

Examining Child Abuse through the Documentary Memoir 'Rewind'



Part 3 of the Discover Documentaries Discussion Series with Award-winning Producer/Director Cindy Meehl

Sasha Joseph Neulinger, a filmmaker and a survivor of multigenerational child sexual abuse, utilized over 200 hours of home videos both to reconstruct his childhood, and to propel important conversations about his harrowing journey in the documentary "Rewind," which recently earned three Emmy nominations. Neulinger and Rewind Executive Producer Cindy Meehl will discuss the film virtually at the Mark Twain Library on Tuesday, Sept. 14 at 7:30 p.m.

"As a director and producer, I get many requests to work on films. When a producer friend sent me a rough cut of Rewind, I didn't think I could possibly watch it, much less work on it! I planned to watch five minutes of it and tell my friend who sent it that it was not my comfort zone of subject matter since I was known for inspirational films," " said Meehl. "I started watching this brave child's story and was transported into a headline making true crime that was mesmerizing, shocking, and it was inspirational!

"For the first time in my life, I clearly understood something that seemed inconceivable. I thought this story should be seen by everyone I know whether they are a parent, a

teacher, aunt, uncle, neighbor, counselor, coach, pastor, anybody in any country. I signed on the day I saw the cut, which is very rare for me,. People say they can't watch a film about this subject, but I say you can't afford not to! It has been one of the best filmmaking experiences I have ever had and I am very proud to know the team who made it and Sasha Joseph Neulinger, who is the director and main character of this powerful documentary.

"We premiered on Independent Lens and the response has been phenomenal. We are honored and humbled to have three Emmy nominations for this year's upcoming Emmy's and I feel that says a great deal about what an accomplishment this film is. Rewind is an extraordinary film that is a MUST SEE. I so hope people will take the time to watch and come 'meet' Sasha on the 14th of September. They will never forget the film or Sasha. It will change your life," she said.

This discussion is a unique opportunity to meet Meehl, the award-winning director and producer who lives in Redding, and the subject of one of her acclaimed films which tells a powerful story. Participants watch the film on their own time prior to the discussion and then join the program to learn and understand more from the creators. The film is available to view free on Hoopla (via the Mark Twain Library) and on Amazon Prime.

Rewind probes the gap between image and reality, showing both how little, and how much, a camera can capture. In the documentary we learn that Neulinger's father is constantly filming. But his father's camera, trained on the celebrations and frequent gatherings of a tight-knit family, was also documenting a hidden secret. It was a secret that eight-year-old Sasha could not keep. The truth sparked a media firestorm, a high-stakes court battle, and a generational reckoning. As an adult, Neulinger drew upon a revealing home video archive to piece together a story of the cycles and consequences of abuse, to examine what it means to heal, and to effect positive change in the world.

This is the third such program featuring Meehl, the award-winning director and producer of Cedar Creek Productions, in the Library's Discover Documentaries

Discussion Series. In April Meehl and director/subject Ben Masters discussed *The River and The Wall*, which addresses the issue of a border wall and its environmental impact. In June Meehl and her subject, maverick veterinarian Dr. Marty Goldstein, talked about *The Dog Doc* and treating animals holistically.

After this three-part discussion series featuring Meehl, the Mark Twain Library will continue the Discover Documentaries Discussion program beginning in January 2022 as an ongoing bi-monthly discussion group where community members can come together after watching a documentary on their own to discuss the film's topic, context, significance and more.

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Cindy Meehl started her career in films in 2008 when she created Cedar Creek Productions and began work on her documentary feature Buck. The film was Meehl's directorial debut and premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, where it won the festival's U.S. Documentary Audience Award and was shortlisted for the 2011 Academy Award - Best Documentary Feature. In addition to her directing, Meehl is a very involved executive producer on a range of critically acclaimed films including Rewind, The River and the Wall, For the Birds, Trapped, Unbranded and Dogs on the Inside. Over the course of her productive career, Meehl's films have won numerous awards such as the Sundance Jury Prize for Social Impact Filmmaking, a Peabody Award and many more. Cindy lives in Connecticut with her husband Brian and a happy home of dogs, cats, horses and chickens.

For more information about Meehl and to see a full list of films and awards, please visit the Cedar Creek Productions website. <https://cedarcreekmedia.com/>

Sasha Joseph Neulinger is the Founder and President of Voice For The Kids, and Co-Founder and Head of Production at Step 1 Films. Sasha travels nationally as a public speaker, advocating for reforms in child advocacy and child abuse prevention. In 2015, Sasha presented at TEDxBozeman with his first public speech, "Trauma Is Irreversible. How It Shapes Us Is Our Choice." Since his TED Talk, Sasha has presented over 100

keynote speeches around the world, helping raise over \$7 Million for the fight against child abuse. Sasha made his directional debut at the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival with his autobiographical, feature length documentary, Rewind, where the film received a special Jury Mention. Rewind had its U.S. Television Premiere on May 11, 2020 as a part of PBS' Independent Lens lineup, where the film reached 280 million households nationwide. Rewind was nominated for a 2020 Critics Choice Award for Best First Feature Documentary, and just received three Emmy Nominations for 2021.

To learn more about Sasha's work in child advocacy, visit www.voiceforthekids.com.

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Register for this program online at www.marktwainlibrary.org or call 203-938-2545 for information.

The Mark Twain Library is owned by the Mark Twain Library Association. It was founded in 1908 by Samuel Clemens - Mark Twain himself - one of Redding's most celebrated residents. Visit www.marktwainlibrary.org, for more information.