started capturing in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 that we had something that could really help people, and help them right away," says Rafferty. "After a disaster or emergency, the FEMAs and the Red Crosses come in and do incredible work, but then they leave, and people often continue to suffer psychologically for years. The Project Rebirth Center will offer unique multi-media tools and access to fellow professionals that will be delivered directly to the affected communities, tools that add to the knowledge base and skills of the professionals and people that will be there with them over those years."

One of the outgrowths of these discussions with the academics and mental health professionals is a companion book 'Project Rebirth' based on the film, written by psychoanalyst Dr. Robin Stern and award-winning journalist Courtney E. Martin. It documents the journeys of eight of the REBIRTH film participants and includes some narratives from their journey of recovery that are not included in the documentary.

Both agreed that the key to REBIRTH would be the intrigue and appeal of its human stories – its indelible narratives straight from the hearts of courageous, vulnerable men and women who have been through the worst, yet hold on to an undeniable sense of the possible.

"We had a lot of interaction and discussion as to where the film might be going, and kept meeting for "reality checks" with the 9/11 community and professionals who worked with them. The time-lapse photography was going to be technologically exciting but the more we talked, the more it was clear that the heart of Jim's film was the story of how people move through grief," recalls Rafferty. "It was by following his incredible instincts as a commercial filmmaker that Jim was able to find the perfect balance between creating a movie with the power to move general audiences yet also able to reach a diverse group of people who can use its content to empower and inform."

In many of those "reality check" meetings, people inquired about Whitaker's interview techniques, and have over the years been studied and applauded by leading academics and psychologists alike. Unlike other documentary projects that have gone back into time to reconstruct devastating historical events such as the Holocaust decades after the fact, Whitaker gently and thoughtfully zeroed in on feelings, memories, hopes, disappointments and discoveries in their most

raw and unexamined state first, then slowly revealed the way those reactions evolved with time and perspective.

“The genius of Jim’s concept was in his willingness to be patient and to capture the things that can only emerge over years and years,” observes David Solomon. “He was able to entwine the journey of real people with the rebuilding of the site with the surrounding milieu of national emotions to create an experience of what rebirth is like that has not been seen before.”

Rafferty was deeply moved to see the impact of what Whitaker was capturing on people from all over the world. “My background is in cross-border investment, so I’ve had the opportunity to show footage to people who have no direct connection to 9/11,” he comments. “What strikes me is how much it touches them, how powerful this is even to people who saw these events from far away. You really start to see how grief and loss are a common human bond that ties us together.”

As the entire Project Rebirth mission developed along with the film, support burgeoned around it, providing the resources and finances necessary to complete such a vast and unpredictable undertaking.

“We could not have done it without the financial, logistical and creative support of hundreds and hundreds of people,” summarizes Whitaker. “We are grateful to all of them.”

Those who stepped forward include the project’s founding sponsor, the Aon Foundation, a unit of the leading provider of risk management services, insurance and reinsurance brokerage, human capital and management consulting, and specialty insurance underwriting, which lost 175 employees in the World Trade Center on 9/11; the project’s principal sponsor, OppenheimerFunds, which has been committed to helping lower Manhattan rebuild; as well as the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and charged with the rebuilding and revitalization of the region most affected by the events of 9/11.

In addition, to help develop the Project Rebirth Center, the team has partnered with the NYPD Executive Training Unit and the Arlington County Fire Department, along with two renowned New Media Teaching and Learning Centers at Columbia University and Georgetown University to explore the footage’s potential to inform, enlighten and help professionals prepare for future disasters and better understand the impact of wide-scale trauma on human lives, communities, society and culture.

Interviews

From the beginning, Jim Whitaker knew that he wanted the compelling, heartbreaking and ultimately uplifting interviews in REBIRTH to mirror the imagery of new buildings rising up from the scene of annihilation – to become a pure distillation of the human spirit returning from the brink.

The question at hand was how to do that, how to allow his subjects to feel safe and supported enough to tell their stories in their own way, in their own time.

