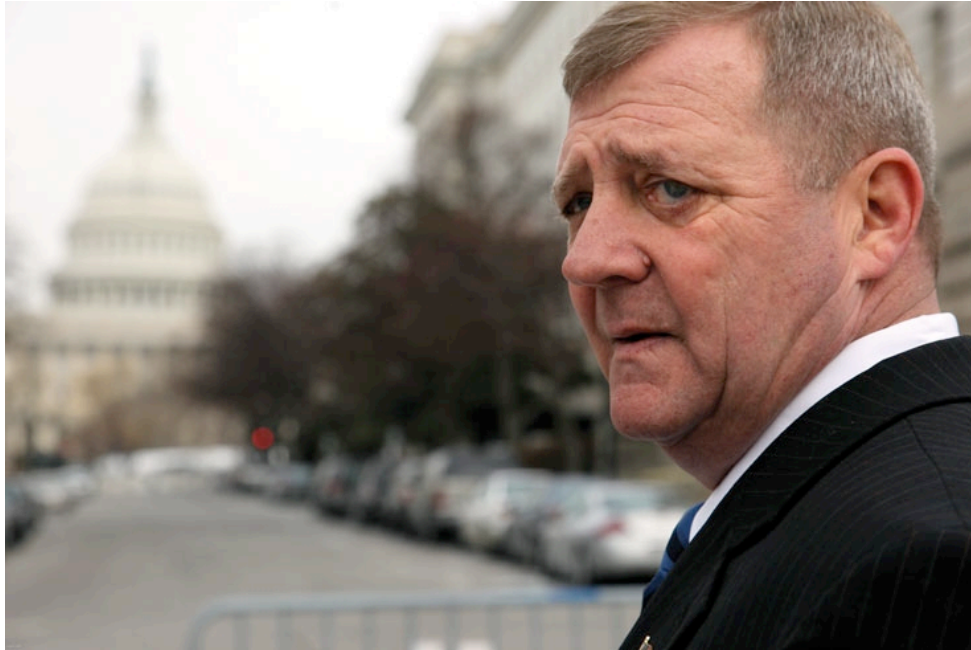


WIDER FILM PROJECTS PRESENTS
IN ASSOCIATION WITH CHICKEN AND EGG PICTURES
A TIED TO THE TRACKS FILMS PRODUCTION

SEMPER FI: ALWAYS FAITHFUL

A FILM BY RACHEL LIBERT & TONY HARDMON



Running Time: 76 minutes



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To see more on the film, visit
<http://www.semperfialwaysfaithful.com/>

SYNOPSIS

Marine Corps Master Sgt. Jerry Ensminger was a devoted Marine for nearly twenty-five years. As a drill instructor he lived and breathed the “Corps” and was responsible for training thousands of new recruits with its motto Semper Fidelis or “Always Faithful.” When Jerry’s nine-year old daughter Janey died of a rare type of leukemia, his world collapsed. As a grief-stricken father, he struggled for years to make sense of what happened. His search for answers led to the shocking discovery of a Marine Corps cover-up of one of the largest water contamination incidents in U.S. history.

The drinking water at North Carolina’s Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base was highly contaminated by toxic chemicals for thirty years. It is estimated that nearly one million Marines and their families were exposed to high levels of carcinogens through the water. When the Marine Corps eventually closed the toxic wells they never made the contamination public. It is now twenty-two years later and only a fraction of former residents know about their exposure to the toxic chemicals.

SEMPER FI: ALWAYS FAITHFUL unfolds like a detective novel tracking the discovery of the contamination and the subsequent cover-up and takes us through present day events as Jerry leads a coalition of former base residents in a fight for justice. Many of them have lost children or are now sick themselves.

In the process of investigating the Camp Lejeune contamination a larger issue comes into focus—the abysmal environmental record of the military. The Department of Defense is the United States’ largest polluter which raises grave questions about environmental conditions at other bases across the country. SEMPER FI: ALWAYS FAITHFUL is a timely and sobering story of the betrayal of US soldiers and is a call to action for more environmental oversight of military sites.

