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Search for the
Gentleman Racer



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Synopsis

“Who Am I?” is perhaps the world’s oldest question.

The feature length documentary, “Search for the Gentleman Racer” is an exploration into the meaning of identity and belonging.

Through the lens of one woman seeking her biological history, this documentary hovers over the question of ancestry in an age of extreme reproductive technologies.

Objective

Every year thousands of children are conceived with anonymous sperm and egg donation. Advances in reproductive science include everything from genetic enhancement and re-engineering to the three-parent child.

All this is happening in tandem with an explosion of interest in genealogy and the scientific consensus of nature via nurture.

The Nature Theory suggests overwhelmingly that abstract traits such as intelligence, personality, aggression and sexual orientation are encoded in our DNA.

However today it’s almost commonplace to conceive children using anonymous genetic material. Sure we match eyes and hair color and educational status, but when it comes to reproductive science it seems history does not matter.

Is anonymous genetic donation a new version of last century’s closed adoption?

Background

New Zealand born documentary filmmaker Barbara Sumner Burstyn believes she is the illegitimate daughter of Swedish Formula One driver Joakim Bonnier.

Family legend says her mother fell in love in 1959 with the about to be married Jo Bonnier, while he was racing the European F1 circuit. When she became pregnant he rejected her and she ran, literally to the ends of the earth; New Zealand.

In 1972, on the verge of retiring from the sport Jo Bonnier was killed while racing at Le Mans. Born in Sweden in 1930, he spoke seven languages, collected modern art, kept his McLaren racecar on the wall and was expected to enter the family publishing business.

When Pamela Sumner died in 1983 in a plane crash in Madrid she was head of Norman Hartnell, the royal fashion house. She was on her way to New Zealand to meet the daughter she had adopted out 23 years earlier.

Upon turning 43 Barbara realised she had outlived her maternal grandmother, mother and father. All had died at 42 and she had not expected to pass this magic number. She decided to unravel her origins and in doing so explore a defining issue.

Oscar Wilde said, “One’s past is what one is.” In Blade Runner, Harrison Ford’s character, Deckard says of the Replicant Roy: “All he’d wanted were the same answers the rest of us want. Where did I come from? Where am I going?”

Search for the Gentleman Racer will canvass the big issues surrounding ‘Who Am I?’. Blending science, history and personal journey, the film will ask: Do we each have a right to know where we come from?

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Content and Structure

Gentleman Racer is Barbara's real-time journey of discovery. The film poses questions asked by every person separated from their genetic history.

Canvassing leaders in the science and ethics of modern reproductive technology, we will discover just how far we've gone and the ethical dilemmas we face as a community, and as individuals.

We can create children with three parents or no parents. Children conceived through anonymous sperm are now so numerous they are forming political groups to fight for their rights.

Craig Venter, the man who sequenced the human genome says we are "on the verge of creating synthetic life." He compares the building of an organism to building computer systems.



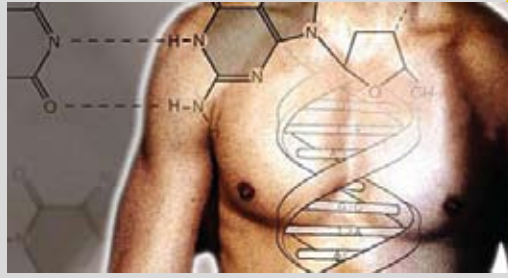
'Foundling', by Patricia Piccinini

British bishops say that human-animal hybrid embryos or "chimeras" conceived in the laboratory should be regarded as humans having a right to life.

Back in Barbara's world, the film will run along a chronological spine, the audience traveling with Barbara as she discovers her father and the escalating industry of reproductive science.

We'll meet a handful of Formula One's greatest surviving drivers as we uncover the personal that backdrops this universal issue. We have commitment from leading bioethics spokesperson and British Peer, Lord Alton and Dr Dennis Sullivan, Professor of Biology at the Center for Bioethics at Cedarville University.

Australian artist Patricia Piccinini will participate and has given us the rights to use her disturbing para-human chimerical sculptures. We will touch on transhumanism both for and against and we'll interview Wendy and Ryan Kramer who set up the fast growing Sperm Siblings Group in the US.



