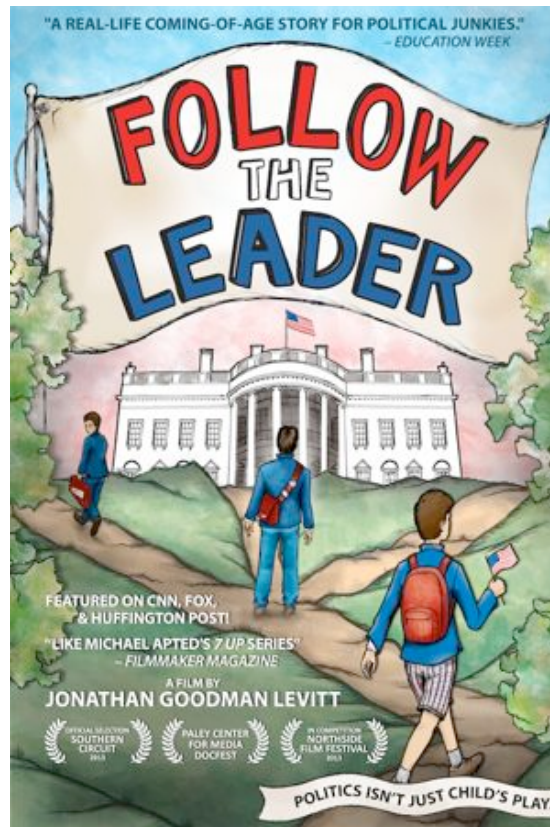


CHANGEWORX, in association with
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Cinedigm, America ReFramed, PBS/World & Tugg.com

present

FOLLOW THE LEADER

a film by
Jonathan Goodman Levitt



72 minutes • 2012 • USA • Color • Stereo • English
Exhibition formats: HD & DCP

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FOLLOW THE LEADER

A provocative and surprisingly funny coming-of-age story about three teen boys who discover that...politics isn't just child's play.

**The Only Film to World Premiere during the 2012 Republican & Democratic Conventions
Featured by CNN, Fox News, Politico, and The Huffington Post
Sold for Distribution in 10 countries across Europe and Japan**

“A real-life coming-of-age story for political junkies” – *Education Week*

“Completely authentic...and without political bias like no film I've ever seen.”
– **Rich Tafel**, President, Public Squared; Founder, Log Cabin Republicans

“Like Michael Apted's *7 Up* Series” – *Filmmaker Magazine*



“**FOLLOW THE LEADER** is a service to history. A fascinating, valuable film. It captures the beginning of the story, which nobody is ever able to do...it knocked me out.”

– **D.A. Pennebaker**, Filmmaker, *Don't Look Back*, *Monterey Pop*, *The War Room*

“**FOLLOW THE LEADER** is fun and provocative. It lets the individual viewer make up his own mind about what to think, rather than telling you what to think. That's what we do [at C-Span], and for a documentary it's much harder to do well. I can't wait to see what happens to the participants next!” – **Brian Lamb**, Founder & Executive Chairman, C-Span

“When we meet the ambitious high school seniors who are the subject of **FOLLOW THE LEADER**, the documentary looks like an examination of the care and feeding of Young Republicans. It quickly becomes an entirely different, and far more interesting, film...As a portrait of baby politicos, **FOLLOW THE LEADER** contains some fascinating insights. Maybe all politics is just like high school, the film suggests. Really, though, the movie is about so much more than politics. Its true subject isn't the vicissitudes of politics, but of life.” – **Washington Post**

OUTREACH PARTNERS

In addition to our U.S. distribution partners Cinedigm (New Video), PBS stations, and Tugg.com, **FOLLOW THE LEADER**'s release is supported by many national and local community partners. Uniquely, our partners are both non-partisan and also partisan across the political spectrum – Our Time, Rock the Vote, Junior Statesmen of America, Student Voice, Mobilize.org, Sustained Dialogue Campus Network, College Democrats & College Republicans. Invited previews of the film have been held at diametrically opposed institutions such as Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform and the Roosevelt Institute. Positive press coverage also spans the spectrum, and includes *Red Alert Politics*, *Firedoglake.com*, *Faultline USA* & *PolicyMic*.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

