

# FOLLOW THE LEADER

POLITICS ISN'T JUST CHILD'S PLAY



WORLD  
PREMIERES  
AT  
RNC & DNC!

CHANGEWORX IN ASSOCIATION WITH CHANNEL 4 PRESENTS "FOLLOW THE LEADER"  
FEATURING BEN "THE LOYALIST", D.J. "THE BELIEVER" AND NICK "THE IDEALIST"  
MUSIC BY DAVID SCHWEITZER AND ZACK MARTIN SOUND MIX BY ROB DALY AND ADAM SEVERS  
GRAPHICS PRODUCER EMILY BRANHAM CO-EDITOR CARLA RUFF  
DIRECTED, PRODUCED, FILMED AND EDITED BY JONATHAN GOODMAN LEVITT

changeworx



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A REAL LIFE COMING-OF-AGE STORY [WWW.FOLLOWTHELEADERFILM.COM](http://WWW.FOLLOWTHELEADERFILM.COM)

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<http://briangeldin.com/>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Political Coming-of-Age Film *Follow the Leader* to Premiere at RNC & DNC Conventions**

**Convention Screenings Are Kick-Off Events for 'Reality Check' Tour,  
Over 100 Events Will Provoke Meaningful Dialogue Surrounding 2012 Elections**

Film Chronicles Three Years in the Lives of Teen Boys With Presidential Dreams,  
Outreach Campaign Features Unique Episodic Film Presentation with Interactive Voting

Late Senator Ted Kennedy, Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli, Senator John McCain,  
Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Presidential Candidate Mike Dukakis & Former President Bill Clinton  
Appear in Rare Non-Judgmental Film Designed to Appeal to Viewers Across Political Spectrum

**New York, New York August 24, 2012 – Jonathan Goodman Levitt's *FOLLOW THE LEADER***, a real-life coming-of-age story of three traditional American boys with Presidential dreams, announces the launch of the **Reality Check Tour** beginning with premiere events taking place at the Republican National Convention in Tampa and Democrat National Convention in Charlotte. Following the conventions, over 100 college and community events are being mapped out surrounding this year's November elections to encourage more meaningful and reflective conversations about American political realities.

Just one week ago the production company Changeworx decided to forego a traditional film festival launch, and instead to premiere the just-completed film at the National Political Conventions so that the country's "Reality Check" could begin as soon as possible. "Our political dialogue in America is too often either negative or focused on small details that don't really matter," according to Levitt. "We've made a fair-minded film that takes a unique new approach to exploring and sparking discussions about American political realities. The positive political dialogue that the film provokes needs to start as soon as possible."

In *FOLLOW THE LEADER*, sixteen-year-old, high school class presidents **Ben** (The Loyalist from Virginia), **D.J.** (The Believer from Massachusetts) and **Nick** (The Idealist from Pennsylvania) are all conservatives who plan to continue leading their peers as President someday. Over three life-changing years, they split into Republican, Democratic and Independent camps as each reconsiders his lofty ambitions. Growing up at a critical moment for America as well, their lives also force us all to rethink our assumptions about tomorrow's leaders, the impact of 9/11 on them, and the political views of the millennial generation – which are more complicated than most people currently believe. As shocking as "Jesus Camp," as revealing as "American Teen," and as funny as "Spellbound" – *FOLLOW THE LEADER* is the true story of what change means for three young leaders who feel destined to lead the world.

*FOLLOW THE LEADER*'s WORLD PREMIERE will be held on the final afternoon of the Republican National Convention in Tampa, on Thursday, Aug. 30 at 1:00pm. The event's host will be the Improv Theatre, Ybor City (1600 East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Tampa, Florida 33605. *For tickets call 813-864-4000 or www.improvtampa.com. \$8 general admission, \$5 for students/seniors 65+. \$3 additional fee for booking online.*) Microsoft is underwriting a "Conversations with the Next Generation" Town Hall panel discussion the day before in the same venue, making Tampa's Improv Comedy Club an unlikely home for important conversations about millennials at the RNC Convention. Filmmaker Jonathan Goodman Levitt and main participant Nick Troiano will attend screenings at both the RNC and DNC conventions, and both screenings will be followed by Q&A sessions with them.

The PREMIERE at the Democratic National Convention of *FOLLOW THE LEADER* will also take place on the final day of the event, Sept. 6 at 12:30pm at EpiCentre Theaters, located at 210 East Trade Street, Charlotte, North Carolina 28202, 2nd Floor above plaza. The EpiCentre is only a short walk from the DNC Convention Center. The general public can buy tickets by calling 704.688.2400 or at <http://epicentretheaters.com/>. \$7 general admission, \$5 for students/seniors 65+.