Synthetic Life Forms

We have full access to the photo and moving image library of award winning French photojournalist Bernard Cahier, including his personal library of Bonnier images. We have secured full access to the moving image archive of Auto Sports Marketing in Baltimore, including their spectacular footage from the 1972 feature film *The Speed Merchants*, including previously unseen footage of Jo Bonnier.

In Stockholm we will meet a life long Jo Bonnier fan who runs a private museum dedicated to Jo's life and memory. And there we will meet with Jo Bonnier's legitimate sons. Kim and Jonas Bonnier have agreed to participate in the film and have given us access to their family photo and moving image records.

In an ironic twist Jo Bonnier's father, Professor Gert Bonnier was a pioneer of genetic science. At the time Barbara was being adopted he was presenting papers on human genetic traits.

However while Barbara's extensive family research verifies Jo Bonnier as Pamela's secret lover and the father of her child, his name does not appear on her birth certificate.

The only means to truly know will be through DNA testing. The Bonnier family has agreed to this.

The precipitous nature of the moment when Barbara and all of us discover if this man, this history she has been searching is really hers, is undeniable. It is the essence of the question at the heart of this film: what is the meaning of identity and belonging?





Visual Style

In the golden age of motor racing (60's and early 70's) the drivers were brave and handsome and the women who clustered around them were beautiful. The images from that time still inspire us with their elusive glamour. The cars were deathly elegant speed machines and speed itself was godlike in its sway over the hearts and minds of drivers and fans.

While in the world of reproductive sciences there is also real human drama, much of it expressed artistically through the para-human sculptures of Patricia Piccinini and the human-animal hybrids already being created by science.

We will tease out visual metaphors linking car racing and the human impact of reproductive technologies such as the entwining of the double helix and the complexities of a city freeway. In true filmic style we'll let our reveals grow out of the story we are telling, each element building on the previous to create a seamless and encompassing story.

Audience

Search for the Gentleman Racer is a feature documentary with crossover genres of popular science, human interest, high-profile glamour sport and genealogy

Genealogy is the fastest growing hobby in America. The Family History Library alone gets six to seven million hits per day. Overwhelming demand recently forced the British Public Record Office to take its new website site offline amid fears the entire UK telephone network could be paralyzed by the tremendous demand.

The Family History Library says genealogy touches a fundamental need. "It's universal, crossing all faiths and cultures. Finding out who you are is in each of us. The positive benefits of knowing our heritage, gives us a sense of responsibility and self-esteem."

Beyond all this Gentleman Racer is a film embedded with 'popular science'. Seen as the bridge between professional scientific literature and the realms of popular political and cultural discourse, popular science is often the vehicle for generating debate on social and political issues.

Combine all this with motor racing, one of the world's most watched television sports. On average about 55 million people all over the world watch Formula One races live. Grand Prix Insider's Mario-Alberto Bauer has already spotted the film on his heavily subscribed blog. Interest in vintage F1 has never been higher with recreated races and remarkably active on-line communities all over the world.

Conclusion

Barbara Sumner Burstyn says the legend of her father, the Formula One driver, runs silently through the corridors of her life. Search for the Gentleman Racer embraces the universal narrative: Who Am I?

While this story is intensely personal, it also explores the broad questions of heritage and belonging that many of us face

In the end each viewer will have to ask themselves the same question that propelled Barbara into making this film: Who am I? And why is this question so important in our human journey?

Search for the Gentleman Racer is the world's oldest story and perhaps the most relevant.



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Key Creative Team



Cloud South Films is a full service Hawkes Bay based documentary production house established by Barbara Sumner Burstyn and Tom Burstyn. They have recently been joined by ex Auckland Audio supremo Paul Stent and business advisor Phil Williams.

Director and Cinematographer: Tom Burstyn CSC, NZCS, FRSA. Director and cinematographer **Tom Burstyn** is a multi-award winning, Emmy nominated filmmaker with 30 plus years experience as a director/cinematographer. He trained at the National Film Board of Canada as a documentary maker winning a number of awards, before enjoying great success in the feature film industry.

