

UN REPRESENTED

A documentary by Daniel Falconer & Andrew Rodney
Press Contact: Sara Needham
sara@filmpath.com

PRESS KIT
weareunrepresented.com

TECH SPECS

Title	UnRepresented
Release	Spring 2019
TRT	PBS & Educational Version: 56:40 Feature Version: 82:35
Aspect Ratio	16:9
Director	Daniel Falconer
Producer	Andrew Rodney
Cast	Daniel Falconer, Lawrence Lessig, Justin Amash, Sheila Krumholz, Ayad Akhtar, Maya Macguineas, Josh Silver, Mike Lofgren, Ellen Weintraub, James Thurber, Admiral Bill Owens (ret.), Bruce Bartlett, Donald Berwick, John Pudner, David Guldenschuh, Bill Fruth, Nick Troiano, Carl Parrish, Mike Monetta

LOGLINE

UnRepresented is a new, award-winning documentary that reveals the driving forces behind political corruption and the unprecedented reforms to restore a government that better serves the people.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

UnRepresented is an award-winning documentary that uncovers the mechanisms that drive the cycle of corruption in Congress—giving political insiders enormous, unchecked power. The film explores how special interests bankroll political campaigns and relentlessly lobby to rig the system in their favor, all while following the letter of the law.

Featuring luminaries and leaders including Harvard Law professor Lawrence Lessig and sitting member of Congress Rep. Justin Amash, the film reveals the powerful possibilities to reform our government to better represent the people. *UnRepresented* serves as a rallying call to bring committed public servants, activists, and everyday Americans together to take action across partisan lines to change our flawed political system.

LONG SYNOPSIS

We all know Washington is broken. Our federal government's spending, regulations, and tax breaks are deeply corrupted; giving special interests limitless power and unfair advantage. Fed up with this status quo, Americans keep electing people who pledge to change it -- but to no avail.

With expert testimony from high-ranking officials, leaders in the reform movement, and everyday people trying to make a difference, *UnRepresented* reveals the barriers that keep the Federal government from enacting popular reforms to end political corruption. Through large investments in lobbying and election campaigns, special interests exercise undue control over our elected officials. In return, these same officials give massive rewards to their investors with spending and tax breaks financed by never-ending debt obtained from banks, foreign governments, and other wealthy financiers. This cycle of *legal* corruption gives unchecked power to these selfish political insiders.

While the political divide is wider than ever, the film also reveals that Democratic and Republican leaders in fact agree on passing basic reforms to outlaw the wanton corruption that both parties take part in – giving hope to non-partisan solutions and a post-partisan future. By passing laws at the State-level, Americans from many

perspectives are building momentum to force Congressional action on these issues or to bypass it entirely by holding a Convention to amend the US Constitution.

UnRepresented serves as a rallying call to bring people together across the divide and introduces grass-roots led movements to break the cycle of corruption and the influence of money in our flawed political system and to ultimately restore our government back to one that serves the people.

SUBJECTS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Lawrence Lessig | *Professor of Law and Leadership, Harvard University*

Justin Amash | *U.S. Representative for Michigan's 3rd Congressional District (2011-Present)*

Sheila Krumholz | *Executive Director, Center for Responsive Politics (OpenSecrets.org)*

Ayad Akhtar | *Playwright, novelist, philosopher*

Maya Macguineas | *President, Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget*

Josh Silver | *Co-Founder and Director, Represent Us*

Mike Lofgren | *Congressional Staff Member (1983-2011)*

Ellen Weintraub | *FEC Commissioner*

James Thurber | *Distinguished Professor of Government, American University*

Admiral Bill Owens (Ret.) | *Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (1994-96)*

Bruce Bartlett | *Former Congressional and White House Staff Member*

Donald Berwick | *Administrator, Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (2010-11)*

John Pudner | *Executive Director, Take Back Our Republic*

David Guldenschuh | *President, Balance Budget Amendment Foundation*

Bill Fruth | *National Chairman, Balance Budget Amendment Task Force*

Nick Troiano | *Executive Director, Unite America*

Carl Parrish | *Chapter Head, Represent Arizona*

Mike Monetta | *National Director, Wolf-PAC*

SELECT SUBJECT BIOGRAPHIES

LAWRENCE LESSIG

Prolific writer and reform advocate, Harvard Law Professor Lawrence Lessig concentrated his early career on the rights of internet users and improving access to copyrighted, trademarked materials. In 2007, he pivoted his focus to the more pressing problem of US political corruption. He has since authored five books on the subject, helped launch several movements, and ran for President in 2016 to draw attention to the need for campaign finance reform. He shares invaluable insight from his years of activism.

JUSTIN AMASH

Rep. Amash represents Michigan's Third District in the 116th United States Congress. At the age of 30, Rep. Amash was the second youngest US Representative when he took office in 2011. Originally a member of the Republican Party, he became an independent in July 2019 before joining the Libertarian Party in April 2020. Rep. Amash believes government overspending is one of the biggest threats to our economic health and national security, and he openly speaks about the immense pressures he and other members of Congress are under to fundraise.