ADDITIONAL QUOTES FROM PRESS AND EDUCATORS

“Frightening...scary...weird...reveals how and why many politicians are out of touch. No matter what your take is on politics, you should take the time to see this film. It's an important look at how and why we get the politicians we do.” – **Unseen Films**

“Levitt selected three distinctive and personable subjects to follow, and stuck with them long enough to witness their transformation in their key early college years. The result is an absorbing and intriguing look at the next generation of political engagement in a time of intense partisanship.” – **Basil Tsiokos**, *What (not) to doc*

“Insightful, illuminating, and even humorous, **FOLLOW THE LEADER** is riveting viewing – both an intimate drama and a deep sociological portrait of the millennial generation. It doesn't just examine the lives of three boys; it forces you to consider American political realities and inequalities. **FOLLOW THE LEADER** is quietly provocative, guaranteed to make students – and their teachers! – rethink their assumptions about American politics. It needs to be seen broadly – and now.” – **Professor Susan McWilliams**, Pomona College, California

“Jonathan Goodman 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 how adult American politics works on even a national level. A rare story of great appeal no matter your own politics.”

– **Brian Gordon**, Programming Team, Sundance & PBS's P.O.V.
Artistic Director, Nashville Film Festival (2001-2008)

“Funny and insightful...has great verite moments. I really appreciate the way it is about their political journeys (and non-political journeys into adulthood). And I love the fact that it's about something different from the same old documentary fare.”

– **Marshall Curry**, Oscar-Nominated Filmmaker, *If A Tree Falls, Racing Dreams, Street Fight*

“...shines in light of the characters' developing understanding of a path they thought they knew...structured in a manner that compliments the central characters' evolution as individuals.”

– **Andrew Robertson**, *Quip*

“An interesting document on the roots of ideology in the time of hyper-conformity...Harnessing its strength from the diversity of its main characters, **FOLLOW THE LEADER** immediately acknowledges [where] ideology comes from, how it is influenced and how it can change...able to boast admirable success in its objective depictions on a subject too often misled by both sides.”

– **Steve Rickinson**, *Indiewood / Hollywoodn't*

“**FOLLOW THE LEADER** ideally illustrates how leadership is molded out of experience and values. When shown to groups, the film will generate robust discussions. It will stimulate thoughtful reflection on how young people can, in fact, make a difference.”

– **Professor Christopher Arterton**

Former Dean, Graduate School of Political Management, George Washington University

FOLLOW THE LEADER

SYNOPSIS

FOLLOW THE LEADER is a political coming-of-age story about three teenage boys with Presidential dreams.

The film 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). All initially conservatives, they each plan to continue leading their peers along with the rest of the country someday. Over three life-changing years, they split into Republican, Democratic and Independent camps as each reconsiders his lofty ambitions – and rethinks what he truly believes.

Growing up at a critical moment for America as well, their lives also “force us to all rethink our assumptions about tomorrow’s leaders, the impact of 9/11 on them, and their political views of the millennial generation” (*Christian Science Monitor*). As shocking as “Jesus Camp,” as revealing as “American Teen,” and as funny as “Spellbound,” **FOLLOW THE LEADER** is the story of what change means for three young leaders who feel destined to lead the world.

STARRING

Benjamin Trump – The Loyalist. Growing up in a Virginia suburb of Washington, D.C., Ben is surrounded by competition and politics. Earnest yet power-hungry – vowing *never to surrender in the face of adversity* – to what extent can he rise through the ranks of the Republican establishment?

David Beauregard, Junior (D.J.) – The Believer.

“Deeje” lives in a small industrial city on the MA-NH border where his parents have been employed at the local missile plant. A born-again Christian who laments *a national descent into less & less God, less & less morals in society*, to what extent will he sacrifice his purity at the political altar?

Nicholas Troiano – The Idealist. From a rural Pennsylvania town, Nick wants to be President but prefers to observe as a journalist, for now. Decrying *partisanship as a problem that will end American Empire as we know it*, how will he reconcile his “centrist” views with his own ambitions?



