

## **Kenneth Levis**

Producer, Director, Writer, Editor

Ken Levis has been producing, directing, writing, and editing documentaries for more than thirty years. During that time his films have covered a wide range of subjects, from the arts and world history, to public affairs and current events. They have been broadcast on PBS, ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, the Discovery Channel, and released theatrically. His work has been honored with seven national Emmy Awards, four Peabody Awards, three duPont-Columbia Awards, and a Writers' Guild of America Award, among others. He lives in New York City.



### Selected Credits:

Producer/Director/Writer - "Death Row Stories: Edward Lee Elmore," about a young black man falsely convicted of murder who spent 28 years on death row before being set free. Part of the CNN series *Death Row Stories*. Jigsaw Productions. (2013-2014)

Producer/Director/Writer - "Death Row Stories: John Thompson," about another African-American youth who was convicted of murder in New Orleans and spent 14 years on death row before being exonerated. Part of the CNN series *Death Row Stories*. Jigsaw Productions. (2013-2014)

Producer/Writer - "Alaska Gold," about the battle over the digging of a giant copper and gold mine in the pristine environment of Bristol Bay, Alaska. PBS *Frontline* (2012)

Producer/Director/Writer - "Journalists Under Attack," a history and profile of the Committee to Protect Journalists on the occasion of its 30th Anniversary. (2011)

Senior Producer/Writer - "The Narcotic Farm," a history of the Federal prison/hospital in Lexington Kentucky, the first to treat drug addiction as a medical rather than criminal problem, and temporary home to many of America's greatest jazz artists. PBS (2008)

Producer/Director/Writer - "Struggle for the Soul of Islam: Inside Indonesia," on the rise of Islamic extremism in the world's most populous Muslim nation. PBS (2007)

Producer/Director/Writer - "Addicted to Oil: Thomas L. Friedman Reporting," about the geo-politics of America's energy consumption and alternatives to oil. Discovery Channel (2006)

Producer/Director/Writer - "Does Europe Hate Us?: Thomas L. Friedman Reporting," about anti-Americanism in Europe in the wake of President Bush's re-election. Discovery Channel. (2005)

Producer/Director/Writer - "The Other Side of Outsourcing: Thomas L. Friedman Reporting," about the impact of globalization on Indian society, and its implications for the future world economy. Discovery Channel. (2004)

Producer/Director/Writer - "West Bank Wall: Thomas L. Friedman Reporting," an examination of both sides of the controversy surrounding the wall Israel has built in the West Bank. Discovery Channel. (2003)

Senior Producer/Director/Writer - "Inside North Korea," about the historical and political forces that shape the ongoing crisis. New York Times TV & Discovery Channel. (2003)

Senior Producer/Writer - "Nuclear Nightmares: Losing Control," ninety minute PBS Special about the global crisis of nuclear proliferation, and the growing threat of loose nukes in the age of terror. Part of the PBS series *Avoiding Armageddon*. (2003)

Senior Producer/Director/Writer - "The Real Saddam," about Saddam Hussien's rise to power, and the brutal tactics used to maintain it. New York Times TV & Discovery Channel. (2002)

Producer - "Report From Ground Zero" Two hour Special Presentation commemorating the one year anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy. ABC Television (2002)

Producer/Director/Writer - "Journalists Under Fire," about the Pentagon's policy of limiting press access during the war in Afghanistan. For PBS's *Media Matters*. (2002)

Producer/Writer/Editor - "Trail of a Terrorist" Winner of duPont-Columbia Gold Baton, about Ahmed Ressam, the 'Millennium Bomber,' who tells the inside story of how a terrorist cell operates in North America. For PBS's *Frontline*. (2001)

Producer/Writer/Senior Editor - "Drug Wars," winner of the Peabody Award, Emmy Award, & Writers Guild of America Award. A four hour series tracing the history of the U.S. government's thirty year war against drugs. For PBS's *Frontline*. (2000)

Producer/Director/Writer/Editor - "Evil Rising," the story of Hitler's path to power, from down and out drifter to absolute ruler. Part of the prime-time series *The Century* on ABC, with Host/Narrator Peter Jennings. ABC Television (1999)

Producer/Director/Writer - "Notes from the Ballpark," a behind the scenes look at covering the NY Yankees for the NY Times. For PBS's *Media Matters*. (1999)

Writer/Editor - "Justice for Sale," Emmy nominated *Frontline* about campaign contributions to judicial candidates undermining confidence in our courts. With Bill Moyers. (1999)

Producer/Editor - "Secrets of an Independent Counsel," the case history of an investigation, from the perspective of Independent Counsel Donald Smaltz. For PBS's *Frontline*. (1998)

Producer/Editor - "The \$50,000 Wave," about Big Wave surfers in Northern California, and the dangers of corporate promotions that encourage reckless competitions. For the ABC/News magazine *Out There*. (1998)

Producer/Editor - "The Fixers," about a husband and wife team of political hustlers from Hawaii who became major players in the campaign finance scandals of 1996. For PBS's *Frontline*. (1997)

Producer/Editor - "Navy Blues." 1996 Emmy Award. An investigation of the ongoing turmoil in the Navy in the aftermath of the Tailhook scandal, and the events leading up to the suicide of Admiral Mike Borda, Chief of Naval Operations. For PBS's *Frontline*. (1996)