He made the decision to keep the interviews as free from distractions as possible. He shot his subjects alone, against a plain black background, vast and dark as empty space, and utilized a minimalist aesthetic without any excess or stylization. Whitaker even eschewed labeling his subjects with their names or occupations, placing the primacy of their experiences above everything.

“I wanted no narration, no visual or any other distractions from their emotional state,” he explains. “Over time, I think it allows the audience to develop a very direct intimacy with them. I didn’t include their names because I wanted to turn off any opportunities to objectify what you were hearing in their voices and seeing in their faces. I always wanted the film to operate as a mirror, and that meant presenting their stories in as honest and as a pure a way as I possibly could.”

He continues: “I was also keenly aware that the subjects would change over the years of filming –and I think that this intimate connection with their faces helps you to feel them aging, growing, evolving, and moving forward through time. I really liked that idea.”

Whitaker began by looking for subjects who would be up to the rigors of filming, narrowing the field down initially to a group of ten, though in the midst of editing the footage down to feature-film length, REBIRTH would focus on only five of that group.

“I was looking for as a diverse group of people as I could find, each with different backgrounds and different struggles, each facing different kinds of grief in completely different ways,” he explains.

Once the final group committed to the project, they never looked back, says Whitaker. “Their courage and generosity was extraordinary,” he says. “They were so giving and willing to be open. Each of them are truly amazing people and I felt lucky to get to know them.”

Whitaker set each of the participants at ease with his open-ended ground rules. “I told them right away that I wasn’t a reporter and I wasn’t looking for any particular sound-bite or story,” he explains. “I told them that I just wanted to have a conversation. A lot of it to me was just being ready to listen and asking any questions that I was curious about. I wanted them to feel like they could talk about the things they were thinking privately, the kinds of things that run through your mind in the morning when you’re all alone taking a shower, and that’s what happened.”

What also happened is that Whitaker began to see each of their lives shifting in unpredictable and often awe-inspiring ways. A woman who lost her fiancé got married and honored her loss by

integrating it into a new family. A son discovered his mother's Wall Street career wasn't the path for him, but that he could honor her by being true to himself. An injured survivor emerged from a series of health crises to realize she could be comfortable in her changed skin.

"I was always aware of how each of the subjects was evolving," says Whitaker. "It was around the 4th or 5th year that I saw each one of them making some kind of small, medium or large leap forward towards something. There was a new feeling, a kind of settling of emotions. I could sense they were moving into a new place. That was exciting. I always felt the journey would announce its own ending, and that's exactly what happened."

Adds David Solomon: "There were so many surprises that we could not have anticipated – marriages, births, big life changes. What was also surprising and beautiful to see is how vulnerable and open the subjects allowed themselves to become during the filming. They each hit a kind of bottom before beginning to emerge and I think that is something not only unusual to see on film, but also of tremendous value."

Whitaker acknowledges that he could not have known in the beginning that the people he followed would find their way back from the depths of despair – yet he always believed they would. "We were recording history so there was no way to know how things would turn out, and the audience can't be sure, either," he notes. "But I always had a feeling that no matter how difficult things were, no matter what our subjects were going through at that time, that the resilience would be there, that there would come down the road a return to life and the joy of moving forward."

Time-Lapse

When Jim Whitaker first approached director of photography Tom Lappin with the idea of REBIRTH, it was unclear how such a massive photographic undertaking could even be approached. The two had been good friends since meeting on John Waters' film HAIRSPRAY (Whitaker assisting craft services; Lappin as a camera loader), and had both gone on to accomplished filmmaking careers. But neither could ever have imagined anything like what they were about to embark upon.

"I remember asking Tom, 'Have you ever done time-lapse photography for more than a day? How about a year? How about ten years?,'" laughs Whitaker. "We knew it would be unlike anything that had been done before but Tom just rose to the challenge."

Although there exists a long tradition of innovative, time-lapse documentaries, including Walt Disney's 1950s classic THE SECRET OF LIFE, Godfrey Reggio's evocative cult favorite KOYAANISQATSI and Ron Fricke's ambitious earth history CHRONOS, the size and scope of REBIRTH were entirely unprecedented, becoming the largest project of its kind.

