



a documentary feature by DAVID RIDGEN & NICOLAS ROSSIER
MUSICS by JUDD GREENSTEIN
USA/CAN, 84-minutes

Presented by Baraka Productions & Ridgen Film

www.americanradicalthefilm.com

AMERICAN RADICAL: THE TRIALS OF NORMAN FINKELSTEIN

directed by DAVID RIDGEN and NICOLAS ROSSIER

SYNOPSIS

American Radical is the probing, definitive documentary about American academic Norman Finkelstein. A devoted son of holocaust survivors, ardent critic of Israel and US Mid-East policy, and author of five provocative books including, "The Holocaust Industry", Finkelstein has been steadfast at the center of many intractable controversies, including his recent denial of tenure at DePaul University. Called a lunatic and disgusting self-hating Jew by some, and an inspirational street-fighting revolutionary by others, Finkelstein is a deeply polarizing figure whose struggles arise from core questions about freedom, identity and nationhood.

From Beirut to Kyoto, the filmmakers follow Finkelstein around the world as he attempts to negotiate a voice among both supporters and critics, providing an intimate portrait of the man behind the controversy while giving equal time to both his critics and supporters.

ABOUT NORMAN FINKELSTEIN

Both of Finkelstein's parents were Nazi Holocaust survivors who were active in the Warsaw ghetto uprising. His mother, Maryla Husyt Finkelstein survived the Majdanek concentration camp, and his father, Zacharias Finkelstein, survived the Auschwitz concentration camp and the Auschwitz Death March.

Finkelstein's work has earned him praise and condemnation from lay-people, intellectuals, and scholars. He has written six notable books on the Middle East conflict and the Holocaust, including the international bestsellers *The Holocaust Industry* and *Beyond Chutzpah*. Finkelstein is completing his seventh book - *A Farewell to Israel: The Coming Break-up of American Zionism* - arguing that American Jewish support for Israel is beginning to wane.

Finkelstein has been mentored by notable linguist and political scientist Noam Chomsky and his late wife Carol. He is a close friend of Canadian Nazi Hunter Ruth Bettina Birn and Award winning investigative journalist Allan Nairn. He often appears on the award-winning radio and television program *Democracy Now*.

STATEMENT OF THE DIRECTORS

For us, Finkelstein is the consummate documentary subject: a complex firebrand, principled to the point of self-ruin at the apex of several of the world's largest conflicts. A man who has never been asked to appear on mainstream American television, but who regularly appears - always creating controversy - in the international media. Norman Finkelstein's life is about focus, through a prism of

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his upbringing by Holocaust survivors. The dogged, often self-destructive pursuit of his principles and foes can both inspire and repel. At once anti-hero, clown, and merciless scholar, Finkelstein creates as many storms as he enters. Few will go where he does. A Jew deliberately walking into Hizbollah headquarters, into a Palestinian refugee camp, into a room filled with those who vehemently oppose his views, to speak his mind. And to what end? When radicals collide, does it create understanding? Some would argue, that sometimes it does. Others would claim that Finkelstein's principled but too often bitter advocacy does much to discredit the cause of a just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Audiences can decide for themselves.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS AND CREW

David Ridgen – Director and Producer

David Ridgen is a filmmaker, writer and director whose multi-award-winning work has been screened and acclaimed around the world.

His first major documentary 'Canadian Images of Vietnam' was acquired by the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography at the National Gallery of Canada, being the only known production to critically document Canadian involvement in the US war in Vietnam. In 1996, David made his first feature drama, 'Memento', launched on a riverboat to popular Canadian acclaim. His feature-length documentary about Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, 'On the Borders of Gardens' (2000), won the prestigious Canadian Association of Journalists Award. His film 'Buried Alive' (2003) about people on a spiritual journey who bury themselves alive over the summer solstice, won the Bronze Plaque Award at the Columbus International Film and Video Festival.

David was instrumental in creating a unique style and form for the hard-hitting documentary tape unit of CBC's successful Sunday morning program CBC News: Sunday.

In 2004 David produced, directed, and shot, 'Return to Mississippi', the first major documentary to look at the possibility of a trial for the Mississippi Burning murders in 1964. And in 2005, David wrote, directed, produced and shot 'Mississippi Cold Case', an investigative documentary about an unsolved civil rights case in Mississippi. The production of this film broke international headlines and caused the case of two black 19 year olds murdered by the KKK in 1964 to be re-opened, and a reputed Klansman to be indicted, charged, arrested, convicted and sentenced to three life sentences. 'Mississippi Cold Case' won five major awards at the famed Yorkton Festival, including 'Best of Festival', a Bronze Plaque at the Columbus Festival, a Cine Golden Eagle, a Canadian Gemini Award for 'Best Director', and an Emmy nomination for Best Feature Investigative

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Documentary.