Both screenings will also be occasions to publicly announce a variety of further plans, including details about ***FOLLOW THE LEADER:REALITY CHECK INTERACTIVE (FTL:RCI)***, a live transmedia experience featuring *FOLLOW THE LEADER* that will premiere in late September and October in Boston, New York and Washington, D.C. FTL:RCI will also be a “Centerpiece” event during The Paley Center for Media’s DOCFEST (<http://www.paleycenter.org/>) in New York on Oct. 16. FTL:RCI voting technology will also be used for audience participation at a viewing party for the Presidential Debate held following the interactive screening that night.

REALITY CHECK INTERACTIVE is a unique live event that combines a special presentation of *FOLLOW THE LEADER* in “episodes” that alternate with live, facilitated interactive voting sessions. Using keypads linked to participants' demographic information, FTL:RCI allows viewers to engage with the film's characters, political ideas, and each other on a journey of political and personal discovery. Results from questions are shown on an interactive screen in real-time, so that FTL:RCI participants can learn what other viewers who differ from them politically and otherwise really think. FTL:RCI's lead facilitator is collective intelligence expert **Chris Bui**, who has led over 2,000 governmental and civic meetings since getting his start running independently-organized consensus-building Interactive Town Halls during the 1992 Ross Perot campaign. *FOLLOW THE LEADER* itself is uniquely designed to encourage discussions across the political spectrum because it attracts documentary's traditional progressive-leaning audience, and also more conservative viewers who get the relatively rare opportunity to see their views fairly-represented through the main characters on-screen. Rich Tafel (founder of Log Cabin Republicans and Public Squared) calls *FOLLOW THE LEADER* “completely authentic...and without political bias like no film I've ever seen.”

According to Levitt, “After living abroad during 9/11 and for nearly a decade, *FOLLOW THE LEADER* began as a personal investigation into the politics of today's youth, whose contradictory views confused me while teaching in the U.S. Post-9/11. By sympathetically portraying its characters on their own terms, the film provokes us to reexamine both our preconceptions about youth and conservatives, as well as our own political views. But more than that, our aim is to force people to reflect on the entrenched inequalities within the American political system in a different way. The traditional methods of motivating such discussions aren't working – often because such efforts themselves are politically motivated, and because they don't even bring people of all political stripes to the table.”

*FOLLOW THE LEADER* and REALITY CHECK INTERACTIVE are not intended to sway voters to choose a particular party or candidate in the upcoming Presidential election, unlike the new documentary “2016: Obama's America,” which wears its political agenda on its sleeve as it tries to influence the elections, just as Michael Moore's “Fahrenheit 9/11” attempted unsuccessfully in 2004. Unlike these overtly-partisan films, *FOLLOW THE LEADER* instead tries to increase cross-partisan dialogue, decrease political polarization, provoke thoughtful consideration of American inequalities in new ways, and encourage a conversation about tomorrow's leaders. “It's not about choosing a side or about partisan arguments,” says Levitt, “but about having an open mind and surprising yourself.”

At special preview screenings this summer, *FOLLOW THE LEADER* was warmly received at high-profile gatherings of both progressive and conservative activists, a rare feat for any documentary, especially one on such political subject matter. At the Roosevelt Institute's Summer Academy, over 75 progressive student leaders discussed diverse reactions to the film, and how the baseline realities of today's political leadership is rarely considered within the political dialogue. For some “Rooseveltters,” the film humanized those on the “right” who they hadn't understood before and forced them to question their own beliefs. At Grover Norquist's famed “Wednesday Meeting” for conservative activists at the Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), a presentation about the film was also made to an enthusiastic audience. A screening was held at ATR immediately following the meeting that led to a spirited discussion about, among other topics, how tomorrow's generation is redefining what “liberalism” and “conservatism” mean for the future.

Among the many prominent politicians on both ends of the political spectrum making cameos in *FOLLOW THE LEADER* are the late Senator **Ted Kennedy** (his last film); U.S. Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton**; former President **Bill Clinton**; U.S. Senator from Arizona **John McCain**, who ran against Barack Obama for President in 2008; **Ken Cuccinelli**, the Attorney General of Virginia, and a candidate for Governor of Virginia in 2013 who was just named one of Politico's rising stars on the verge of national prominence; **Deval Patrick**, current Governor of Massachusetts, and the second African-American elected Governor of any U.S. state; **Michael Dukakis**, the longest-serving Governor in Massachusetts history, who in 1988 was the Democratic Nominee for President; **Niki Tsongas**, the first woman elected to Congress from Massachusetts in 25 years who now represents the state's 5th Congressional District in the U.S. House; and **Michael Bloomberg**, the billionaire founder of Bloomberg L.P., and current Mayor of New York City.