Lappin would ultimately have to engineer his own completely original, 14-camera system -- one spread across the Ground Zero site and capable of rolling 24 hours a day, while enduring exposure to summer's heat and winter's freezes, and never interfering with a hectic construction site.

Early on, Lappin made the decision to use 35mm film, because it remained the highest visual state-of-the-art in 2001 and would ensure maximum quality and durability for preserving the record. (A different reason impelled the team to shoot the interviews with digital cameras -- the need to be able to shoot continuously for hours, allowing the subjects the emotional room to tell their stories without any interruptions.)

The director of photography began with cameras designed by the Mitchell Camera Corporation, founded in 1919, for military applications -- cameras that shoot one frame of film every five minutes. Working with the project's experienced Technical Director, Andy Nelson, Lappin then outfitted the cameras with specially designed electronic controls and a variety of lenses, providing both close-up and wide-angle views. The team then crafted unique housings using titanium-surface glass windows to reduce unwanted glare, and added miniature heaters and dehumidifiers to keep the cameras functioning happily in tough weather conditions. (Four of the camera units are solar-powered.) They also designed the system so that individual cameras could be moved, sometimes mere inches, to accommodate progress in construction.

Kodak donated the film stock for the system, while Deluxe Laboratories donated the processing and Ascent Media offered post-production services.

The biggest challenge has come in maintaining the system, which requires the film be reloaded every 20 days, a process that can take up to 8 hours, which is considerable when you realize that 20 days of filming translates into just four minutes of actual footage. But the costs in human labor were well worth the results, which evoke a powerful, but almost meditative response in the viewer.

"It's an extraordinary system," Whitaker says, "and it will allow audiences around the world to experience the feeling of the new buildings at World Trade Center rising up around them. The amount of work and sweat that has gone into it is monumental, but I think everyone involved has been awed by the chance to capture this part of the story."

Image & Sound

With nearly 1000 hours of raw footage at hand -- footage that could never be captured again -- it would take Jim Whitaker a year and a half of intensive creative work in the editing room to weave

together all the elements of REBIRTH into a single, compacted 2-hour experience. “It was an immense endeavor, and I have to mention that my wife and kids sacrificed a lot during the entire production,” the director notes.

It was during the final editing that Whitaker solidified his decision not to include any of the now culturally ubiquitous archival imagery from the day of 9/11 in the film. “There was some risk to doing this, but I felt it was the right choice,” he says. “My instinct was always to focus on the people’s experiences that began after the images that we have all seen. I decided to use a dark screen instead, so that each viewer could bring his or her own emotions and remembrances to the experience of watching the film.”

With its contrast of hypnotically austere and rapidly blossoming images, Whitaker also knew that the film would require a musical score that could underline the visuals with matching strains of stark emotion and lyricism rising towards a subtle beauty. Several people suggested to him that there was one composer whose deft sensibilities might be up to the task: New Yorker Philip Glass, who is widely considered among the most influential composers of our times and has written award-winning scores for numerous films, winning the Academy Award® for THE HOURS.

“Some mutual friends reached out to Philip and then I sent him a personal letter asking him if he would simply watch the film,” recalls Whitaker. “At the time, no one had seen the entire thing before, so my very first screening was for Philip Glass. He watched it, gave me a very nice compliment at the end, and shortly thereafter, sent me an e-mail saying he was prepared to write the score.”

Over the next several months, Whitaker continued to collaborate with Glass, as the score made its own journey towards transcendence. “Philip really just got it,” says Whitaker. “He had a feeling for the imagery on the screen and understood the themes in a deeply musical way. His score is so beautiful – he gets to the heart of the film’s sadness but then moves to a place where hope comes in and the engine of rebuilding starts up. Working with him was one of the most amazing experiences of my career.”

For Whitaker, the collaboration with Glass was one of many from REBIRTH that will stay with him forever.