David is currently spearheading two unprecedented collaborations across the media spectrum in Canada and the United States that will seek to investigate all the remaining civil rights era cold cases in the American south, and a number of unsolved cases from Canada. David is also working with the Canadian Journalism Foundation to establish Canada's first fund for investigative journalists. David continues to work for the CBC, and is stationed at the CBC's new Investigative Unit. He was born in Stratford, ON and raised in the small lumber town of Arnprior, ON.

More on David at www.davidridgen.com

Nicolas Rossier – Director and Producer

Nicolas Rossier is an American film producer and director whose works have appeared on televisions and festivals around the world. His latest films include the acclaimed Aristide and the Endless Revolution which investigates the events leading to the 2004 overthrow of Haiti's president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Hallmark Faith and Values primetime television documentary Brothers and Others that explores the impact of the tragedy of 9/11 on Arabs and Muslims in America and the award winning documentary Life is a Dream about self taught Jewish Street Poet Isidore Block, aka Poet-o.

Nicolas Rossier studied Political Science at the Geneva based Graduate Institute of International Studies as well as theater and film at the Lee Strasberg Institute and the School for Visual Arts in New York. He lives with his family in Brooklyn, New York. Nicolas is currently developing a new reality show on human rights and law enforcement and working on his first narrative film.

More on Nicolas at www.barakaproductions.com

Cameron Clendaniel – Editor and Co-Producer

Born in Boston, Cameron has worked as a film editor ever since he found his passion for editing at Williams College. Focusing on cutting documentary features while working freelance in New York, Europe and Los Angeles, Cameron has edited a great variety of documentaries, from hard-hitting investigative films on political turmoil in Haiti and the Middle East, to character-driven films filled with complex, colorful narratives from around the world. Currently, working out of his editing studio in Brooklyn, Cameron is cutting a documentary feature that examines Christian Evangelicals and Rapture culture in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

More on Cameron at www.cameronclendaniel.com

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Judd Greenstein – Composer

Judd Greenstein was born and raised in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of

New York City, where he began his compositional life by writing hip hop beats as a teenager. His concert works reflect those origins, as well as his traditional piano background, combining an urban, beat-oriented sensibility with a late Romantic classical harmonic language. A passionate advocate for the indie classical community in New York, much of Judd's work is written for the virtuosic ensembles and solo performers who make up that community, and is tailored to their specific talents and abilities. Judd has attracted attention through his close collaboration with many of the best young solo musicians in New York and beyond, including violist Nadia Sirota, soprano Anne-Carolyn Bird, percussionist Samuel Solomon, violinist Colin Jacobsen, pianist Michael Mizrahi, flutist Alex Sopp, clarinetist Sara Budde, saxophonists Argeo Ascani and Brian Sacawa, and cellist/vocalist Jody Redhage....Judd's work has been heard at festivals such as the Bang on a Can Marathon (both in New York and at Mass MoCA), MATA, the Icebreaker IV Festival, the Carlsbad Music Festival, the Look & Listen Festival, and the Audio Inversions series in Austin, TX. International performances of Judd's music recently took place at the Musiekgebouw in Amsterdam, Holland, by Guitar Quartet Catch; in Rome, by the Williams College Concert Choir; at the Tel Aviv Art Museum in Tel Aviv, Israel, by the Israel Contemporary String Quartet; and in the Kyiv Music Festival in the Ukraine, by the Seattle Chamber Players.

More on Judd at www.juddgreenstein.com.

Jennifer Utz – Supervising Producer

Jennifer Utz is a video journalist and filmmaker who's been covering the Iraqi refugee crisis since the fall of 2006. She was one of the first journalists to highlight the extent of the crisis, first breaking the story on Democracy Now in February 2007. Her subsequent reports aired on ABC World News Tonight, France 24, and Current TV. Between 2006 and 2007, Utz was a producer at Democracy Now! – the independent radio and television news broadcast hosted by the award-winning journalist Amy Goodman.

Utz does ongoing producing and editing work at BBC America and CBS News. She's also a regular contributor to The Huffington Post. She spent 2004 in India, teaching members of a women's empowerment organization to produce outreach videos designed to educate a non-literate audience of Untouchable, Tribal, and Muslim populations. Prior to that, Jennifer co-edited a documentary about youth in Zimbabwe, comprised of footage smuggled out of the country.