Tom directed the award winning documentary *One Man, One Cow, One Planet*. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and has dual New Zealand / Canadian citizenship. A full resume follows. <http://www.tomburstyn.com/>

Writer / Producer: Barbara Sumner Burstyn is a Qantas Award winning columnist and multi-award winning documentary producer. She is widely published in New Zealand and is the writer and producer of *One Man, One Cow, One Planet* and the soon to be completed documentary epic, *This Way of Life*. A selection of her written work can be viewed at: www.sumnerburstyn.com

Company Filmography:

On release: One Man, One Cow, One Planet: multi-award winning documentary about the biodynamic revolution sweeping India, the fight of subsistence farmers for food sovereignty in the face of corporate bio-colonialism and one New Zealander's efforts to save the world. In distribution with OTF (Netherlands) www.howtosavetheworld.co.nz



In Post-Production: 'This Way of Life' is a film about a wild Maori family, their six kids, 50 horses and their complex relationship to land as lifeblood. <http://cloudsouthfilms.co.nz/films/wayoflife/video.html>

In Production: To Zim with Love. Connie is 50, white and wealthy. She has every comfort money can buy. But she has thrown it all away to find love on a remote crocodile farm in war-torn Zimbabwe.

In pre-production: 'Divine Water' As blood is to the human body, water is to the Earth. Water is the sense organ of a living earth. It is life's own element and without it we perish. Funded by Healing Water Institute (NZ and UK) www.healingwaterinstitute.net NZ.IRD Reg. Charitable Trust #407408

In development: 'New Dark Age' An essay style film about simulacra and the loss of meaning that defines our society. Drawing on everything from the child-proofed world to RFIDing, to nature deficient disorder, to the cult of Extropianism and technological singularity to the David Syndrome and Solastalgia, this film traverses our very human efforts to find meaning and uncover what is real in our increasingly unreal world.

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THOMAS BURSTYN NZCS CSC FRSA
Director/Cinematographer

Awards

Award of Excellence, The Accolade Competition, 2007
Jackson Hole Film Festival: Best non-broadcast film, 2007
Emmy nominee: Outstanding Cinematography For A Miniseries or Movie, 2005
New York Independent Film & Video Festival - Best Cinematography, 2003
CSC, Best Cinematography, short film, 2002
Yorkton Film Festival, Best Cinematography nominee, 2002
ASC Best Cinematography, Nominee, 1998
Genie Award Winner, Best Cinematography, 1996
CSC Award Nominee, Best Cinematography, 1995
Genie Award Nominee, Best Cinematography, 1993
CSC Award Nominee, Best Cinematography, 1993
CSC Cinematography Nominee, 1993
Genie Award Nominee, Best Cinematography, 1988
ACE Awards - Best Cinematography, 1985, 1986, 1987.
CSC - Best Cinematography Award, 1987
Melbourne Film Festival - 1st Prize - Peter Stuyvesant Trust Award- Films on Art, 1977
San Francisco International Film Festival - Special Jury Award, Documentary, 1976
Chicago International Film Festival - Gold Plaque- best documentary, 1976

Director / Cinematographer

This Way of Life – feature documentary, Cloud South Films. 2005-2008
Daffodil Day – TVC, New Zealand Cancer Society, 2008
If Water Were God – feature doc (in production), Cloud South Films, Healing Water Institute
One Man, One Cow, One Planet – 1 hr television documentary 2007
How to Save the World – feature documentary. Cloud South Films 2006
Profiles in Rock – 13 part ½ hr documentary series, 1981
Flash William – ½ hr documentary, national Film Board of Canada, 1976
If Brains Were Dynamite You Wouldn't Have Enough to Blow Your Nose ½ hr doc, 1975
Le Patriote – ½ hr documentary, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 1975

Cinematographer - Selected Feature Films

Boys and Girl From County Clare

Director: John Irvin
Producer: Evzen Kolar, First Look Pictures, 2003 (N. Ireland, Isle of Man)
Cast: Bernard Hill, Colm Meaney, Andrea Corr

Timeline – 2nd unit

Director: Richard Donner
Producer: Lauren Schuler-Donner, Jim van Wyck, Kevin de la Noy 2003 (Montréal, QC)
Director of Photography: Caleb Deschanel

