



TRUFFLE HOUND

ON THE TRAIL OF THE WORLD'S MOST **SEDUCTIVE SCENT**,
WITH **DREAMERS**, **SCHEMERS**, AND SOME EXTRAORDINARY **DOGS**

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4 X 60 MINUTE DOCUMENTARY SERIES BASED ON THE FORTHCOMING BOOK BY ROWAN JACOBSEN
PRODUCED BY WARNER HANSON TELEVISION

Over the years, award-winning author Rowan Jacobsen has changed the global conversation on foods ranging from heirloom apples to plant-based proteins. A decade ago, he turned American oyster appreciation into a national obsession and launched a thousand oyster happy hours with his James Beard Award-winning book *A Geography of Oysters*. Now he is poised to do the same for the most coveted and misunderstood food of them all. Deeply informed, unabashedly passionate, rakishly relatable, *Truffle Hound* will spark America's next great culinary passion.

Inspired by the scent of one freshly unearthed white truffle in a Barolo forest, the book and film adaptation follows Rowan down a rabbit hole into *Truffleland*, a world of secretive hunts, misty woods, black-market deals, obsessive chefs, quixotic scientists, muddy dogs, maddening smells, and some of the best late-night meals ever created.

Rowan guides our cameras from the famed Truffle Fair of Alba to the forests of Tuscany, hunting truffles under cover of night. We see the back alleys of Budapest and the refrigerated hangers at JFK Airport where the real truffle trade happens. As we meet the dreamers, schemers, sensualists, and scientists devoted to truffles, a question arises: What is it about these mysterious fungi that turns people into quivering puddles? The answer lies in their evolution. Over millions of years, these little mushrooms—which live their entire lives underground, and depend on animals to dig them up, eat them, and spread their spores—have perfected a scent designed to do one thing: Drive animals wild. It works on squirrels. It works on pigs. AND IT WORKS ON US!

People pay more than \$8,000 for a top Lagotto Romagnolo, Italy's legendary truffle dog, and spend years training the dogs to find truffles. (Pigs are passé.) They plant entire forests of oaks and wait a decade for the fungi to appear. They pay \$3,000 a pound to possess them. And yet almost everything they've been taught about truffles is wrong.

The best "Perigord" black truffles come from Australia and Spain. The best "Alba" white truffles come from Croatia and Hungary. And the best truffles of all may actually be tucked away in America, just waiting to be discovered. For centuries, the French and Italian "truffle mafia" has managed to obscure the truth about truffles, but Rowan leads us around the middlemen to the world's best truffle hunters (four-legged and two-legged) and the chefs who are working with them to drive the latest farm-to-table revolution.

From the Medieval hill towns of Istria to the fragrant fir forests of the Pacific Northwest, *Truffle Hound* explores a vibrant world that has little to do with the old clichés of haute cuisine. Amazing truffle varieties—some well-known, others just being discovered—are being farmed and foraged in dozens of countries, where unique local cultures are springing up to celebrate them, from the young chefs of Spain's little-known truffle country to the pioneering women spurring a truffle-dog revolution in the United States.

Both an entertaining odyssey and a manifesto, *Truffle Hound* will demystify truffles—and then remystify them. It will help people understand how a funky little fungi can make them swoon, and give them all the tools they need to take their own truffle love to the next level. A culinary and sensory explosion in four 1-hour episodes—think *Parts Unknown* with dogs!—this documentary miniseries will be America's introduction to a tantalizing world about to mushroom into the mainstream.

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EPISODE ONE (in 4 parts): Everything You Know About Truffles Is WRONG!

1) Down the Rabbit Hole

Our camera lens catches distant flares of light twinkling through the craggy woodlands of a seemingly haunted terrain. In the dead of night, beneath the medieval landscape of the Italian Piedmont, we meet a young truffle hunter who is singlehandedly trying to save the region's truffle forests, along with the two dogs he inherited from his mentor. Here we get our first intimation of the lasting spell truffles cast, and realize how profoundly different they are from any other food on earth. These truffles have something to teach us about the nature of scent, memory, and desire.