FEATURING

FOLLOW THE LEADER features prominent politicians across the political spectrum including:

President Barack Obama; Late Senator Ted Kennedy (his final film appearance); U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton; President Bill Clinton; U.S. Senator from Arizona John McCain; Ken Cuccinelli (Ben's mentor in the film), the Attorney General of Virginia, and Republican Candidate in 2013's hotly contested race for Governor of Virginia; Governor Deval Patrick of Massachusetts; Michael Dukakis (D.J.'s mentor in the film), the longest-serving Governor in MA history; Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, the first MA woman elected to Congress in 25 years; and Michael Bloomberg, New York City's Mayor.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

MAIN CREDITS

(Please note: For filmmaker biographies, see pages 6 & 13)

DIRECTED, PRODUCED, FILMED & EDITED BY
Jonathan Goodman Levitt

CO-EDITOR & STORY CONSULTANT
Carla Ruff

MUSIC BY
David Schweitzer & Zack Martin

GRAPHICS PRODUCER
Emily Branham

RE-RECORDING MIXER
Rob Daly

CONSULTING EDITORS
Adam Zucker, Pagan Harleman & Nancy Kennedy

COLOR CORRECTION
Pedro Padilla

DESIGN & ANIMATION
Dave Tecson, Cassidy Gearhart & Emily Branham

FEATURED SONG
"Don't Say Oh Well"
Written by Christian Zucconi, Ryan Rabin, Hannah Hooper & Sean Gadd
Performed by Grouplove

PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH
Channel Four Television, UK

Sveriges Television (SVT), Sweden
Commissioning Editor Axel Arnö

Norsk Rikskringkasting (NRK), Norway
Commissioning Editor Tore Tomter

Danmarks Radio (DR), Denmark
Commissioning Editor Mette Hoffman Meyer

DEDICATION
FOR MY MOM • and other teachers • who lead by example

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FOLLOW THE LEADER

ABOUT FILMMAKER JONATHAN GOODMAN LEVITT

FOLLOW THE LEADER is Jonathan's first feature made in the United States, after a decade working as a filmmaker and producer based in London. His work has been funded and shown by BBC, PBS, and over a dozen international broadcasters. Jonathan's company Changeworx is also producing new films set in Pakistan, Chile & Cameroon that have been supported from Ford Foundation, TriBeCa Film Institute, IFP, Center for Asian American Media & Women Make Movies. His previous feature *Sunny Intervals and Showers* (Director, Producer, Editor, Camera, 2006) screened at Festivals including Sheffield, Chicago & One World, and was nominated for awards including a Grierson (British Documentary) after its broadcast within Nick Fraser's BBC Storyville strand. Other credits include consulting on a Best Documentary Emmy-winner, and various roles on award-winning short films & multi-screen art installations. Jonathan studied social psychology, political philosophy & painting at Stanford, and was a Fulbright Scholar at the UK's National Film School (NFTS) in 1999. He has been based in Brooklyn, New York, since 2008.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

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. But rather than trying to define millennial opinion generally, my approach was to follow teens who had signed on wholeheartedly to the "War on Terror" as they became adults. Ben, D.J. & Nick's stories add new pieces to a media picture that typically assumes millennials are simply "liberal" – without asking what that means for today's young people. While the boys' political obsession and initial conservatism may place them in a minority, their stories mirror the political experience of millions of teens at the crossroads of tradition and change.

Born as Reagan left office and the Berlin Wall fell, Ben, D.J. & Nick were raised to believe in an American exceptionalism that *was shattered on 9/11 when we learned that America was great but not invincible* (in Ben's words). As they finish high school and begin college, the film shows moments in their lives during what are typically critical years for the crystallization of political beliefs. As the characters took different paths politically, the film became less about political positions and more about the universal process of becoming politically conscious and mature.