Where the Money Is

Director: Marek Kanievska
Producer: Ridley Scott, Beau Marks, Scott Free Prod., 2000 (Montréal, QC) Cast: Paul Newman, Linda Fiorentino, Dermot Mulroney

City of Industry

Director: John Irvin
Producer: Evzen Kolar, Largo Entertainment, 1997 (Los Angeles, Palm Springs)
Cast: Harvey Keitel, Stephen Dorff, Timothy Hutton

Crying Freeman

Director: Christophe Ganz
Producers: Samuel Hadida, Taka Ichise, Ozia Pictures, 1995 (Vancouver, BC)

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***Magic In The Water**

Director: Rick Stevenson

Producers: R. Stevenson, M. O'Conner, David Saunders, TriStar, 1995 (BC)

Cast: Mark Harmon

*Genie Award Winner, Best Cinematography, 1996

***Andre**

Director: George T. Miller

Producers: David Kushner, Peter Locke, Sue Baden-Powell, Paramount, 1994

Cast: Keith Caradine (Vancouver, BC)

*CSC Award Nominee, Best Cinematography, 1995

***Lotus Eaters**

Director: Paul Shapiro

Producers: Alex Raffe, Sharon McGowan, Mortimer & Ogilvy Productions, 1993 (Galiano Is., BC)

*Genie Award Nominee, Best Cinematography, 1993

*CSC Award Nominee, Best Cinematography, 1993

Toy Soldiers

Director: Dan Petrie Jr.

Producer: Mark Burg, Island Productions, 1991 (North Carolina)

Cheetah

Director: Jeff Blythe

Producers: Sam Mercer, Robert Halmi, Walt Disney Studios, 1989 (Kenya)

***Tadpole & The Whale**

Director: J.C. Lord

Producer: Roc Demers, Les Productions La Fete, 1988 (Québec)

*Genie Award Nominee, Best Cinematography, 1988

Native Son

Director: Jerrold Freedman

Producer: Lindsay Law, American Playhouse, 1986 (Chicago, Los Angeles)

Cast: Matt Dillon, Geraldine Page, Elizabeth McGovern, Oprah Winfrey

Mr. Wrong (Dark Of The Night)

Director: Gaylene Preston

Producer: Robin Laing, Meridian Productions (New Zealand), 1985

The Lost Tribe

Director: John Laing

Producer: Meridian Productions (New Zealand), 1981

Cinematographer - Television

Tin Man (6 hour mini-series, Arri D20 HD format) 2007

Director: Nick Wiling

Producer: Matthew O'Connor, Robert Halmi Sr., RHI Entertainment

The Travels of Marco Polo (4 hour mini-series, Thomson Viper HD format) 2006

Director: Kevin Connor

Producer: Matthew O'Connor, Robert Halmi Sr. RHI Entertainment

Son of the Dragon (4 hour mini-series, Thomson Viper HD format) 2006

Director: David Wu

Producer: Matthew O'Connor, Robert Halmi Sr. RHI Entertainment

Terminal City (10 part mini series, Thomson Viper HD format) 2004-2005

Director: Lynn Stopkovitch, Rachel Talalay, various

Producer: Christine Haebler, Angus Fraser, Gordon Marks, Crescent Entertainment

***The 4400** (pilot & series, Thomson Viper HD format)

Director: Yves Simmoneau

Producer: Brent Carl Clackson, Yves Simmoneau, Scott Peters, Viacom Entertainment, Paramount Television

*Emmy nominee: Outstanding Cinematography For A Miniseries or Movie, 2005

***La Premiere Fois**

Director, Producer: Claude Paré, Luna Films

*CSC, Best Cinematography, short film, 2002

*Yorkton Film Festival, Best Cinematography nominee, 2002

*New York Independent Film & Video Festival -Best Cinematography, 2003

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Within These Walls

Director: Mike Robe,
Producer: Von Zerneck / Sertner Productions, 2001
Cast: Ellen Burstyn, Laura Dern

Deadlocked

Director: Micheal Watkins,
Producer: Jake Rose, TNT Entertainment, 2000
Cast: Charles Dutton

***When Trumpets Fade**

Director: John Irvin,
Producer: John Kemeny, HBO, 1998
*ASC Best Cinematography, Nominee, 1998