“There were so many hundreds of people who dedicated their time, energy and emotions to the film,” he concludes. “That’s why one of the things that moves me most in watching the film is the credits – because you see how many people contributed passionately to making this happen. On a personal level, the whole process helped me to learn a lot, not only about the acceptance that comes after a great loss, but also about how hope emerges when people come together. The film is about

memories and feelings that must continue to be honored, but it is also about the journey to a better place that so many have made.”

For more information please see www.projectrebirth.org

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REBIRTH

ABOUT THE SUBJECTS

TANYA

*“The truth is that you don’t move on.
It’s something that’s always there . . . just kind of like . . . it’s there.”*

Tanya was about to be married to the love of her life, a New York City First Responder named Sergio, when he was killed in the line of duty on September 11, 2001. A vivacious woman in her 30s, of Filipino and German background, Tanya’s world was shattered when she lost the man she calls her “soul mate” in the midst of planning for their wedding and life together. Rocked by heartbreak and visions of what might have been, Tanya takes unforeseen turns as she begins to integrate her unflagging devotion to Sergio into a new life and unexpected new love.

TIM

*“He’s screaming in my ear through his mask, ‘let’s go brother, you got it, you got it!’ . . .
That right there describes our relationship . . .
I knew he was there for me and he knew I was there for him.”*

Tim moved to New York to be part of what he considered to be the boldest and most revered Fire Department in the world: the NYFD. At a young age, he moved rapidly up the ranks, and soon became best friends with his much-admired mentor, Captain Terry Hatton of the elite Rescue 1. Both were called to the scene of the World Trade Center on 9/11, where Terry greeted Tim with a warm hug and kiss on the cheek, before they each went off into separate buildings. Soon after, Tim saw World Trade Center One collapse, knowing that Terry was deep inside, leaving Tim to grapple with survivor’s guilt, questions about how to continue to do what he loves, and memories of an incredible friendship.

BRIAN

*“The bottom of the pit is a spiritual place . . . it will give you strength or energy.
That’s the way I look at it.”*

Brian, a New York City construction worker, was engaged to his wife at the top of the World Trade Center and had beautiful memories of the soaring towers. But on 9/11 he lost his youngest brother, a firefighter, when the towers fell. Driven by the urgent need to do something, Brian immediately went down to the site to see if he could be of any help in the massive search and rescue effort. He stayed long past the clearing of debris, to begin the rebuilding. Over the years, the Ground Zero pit becomes a kind of second home to Brian, a place of both reverence and renewal, as he is

named a project manager for the reconstruction of the World Trade Center and discovers both the city's grit and his own hard-fought resilience.

NICK

"I was just holding this baby sparrow in my hand . . . it was something that cannot be explained. There's no doubt in my mind that my mom was there."

Nick was a high school student with an entire unwritten future ahead of him, when he lost his mother -- the woman he idolized as "the glue of our family" -- who was working in the financial industry on the 104th floor of the World Trade Center on 9/11. He was the eldest of three siblings and one of the top squash players in the country, but his mother's sudden death sent Nick reeling and tore at the fabric of their family. Coming to grips with loss at the same time as he is growing up, Nick sets out on a personal search to find the best way to honor all that his mother meant to him -- a journey that leads him from anger to Yale to Wall Street and from unanticipated self-discoveries to family reconciliations.

LING

"The only thing we said to each other was 'oh my God, we were lucky.'"

Ling, a hard-working mother of three of Chinese descent, worked at the New York State Tax Department. She was on the 78th floor of the World Trade Center when a plane hit the building. Knocked unconscious by the impact, she felt blessed to be among those who escaped the tower with her life, only to later discover she had suffered extensive 2nd and 3rd degree burns across her body. After spending several months in the hospital, Ling begins a challenging, unpredictable, roller-coaster process of recovery -- as she learns to approach her newly altered body and precarious health with an inspiring sense of resolve and love of life in the moment.