2) Thinking Like a Fungus

When the scent of a truffle sucks us into a blissful reverie, it's because we're in the embrace of one of the oldest and craftiest forms of intelligence on the planet. And it has a lot to teach us. Truffles are the fruits of mycorrhizal fungi, underground organisms that form symbiotic relationships with trees and link them into an underground network scientists have dubbed the Wood-Wide Web. Through this network, the members of a forest share resources and information, and truffles and other mycorrhizal fungi are the ones pulling the strings, using the same volatile compounds that smell so enticing to us. In other words, these masters of manipulation have hacked the operating systems of both plants and animals. Rowan sets out with truffle-loving mycologists to learn how they do this, and how our hunger for truffles can sustain healthy forests.

3) The Alba Connection

If truffles are drugs, then Alba is Bogota. From October to January, white truffles are the lifeblood of its cobblestoned streets, grated over pasta in every trattoria and sold under glass in back alleys as if they are precious stones. Hungry to experience that scent again, Rowan throws himself at the 90th annual Alba Truffle Fair, which smells like a high school gym locker, the air thick with garlic and hormones. Hundreds of thousands of people attend. Tens of thousands of truffles are consumed. And one massive secret is revealed: Almost none of them come from Alba.

4) Black Autumn

We are on a train, rolling through the countryside, to go truffle hunting with the world's top truffle dealer. Gentle meadows flash past, spotted with sheep. Horses rolling joyously on their backs in the golden September light. This certainly isn't Italy. It isn't even France. It's the Wiltshire Downs of southern England, and we are here to meet Zak Frost, the whistleblower who is exposing the lies of the truffle industry. Zak imports the world's best truffles and delivers them to London's finest restaurants by motorbike. And as he's quick to tell anyone who will listen, they aren't coming from Alba or Perigord.

As we ditch the dogma (and follow the dogs), we're finding great truffles everywhere: Croatia and Hungary, Australia and Spain. We tag along as Zak and his black lab Stanley as they hunt Black Autumn truffles at a secret location in Wiltshire, getting the truth about truffles, then retire to the local pub—whose proprietors just happen to be the former chef de cuisine and pastry chef at the famed Per Se restaurant—to dry out by a roaring fire, drink a pint, and experience the birth of a new, earthy and very English cuisine. By the end, we are ready to set off to explore the real world of truffles.

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EPISODE TWO (in 4 parts): **The Real Dirt**

1) La Dolce Vita

So if Alba is a lie, are there still truffles to be found in Italy? Oh, yes. But we're going to have to leave Piedmont and head for the limestone-rich mountains of Central Italy. In Tuscany, we sip wine with Ginevra Venerosi Pesciolini, the rebellious 26th-generation Contessa and biodynamic winemaker, then plunge into the organic white-truffle forests she secretly preserves around her vineyards. From there, we head to the mountains of Le Marche, Italy's least-visited region, which also happens to be the real powerhouse of Italian truffles. There, we take in the Aqualagna Truffle Fair, Italy's insider festival, before finishing our grand tour in Umbria at the headquarters of Urbani Tartufi, the 800-pound gorilla of truffles, to see how all those truffles go from holes in the ground to five-star restaurants.

2) Mr. Big

Push those Italians hard enough and they admit that *maybe*, just *maybe*, some of their truffles come from Istria, not Italy. So we cross the Adriatic to meet Giancarlo Zigante, the Tony Soprano-like don of Croatian truffles. Trivia: "Zigante" is an old Venetian dialect for "gigantic." In other words, we are literally meeting with Mr. Big. Zigante started as a hunter forty years ago, then began buying and selling. Now he travels Istria in his blacked out Mercedes, visiting hundreds of hunters at their homes to buy their latest finds, selling them all over the world. He's got his own factory, a palatial restaurant, even a festival almost identical to Alba's. In other words, he's decided to beat the Italians at their own game—if they don't make him disappear first. Before heading out on an underground buying spree, we dine with Mr. Zigante in his restaurant for the real dirt on Istria vs. Italy.

3) Last Days of the Truffle Knights

Zoltan is a mild-mannered mycologist at Budapest University by day, but when the forces of evil threaten truffles anywhere, he dons his blue robes and truffle medallions, grabs his truffle shield and bottle of homemade truffle brandy, and transforms into the Grand Master of the Hungarian Order of Truffle Knights. He tells us about Hungary's little-known 1,500-year tradition of truffling, then takes us to the Truffle Museum out in the countryside.