SHEILA KRUMHOLZ

Sheila is the Executive Director of the Center for Responsive Politics (CRP), an organization that reveals the secrets behind money in politics. OpenSecrets, CRP's online news outlet provides critical data that shows up in news reports, research papers, and campaign ads. Regularly featured in the news, Fast Company magazine named Sheila "one of the most influential women in technology" in 2010

JOSH SILVER

Prior to cofounding Represent Us in 2012, Josh led the successful 1998 Arizona Clean Elections ballot initiative and served as CEO of Free Press, a media and technology reform advocacy organization. The mission of Represent Us is to pass versions of its Anti-Corruption Act in State and local governments nationwide while supporting campaigns of groups aligned with its platform. Silver explains how this tried and true strategy holds the best hope for forcing the reform of Congress.

MAYA MACGUINEAS

Veteran fiscal policy expert, Maya served at prominent nonprofits including New America Foundation, Brookings Institution and the Concord Coalition prior to taking over as President of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget in 2003. MacGuineas testifies regularly before Congress and advises Democrat and Republican members as a leading budget expert. She has published broadly, including regularly in The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, and The New York Times. She also appears regularly as a commentator on television.

NICK TROIANO

Nick is the Executive Director of Unite America, a national organization that works to bridge the growing partisan divide by enacting political reforms and electing candidates who put people over party. He has been involved in the political reform movement for over a decade, including running for U.S. Congress in 2014 as an independent candidate. Nick is active in leading efforts and supporting organizations that are aimed at strengthening American democracy and tackling our country's most pressing challenges.

MIKE LOFGREN

As a Congressional Staff Member for 28 years (1983-2011), Mike witnessed the devolution of the US political system, a subject he covers in detail in his books “The Party is Over” (2012) and “The Deep State” (2016). From his years of experience, he speaks about the corrupting influence of lobbyists, the wealthy financiers behind election campaigns, and the debt’s ability to empower dishonest lawmakers.

BILL OWENS

As Vicechair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1994-1996, Admiral Bill Owens (Retired) oversaw the largest-ever decrease to the Defense Department’s budget- from 600 billion to 300 billion. Serving as a naval officer for more than 30-years, he witnessed firsthand the spending that produced no-better safety for service-members while providing ever-greater profits for Congressionally approved suppliers.

DAVID GUIDENSCHUH

As legal counsel to various Article V movements and President of the Balanced Budget Amendment Task Force, David is the foremost expert in the process by which States can amend the US Constitution. Serving as Secretary of the first Convention of States since 1861, held in Phoenix in 2017, David dispels myths about the process and explains the motivations of those seeking to utilize this untapped power of State governments.

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

DANIEL FALCONER | DIRECTOR

"I never expected when I started this film that it would impact my political views as profoundly as it has and given my crew and I such great hope for reform."

Born in Detroit, Daniel Falconer studied Film at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. He wrote, directed, and edited "On My Own" in 2008, before dedicating three years to making "Deforce," a documentary chronicling Detroit's long struggle with political oppression.

He is proud to put his storytelling ability to work on *UnRepresented*. He stands ready to claim credit for anything the film does well, and equally prepared to blame others for any potential shortcomings.

ANDREW RODNEY | EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

"We were motivated to make UnRepresented with a desire to help our city overcome the terrible violence and poverty that have long gripped it."

Born and raised in Detroit, Andrew wrote and produced the documentary Deforce in 2010 along with his longtime friend, Director Daniel Falconer. While making Deforce, they found that many of Detroit's most severe problems stemmed from unaccountable federal policies like the War on Drugs. Appalled by the power of special interests in Congress that perpetuate such failed policies, Andrew was inspired to create *UnRepresented* to educate people about the cycle of corruption and ways they can take action to stop it.

Andrew is the Chief Operations Officer for Detroit Forming, Inc. in Southfield, Michigan. He is also a tutor in Detroit schools and a global member of Gen Next, a group dedicated to confronting challenges that face future generations.

TJ HELLMUTH | CINEMATOGRAPHER

LA based, TJ began his career in NYC in 2002 where he had the opportunity to work in camera and lighting departments on projects such as "Man on Wire", "Law and Order", "The Visitor", "Great World of Sound", "Sesame Street", and "Seemore's Playhouse", as well as countless music videos for artists such as Chris Cornell, Lil Kim, and 50 Cent.

ERIC BRUGGEMANN | EDITOR

Recently coming off producing and editing the feature documentary “Sunshine Superman” and working on Amazon’s series “The New Yorker Presents”, Eric Bruggemann has been active in the documentary, television and film worlds for years. He has edited four projects for Alex Gibney including “NRDC: Laws of Nature” and “Taxi to the Dark Side”. He edited “Video Free Europe,” a feature doc about R.E.M. and “3 Nights Live,” a feature doc about Ryan Adams. Eric also cut two seasons of Sundance Channel’s “Iconoclasts”, the feature film “Woodpecker,” and broadcast campaigns for Levis, NASCAR, DeBeers, and Citizen Watch. Eric has also edited music videos for Rufus Wainwright, Natalie Cole, Gladys Knight, Tilly and the Wall, The Stills, Ryan Adams, and Counterclockwise.