REBIRTH

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

JIM WHITAKER (Director/Producer) founded Project Rebirth shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001, and placed the first 35 millimeter time lapse film cameras on March 11, 2002 – the six month anniversary of the attacks. Project Rebirth now has 14 cameras that are documenting the historic rebuilding of the World Trade Center site in 35mm film. Jim has also interviewed nine people who were impacted by the event and has recently spent more than a year and a half to complete the Project Rebirth documentary, which combines the minute-by-minute redevelopment of the site and represents the first long term film record of people coping with grief and trauma. He is currently the Chairman and Producer of Whitaker Entertainment at Walt Disney Studios and a producer of the upcoming *THE ODD LIFE OF TIMOTHY GREEN* from director Peter Hedges.

Previously, Jim was the President of Motion Pictures at Imagine Entertainment and completed notable films, such as, *8 MILE*, *FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS*, *CINDERELLA MAN*, *AMERICAN GANGSTER*, *CHANGELING* and many others. Jim began his career as a documentary filmmaker to raise money for nonprofit organizations. He wrote and directed *LOADED*, an award-winning public service announcement against drinking and driving, in memory of a Georgetown University classmate.

DAVID SOLOMON (Producer) has spent the past ten years working at Forest Laboratories, a New York based pharmaceutical company, where he is currently the Senior Vice President, Corporate Development & Strategic Planning.

Prior to joining Forest, David spent ten years working in the film business in New York and Los Angeles. David spent three years practicing entertainment law at Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison. Then in 1995, David moved to Los Angeles to work as Director of Creative Affairs at Paramount Pictures, overseeing development and production of feature films for the studio. He left Paramount in 1997 to work as an independent producer with Davis Entertainment, based at 20th Century Fox, and in 2003, David produced the feature film *PAYCHECK*, directed by John Woo and starring Ben Affleck and Uma Thurman. David serves on the Board of Directors of Lincoln Center Theater and the Municipal Art Society and on the Executive Board of the Yale Dramatic Alumni Association. David has also served as a member of the Yale University Council Committee on Theater at Yale and has participated in the National Advisory Council for Fine and Performing Arts for Horace Mann School in New York City. David graduated *summa cum laude* from Yale College and received his J.D. from Yale Law School, where he was a Senior Editor of the Yale Law Journal.

TOM LAPPIN (Director of Photography) is a New York based cameraman and has been making films for more than 25 years. He has worked on numerous feature films such as Martin Scorsese's Academy Award® winning THE DEPARTED and GANGS OF NEW YORK. Tom's career has included a variety of films from Meryl Steep's THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA and Jodie Foster's FLIGHTPLAN to Terry Gilliam's 12 MONKEYS. His most challenging film project has been REBIRTH, which he has been working with director Jim Whitaker since the film's inception.

KEVIN FILIPPINI (Editor) began his career working on commercials and a variety of short films, including the Oscar®-nominated short MOST. Inspired by his award winning community service work in Chicago, he transitioned to editing socially and environmentally conscious projects for organizations such as Global Green USA, the Democratic National Committee, and the Brent Shapiro Foundation for Drug Awareness. Documentary credits include: THE DANCE, KISS SYMPHONY, NIHI (A biography of Titus Kinimaka), and JIMI HENDRIX: THE LAST EXPERIENCE.

BRAD FULLER (Editor) began his career as Associate Editor on Errol Morris' first film, "Gates of Heaven." He has worked with Morris several times since including VERNON, FLORIDA, A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME, FAST, CHEAP AND OUT OF CONTROL and STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE. Fuller's other credits include Gary Oldman's NIL BY MOUTH, Nathaniel Kahn's Oscar®-nominated short TWO HANDS as well as EVERY LITTLE STEP and COUNTDOWN TO ZERO which screened last year at Sundance. Brad was the final editor for REBIRTH.

DANIELLE BEVERLY (Field Producer) began her career at a Chicago's PBS affiliate, after graduating with an MFA in Filmmaking from Columbia College Chicago. She has since worked as a Producer and Director for PBS and cable, an independent filmmaker, a Professor in Filmmaking, and a cameraperson on national social issue documentary projects.