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In 2003, Jennifer produced and edited a feature documentary about the academic program "Semester at Sea," which documented the townships of South Africa, life in Castro's Cuba, and the Movement for Landless People in Brazil.

More on Jennifer on www.jennyjo.com

Eli Cohn – Sound Design

New York native Eli Cohn graduated from the University of Massachusetts, where he studied Cello Performance and the Recording Arts. His interest in audio continued to grow and he began sound designing for independent films. Recent notable features include Cruz Angeles' "Don't Let Me Drown" (Sundance 2009) and Kelly Reichardt's "Wendy and Lucy" (Cannes 2008). His sound design, foley, and mixes have established himself as an emerging sound engineer in the New York film community.

FILM CREDITS

produced and directed by
DAVID RIDGEN & NICOLAS ROSSIER

edited by
CAMERON CLENDANIEL

music by
JUDD GREENSTEIN

cameras
DAVID RIDGEN and NICOLAS ROSSIER

sound design by
ELI COHN

co-producer
CAMERON CLENDANIEL

supervising producer
JENNIFER UTZ

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directed by **DAVID RIDGEN** and **NICOLAS ROSSIER**

associate producer

JENNIFER FILIPPAZZO

line producers

SAED ANDONI, LIDA CHARAF, DAN YARON

assistant producers

CHRIS KRYSTALLIS, CAMILLE ALMADA

additional camera and sound

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ARIEL MAYROSE, ELIZABETH PRESS, RAOUF ZAKI, JOHN VERSICAL, CATON VOLK, JILL WOODWARD

translators

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NORMAN FINKELSTEIN, MUSA ABU-HASHHASH, NIDAL BARHAM, NOAM CHOMSKY, ALAN DERSHOWITZ, RICHARD FINKELSTEIN, RAUL HILBERG, JOHN MEARSHEIMER, DAVID OLESKER, LEN RUDNER, AVI SHLAIM, MAXINE TSVAIGRACH.

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WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT THE FILM

“Surprisingly entertaining...a compelling portrait of a difficult man.”

- Mark Cohen, *Jewish Daily Forward*

“American Radical is a powerful film — brave, bold, incendiary. I highly recommend it!”

- Michael Moore, award-winning documentary filmmaker

“American Radical is a nuanced and powerful portrait of the scholar Norman Finkelstein, ..The power and subtext of this film, however, is not in the wars fought between Finkelstein and those like Alan Dershowitz who seek to destroy him, but in Finkelstein’s powerful fealty to his mother’s suffering in the Warsaw Ghetto and later the Nazi death camps...”

- Chris Hedges, former *New York Times* Middle-East correspondent and author of *American Fascists*

“*American Radical: The Trials of Norman Finkelstein* is a cautiously respectful documentary portrait of a political firebrand who presents himself as a beacon of moral truth in the murk of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”

- Stephen Holden, *New York Times*

“Presents a humanizing portrait of a complex and principled individual...‘American Radical’ deserves to be seen widely as a fascinating introduction to the man and his views.”

- Susan Ryan, *Cineaste Magazine*

“A fascinating, well-rounded portrait of Finkelstein that simultaneously informs, inspires and infuriates...the filmmakers ride a delicate line, assembling a warts-and-all portrait that shows why Finkelstein is deeply respected and equally reviled.”

- Mark Achbar, director of ‘The Corporation’ and ‘Manufacturing

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Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media'

“With impressive restraint, the fascinatingly thorny ‘American Radical’ is less interested in the validity of Finkelstein’s ideas—seriously mounted, if inflammatory—and more in the topsy-turvy life of today’s professional academic. Amazingly, that choice doesn’t result in a boring movie.”

- Joshua Rothkopf, *Time Out New York*

“A guaranteed argument starter...an engaging portrait of an academic whose work is both fueled and undermined by his vitriolic personality.”

- J.R. Jones, *Chicago Reader*

“*American Radical*...presents a more balanced portrait of Finkelstein, who, when his passion doesn’t carry him off on a wave of anger, is shown to be thoughtful, intelligent and deeply melancholy.”

- George Robinson, *Jewish Week*

“Norman Finkelstein’s conclusions can be debated, his methods can be deplored, but as “American Radical”’s directors Ridgen and Rossier take pains to point out, a man so rigorously committed to putting an end to oppression ought not be so easily dismissed, even if coming to grips with such a challenging figure may be finally as difficult as getting to the bottom of the Arab-Israeli conflict itself.”

- Andrew Schenker, *Slant Magazine*

“A blood-boiling, very good documentary.”

- Mark Keizer, *Boxoffice Magazine*