HANNAH NOEL | RESEARCH DIRECTOR

A Lansing native, Hannah graduated with a degree in Screen Arts and Cultures from The University of Michigan. She is an advocate for social justice and reform, heavily involved in the Prison Creative Arts Program- dedicated to bringing arts and literature inside Michigan prisons and connecting students with incarcerated men, women and children. It was here that her drive was sparked to bring insight to audiences about issues that plague our society, and ways in which we can stand up to change them.

SARA NEEDHAM | IMPACT PRODUCER

Based in the San Francisco Bay Area, Sara is an Emmy-nominated producer with over 18 years of experience working in documentary film and journalism. She has led and implemented several successful outreach & impact campaigns for documentaries and is excited to be spearheading the distribution campaign for *UnRepresented*.

Sara holds an M.J. from the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, where she learned the craft of filmmaking from legendary, Oscar-nominated filmmakers and her reporting skills from some of the top journalists in the country.

Q&A WITH EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ANDREW RODNEY

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO MAKE THE FILM?

The State-led movements to change Federal law that we cover are fascinating and underreported. Most Americans I talk to understand that Washington is corrupt and it's costing them, but fewer know how corruption happens and fewer still are aware of all their options to change the laws that allow for it. When we got special access to some leading movements and individuals in them, I thought it important to share their stories which show different paths to reform that bypass our broken Congress.

AS SOMEONE WHO'S NEVER WORKED IN GOVERNMENT POLICY, WHAT MADE YOU FEEL YOU HAD A VALUABLE PERSPECTIVE ON THESE TOPICS?

Our interviewees have amazing policy experience and they have the same basic problems with Congress as the rest of us. The power of independent documentary film is that voices like theirs can be heard while practically unlimited sums of money are driving partisanship that protects the status quo. That said, the most valuable perspective is that of the ordinary American that wants to see a change in our political system, but is unsure of how to go about it. That's where I started in 2012 after the film's director and I completed our last documentary (*Deforce*) about Detroit's historical challenges. Since then, our team has traveled the country and gotten involved in various movements working for solutions. We saw how all of these movements are challenged by the partisan rhetoric that gets pushed top down by political leaders and we saw a story in the fascinating possibilities of nonpartisan reforms bringing change from the bottom up.

WHAT WERE YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGES IN MAKING THE FILM?

Framing the problem we focus on. It's not Americans' fault that we view political subjects through a lens colored by partisanship- billions are spent every year influencing media to encourage this mindset. So, when a person says that unlimited debt spending is a primary reason our system is so corrupt, the assumption of many is that the person saying it is a Republican who supports cutting social programs. Alternatively, when a person says that the biggest problem is corporate donors buying elections the assumption is the person saying it is a Democrat who wants public financing to take away any advantage the 1% has in nominating candidates or influencing policy. Only with the help and openness of our interviewees, were we able to meet this challenge. We hope their words and the evidence we present shows you how change can and will happen when more Americans come to care less about the party controlling government than they do about the checks and balance necessary

to assure the just representation of The People's will irrespective of which party holds office.

WHAT MAKES YOUR FILM STAND OUT FROM OTHERS ABOUT SIMILAR TOPICS?

That same post-partisan, independent approach that we took and the sheer number of underreported stories we share. Relatively few Americans know the States have the power to amend the Constitution without a two-thirds vote of Congress or that the first Convention of States since 1861 was held last year (2017) in Phoenix to define the process for doing so. With special access to that Convention and its organizers, the film explains how this would happen.

Also underreported, though it has a far larger following including many Hollywood celebrities, are the actions of the movement Represent Us (RU) is leading across the nation. Relatively few people know that in 2017 the South Dakota Legislature overturned a referendum their citizens passed to require those same legislators to disclose lobbying and campaign contributions amongst other reforms that targeted corrupt practices. The citizens overrode the legislators in the 2018 election and Represent Us supported this and more than a dozen other successful initiatives in State's in the last election.

Beyond these movements, it's fascinating to hear experts like the former head of Medicare and Vicechair of the Joint Chiefs talking specifically about how corruption worked around their departments and how it harms us. However, the film really stands out in showing the ways the problems presented can be addressed.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN LOCAL MOVEMENTS TO STOP CORRUPTION?

I thought you'd never ask! At our website you'll find descriptions and links to groups we cover in the film. Represent Us in particular has an extensive nationwide network of volunteers and whether you just sign up for their emails or join a local chapter you'll learn about a broad assortment of actions you can take to help. They are a very collaborative movement and their members support a range of reform initiatives. They also host an annual summit (March 29-31 in Nashville this year) with many other groups they support or want to hear from attending. The various groups pushing for a Constitutional Convention called by the State also have local chapters in many State's and if you are in a State that has not passed their resolution they could really use your assistance.

###