Co-Producer/Editor - "The Political Education of Maggie Lauterer." Winner of 1996 Peabody Award, duPont-Columbia Award, and Emmy Award for Best Editing. Ninety minute portrait of a Congressional campaign, depicting the trials, tribulations, and humiliations of running for office in North Carolina. Part of the PBS series *Vote for Me: Politics in America*. Center for New American Media. (1996)

Producer/Editor - "Waco: The Inside Story." Winner of 1995 Peabody Award. In depth examination of the standoff at the Branch Davidian compound from the FBI's point of view, detailing key events and decisions that led to its tragic resolution. For PBS's *Frontline*. (1995)

Director/Editor - "George Marshall and the American Century." Emmy Award winner. A feature length biography of the former Army Chief of Staff, Secretary of State and Nobel Laureate for Peace. A PBS Special Presentation. (1991)

Director/Editor - "Mr. Sears' Catalogue," about the impact of the famous mail order catalog on turn of the century America, for the PBS series *The American Experience*. Produced by Mark Obenhaus and Edward Gray. (1989)

Producer/Director/Editor - "Jackie McLean on Mars," about the life and times of the great jazz saxophonist. Mobil Award for Best Documentary. Ken Levis Films. (1983)

Editor - "Winter Dreams," Peabody Award winner. Ninety minute portrait of F. Scott Fitzgerald, for PBS's *American Masters*. Produced by Dewitt Sage. (2001)

Editor - "The Orphan Train" Emmy Award nominee for Best Editing, about the Children's Aid Society's practice of shipping big city orphans to rural communities in the hope of finding a new home. For PBS's *American Experience*. Produced by Edward Gray (1994)

Editor - "Innocence Lost: The Verdict." Winner of 1993 duPont-Columbia Award, and the Grand Prize at Banff Film Festival. Four hour special about one of the largest child sexual abuse cases in U.S. history. Produced by Ofra Bikel. For PBS's *Frontline*. (1993)

Editor - "We Shall Overcome," Emmy Award winner about the history of the civil rights anthem, and the role of music in social movements past and present. Produced by Jim Brown. A PBS Special Presentation. (1988)

Senior Editor - "The Crash," Edward R. Murrow Award winner about the causes and consequences of the global financial crisis of 1998. Produced by Sherry Jones for PBS's *Frontline*. (1999)

Editor - "Sholem Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness," feature length biography of the great Yiddish writer who inspired *Fiddler on the Roof*. Theatrical release. Produced by Joseph Dorman (2010)

Editor - "Martin Scorsese's Personal Journey Through American Movies," a three part series on the history of American films from the perspective of one of America's greatest directors. Produced by the British Film Institute and directed by Martin Scorsese. (1994)

Editor - "Dangerous World: The Kennedy Years." A two hour ABC/News Special about the secret life and policies of JFK. Based on Seymour Hersh's *The Dark Side of Camelot*, with Peter Jennings. Produced by Mark Obenhaus & Edward Gray. (1997)

Editor - "The Vanishing Father," about the effects of single parenting on children and the changing role of fathers. Produced by Dewitt Sage. For PBS's *Frontline*. (1995)

Editor - "Faith Under Fire," about the suppression of religion in Poland and Czechoslovakia under communism, and the role of the underground church in the democratic revolutions of 1989, with President Vaclav Havel. Produced by Dewitt Sage. A PBS Special Presentation. (1992)

Editor - "Miles Ahead: The Music of Miles Davis," biographical documentary about the world renowned jazz artist. Produced by Mark Obenhaus. For PBS's *Great Performances* (1986)

Editor - "Idols of the Game: Love and Money," a two hour documentary tracing the history of the relationship between sports and big business, from Joe Jackson to Michael Jordan. Produced by Oren Jacobi for TBS. (1994)

Editor - "Duke Ellington, Reminiscing in Tempo," about the great American composer, musician and bandleader. Produced by Robert Levi for PBS's *American Experience*. (1990)

Editor - "Child of Mine: Lullabies for All Ages," winner of the Cable ACE Award for Best Musical Special. Produced by Jim Brown for the Disney Channel. (1993)

Editor - "A Vision Shared: All Star Tribute to Leadbelly and Woody Guthrie," a feature length biographical portrait of the legendary singer/songwriters, interwoven with performance of their songs by stars of today's music world. Produced by Jim Brown for PBS. (1988)

Editor - "The Mind Series: Language." Exploring the relationship between language and the human mind, for PBS. Produced by Peter Bull & Vivian Ducat for WNET/13. (1987)

Editor - "Steve Lacy: Lift the Bandstand," independent documentary about the innovative jazz saxophonist. Released theatrically. Produced by Peter Bull (1985)

Editor - *ABC News/Closeup*. Edited numerous documentaries for the network, including:

- "The Fire Unleashed," about nuclear issues confronting society.
- "Growing Old in America," about the problems of aging.
- "The Supreme Court," about shifting trends in the nation's highest court, with Justices Harry Blackmun and William Rehnquist.
- "To Save Our Schools, To Save Our Children," about the crisis in public education. (1984 - 1986)

Editor - "Backstage at the Kirov," feature documentary about the Kirov Ballet Company of Leningrad. Nationwide theatrical release in 1984. Directed by Derek Hart (1983)

New York University/School of the Arts. B.F.A. Summa Cum Laude.