While a classical coming-of-age story, the film also takes the novel and provocative approach of featuring boys who reflect "traditional" American leaders, rather than a diverse cross-section of youth who we often envision as tomorrow's leaders. In this way, **FOLLOW THE LEADER** asks us to reexamine American political realities and entrenched inequalities that prevent our leaders from more closely reflecting America itself. By sympathetically portraying its characters, however, it also encourages a reexamination of our preconceptions about conservatives and young people, and of our own political views. When only 16% of millennials favor affirmative action (Harvard Institute of Politics, 2013) – and a majority of white millennials see reverse discrimination to be "as big a problem as discrimination against minorities" – does President Obama's re-election truly signal the ascension of a color-blind politics? Does growing support of gay rights and immigration reform obscure an increasingly conservative reality in other areas? As we move toward another election battle, **FOLLOW THE LEADER** begs us to move past minutia of the modern political news cycle, and to consider instead who we can expect to be America's new President...in 2040 and beyond.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

SEVEN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS **ANSWERED BY DIRECTOR JONATHAN GOODMAN LEVITT**

- (1) What motivated you to make the film?
- (2) Can you describe what drew you to each of the main participants in the film?
- (3) How do the main participants act as avatars in the context of American politics?
- (4) What challenges have you faced in getting the film made and distributed?
- (5) Can you describe how your Reality Check Interactive live events engage viewers?
And what does the future hold for Reality Check?
- (6) What role do you think today's youth play in politics?
- (7) Can you provide updated biographies for the three main characters in the film?

(1) What motivated you to make the film?

Jonathan Goodman Levitt (JGL): I was living and working in London for for about a decade, including a couple of years before 9/11 and several years after. The summer after 9/11, while I was teaching in New Jersey at the Governor's School held at Monmouth University, I was struck that the student leaders there had changed in some way compared to students I'd taught prior to 9/11, in terms of their politics and outlook on world affairs.

So my aim when starting to research ***FOLLOW THE LEADER*** nearly eight years ago was to better understand a new generation of Americans who developed their ideas about what it meant to be American in the wake of 9/11. I really felt like the people growing up in the wake of 9/11 here, and just people generally in the U.S., were getting a radically different look at current events compared to anyone from outside the U.S. That's still an idea that most Americans are resistant to considering, but it was an idea that preoccupied me when I was considering moving back home. What did it mean to be a kid growing up in this new America, and what it meant for them to be American today? I was still a proud American even when I lived abroad, but developed a certain outsider's perspective as a result of basically becoming an fully-fledged adult while being away. Before that, I was on a path to do a PhD in Psychology and stopped after a master's, but those years studying social psychological processes also stay with me, and continue to strongly influence how my work is made. So this film came out of those two motivations, wanting to understand what it meant to be American for those growing up in the wake of 9/11, and wanting to understand the psychology behind it.

The guys in the film were all born the year the Berlin Wall fell, and in 2001 they were all 12-year-olds – which is around when most people are able to start thinking more abstractly about politics and the world. I don't think we understand our recent history well at all as Americans, or that we've begun to come to terms with the mentality of perpetual war with which young Americans have grown up. The bigger picture of what's actually happening here politically is lost in the minutia of the news cycle or flawed macro-analysis that claims fantasies like “the liberal revolution sweeping the country that elected President Obama.” Getting to know the first generation of Americans who didn't know what “America” meant before this new chapter for our country began is a way of answering the question of what the “idea” of America means today.

(2) Can you describe what drew you to each of the main participants in the film?

JGL: I met D.J. (David Junior) first, and he was immediately charismatic. He was just a charming, and charmingly goofy, kid who had all these great ideals. He was an inspiring, contagiously energetic guy to be around. That was by far the easiest choice. He was just larger than life at 16. I was really impressed with how he operated as an adult politician the first times we met – like, he would get phone calls from actual adult politicians asking for his endorsement, and he would talk with them as someone who had the very real power he had to influence a local election. He was coming off running the campaign for the top vote-getter in the last City Council election, I think. I met him at a leadership training conference on the very first day of our shoot when we had filmed earlier in the day with Ted Kennedy...and then here was this kid who didn't necessarily look the part, but certainly played it very well.

