

# MIPCOM–OCTOBER 2017

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## **Jerome Delhaye**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Jerome Delhaye and I'm the head of the Entertainment Division at Reed Midem and I am delighted to introduce our next Media Mastermind keynote speaker, Chief Executive Officer of National Geographic Global Networks, Courteney Monroe. We all know National Geographic for its superb documentaries and factual programming. Today we are going to hear about the company's strategy into the scripted content and how National Geographic is turning factual events into high end drama that is thrilling audiences around the world. Courteney Monroe's keynote will be followed by a panel led by journalist and author, Martha Raddatz, whose book inspired *The Long Road Home*, and which includes some of the main talents from Nat Geo's exceptional dramas, noted filmmaker Peter Kosminsky, Executive Producer of the four part event series, *The State*, which focuses on the Islamic State, and actor Michael Kelly, starring in *The Long Road Home* about the events of the Black Sunday ambush of US forces in Baghdad. This will be a fascinating dive into some of the smartest TV available today.

## **Audience**

[APPLAUSE]

## **Jerome Delhaye**

And now please join me in welcoming Courteney Monroe.

## **Courteney Monroe**

Good morning everyone, or at least, I think it's morning. I've taken two overnight flights in the past four days, and I pretty much didn't sleep at all last night, so I have no idea what day it is, or what time it is, so please bear with me. That being said, I love nothing more than to start a presentation with a video narrated by the amazing Morgan Freeman. I wish he could be here with us in person, but he is actually on a press tour for our series, *The Story Of Us*, with Morgan Freeman. Thank you, Jerome, for that kind introduction and I want to thank Reed Midem and the MIPCOM team for inviting me to speak this year.

This is the first ever National Geographic keynote presentation and I am extremely honoured to be here. And the timing is not lost on me. You see, two years ago we set out on a brand new journey at National Geographic Channels to elevate our content with premium, high quality,

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widely entertaining programming in both factual and scripted drama. And what an exciting journey it has been. For me, the realisation that our transformation is truly taking hold, took place last week when I found myself standing on the massive stage at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, in front of a crowd of more than 15,000 people for the premiere of our upcoming feature documentary, Jane, about the life of Jane Goodall. The experience was both exhilarating and totally terrifying. Along with Jane Goodall herself, we screened our documentary from Oscar and Emmy nominated filmmaker, Brett Morgen, with a live 78 piece orchestra playing the breathtaking Philip Glass score. It was an experience I will never forget, and a moment that truly exemplified today's Nat Geo.

As we all know, the television business continues to dramatically transform. The landscape is shifting beneath our feet at breakneck speed. From peak competition to rapidly evolving distribution, there is simply no way to survive without being exceptional. So at Nat Geo we are shaking things up. Radically so. Our strategy today is informed by the notion that more isn't always better. Instead, better is better. And for us, that now means fewer, bigger, bolder programmes that are distinctive, that are exceptional and that are worth paying for. And it includes adding scripted drama to our portfolio in a meaningful and impactful way. This new programming strategy marks a bold and radical departure for us, and just one year into its launch on air, we are already accomplishing much of what we set out to do, including working with best in class creative talent, significantly raising our profile in the industry and among consumers, and driving audience globally with creatively excellent and entertaining content that is closely aligned with our brand. In a very short amount of time, we have become a port of call for some of the best in the business.

The creative talent we now have associated with our programming is nothing short of extraordinary. In fact, in just the past year alone, we took on climate change with Leonardo DiCaprio in Before The Flood. We went to Mars with Brian Grazer and Ron Howard. We started a Gender Revolution with Katie Couric. We explored God with Morgan Freeman and we celebrated Genius with Geoffrey Rush. I am proud to say that three of those shows I just mentioned, ranks as our top three series of all time. And all are for sale by our Fox Networks Group Content Distribution team - The Story of God with Morgan Freeman, Mars and Genius. I am extremely proud of what we've accomplished and incredibly excited about what lies ahead. But at National Geographic our dedication to premium content goes way beyond just television

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and so does our success. Our distinguished magazine grabbed its first ever Pulitzer nomination this year for their issue dedicated entirely to gender. And we have a massive and unrivalled presence in social media.