Changeworx is in the process of following up with colleges and other community groups who have requested screenings, and the Reality Check Tour will run primarily in October and November. Outreach Partnerships are formed with about 20 organizations, including diverse groups such as the Sustained Dialogue Campus Network, Purple States, Mobilize.org, Living Room Conversations and Rock the Vote. The filmmakers are seeking American distribution, and invite any interested parties to request screenings for later in the year on their website. TV broadcast deals for the film have already been agreed in seven foreign countries including Japan (NHK) and the U.K. (C4).

**For more information on FOLLOW THE LEADER and to stay updated on future Reality Check events, visit:**

<http://www.followtheleaderfilm.com/> (Official Website)

<https://www.facebook.com/followtheleaderfilm> (Facebook)

<https://twitter.com/changeworxfilms> (Twitter)

#### **ABOUT THE FILMMAKER:**

*FOLLOW THE LEADER* is **Jonathan Goodman Levitt's** first film made back home in the United States, after a decade working as a filmmaker based in London. His past work as director and/or producer has been primarily funded and shown by European broadcasters including BBC, Channel 4, DR, NRK and SVT. Jonathan's company Changeworx USA LLC is also currently in production on films with international partners in Pakistan and Chile that have received support from funders including Arte, TriBeCa Film Institute, Center for Asian American Media, Ford Foundation, IFP and Women Make Movies. His previous feature *SUNNY INTERVALS AND SHOWERS* (Director / Producer / Editor / Camera, 2006) screened at Film Festivals worldwide including Sheffield, Chicago and One World; aired as part of the BBC Storyville documentary strand; and was nominated for Grierson (British Documentary) and Mental Health Media Awards. Other credits include consulting on a Best Documentary Emmy-winner featuring Stephen Fry, and various roles on several successful short films and multi-screen art installations. Jonathan studied social psychology, political philosophy, and studio art at Stanford, and was a Fulbright Scholar studying at the UK's National Film School (NFTS) in 1999. Since 2008, he has been based in Brooklyn, New York.

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**For interview requests with filmmaker Jonathan Goodman Levitt, please contact Brian Geldin (BGPR) at: 917-549-2953 or [briangeldin@gmail.com](mailto:briangeldin@gmail.com). Visit BGPR at <http://briangeldin.com/>. High-Resolution Production Images and Film Clips are available upon request.**

Changeworx presents a film by Jonathan Goodman Levitt

## ***FOLLOW THE LEADER***

### **WORLD PREMIERE**

Republican National Convention

Tampa, Florida

IMPROV Comedy Club Theater  
1600 East 8th Avenue (C-112)  
Ybor City  
Tampa, FL 33605

August 30th, 2012  
1:00pm (doors open 12:15pm)  
Lunch orders taken up until 1:00pm  
**Filmmaker & Star Q&A to follow**

For tickets call (813) 864-4000 or visit [www.improvtampa.com](http://www.improvtampa.com)  
\$8 general admission / \$5 students & seniors 65+ / \$3 add'l fee for booking online

*"Completely authentic...and without political bias like no film I've ever seen."  
- Rich Tafel, Founder, Log Cabin Republicans • President, Public Squared*



**FOLLOW THE LEADER** charts the lives of sixteen-year-old high school class presidents **Ben** (The Loyalist from Virginia), **D.J.** (The Believer from Massachusetts) and **Nick** (The Idealist from Pennsylvania) – three traditional boys who plan to continue leading their peers as President someday. Over three life-changing years, they split into Republican, Democratic and Independent camps as each reconsiders his lofty ambitions.

As shocking as "Jesus Camp," as revealing as "American Teen" and as funny as "Spellbound," **FOLLOW THE LEADER** forces us to rethink our assumptions about tomorrow's leaders, the impact of 9/11 on them, and the political views of millennials...which are more complex (and more conservative) than most people currently believe.

*"Levitt intimately captures the coming-of-age stories of three optimistic, idealistic young men who aren't what you'd expect. The film delves deeply into how they navigate political campaigns – and has much to say about adult American politics on a national level."  
- Brian Gordon*

*Artistic Director, Nashville Film Festival • Consultant, Sundance Film Festival & PBS's P.O.V. Series*

See the trailer & learn more:  
[www.followtheleaderfilm.com](http://www.followtheleaderfilm.com)  
[www.facebook.com/followtheleaderfilm](http://www.facebook.com/followtheleaderfilm)  
[www.kck.st/MdPRbF](http://www.kck.st/MdPRbF)  
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see it unfold.