When I first met him Ben, I asked him one question, and I think he spoke for 15 minutes without stopping, and he told me everything about his life as if he were on the news. It was immediately apparent that Ben had a lot going on “professionally,” but his parents were also going through a divorce, as mine had when I was his age. He had a very interesting personal motivation to go into politics that partly related to his father's leaving his mom; he wanted to prove his father wrong in a way, but the experience also had a direct impact on his personal political values. In fact, when I met Ben, one of the first politicians he told me he admired was the “honorable Barack Obama, the great senator of the state of Illinois,” and within weeks his openness to the politicians on the Democratic side had already changed. Ben seemed very plugged into politics in his local area and was incredibly ambitious. He was a star – as even his eventual mentor in the film Ken Cuccinelli (a rising Republican star himself, who's now Virginia's Attorney General and the likely Republican nominee for Governor in 2013) used to say. For a wannabe politician, he was also disarmingly honest and earnest, and I wanted to see how Ben worked through his personal challenges as he became an adult.

Nick was the last character I settled on because in many ways it wasn't clear that he would be open enough to let us film him. I was impressed by what he did in high school. He was that kid who everyone in town has high hopes for, the All-American leader who carries the hopes of his small town for everyone. But whether he would be willing to be open to the camera – so that he would be a sympathetic character to viewers as he was to me personally – was unclear at the beginning. Before I decided that he would definitely even be in the film, Nick and I got to spend time filming and just hanging out with his family on several occasions. Eventually he trusted me enough to tell his story. At the end of the day, Nick is like many of the best characters in documentaries because he's a reluctant participant. As a viewer, you're getting special access to a private person because they have a relationship with the filmmaker, not because he or she is someone who has a strong desire to have their lives filmed all the time...even if he would enjoy being interviewed for the Nightly News. In the end, Nick's story is certainly a personal one, but it also became a real entry point into public opinion generally. His journey, more than the other guys', inhabits the nation's journey. He was and continues to channel a lot of what's happening with the attitudes for many among the millennial generation. (Note: On the occasion of the film's U.S. Premiere, our publicist arranged for Nick to publish a reflective piece about his participation in the film on the popular PolicyMic site: <http://bit.ly/1245nx0>)

(3) How do the main participants act as avatars in the context of American politics?

JGL: The boys' stories are meant to be evergreen. How they grow up represents the process of figuring out what you believe politically speaking, and what you want to do in your life, that everyone goes through – even if we all don't start off wanting to be President. But in the context of our current political system, there are at least a few specific readings that help spark some interesting discussions. The boys are all white Protestants, and two of the three are relatively well-off while growing up, so they can be seen as avatars for how our traditional American leaders are responding to demographic shifts in the country. We did in fact become a majority-minority country and elected our first African-American President while we were filming. Similarly, they all started Republican before splitting into Republican, Democratic and Independent camps in the film – so they also provide some insights into the splintering of the Republican Party and its future. Religion and the media also play a significant role in the film and its plot twists, as they do in our politics.

In a wider sense, the boys' stories of coming-of-age, of disillusionment, mirrors what the country's been experiencing over the past years since the recession began. Many people across the political spectrum are disappointed by President Obama's failure to live up to impossibly high expectations, but in some sense have come to accept reality – like we all do in the process of growing up. High hopes are dashed, but hope itself remains (for most of us, at least). And whether you agree with the boys' politics or not, they do provide hope for tomorrow's generation because they undoubtedly care; they undoubtedly are engaged politically; they are decent and aim to stay that way. And yet at times they have an innocence, an ignorance or an overconfidence that haunts them...much like many Americans, and at times our leaders.

(4) What challenges have you faced in getting the film made and distributed?

JGL: Over the last eight years, people in general have really been suspicious about what we're doing. We are not pushing a political point-of-view with the film, and so everyone thinks we're against them because we're not for them. Everyone might think I'm for the other side, but all along my aim has been to make a fair-minded film about all opinions represented that accurately portrays the points-of-view of the participants. Frankly, people have also just had a very hard time grasping why the film is about three white boys, because they imagine it's somehow not reality; they have a hard time dealing with the bald fact that it's primarily white men who still run the country politically, given our political system's slow pace of change. It's odd, but a “traditional” way to make this film within the paradigm that many filmmakers and channels operate would have been to film a multicultural set of teenage leaders, maybe even without a white boy. That's fine – but the “traditional” ways of sparking the political conversations we need aren't working for us, and they're too often preaching to the converted only...leaving the people whose minds filmmakers want to open outside of the conversation entirely.