We are the number one most followed brand in social and the number one non celebrity account on Instagram. Watch our Kim Kardashian, I am coming after you. In every area of our business we are focussed on living up to the promise and expectations of our extraordinary brand. You see, for 130 years, National Geographic has been igniting the explorer in all of us. Through ground breaking storytelling from the best and brightest explorers, photographers and filmmakers in the world, we have used the power of our yellow border to take our audiences to places only National Geographic can bring them. We're demonstrating how you can take a revered and iconic brand, and through innovation, give it a completely modern and entertaining twist. The difference between brands that endure and those that decline is that one is busy living while the other is simply obsessed with not dying.

At National Geographic we are living out loud and we are thriving. Today we reach a global audience of nearly three quarters of a billion people every single month through our extensive media portfolio, providing them with a deeper understanding of the world we share, and their role in it. The amazing woman we honoured last Monday night at the Hollywood Bowl, Jane Goodall, once said, "Only if we understand, will we care. Only if we care, will we help. And only if we help, shall all be saved." We take those words very much to heart at National Geographic and believe passionately in creating entertainment with purpose. And that purpose drives us to return 27% of all of our proceeds to the non profit National Geographic Society, helping to fund nearly 500 grants per year for conservation and exploration.

Storytellers are our lifeblood at National Geographic, which brings me to the specific topic that I want to speak to you about this morning - our scripted programming strategy and the amazing storytellers with whom we are partnering. People often ask me what scripted looks like at National Geographic, and with such a glut of content in the market, why in the world is National Geographic even bothering with scripted? Those are both very legitimate questions, especially in a world with more than 500 scripted series premiering this year in the United States alone and, at my best count, more than ten times that globally.

My colleagues at 21st Century Fox in Turkey alone, produce 600 hours of scripted a year. It's simply staggering. And yet I hope this morning that you will leave with a clear sense of why, in spite of all that, scripted makes sense for us and how we plan to distinguish ourselves in this space. First, we have zero ambition to become a fully scripted network. Exactly the opposite, in fact. We remain, at our core, a factual network that will continue to produce documentaries on globally urgent topics, ranging from climate change to the crisis in Syria and even space exploration, as we do in our hybrid, factual, scripted series, Mars, which returns for a second season this spring.

In fact, we also have a team here this week looking for factual acquisitions to complement our new strategy. But as we transform ourselves into one of the world's leading destinations for premium content, fully original scripted series can and should play a role on our network. But the way in which we are approaching scripted is highly selective and curatorial. First, it's worth noting that our scripted team, led by Carolyn Bernstein, whom you will meet in just a moment on our panel, is based on the Fox Lot in Los Angeles, in the heart of the entertainment community, providing us direct access to the very best talent and show runners in Hollywood. And when it comes to National Geographic scripted programming, we have a very specific filter in mind.

We are looking for drama that is distinctive and premium and globally appealing, drama that is entertaining first, and nutritious second, drama that is resonant, muscular and urgent and from, as I said, the very best creative minds working in entertainment today. And finally, and I think most importantly, drama that is fact based and authentic. I often joke, "You will never see dragons on National Geographic channel because they don't exist, although I would happily take the success that HBO has achieved with their dragons." Here's a quick look at some of our recent work in scripted.

## **VIDEO CLIP**

### **Courteney Monroe**

So, as you can hopefully see, our vision is built on quality and distinctiveness, and the belief that entertaining and smart are not mutually exclusive. Before we get to our panel, I would like to touch on three specific scripted projects that we have here at the market. Genius, The State, and The Long Road Home. If you want to play the long game, you've got to chase the big beasts

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which is exactly what we did with our very first scripted series, Genius. It was an entirely new way of doing business for us. It started with Brian Grazer and Ron Howard of Imagine Entertainment bringing us a beautiful script based on Walter Isaacson's New York Times best selling biography of Albert Einstein, which immediately attracted Geoffrey Rush, one of the few people ever to have won the triple crown on acting, an Oscar, a prime time Emmy and a Tony. By the time the series was over, the first ever scripted series to come out of National Geographic Channel had bagged ten Emmy nominations, including Best Limited Series, Best Leading Actor for Geoffrey Rush, and Best Director for Ron Howard. The only other two networks with shows nominated for Best Limited Series were HBO and FX - two networks who have been playing the scripted game at the highest level for decades. So even though we did not make it onto the Emmy stage, that night, I most certainly felt as though we had won regardless. Genius not only resonated in the industry, but it resonated with viewers as well. It was the most watched series in National

Geographic history. It drove on demand performance to all time highs, serving as our single highest performing show ever in non linear. It attracted one of the most upscale, educated and wealthy audiences in our history, which helped to drive advertising rates four times higher than the network average. It also attracted a ton of new viewers, in fact over 60% of the audience across the globe was new to National Geographic. And Genius's global social media generated 567 million impressions, and 92 million video views. But the real testament of success often comes from really unexpected places.