Creature (Miniseries)

Director: Stuart Gillard,
Producer: Richard Lewis, Peter Benchley - Trilogy / ABC, 1998
Cast: Craig T. Nelson, Kim Catrell

Dead Silence

Director: Dan Petrie, Jr.,
Producer: John Kemeny, HBO feature, 1997
Cast: James Garner, Marlee Maitlin

Murderous Passion (Miniseries)

Director: John Patterson,
Producer: Brooke Kennedy, Brian Pike, NBC, 1997
Cast: Ann-Margaret, Peter Coyote

Crazy Horse

Director: John Irvin,
Producer: Turner Television feature, 1996
Cast: Richard Greyeyes, Ned Beatty

***Liar, Liar**

Director: Jorge Montesi,
Producer: Phil Savath, CBS, Cast: Kate Nelligan
*CSC Cinematography Nominee, 1993

Criminal Behavior

Director: Michael Miller,
Producer: Preston Fischer, ABC, 1992 Cast: Farrah Fawcett

Perfect Tribute

Director: Jack Bender,
Producers: Dorothea Petrie, John Flynn, ABC, Cast: Jason Robards

Millenium: Tribal Wisdom & The Modern World - Makuna Amazon Expedition

Director: Michael Grant,
Producers: Michael Grant, Adrian Malone, Richard Meech, BBC, CBS, PBS

Liberace (Miniseries)

Director: Billy Hale,
Producer: Preston Fischer, ABC

Leap of Faith

Director: Stephen Gyllenhaal,
Producers: Kathie Berlin, Carol Hart, CBS Cast: Anne Archer

Promised a Miracle

Director: Stephen Gyllenhaal
Producers: Preston Fischer, John Flynn, CBS
Cast: Rosanna Arquette

Foxfire

Director: Jud Taylor,
Producer: Dorothea Petrie, CBS
Cast: Jessica Tandy, Hume Cronyn, John Denver

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***The Hitchhiker** (Anthology series 1984-1986)

Directors: Carl Shenkel, Chris Thompson, Phillip Noyce, Daniel Vigne, Mai Zetterling,
Producer: Gil Adler, HBO

*ACE Awards - Best Cinematography, 1985, 1986, 1987.

*CSC - Best Cinematography Award, 1987

Producer: Meridian Productions (New Zealand), 1981

Contact

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BARBARA SUMNER BURSTYN

Producer/Writer

Present:

Research, writing, producing documentaries for Cloud South Films.

Author: The Meningococcal Gold Rush report and the MeNZB Quick Guide.

Public speaker: The bad science, manipulation and dishonesty surrounding the development and marketing of the MeNZB vaccine.

Weekly columnist: The New Zealand Herald.

1998 - present:

Free-lance writer: features, profiles and investigative articles: (in NZ) The New Zealand Listener, Sunday Star Times, design magazine Urbis, business magazine Unlimited, Air New Zealand In-flight Panorama, The National Business Review, contemporary culture publications Metro, Pulp, Investigate, Flash and Loop, Grace and New Idea. The Independent on Sunday (UK), Montreal Gazette (Quebec), Sailing (USA), Harpers Bazaar (Aust.) Ottawa Citizen, MacLean's, Vancouver Sun, Readers Digest (Canada)

Qantas Media Awards:

Winner: Best Social Issues Columnist 2004

Finalist: Columnist 2004

New Zealand Herald column syndicated: www.dissidentvoice.org www.progressivetrail.org

Other writing includes:

Fast Girls, TV pilot in development, optioned by Terminal City Productions, Vancouver.

The Mermaids Dance, in development, optioned by Terminal City Productions, Vancouver.

Other work:

Events Manager: Women's Refuge Appeal 2000, Pigeon House Communications.

Brieleys International Wind Festival 1998

Operations Manager, Rialto Cinema, Wellington

Events Manager, Auckland City Council, Pasifica Festival and Pasifica Fashion.

Business owner: Magazzino - specialist magazine retail store. Radio show host, Mediaphile, views, reviews and interviews.

Contra co-coordinator. Television New Zealand, Sale of the Century and Telethon 1988.

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