On a basic level, I think Americans need to react and respond to the baseline political realities we have. There's such a poor discourse now because everyone has their own set of facts and relies on different assumptions. So I think we need to be making media that actually attracts different people for different reasons, so they can then discuss it and arguably decrease attitude polarization. On some level it comes down to misconceptions among many people, and

particularly among many industry “gatekeepers” who decide what films get made & seen, about how attitude change actually works. It was just a nightmare getting the industry to understand my approach in the U.S. prior to completion – which is why all of our financing was from foreign broadcasters (except for our Kickstarter campaign). The idea is that documentaries are about understanding where people are coming from, whether they “agree” with the film participants' attitudes or not; but films that get support often don't adhere to that model. On politicized subjects, there's a political correctness among many who have the power to effectively kill film projects here that reflects the skittishness of our politics in general. Leaving the question of whether they are actually worthy films aside, political screeds that are in agreement with the views of the documentary establishment often do win support, while more non-judgmental approaches like ours are viewed with suspicion for lacking a “strong point-of-view.”

That said, it's always been more of a problem getting a “yes!” from decision-makers than from individual viewers themselves, who just enjoy **FOLLOW THE LEADER** as a good story. And now that the film is done, people who railed against it are often coming around to see where I was coming from in the first place. Anger toward our process and the film rarely remain after people actually see it, but some people stay angry at the characters themselves – which I hope will lead to productive action. That's what art should do, and I would be very disappointed in myself if my work didn't provoke strong reactions in people. We now also have supporters across the political spectrum, who may come to the film for different reasons but often walk away having had their expectations upended. The political conventions aside, we're now working with the Roosevelt Institute – that works to continue Eleanor Roosevelt and FDR's work, which has as one of its signature accomplishment much of our social safety net such as social security. And we've also screened the film at the American for Tax Reform, a conservative group run by Grover Norquist. Even groups (and media outlets) that clearly disagree are seeing the value in having reflective and thoughtful discussions around the film.

(5) Can you describe how your Reality Check Interactive (RCI) live events engage viewers? And what does the future hold for Reality Check?

JGL: Reality Check breaks the feature documentary **FOLLOW THE LEADER** into five discrete “episodes” that – in the RCI presentation – alternate with collective, facilitated interactive keypad voting sections. What we're doing is leading viewers – who we consider participants – through a journey that allows for deeper engagement, and usually greater fulfillment. All responses (to questions about the characters, their views, participants' own political views and current events) are reported in real-time, split along demographic lines. So everyone gets a “reality check” about what people really think in relation to what they're watching, which complements and highlights their own unique reactions. We premiered the event to great success at The Paley Center for Media last October, on the night of the second Presidential Debate: <http://bit.ly/14ENKab>.

What we're trying to create is really an ideal viewing and learning experience for the film, as well as an argument for why people should come out and see it live in a theater. Young people are a core audience for us, and they're even more open to new modes of storytelling and a viewing experience that promises something different and unpredictable. The earliest work-in-progress screenings of the film we had showed us how differently people reacted to the film given their own political ideologies, and we wanted to find a way to make these responses part of the

experience while people watched. It wouldn't work for a film that tells you what to think, but **FOLLOW THE LEADER** is more open to interpretation, and allows viewers to think for themselves. What we're doing is turning viewers into active participants who each complete the film for themselves as they watch. It's new in this context, but in art in general that's not a new idea at all – we're just explicit about how every person who sees the film is seeing a different film because of what they bring to it. What we want people to do is play this idea out in a wider political context: What do we experience when we watch a politician talking or an political ad on TV? Are each of us really even “seeing” the same thing?