So if you will indulge me, I want to read you a short letter that one of our writers, Noah, received out of the blue from a biochemist at the Weizmann Institute in Israel. It reads, "Dear Noah, Just a quick note to say that lots of real scientists are being inspired by Genius. Everyone in my biochemistry lab at the Weizmann Institute in Israel has been watching the episodes at home with friends and family, and then talking all day in the lab about their favourite scenes. My husband and I pause the show every few minutes to fill in, for the benefit of the kids, the historical context and peripheral characters which are so lightly and gracefully touched on, or to wax enthusiastic on Einstein's insights which, of course, we knew the details of already, but are having so much fun being re-exposed to in this way. You have no idea how rare it is that I would praise anything developed for television, so please be flattered that we think your work is awesome. Sincerely, Debbie Fass, Department of Structural Biology, Weizmann Institute of

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Science."

The funny thing was that Debbie didn't even know how to reach Noah, but she took a chance and she typed his name with a gmail address and lo and behold, it actually reached him. I think Debbie perfectly captured how we hope and envision our scripted content will resonate with audiences around the world. I'm incredibly excited about Season Two of Genius, which will feature Antonio Banderas playing the title role of Pablo Picasso. Carolyn will be on stage shortly and can share with you more on what to expect from Season Two, along with Eugene Simon, one of our stars from Season One. Now we followed up Genius with a bold and provocative mini series event, which premiered last month, from acclaimed writer/director Peter Kosminsky. A compelling fictional story based on extensive and meticulous research, The State follows four young British men and women who have left their lives behind to join ISIS in Syria. The State is a raw, gripping and unflinching drama that provides unique, never before insight into the harsh reality of life inside ISIS. It is not a story anyone but Peter could do justice to and we were honoured to partner with him. The reviews were tremendous.

Stewart Clarke from Variety said, "The State is one of the most interesting television projects to be released this year." While Parade called it "absolutely gripping." Peter will be joining us in a few minutes to tell you more about the show and elaborate on the impressive project - how it came to fruition and the extensive research that he did before he even attempted to write a script. The Long Road Home is the last series I want to discuss, which will be premiering globally next month. It is based on the New York Times best selling book by internationally acclaimed journalist, Martha Raddatz, and The Long Road Home tells the true story of Black Sunday when a small platoon of army soldiers were ferociously ambushed in Sadr City, Baghdad, in April of 2004. Eight soldiers would make the ultimate sacrifice that day and more than 65 would be seriously wounded. This eight hour series offers viewers an intimate window into the experience of war as seen through the eyes of the soldiers themselves as well as their families back home. The soldiers profiled are ordinary rank and file guys, not the elite fighting machines who are so often portrayed in television and film. These soldiers literally go from driving mini vans at home on one day, to a life or death combat situation they were totally unprepared for, the next.

It is an adrenalin fuelled, and very emotional journey about the universal and global experience of war. TV Guide has already dubbed the series "truly must see". Our cast is incredible, including

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Michael Kelly, Jason Ritter, John Beavers, Kate Bosworth, Sarah Wayne Callies and Jeremy Sisto. Michael and our Executive Producer, Writer and Show Runner, Mikko Alanne, will be joining us shortly to tell you more. We are incredibly proud of our new premium, creatively ambitious programming, and I hope that you agree that when it comes to scripted drama specifically, we have found our voice in the landscape with authentic, entertaining and powerful stories that resonate globally, and that live up to the promise and expectations of the National Geographic brand.

I am tremendously excited about where Nat Geo is headed and hope that when you meet with my colleagues at Fox Networks Group Content Distribution Team, you will be as well. It has been a true honour to be here this morning. Thank you so much for inviting me and it is now my great pleasure to ask the panel to please join me on stage, along with ABC News Global Affairs Correspondent, and New York Times best selling author, the amazing Martha Raddatz, to moderate our discussion.