We end our tour with Istvan Bagi, excommunicated truffle knight. Istvan and Mokka, his brilliant truffle hound, are widely considered the world's top truffle team. They show us the extraordinary bounty of Hungary's legendary oak forests, including rare truffle species completely unknown to chefs or the general public. And we meet their team of hunters—poor Hungarians who have found a last lifeline hunting truffles, even as their villages collapse and their government slides toward dictatorship.

4) Confessions of a Truffle Dealer

Her day would begin at 4 a.m., skyping with truffle hunters in Eastern Europe about the next shipment. Then she'd head for the refrigerated hangers of JFK Airport, where the dead bodies and live truffles that have come in from Europe overnight are kept. She'd fill her backpack with \$20,000 worth of truffles and hit the streets, eager to move them before they turned to rot. Success for her startup hinged on convincing New York's macho chefs that she knew more about truffles than they did. But she was young, smart, and she learned the exact buttons to push. She's now a big player in the food media world, but 'H,' as she is known, reminisces for us about those scrappy days when everyone on the subway wondered what the hell was in her pack. In the process, we learn the ins and outs of the New York truffle scene—where to go, and where not to.

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EPISODE THREE (in 4 parts): **Black Magic Apple of Love**

1) The Brotherhood of the Black Diamond

January. Richerenches, France. The Mistral howls across the wintry Provence landscape. Up the street, between the old stone buildings, comes a solemn procession of black-robed figures sporting gold medallions and straw baskets. The baskets are filled with black truffles. As the church bells toll, they stroll up the street and turn into the ancient church for the Mass of Saint-Antoine, patron saint of truffles.

These descendants of the Knights Templar, here in one of the old Templar strongholds, have been celebrating this mass as long as anyone can remember. This is the epicenter of black truffle culture. After mass, we follow the hunters to the local cafes for an epic Sunday lunch as deeply French as foie gras and intrigue. We don't talk of the murdered truffle hunter, or of declining French truffle production. But it's on everybody's mind.

2) The Rains in Spain

Those cute little truffle gnomes in France, lined up with their straw baskets of truffles for sale, have a big secret: They didn't actually hunt the truffles themselves, and most of those truffles didn't even come from France. They were bought in Spain, which produces more black truffles than anywhere on earth. The Black Diamond, the winter truffle, which most chefs consider the ultimate culinary truffle, is now being farmed in Spain and Australia on a massive scale.

Scientists cracked the code 30 years ago, and the Spanish government subsidized the last old farmers in its dying Teruel region to grow them. It was an extraordinary turnaround. Now Teruel is rich on truffles, the kids are moving back to become farmers of their own, and a unique Spanish truffle culture of farmers, dog trainers, and chefs has arisen. We visit Spain's truffle scientists and entrepreneurs to learn how they did it, if they can keep doing it in the era of climate change, and where they think the next truffle resurrection will take place.

3) The Truffle Whisperers

What exactly is that scent that so many find unforgettable, even life-changing? One thing it's *not* is the artificial aroma found in all truffle oil and jarred products. As chef Wylie Dufresne explains, that stuff has zero truffle in it, and the flavor isn't even close. We interview flavor scientists to learn about the volatile mix of pheromones, cannabinoids, and other brain-busting compounds found in truffles, and then we visit the chefs who are making magic with those compounds. Any idiot can take a mandoline to a white truffle and whip up an awesome pasta con burro e tartufi, but in the hands of Suzanne Goin, Ken Frank, Heston Blumenthal, and Massimo Bottura, truffles become something dazzlingly new.

4) The Judgment of Paris II

Forty-five years ago, the wine world was upended when a handful of upstart California wines bested their pedigreed French counterparts in a blind tasting in Paris, forever after known as The Judgment of Paris. After months of peregrinations, Rowan begins to wonder if the same could be true for truffles: Could the Americans beat the Europeans in a fair fight? Can any one truffle region lay claim to the best? To find out, we pull together a panel of chefs, gourmards, and celebrity noses for a definitive blind "smelling" of the best the world has to offer.