Right now, Reality Check Interactive has been touring as a live event, and it's received off-the-chart ratings from participants – but it's often cost-prohibitive to put on for groups that want to host it. For far wider exposure, we're building a way to experience RCI online and make it available on-demand; and we're talking with funders, broadcasters and online platforms now about making this happen by later this year (or at least well in advance of the 2014 midterm elections). Apart from the inherent pleasure and increased fulfillment from the film experience, we also have serious research questions that we're looking to investigate through the data. For instance, does taking part in the Reality Check Interactive version of **FOLLOW THE LEADER** really decrease political polarization, and increase cross-partisan understanding and dialogue? Does Reality Check encourage people to step back and reconsider their political values, or make them vote differently? And does it impact civic participation over time? We're working with a growing number of academics to make the scientific validity robust; research psychology is part of my own background before moving into filmmaking, so it's not completely out of left field. Rather than simply relying on anecdotal evidence, we'd rather prove that what we're doing works, or at least know to what extent it doesn't. It all goes to a central outreach goal, which is basically to encourage a deeper conversation, to change the political conversation for the better – and to have an impact on the best practices in the engagement work of other filmmakers.

(6) What role do you think today's youth play in politics?

JGL: Young people can play a huge role in politics, and having spent so many years getting to know so many “millennials,” I do feel a lot of hope for the future. Today's millennials will be the ones who make great strides toward solving the major problems our country faces, and they're already leading the way. I'm blown away every day by the energy and talent of Americans half my age across the political spectrum who are running political engagement non-profits, many of which have become our outreach partners for the film's release. It's important for all of us to get to know these people, and to understand them, because their motivations and worldviews are different than members of previous generations in subtle ways.

For one, they're far more comfortable working within politics to create incremental change than generations before them, particularly when it comes to areas where they have obvious expertise like education. Amazing groups we're working with like Mobilize.org, Our Time, Student Voice, Generation18 and SparkAction (along with its offshoot Presidential Youth Council) are working to develop stronger collective voices for young people within our political system nationally. Young people are also redefining basic terms like “liberal” and “conservative” themselves, and groups like The Sustained Dialogue Campus Network are working year-round to facilitate the types of meaningful and reflective conversations that Reality Check Interactive was also created

to provoke. I've also met scores of young people through both our progressive and conservative outreach partners who are making a real impact on public policies that affect us all.

Regardless of who's running the campaigns at the top, many people also fail to realize that for generations it's been young people who are the field workers, the foot soldiers if you will, for political campaigns nationwide. College students and recent graduates who I've met through our friends in the College Democrats and College Republicans are out there every day knocking on doors and calling potential voters during every local, state and national election cycle. Partly because the "youth vote" story that's been covered to death since 2008, I think we all recognize young people can make a difference, but it's young people who are quickest to point out that engagement must extend beyond simply voting. I actually do worry about whether young people will continue voting in the numbers they did in the last Presidential elections; the enthusiasm gap among youth has decreased a lot since 2008, though that's not nearly as alarming as voter suppression efforts that (in light of the recent Supreme Court ruling) may disenfranchise many. In America, power goes to those who are organized, and I think the millennials will be the ones to institutionalize that for young people, such that we'll see groups jockeying to be the AARP of young people, so to speak, in the years to come.

(7) Can you provide updated biographies for the three main characters in the film?

BENJAMIN TRUMP (Main Participant)

Ben is a doctoral student in The University of Michigan's School of Public Health. He also works for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a Risk and Decision Analysis Intern, and on various political campaigns. While an undergraduate and master's student at Carnegie Mellon, Ben contributed to many research projects and shared authorship on several publications. A native of northern Virginia near Washington, D.C., he was a high school Student Body President, and awarded throughout his teenage years for extemporaneous speaking. Academics aside, Ben is passionate about dogs, heavy metal music, and his wife Anna – who he married in June, 2013.

DAVID BEAUREGARD (Main Participant)

Dave ("D.J.") is a graduate of Boston Bible College, and currently studying at the Massachusetts School of Law in Andover, MA. A skilled sermonizer, he and his wife Hillary plan to one day open their own youth ministry in the Boston area. As a teenager, D.J. worked in a variety of roles on political campaigns for city council, mayor, U.S. Congress, Governor, and President. At 15, he was a campaign manager for the first time, and ran the race for the highest vote-getter in the city council race in Methuen, MA. A class president in high school for three years, "The Deeje" loves his family, classic rock, and all things Mr. Bean.