### **Audience**

[APPLAUSE]

### **Martha Raddatz**

We're all so happy to be here and I am a completely objective journalist like some of you out there and I will just say that what National Geographic is doing is really and truly astonishing. I'd like to welcome the panel who Courteney introduced a little bit. Peter Kosminsky, who is the Director of The State, Sam Otto, one of the actors who plays a British man who joins ISIS, my friend Mikko Alanne who is the Screenwriter, Show Writer and Executive Producer of The Long Road Home, that guy there, Michael Kelly, who plays the lead, Lieutenant Colonel Gary Volesky, and Eugene Simon who plays the son of Albert Einstein, and the great Carolyn Bernstein. It's why we're all here. She has scripted content for National Geographic Channel. And Peter, I want to ask you and Mikko first, because you've shaped these programmes so much, to talk about about how you balance the authenticity and the entertainment? Peter, if you'll start.

### **Peter Kosminsky**

I don't think anyone's ever accused me of being entertaining! The difficulty is when you've got a vast amount of research and you have to try to distil it into something that people are prepared to

sit and watch. At the same time you have an obligation to the research not to be misleading, not to misrepresent it. I'm sure you've had exactly the same experience in your work. So you have something like 18 months of research gathered by a pretty impressive team, and somehow you sit down, just like every writer does, with a blank page, and try to distil that into something that people are going to watch.

**Martha Raddatz**

And Mikko?

**Mikko Alanne**

I think in our case, especially because we used the real names of all the soldiers and family members, the expectation that the audience has is that what you are going to see is true. You know, every dramatic programme carries a disclaimer that some events have been dramatised. But I think the balance is the level of dramatisation and what you choose to change for purposes of drama because obviously life doesn't unfold in an eight hour television structure. So I'm always mindful of the fact that the real life people are going to be watching this. Where we can maybe literally capture what happened, it still needs to be dramatically and ethically true to the experience.

**Martha Raddatz**

Which is really difficult, particularly because they're still alive. We still have people on active duty in the army, as Michael's playing for instance. And I want to talk to the actors, and Michael, I'll start with you on that. How big a challenge was that for you because you have the real guy kind of looking over your shoulder, who is now a Lieutenant General?

**Michael Kelly**

It was a big challenge and a great responsibility to take on someone who his men consider God. And, through the research that I did in reading the scripts, reading the book, and watching the interviews on this great man, I had put him on this pedestal that was very high in the sky. And then, when I finally got to meet Gary Volesky, I put him on one even higher. And for me the toughest toughest part was, like you said, these are people who are still alive, and I met a lot of his men who served under him and the first time they met me they looked at me with disdain. [LAUGHS] "This is Michael Kelly. He's playing Gary Volesky." And they were like, "Uh, good

luck, buddy!" So you felt a great responsibility to do this man justice, you know.

**Martha Raddatz**

And Eugene, playing the son (of Einstein)?

**Eugene Simon**

My character of Eduard Einstein changes entirely on Genius. This was a very interesting character and a very interesting, almost a concept to me, because really Eduard's storyline, as a young man raised by someone who had such eminence even early into his life, was a very difficult thing for him to experience. And my curiosity, my fascination with the character, came from the fact that he gives a sort of commentary on Albert Einstein that is really kind of unique, because he's a young man who has essentially been neglected from a very, very young age by someone the world considered to be one of the most renowned, extraordinary men of the 20th century. And yet he perceived him to be frankly something of a monster. He felt neglected.

He felt unwanted, and he was also suffering from very, very heavy bouts of schizophrenia at a time when the treatment for that sort of illness left a lot to be desired. So I felt a huge sense of responsibility for the character, because he has such an intimate relation to the underlying emotional issues of a man like Albert Einstein. And there was a strong duty to be as authentic to his experience as possible. I invite you, by the way, if you want to see a very powerful image of the character that I play, Eduard Einstein in his later life, simply type it into Google and so onto 'images', and you'll see this extraordinary image of this man, probably in his late forties, who is sat in a restaurant eating an ice cream. And this is someone who would have undergone hydrogen therapy, insulin therapy, electro therapy and in this single photo, just the look on his face, captures a mind that has had so much done to it and it still has so much going on of its own accord. So it was very heavy. It's quite a heavy subject matter, but there were moments of levity in this when he meets Carl Jung and it was a wonderful thing to do with Raf Green as the writer. It was an absolute joy.