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EPISODE FOUR (in 4 parts): American Truffle

1) Miracle in Oregon

We are running through the mist in a dark Douglas Fir forest, pursuing two curly-headed mops named Dante and Mocha who seem intent on eating as many truffles as they can find—and they are finding a lot. With us is Charles Lefevre, the mycologist who has put Pacific Northwest truffles on the map. And now Rowan is holding a small, white miracle in his hand. It's an Oregon White truffle, and he's pretty sure it's the best truffle he's ever smelled. How could this be? Everyone always said Oregon truffles were terrible. But as Dr. Lefevre explains, dogs were the key. Until recently, there was no truffle dog culture in the Pacific Northwest, and people used to harvest native truffles by raking the soil under the fir trees. That harvests all the unripe truffles, which have no smell. But dogs only find ripe ones. Now that Dr. Lefevre has introduced truffle dogs to the region, Oregon truffles are developing a reputation as some of the world's best, and Eugene is the epicenter. We visit the Oregon Truffle Festival to find out if it's true, and to meet the chefs behind the six-course Grand Truffle Dinner and learn if they think Oregon truffles can run with the big dogs.

2) The Truffle Huntresses

Part of the Oregon Truffle Festival is the Joriad—the world truffle-dog championship. It has always been won by women (and their dogs). Sunny Diaz and Stella in 2016. Aiko Vail and Cowboy in 2017. Marcy Tippmann and Gustave the Chihuahua (massive upset) in 2018. Ava Chapman and Joey in 2019 and 2020. Unlike Europe, where truffle hunting is dominated by men, women are leading the way in America. Twelve years ago, there were no certified truffle dogs in America; now there are more than one thousand, a nose corps that is sniffing out opportunity one muddy snout at a time. We pack it in with the woof gang, attending the Joriad and learning from trainers like Staci O'Toole, the self-described "Truffle Huntress," how these pioneers leaned in to the old boys' club and changed the rules.

3) Gun Dogs and Indian Summer: The South Digs Truffles

Truffles love the climate of the American South. Perigords are booming in Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia. Pecan growers in Georgia and Florida have struck gold with the native Pecan Truffles that pop up beneath their orchards. And in February 2020, beneath some loblolly pines in Middle-of-Nowhere, North Carolina, an unlikely partnership between an evangelical backwoods forester and a rogue Nigerian mycologist produced the most abundant two acres of truffles *in the history of the world*. We road trip through the deep south to witness the blossoming of a new truffle culture, ending at Blackberry Farm, the 4,200-acre mega-retreat in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, where the world's most expensive Lagotto Romagnolo puppies are raised and where chef Dustin Busby is giving truffle charcuterie a uniquely southern spin.

4) New Tricks

Throughout this journey, Rowan has been distressed by one mystery: Why does the Northeastern United States, his home stomping ground, seem to be the only one with no good truffles? Finally, a lead: Thirty years ago, James Beard himself called *Tuber canaliculatum*, the Appalachian Truffle, "exquisite." Small, golden, incredibly aromatic, it has almost never been seen since, the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker of truffles. But after much sleuthing, Rowan finds a mycologist in Quebec who has trained his truffle dachshund to find them. Is Rowan's ten-year-old cockapoo up to the task? With much hope, and many treats, the hunt is on for the truffle that could revolutionize foraging from Maryland to Maine.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND HOST

Rowan Jacobsen likes to immerse himself in his subject matter. Whether knee high in a salt marsh or dog sledding at midnight, Rowan dives in deep with the characters and subjects he covers. His combination of journalistic spirit, quirky outlook and intensity for topics that many of us take for granted distinguishes him as one of the great explorers of our time.

Rowan has made numerous television, radio, and lecture appearances over the years and is comfortable and spontaneous on camera.

Rowan is the award-winning author of *A Geography of Oysters*, *Fruitless Fall*, *American Terroir*, *Apples of Uncommon Character*, and other books. His books have been named to numerous Top Ten lists, and he has been featured on *All Things Considered*, *The Splendid Table*, *CBS This Morning*, *Bon Appétit*, *Saveur*, *Weekend Edition*, *Morning Edition*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and elsewhere.