NICHOLAS TROIANO (Main Participant)

Nick is currently finishing his Master's Degree in Government at Georgetown, while also serving as National Field Director for The Can Kicks Back, a Millennial-driven campaign to help solve America's fiscal crisis. Nick's college accomplishments include co-founding both the "SIPS" Fund (a \$1.5 million endowment for young entrepreneurs) and the web platform myImpact. Previously, Nick served as National Campus Director for Americans Elect, for which he organized a network of over 300 college chapters. Active in student government throughout high school and college, Nick is also a dedicated photographer.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

ABOUT THE FILMMAKING TEAM

CARLA RUFF (Co-Editor & Story Consultant)

Carla Ruff is an award-winning documentary editor and filmmaker based in Brooklyn. In recent years, she has been a producer and editor for TV's *Dan Rather Reports*, and worked as an artist and motion-graphics designer with over 30 credits on a variety of video projects and art installations. Her documentary editing credits include *Daughters of Wisdom* (Best Documentary, Brooklyn Film Festival); *Steve Earle: Just an American Boy*; and *The Never-Ending Path*. She has a degree in film from NYU and is a Fellow in Film with the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA). Carla provided incisive story analysis at a vital stage in the editing process, and later joined the team as Co-Editor – some of the film's most dynamic sequences are thanks to Carla's unique skills and perspective, and her passion for keeping things moving through no-nonsense storytelling.

DAVID SCHWEITZER (Composer)

David is one of the most sought-after, award-winning and eclectic composers working in the United Kingdom today. He has scored well over 100 films since attending Oxford and the UK's NFTS. His *Charlie and Lola* score won a Royal Television Society Award, unprecedented for a children's program. David's credits include many high profile series for Discovery, National Geographic & BBC. Also a successful singer-songwriter, David and his wife Mary were commissioned by the Tate Gallery to create the best-selling *ArtSongs* CD. **FOLLOW THE LEADER** marks David's second collaboration with Jonathan, after their work together on *Sunny Intervals and Showers*, on which David exceeded all expectations by nailing every song and cue he was asked to write on his first attempt! David and Mary are also the parents of four young children (including twin babies).

ZACK MARTIN (Composer)

Zack Martin has been a professional musician for the past 16 years. Zack's other recent documentary scoring work includes the celebrated feature *The Way We Get By*, for which he composed all music. But he's still best known for being the driving force behind the band Carrigan, which has a following around New England, especially in the Boston area. In 2006, Carrigan released its second album *Young Men Never Die* on Boston's Radar Recordings. Zack has previously performed at Austin's SXSW music festival, and toured with bands including Muncie, Indiana's BRAZIL, Drowningman, and The Cancer Conspiracy. His studies have included percussion and guitar in jazz, rock and experimental music. Zack's rock- and punk-infused tracks amp up the youthful energy in **FOLLOW THE LEADER** and mirror the main characters' passion for and sense of wonder toward politics.

EMILY BRANHAM (Graphics Producer)

Emily is a filmmaker based in Brooklyn, New York. Her short documentary, *Legend: A Film About Greg Garing*, won the jury prize for Best Film in the International Documentary Challenge (2010) at Hot Docs in Toronto, and screened at Sheffield Doc/Fest (UK) and IDFA (The Netherlands). She is currently in production on her first long-form documentary, *Bebe*, about the rise and struggles of an exceptional drag queen from Cameroon, BeBe Zahara Benet. Emily has directed music videos for artists including Jonatha Brooke, Eleni Mandell and The Muckrakers. Originally from Minneapolis, Minnesota, she studied Radio, TV and Film at Northwestern University. In 2002, Emily moved to New York City where she works primarily as a freelance post-production and visual effects producer. For **FOLLOW THE LEADER**, Emily assembled and managed a visual effects team that included acclaimed designers/animators Cassidy Gearhart and Dave Tecson (one of the creators of After Effects), along with additional talent from post-production facilities Edgeworx Studios and The Mill.