**Martha Raddatz**

And speaking of heavy, Sam, you really had a part that was based on a composite?

**Sam Otto**

Yes. It was a bit different to these guys in terms of it wasn't necessarily a real person, but as

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Peter wrote this, it's an amalgamation of people's experiences that have really happened. So in a similar vein, I did feel a huge responsibility representing a group of people and a kind of sub group of people. And it's such a sensitive story anyway, going out to Syria to fight for the Islamic State, so I had to make sure the preparation was really intensely studied. And so when we came to do the shoot we felt like we were really part of telling a really important story. And so making sure that it was all there and ready to go was so important.

### **Martha Raddatz**

And so Carolyn, three very different scripted content here, how do you choose? What did you want to achieve this season and last season?

### **Carolyn Bernstein**

I think for us, and Courteney touched on it in her keynote, we look for a bunch of different qualities in our shows that I think all of these shows possess. The first is, as Courteney said, that they're fact based or fact inspired, and feel really authentic. Most of the projects that we have green lit so far are based on a big underlying non fiction book. So we have great source material to draw from. In the case of The State it was tons and tons of research that Peter was drawing from. But we want to make sure that everything is fact based in order for it to be brand relevant, relevant to the Nat Geo brand.

The second thing we look for is stories that are globally relevant and that have some sense of urgency to them, that shine a light on something that's happening in the world that feels important for the world to know, that we think that you may know a little something about. You may have read about it in the newspaper in the case of The Long Road Home or The State, or with Einstein you may know a little bit about Albert Einstein. You may know E equals MC squared. You may know that photograph of him sticking out his tongue as an old man in Princeton, but you don't know the complete story. And we're always looking for stories where the truth is stranger and more extraordinary and fascinating than fiction and I think with all three of these stories we've certainly found that in spades. So those are some of the qualities that I think we look for and that unite these three very different stories.

### **Audience**

[APPLAUSE]

**Martha Raddatz**

You, (Peter), and Carolyn talked about the research so when we look at The State, how much is based on reality? I know how hard it is to get people to talk who've survived the Islamic State, if they tried to join, so how did you do that? And what's true?

**Peter Kosminsky**

The characters are composites. But every incident depicted in the four hours of the show is true. I didn't make up any event. And the characters are fictional only to the extent that they're composites of a series of real people. And that's actually to try to broaden the range of things that we see through their eyes in the show. So we are setting out to try to make it as realistic as we can within the limitations of the medium. You know, television is an essentially trivialising medium. You think of what you can write in a broadsheet newspaper compared with what we...

**Martha Raddatz**

Not any more, at National Geographic. It's not trivialised.

**Peter Kosminsky**

Okay. Generally speaking, we struggle to deal with complex ideas in television but at the same time, we have this enormous reach, millions and millions of people watching the show often simultaneously, or semi-simultaneously.

That still has an incredible power even in this multi channel universe. So you have to use it responsibly and you have to make sure that the impression you're creating isn't misleading.

**Martha Raddatz**

And Sam, your character joins ISIS and then has a change of heart, which does happen.

**Sam Otto**

Well, yes, I mean, that was really fascinating for me, this idea of what happens when somebody who's innately good is plunged into this kind of horrifying situation and this good guy is confronted with this stuff. It was about a sense of a kind of naivety I think, going there and

putting things to the back of his mind, and it being more about duty and honour than anything else. And then, once there, you know, he tries to save everybody he can ultimately and ends up going down this tragic route. And yes, it was profound, the fact that it's based on true stories. It would be in my mind whilst we were doing it, and it was important to kind of keep your head and your mind focussed, because it would be very easy for it to become very heavy, but it was important that we kind of just forgot and didn't get too stuck in the politics of it, and tell this human story.

### **Peter Kosminsky**

Can I just say, because it is important to say it, that this was an incredibly difficult show to get financed. Channel 4 came in in Britain, but the days of fully financing by a UK broadcaster are long gone. And I'm sorry if it sounds like a bit of an advert, but without National Geographic being brave enough to take on what was a really difficult subject, this show would not have been made. It was turned down almost everywhere, so we owe a huge debt, just in terms of boring freedom of speech, to National Geographic for allowing something that is not obviously commercial and is not easily going to put bums on seats to get made. And I'll always be grateful for that.