**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT
BY RACHEL LIBERT & TONY HARDMON**

Our film SEMPER FI: ALWAYS FAITHFUL follows the journey of Master Sgt. Jerry Ensminger as he fights for justice on behalf of Marines and their families exposed to toxic drinking water at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. In the process, we see this dutiful soldier transform himself into the activist he never imagined he'd become.

In many ways, the story of SEMPER FI: ALWAYS FAITHFUL, is a classic David and Goliath tale and it was this conflict and heroism that initially attracted us. We felt that this was a unique opportunity to tell the story of an environmental disaster from a very personal perspective.

The water contamination at Camp Lejeune is one of the largest in U.S. history. Nearly a million people were unknowingly exposed to harmful chemicals at Camp Lejeune at levels that are "off the charts" by today's standards. These people chose to serve their country. They never imagined that their families would be put in danger by their decision to join the Marine Corps, and they never imagined that the organization to whom they swore their loyalty would betray them in such an intimate way.

As we dug deeper into this story, we discovered that Camp Lejeune was just the tip of the iceberg. The United States Department of Defense is our country's largest polluter. There are currently 130 contaminated military sites on the EPA's priority clean-up list. Many of these sites are still active and at some sites the contamination affects the neighboring civilian communities.

We hope that SEMPER FI: ALWAYS FAITHFUL sheds light on the injustice at Camp Lejeune and illustrates that social change is possible especially when undertaken by relentless and determined individuals.

Q&A WITH DIRECTORS RACHEL LIBERT & TONY HARDMON

Q: What was the genesis of the film; and what propelled your interest in Jerry Ensminger's story?

In early 2007, we were researching another documentary film when we met the sister of our main character Jerry. She told us that her brother was in the process of exposing a Marine Corps cover-up of a water contamination and she was looking for filmmakers to document it. We were skeptical but she laid out this incredible story of intrigue, heartbreak and betrayal. It piqued our interest enough that we showed up in Washington DC two weeks later and met a gruff retired Marine on the mission of his life. We knew immediately that Jerry would be a compelling film subject. Ironically, it is the skills that he learned as a Marine Corps Drill Instructor that serve him well today. He has a very commanding presence and dramatic cadence to his speech. We were also intrigued by his emotional complexity. He has this very tough exterior yet the pain that fuels his fight is just below the surface.

When we first learned about this situation, we were shocked that Camp Lejeune's water was contaminated for such a long period of time (30 years) and that the Marine Corps still hadn't notified former residents of their exposure to carcinogenic toxins. When we dug deeper and learned that the Department of Defense is our nation's largest polluter we knew that this was an important story with far-reaching repercussions. We felt that we had a unique opportunity to tell the story of an environmental disaster through a very personal perspective and with an extremely charismatic storyteller.

Q: Was there anything different in how you approached this documentary as opposed to your previous works?

Taking on the United States Department of Defense is not something either of us thought we'd ever do. Our previous films have depicted more intimate stories in which we followed someone on a personal journey and told their story in that moment in time. This film has that aspect but it also has this huge political, environmental and scientific side to it. We had to do a lot of research so that we could engage in knowledgeable way with our film subjects. We had to learn about environmental laws and regulations, military procedures, public health policy and the inner workings of Capitol Hill.

Q: Over what course of time did you begin and finish shooting?

We began shooting in mid-2007 and wrapped at the end of 2010.

Q: What were your biggest challenges in developing the project?

This film had a lot more uncertainty about how it would end than anything we had worked on before. We knew what Jerry and Mike were fighting for but it was unclear how much they would be able to achieve. They had a pretty formidable opponent in the Department of the Defense. Many contamination cases end unresolved, and we knew that if we ended up in the same place that we started it wouldn't be very satisfying for a viewer. We also didn't know how long it would take for things to change. Fortunately, we picked a perfect time to film Jerry and Mike as they had a lot success and paved the way for more victories.

Another challenge was finding a way to convey some very technical scientific information in a way that was interesting and understandable. We knew that we wanted to couch this information within the narrative of the story and not rely on expert "talking heads". We think this makes it more compelling but it was a challenge to find the right balance of personal story versus scientific/political story in the edit.

Q: How did your feelings about the subject matter evolve while making this?

Making this film has been an eye-opening experience for both of us.