He has written for the *New York Times*, *Harper's*, *Newsweek*, *Outside*, *Food & Wine*, *Forbes*, *Bloomberg*, *Mother Jones*, *Scientific American*, *Eating Well*, *Vice*, *Yankee*, and others, and he appears regularly in the *Best American Science & Nature Writing* and *Best Food Writing* collections. He has performed with *Pop-Up Magazine*, lectured at *Harvard University*, *Yale University*, and *The Explorer's Club*, and trained the staffs of the country's top oyster bars, and he makes dozens of appearances each year at museums, festivals, and in the media.

He is the recipient of an *Alicia Patterson Foundation* fellowship to write about endangered cultures on the borderlands between *India*, *Myanmar*, and *China*; and a *McGraw Center* fellowship to explore the environmental potential of high-tech proteins.

He has received *James Beard Awards* for his book *A Geography of Oysters* and his *Eating Well* piece on the collapse of honeybees; a *Society of American Travel Writers* prize for his *Outside* story on rhino poaching in *Assam*; and an *Overseas Press Club* award for his *Harper's* piece on villages in rural *India* overrun by elephants. He was a *Knight Fellow* at *MIT* in 2017–18. When not pursuing the elusive, provocative, or delicious, he lives in *Vermont*.



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ABOUT THE PRODUCERS

Warner Hanson Television (WHTV) produces smart and original programming for a variety of audiences. Our productions, for broadcast and cable networks as well as streaming and social media sites, are unique in their approach. Whether it's putting unconventional characters in the forefront or trekking to the ends of the earth, we believe that in order to find the best storytellers we need to meet people where they are. Over the years it has been our privilege to have filmed in some astonishing locations—from deep sea dives to erupting mountains and jungle canteens to plenty of Michelin Starred restaurants—all in pursuit of stories that change peoples lives and perspectives.

Founded in 1999, WHTV has created and produced numerous award-winning documentaries, culinary and lifestyle series, commercials, and PSA's. We believe that strong visual storytelling can educate, inspire, and entertain. We create and produce films on the subjects of natural history, culinary arts, travel, education, sports, social justice and health.

Warner Hanson has won four James Beard Awards, multiple Emmy 's, IACP Awards, and others. WHTV is dedicated to creating high quality, original work in film, television, and digital media. Reviews of our productions by the national press have stated that our work is "artful and engaging" as well as "smart and genuine." Based in Washington, DC our creative team of visionaries and artists are exceptional storytellers, screenwriters, directors, photographers, editors, graphic designers, and developers.

Our work airs on PBS, BBC, A&E, Discovery, ESPN and streams on Amazon Prime, Hulu, Passport and others. Footage from the WHTV film library appears in major Hollywood motion pictures and in episodic dramas that include Designated Survivor, CSI, The West Wing, Grey's Anatomy, The Blacklist, and others. National Geographic and the Discovery Networks integrate WHTV's footage as well. WHTV produces films for non-broadcast clients that include: The Nature Conservancy, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Cancer Institute, Children's National Medical Center, NIH, Iceland Naturally, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and others.

RECENT AWARDS:

EMMY AWARDS Honoree Outstanding Public Service: *Fighting Opioids Today*, PBS (2019)

IACP AWARDS Finalist Best Television Series: *Good Catch*, MPT (2019)

EMMY AWARDS Honoree Outstanding Achievement in Photography: *Good Catch*, MPT (2019)

TASTE AWARDS Winner Best Social Media Short: *Good Catch Films*, Twitter (2017)

LA SHORTS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL Official Selection: *Today's Students Tomorrow's Workforce* (2015)

EMMY AWARDS Nomination Outstanding Travel Program: *Over Hawaii*, PBS (2013)

TASTE AWARDS Winner Viewers Choice Award: *The American Chef*, A&E (2012)

JAMES BEARD AWARDS Winner Best Cooking Series Filmed on Location: *Chefs A' Field IV*, PBS (2011)

TASTE AWARDS Winner Best Green/Organic Television Series: *Chefs A' Field IV*, PBS (2011)

BLUE OCEAN FILM FESTIVAL Honorable Mention Broadcast Category: *Old Salts, Young Guns* (2010)