### **Martha Raddatz**

And it adds great depth to everyone's understand, I can certainly vouch for that. I want to move on to The Long Road Home, which I was closely associated with during this period and let's take a look at the trailer for The Long Road Home.

### **VIDEO CLIP**

#### **Audience**

[APPLAUSE]

### **Martha Raddatz**

And I think you can see from that there is emphasis on the frontline and there is emphasis on the home front. That was certainly part of the book but you really took that beyond the book in ways Peter talks about too. There were so many characters in the book, there's so much depth you can have in a book, but both of you added such extraordinary depth on both those fronts.

**Mikko Alanne**

Yeah, it was fascinating. What I found so unique about your book is that it really wasn't just a story about what it's like to go to war for the very first time as a soldier, but for the military family, which I think is a really universal and timeless story. I really wanted to get to know the people. You know, you had about 60 soldiers and families you get to know quite well in the book, but you can't really do that in a television series. So I always knew that we wanted to choose different points of view. We have eight main characters who represent different levels of command, and I wanted our cast to really give a complete picture of what different soldiers went through.

At the same time it was very important that we show the Iraqi side. I think we have a responsibility for people to understand, not just what happens, but why it happened. So we tell that story in large part by making the interpreter in that unit, Jassim, who Darius plays in the show, a main character, because it was important to me too to look at this rather dark and tragic day. One of the story lines that we tell on both sides is both the Americans and the Iraqis, who were trapped in this circumstance that they haven't made, start to recognise the inherent humanity of the person on the other side. And we tell that in Jassim's story.

**Martha Raddatz**

And I would say that Mikko, this is not part of the interpreter certainly in the book. And I know the interpreter well, but at the time the book was written you could not possibly go into Sadr City and interview the people who I wanted to interview as well because it was far too dangerous.

**Mikko Alanne**

Yes. Well we wanted to create, much as Peter said, you know composites of different experiences that are all real into the characters so that we could, you know, impart to the audience what had happened the year before, how this insurgency was born and what the grievances were.

**Martha Raddatz**

Mikko, can we introduce the other members of the cast we have here?

**Mikko Alanne**

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Yes, we have John Beavers who plays Eric Bourquin and the real life Eric with us. And then Darius Homayoun who plays Jassim, the interpreter.

**Audience**

[APPLAUSE]

**Martha Raddatz**

You do a fantastic job. And Eric, who really guided us as the Technical Consultant, was one of those platoon members who was ambushed.

**Mikko Alanne**

If I may say this too, it's an extraordinary thing to be able to tell a real story with the intimate participation of the people who lived through it, and Eric not only helped us understand minute by minute what happened, but was on set, helping us get down every smallest detail of the configuration of the radios and Humvees. And it's just extraordinary. You never to get to do that really as a writer and we had other soldiers, other family members who, you know, we consulted as our guides and teachers to try to tell this story for the first time in a way that really is for ordinary soldiers and their families.

**Martha Raddatz**

Michael, talk about that. Doing a series like this and having Eric Bourquin around, what did it mean to you? I know the cast and crew and all of us have created this bond much like A Band Of Brothers bond, but I really have felt throughout that this means a great deal to you.

**Michael Kelly**

Yes, it does. I mean, you know, first of all to touch lightly on Eric and the other soldiers that we had with us, as an actor you can do only so much research. You can only read so much. You can only watch so much. But when you have the real men - you know, Eric was there. From something as simple as like, I know how to hold and fire a rifle, I know how to clear a room, but I was like, "Oh man, how do I get in the Humvee with this?" [LAUGHS] "How do come out of the Humvee and how do you do it?" And those guys who were there were so willing to give us that information and experience and the stories that they had. All you wanted to do was make it as authentic as possible to represent these men who literally go out there and put their lives on the

line for us on a daily basis so that I can go have fun playing cops and robbers as an actor. You know, they really fight for your freedom to do what you want to do in life. All you want to do is represent those guys.

**Martha Raddatz**

And when we see you on the home front as well, that is such a powerful message, and that they're in combat mode themselves. And your scenes on the home front really capture that.