(From Tony) I grew up as an Army brat and loved moving around the country and living on military bases. Life on base was well run and organized, everything we needed was available to us. I certainly believed that the places where my father was stationed were safe and secure. I never would have imagined anything unsafe could occur while we were living at these places. I can really understand the sense of shock and betrayal the residents of Camp Lejeune are experiencing.

(From Rachel) One thing that I realized in making the film was that the Department of Defense is behaving the way that most polluters behave. They often bury their head in the sand and hope that no harm comes from what they've done. I think the difference here is that we expect more from our government than from private industry.

We both went into this project believing that our government's regulatory and environmental agencies might have some problems but that ultimately they were doing their job. We assumed that harmful chemicals were properly regulated and egregious polluters were punished. In making the film we've come to see how broken the public health and environmental regulatory system really is.

What do you want people to take away from this film? What makes this film important?

We hope that SEMPER FI: ALWAYS FAITHFUL sheds light on the injustice at Camp Lejeune and the looming environmental crisis at military sites across the country. We want people to understand that this issue does not just affect military personnel and their families. There are currently over 130 military sites on the EPA's priority list for clean-up. At some of these sites, toxins have spread from the military base into neighboring civilian communities—contaminating their water supply or releasing dangerous vapors into homes, schools and businesses.

On a more optimistic note, when we began making the film we were somewhat cynical about how much one man could achieve when fighting the U.S. government. We hope the film illustrates that social change is possible especially when undertaken by relentless and determined individuals.

SEMPER FI: ALWAYS FAITHFUL TIMELINE

- 1941-1991** A fuel depot is in operation at Camp Lejeune. Defective underground storage tanks at the fuel depot leak fuel into the ground. The fuel spills were not made public at the time. It's later discovered that an estimated that 1.1 million gallons of fuel leaked into the ground while the fuel depot was in operation. A drinking water supply well is 1500 feet from the fuel depot.
- 1957** The estimated start date of the drinking water contamination. The sources of contamination are improper disposal of industrial cleaning solvents, the fuel leaks at the fuel depot and an off-base drycleaner.
- 1968** Mike Partain is born at Camp Lejeune.
- 1975** Jerry Ensminger and his family live at Camp Lejeune while his wife is pregnant with their daughter Janey.
- 1980-1981** A U.S. Army lab tests Camp Lejeune's water three times and warns them with increasing urgency that there are toxins in the water. The technician testing the water handwrites a note to the base that states "Water is Highly Contaminated".
- 1981** New federal regulations require that military bases use outside certified labs to test their water. Camp Lejeune hires Grainger Labs.
- 1982-1984** Grainger Labs tests Camp Lejeune's water three times and find contaminants and warns the base of the health concerns.
- 1983** Jerry Ensminger's daughter Janey is diagnosed with leukemia.
- 1984** Frustrated by Camp Lejeune's inaction, Mike Hargett the co-owner of Grainger Labs tells North Carolina's environmental officials about the contamination at Camp Lejeune.
- Late 1984** The first contaminated well is closed.
- 1985** Ten more contaminated wells are closed.
- 1985** The Commanding General at Camp Lejeune sends a notice to base residents asking them to conserve water because of the well closures. In the notice he mentions that "minute (traces) of several organic chemicals" were found in the wells. The chemical levels in Camp Lejeune's water were 20-280 times above what is now considered safe.
- 1985** Jerry Ensminger's daughter Janey dies of leukemia.
- 1987** The last contaminated well is closed. The Marine Corps does not notify current or former residents of their exposure to the toxins in their water.
- 1997** Jerry finds out about the water contamination when he hears a local news story about a proposed health study on adults and babies exposed to toxins in the water at Camp Lejeune. This study was initiated when Camp Lejeune became a Superfund site.