As Field Producer for REBIRTH since its inception, Beverly first located the film's subjects, and then worked with the filmmaking team to document the unfolding events in their seven-year journey. Beverly's first documentary feature as Director/Producer/Cameraperson, titled LEARNING TO SWALLOW (2005), follows an artist with bipolar disorder, as she struggles to rebuild her life after a suicide attempt destroys her digestive system. The film premiered in competition at The Silverdocs Documentary Film Festival, and went on to screen internationally, as well as travel to small rural communities on the Southern Circuit film series. Beverly also produced the ITVS International Global Perspectives documentary series TRUE STORIES: LIFE IN THE USA hosted by Danny Glover, which airs in Bahrain, Colombia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malawi, Peru, and other

developing countries. Beverly is currently directing and shooting her social issue documentary that follows a changing Georgia neighborhood over the course of 3 years. She is a Visiting Professor in Filmmaking at The University of Notre Dame, and lives in Chicago.

JOHN ZECCA (Production Sound) has traveled the world recording sound for documentary films for nearly 30 years. He's worked on films exploring topics as varied as China's "open-door" policy, hemophilia in Africa, the American Ballet Theatre's recent visit to Cuba. His work has appeared on PBS, the BBC, and ARTE France. A member of the Cinema Audio Society, John has taught sound and video workshops in India and lectured in sound design at the New School in New York City. He considers his work on *REBIRTH*, in which he followed those profiled in the film for nearly a decade, to be one of the great privileges of his career.

PHILIP GLASS (Composer) has, through his operas, his symphonies, his compositions for his own ensemble, and his wide-ranging collaborations with artists ranging from Twyla Tharp to Allen Ginsberg, Woody Allen and David Bowie, had an extraordinary and unprecedented impact upon the musical and intellectual life of his times.

The operas – “Einstein on the Beach,” “Satyagraha,” “Akhnaten,” and “The Voyage,” among many others – play throughout the world’s leading houses, and rarely to an empty seat. Glass has written music for experimental theater and for Academy Award®-winning motion pictures such as *THE HOURS* and Martin Scorsese’s *KUNDUN* while *KOYAANISQATSI*, his initial filmic landscape with Godfrey Reggio and the Philip Glass Ensemble, may be the most radical and influential mating of sound and vision since *FANTASIA*. His associations, personal and professional, with leading rock, pop and world music artists date back to the 1960s, including the beginning of his collaborative relationship with artist Robert Wilson. Indeed, Glass is the first composer to win a wide, multi-generational audience in the opera house, the concert hall, the dance world, in film and in popular music -- simultaneously.

He was born in 1937 and grew up in Baltimore. He studied at the University of Chicago, the Juilliard School and in Aspen with Darius Milhaud. Finding himself dissatisfied with much of what then passed for modern music, he moved to Europe, where he studied with the legendary pedagogue Nadia Boulanger (who also taught Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson and Quincy Jones) and worked closely with the sitar virtuoso and composer Ravi Shankar. He returned to New York in 1967 and formed the Philip Glass Ensemble – seven musicians playing keyboards and a variety of woodwinds, amplified and fed through a mixer.

The new musical style that Glass was evolving was eventually dubbed “minimalism.” Glass himself never liked the term and preferred to speak of himself as a composer of “music with repetitive structures.” Much of his early work was based on the extended reiteration of brief, elegant melodic

fragments that wove in and out of an aural tapestry. Or, to put it another way, it immersed a listener in a sort of sonic weather that twists, turns, surrounds, and develops.

There has been nothing “minimalist” about his output. In the past 25 years, Glass has composed more than twenty operas, large and small; eight symphonies (with others already on the way); two piano concertos and concertos for violin, piano, timpani, and saxophone quartet and orchestra; soundtracks to films ranging from new scores for the stylized classics of Jean Cocteau to Errol Morris’s documentary about former defense secretary Robert McNamara; string quartets; a growing body of work for solo piano and organ. He has collaborated with Paul Simon, Linda Ronstadt, Yo-Yo Ma, and Doris Lessing, among many others. He presents lectures, workshops, and solo keyboard performances around the world, and continues to appear regularly with the Philip Glass Ensemble.