**Michael Kelly**

Yes. And you know to hear Gary Volesky talk about his wife and call her the real hero - it's these women who stay home and don't know if their husbands are coming back. You want to do them right.

**Martha Raddatz**

Thank you. And you did do it right. They all did it and I want to conclude here with looking at a quick trailer from Genius, Season one.

**VIDEO CLIP**

**Martha Raddatz**

And so we learned so much about Einstein in this, and you talked a little bit about your character, but was there anything incredibly surprising to you as you were shooting this, besides maybe the ten Emmy award nominations?

**Eugene Simon**

I think that was a wonderful surprise. Almost normally, with some of those enormous characters, you don't think much of their personal life. You think their personal life would be so revealed because they are such well known figures. But how to understand a man like Albert Einstein, who first married Mileva Maric and had these two boys, Hans Albert and Eduard, and then went on to marry Elsa Einstein, his cousin, and then moved to found the IRC, the International Rescue Committee in '43, which is still active today in helping Syrian refugees? I could go on forever giving random bits of fact that illustrate the greater character of this man. And one of the things that I feel so strongly about is, whether you're performing as a character or you're watching it as

a viewer, the level of authenticity of the storytelling that Ron Howard, Brian Grazer, Ken Biller, and National Geographic as a network really gives is just extraordinary.

I've been very, very fortunate to be on a show like Game Of Thrones which has such specific imaginative detail in a fantasy world, and to feel that the enormity of that world can be incorporated into a series of real life historical events and be just as detailed and nuanced and intriguing and explorative and revealing is just wonderful. And so for me, I hope I'm doing it justice, I just found that as the character, Eduard Einstein, it was very, very interesting to be a young man that was seeing Albert from the perspective that he was, which was as a young man that was neglected and felt that this is someone who had really done wrong by him, because it showed a side to Albert Einstein that most people will never really be able to see unless they watch it. And I think it's a beautiful show and it deserves full marks.

**Martha Raddatz**

And Carolyn, to go from Einstein, as Courteney said, to Pablo Picasso? Did you know that Genius would have a second act there? And why did you go from Einstein to Pablo Picasso? Why did you choose him?

**Carolyn Bernstein**

Sure. We did envision it as an anthology series, pretty much from the get go. We weren't sure who our subject would be for Season Two but we thought it had legs, and was something that we could repeat across many seasons. The trick is finding the right subjects. So why Picasso? Like Albert Einstein, I think he really fits into a similar model of someone that we all know a little bit about. You may know his famous painting Guernica. You may know Les Demoiselles D'Avignon. I can speak a little French here.

**Martha Raddatz**

Which she does!

**Carolyn Bernstein**

You may know that he had a very tumultuous romantic life across his 90 years. But no one has yet dramatised the complete picture and you can't do it justice in two hours. We're doing it across ten hours as we did for Einstein. It was a full, rich, complicated life. He was obviously a

creative genius, which is different from a scientific genius, but similar to the Einstein story, we're trying to get to the heart of the question of what conditions needed to be present to make his genius really fully flower. And the answer in the case of Picasso had a lot to do with his romantic relationships which provided tremendous inspiration. But also he would grow tired of some of his romances and then required new inspiration, and so would move on to the next romance, sometimes juggling several at once. In fact, often juggling several at once. So a rich, complicated personal life, like Einstein had, and true genius in terms of him teaching all of us how to see the world differently than anyone had ever seen it before. He was a true innovator.

So I think many of the same qualities are shared by both shows, but we thought it would be a good kind of statement about what we're doing in scripted to pivot from a scientific genius to an artistic genius. To our way of thinking, exploring creative genius is just as worthy and fascinating and complex as exploring scientific genius. So we're really excited about Picasso. And I want to mention we're shooting in Malaga, Barcelona, Paris and Budapest. So it should be absolutely beautiful as Genius Season One was. And we were primarily in Prague for Genius Season One, but we're really all over Europe for Genius Season Two. And we're excited about Antonio. We're excited about all these beautiful places we're shooting and it is a juicy, thrilling, really surprising, unpredictable story. So we start shooting in about a week and we're planning on airing in the spring.

### **Martha Raddatz**

We can't wait. We can't wait for The Long Road Home. We're very excited about that. The State is amazing. Thank you to National Geographic. Thank you to all of you for coming. Thank you again.

### **Audience**

[APPLAUSE]