- 2002** Jerry Ensminger and Maj. Tom Townsend find documents about the contamination on a government website.
- 2007** The House Energy and Commerce Committee holds the first Congressional hearing about the water contamination at Camp Lejeune
- 2008** A Congressional mandate is passed that requires the Marine Corps to notify former base residents of the water contamination.
- 2009** Jerry Ensminger and Mike Partain discover documents which reveal the extent of the fuel depot leaks and that there were high levels of Benzene, a known carcinogen, in Camp Lejeune's water.
- 2009** The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry rescinds a Public Health Assessment about Camp Lejeune. They state that the Benzene discovery has caused them to re-evaluate the health risks.
- 2009** The Marine Corps begins notifying former base residents about the water contamination.
- 2010** The Janey Ensminger Act is introduced in Congress. If passed, it will provide healthcare to Marines and their families sickened by the water.
- 2011** The Janey Ensminger Act (now HR 1742) is reintroduced in Congress and The Caring for Camp Lejeune Veterans Act (S 277) is introduced in the Senate. S 277 passes the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classifies TCE as a known human carcinogen.

CREW

RACHEL LIBERT – DIRECTOR & PRODUCER

Rachel Libert is a New York-based director. Her critically acclaimed documentary BEYOND CONVICTION was called a “humanizing portrait of life after death” by the Philadelphia Weekly and “Must See Cinema” by the Hollywood Reporter. After premiering in competition at the Los Angeles Film Festival, the film was broadcast as a primetime special on MSNBC and featured on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* and the *TODAY Show*. It also received a PASS award from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the Woodstock Film Festival.

She made her directing debut with the award-winning short film UNDERTAKER. This film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, screened at thirty film festivals worldwide and aired on Lifetime Television. It received many awards including a Golden Spire from the San Francisco Film Festival and a national CableACE award for best dramatic short film. Her broadcast credits include work for MTV, Discovery Health, HBO, Court TV, Food Network and Oxygen.

Most recently, she was the Executive Producer and Director of a documentary series on Discovery/Planet Green which follows the effects of an oil boom on a tiny town in North Dakota. She is a 2010 Sundance Institute Documentary Fellow and she currently lives in Brooklyn, NY

TONY HARDMON – DIRECTOR & PRODUCER

Tony Hardmon is a veteran cinematographer who has worked on numerous projects for television and theatrical release. He has collaborated on several films with acclaimed documentary filmmaker Liz Garbus. These credits include THE EXECUTION OF WANDA JEAN (HBO), GIRLHOOD (TLC), and JUVIES (A&E).

He also filmed the Emmy-nominated documentary THE BOYS OF BARAKA (PBS) which won several awards including an NAACP image award, Special Jury Prize at the SXSW Film Festival and the Audience Award at the SilverDOCS Festival.

His other credits include Michael Moore's SICKO, Stacey Peralta's MADE IN AMERICA, Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady's segment of FREAKONOMICS and the IDA award-winning film A WALK TO BEAUTIFUL (PBS). He was the additional cinematographer on the Academy Award -nominated JESUS CAMP, 12th & DELAWARE, and the HBO special ALIVE DAY MEMORIES: HOME FROM IRAQ. He recently worked with Joe Berlinger & Bruce Sinofsky on their Sundance Channel series ICONOCLASTS.

SEMPER FI:ALWAYS FAITHFUL is his directorial debut. He is also a 2010 Sundance Institute Documentary Fellow.

Jedd and Todd Wider/Wider Film Projects, Producers

The Widens formed Wider Film Projects several years ago as a film company devoted to developing projects that have social and political resonance. In the past three years, they have produced numerous critically and commercially successful documentary films. Most notably, the Widens are executive producers of the 2008 Academy Award Winner for Best Documentary, TAXI TO THE DARK SIDE (2007) directed by Alex Gibney. Their other widely-acclaimed projects include CLIENT 9 directed by Alex Gibney, Morgan Spurlock's WHAT WOULD JESUS BUY? the 2008 Sundance film KICKING IT (2007) about the Homeless World Club soccer tournament and Paul Cronin's A TIME TO STIR about the Columbia University student uprisings in 1968.