EMMY AWARDS Nomination Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography: *Chefs A' Field III*, PBS (2008)

NAPA SONOMA WINE COUNTRY FILM FESTIVAL Winner Best Eco Cinema: *Lunatic Farmer* (2008)

NEW YORK FESTIVALS Gold Medal Best Family Program: *Kids On The Farm*, PBS (2008)

FILM ADVISORY BOARD Award of Excellence Family Programming: *Kids On The Farm*, PBS (2008)

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL Winner Gold Hugo Award: *Chefs A' Field II*, PBS (2007)

TACOMA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL Finalist: *Lunatic Farmer* (2007)

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JAMES BEARD AWARDS Winner Best National Cooking Special: *Chefs A' Field II*, PBS (2006)
CINE GOLDEN EAGLE AWARD Winner People & Places: *Chefs A' Field II*, PBS (2006)
WHITE HOUSE NEWS PHOTOGRAPHERS AWARDS Runner-Up Best Documentary: *Wild AK* (2006)
JAMES BEARD AWARDS Winner Best National Cooking Series: *Chefs A' Field*, PBS (2004)
CINE GOLDEN EAGLE AWARD Winner People & Places: *Chefs A' Field*, PBS (2004)
JAMES BEARD AWARDS Winner Best Local Food Program: *Tom Douglas Seattle*, KCTS (2003)
NEW YORK FESTIVALS Finalist: *Microcredit Achievement From Uganda to Kyrgyzstan* (2000)
ITVA DC FILM FESTIVAL Award of Merit: *The Howler Monkey*, ABC NewsOne (2000)
TELLY AWARDS Finalist: *Great Cats of the World*, OLN (1997)
SIERRA CLUB NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL Finalist: *Fighting Extinction* (1997)
ITVA DC FILM FESTIVAL Special Achievement in Cinematography: *The Village Bank* (1997)
TELLY AWARDS Gold Award: *Shadows Of The Jaguar - Dangerous & Endangered*, ESPN (1996)

KEY BIOS

HEIDI HANSON - EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Heidi Hanson is the Executive Producer and co-founder of Warner Hanson Television. She is responsible for editorial development, fundraising, business development, and production at WHTV. Heidi has developed and produced natural history documentaries, newsmagazine, and programming that airs on major networks and streaming services. She is Producer of the long running PBS series *Chefs A' Field* which features some of the world's top chefs. Heidi has received numerous awards, including four prestigious James Beard Awards. Food & Wine Magazine touted Heidi as "one of the most influential figures in food today," naming her one of their "TASTEMAKERS." Heidi was the longtime Chair of American Institute of Wine & Food's Days of Taste program where she created programs that bring gardens, chef demonstrations, and food lessons to Washington, DC inner city schools and communities. She is a founding member of FoodPrints, a collaborative that promotes the joys of local & sustainable food in schools. Heidi has been a guest lecturer for L'Academie de Cuisine, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Smithsonian Associates, Walt Disney World, Slow Food, SeaWeb, and various Food & Wine festivals. Heidi is a member of The James Beard Foundation, The American Institute of Wine & Food, National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, and Les Dames D'Escoffier. She is the author of two cookbooks. Heidi grew up in Hong Kong and attended the Hong Kong International School. She has a B.A. in Journalism from The George Washington University in Washington, DC.

CHRIS WARNER - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chris Warner is the Executive Director at Warner Hanson Television. He oversees series development, field & post-production, and the technical aspects of the company. Prior to co-founding WHTV, he directed and produced documentaries and news features for ESPN, CBS, and CNN. Before moving to Washington, DC in 1992 he spent time in New York as an independent filmmaker working at Global Village and The New School. Prior to that, he produced features for CNN in Atlanta and news stories for the CBS affiliate in Seattle. Chris has won numerous awards for his work in film and television. He has been recognized by his peers for excellence in production over the years and currently serves as the jury chair on the Cine Golden Eagle Awards. He also judges for the national news, documentary and daytime Emmy Awards at the request of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Chris has a joint B.A. in English and Government with a minor in Fine Arts from Georgetown University in Washington, DC. He did post-graduate work at The New School's graduate film program in New York, NY.

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