Wendy Ettinger, Julie Parker Benello, Judith Helfand

Chicken & Egg Pictures, Executive Producers

Chicken and Egg Pictures is a hybrid non-profit film fund, providing strategically timed financial support, mentorship and executive producing services to women non-fiction filmmakers who are passionate about using their storytelling skills to address the social justice, environmental and human rights issues of our time - locally, nationally and globally. Aggregating over twenty years of collective expertise as producers, mentors, social-justice donors, advocates and practitioners of rigorous impact-driven audience engagement campaigns, Julie Parker-Benello, Wendy Ettinger and Judith Helfand co-founded Chicken & Egg Pictures in 2005. Themselves award winning non-fiction producers/directors (THE WAR ROOM/'93, A HEALTHY BABY GIRL/ '97, BLUE VINYL/'02, EVERYTHING'S COOL/ '07, HOTEL GRAMERCY PARK/'08), they came together to create this responsive and dynamic venture.

PURCELL CARSON – EDITOR

Purcell is a documentary filmmaker and editor based in New York. Purcell's award-winning editorial work has brought many worlds into her edit room, from a piano factory in Ben Niles's NOTE BY NOTE: THE MAKING OF STEINWAY L1037 to the Hollywood stunt set in Amanda Micheli's DOUBLE DARE (PBS's *Independent Lens*). Most recently, she edited the 2009 Academy Award winning documentary short SMILE PINKIE. She has also edited Gabe Rhodes and Keefe Murren's AUGUST IN THE EMPIRE STATE (Sundance Channel). Purcell assisted on LOCAL NEWS (a five-part series for PBS), AMERICAN MASTERS (PBS) and NEW YORK JUSTICE (A&E). She has recently directed and edited AD LIB: WILLIAMSBURG UNSCRIPTED for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Before turning to documentary, she produced interactive media, first for The Voyager Company (a partner to The Criterion Collection) and then for Fodor's, one of Random House's internet division

IVOR GUEST – COMPOSER

Ivor Guest is a British record producer and composer. His recent work includes Grace Jones' 'Hurricane' and 'Hurricane in Dub' albums (Wall of Sound), and the Brigitte Fontaine albums 'Prohibition' and 'L'un ne l'empêche pas l'autre' (Universal). He has worked and works with Brian Eno, Sly and Robbie, Tony Allen, Atticus Ross, Wally Badarou, Barry Adamson and British bands such as Polar Bear and The Invisible. His film credits include the British cult classic THE FOOTBALL FACTORY.

SEMPER FI: ALWAYS FAITHFUL is the second film that these two have scored together, the first being Alex Gibney's Oscar winning TAXI TO THE DARKSIDE.

ROBERT LOGAN – COMPOSER

Robert Logan is a British electronic music prodigy. His first album 'Cognessence' (Slowfoot Records) was described by the BBC as 'the essential last word in electronic soundscapes'. This at the age of nineteen. Now twenty-four, he works with Ivor Guest on various projects as well as releasing his own albums, most recently 'Inscape' (Slowfoot Records).

SEMPER FI: ALWAYS FAITHFUL is the second film that these two have scored together, the first being Alex Gibney's Oscar winning TAXI TO THE DARKSIDE.

MAIN CREDITS

Produced and Directed by

Rachel Libert
Tony Hardmon

Produced by

Jedd Wider
Todd Wider

Executive Producers

Julie Parker Benello
Wendy Ettinger
Judith Helfand

Editor

Purcell Carson

Director of Photography

Tony Hardmon

Original Music Composed by

Ivor Guest
Robert Logan

PRESS

"Shocking expose...strong, impassioned docu"
-Ronnie Scheib, Variety

"For profiles in pure courage, it doesn't get more sobering than *Semper Fi: Always Faithful*."
-Ann Hornaday, Washington Post

"A journey of discovery and activism.
The story of a man's fierce determination to find out what happened and set it right."
- ABC News

"A riveting and often enraging documentary."
- Lloyd Grove, Daily Beast

"SEMPER FI strikes a nerve. It examines issues affecting ordinary Americans."
- Christine Kearney, Reuters

"One man's quest to reveal the truth makes for a powerful documentary"
-Matt Singer, IFC.com

"A profound tale that one man can make a difference in this world"
-Stuart Nusbaumer, Filmmaker Magazine

FESTIVALS & AWARDS

* World Premiere, Tribeca Film Festival, 2011

Best Editing Award- Tribeca Film Festival
2nd Place Audience Award –Tribeca Film Festival

Special Founders Prize- Traverse City Film Festival 2011

Best Documentary Award –Woodstock Film Festival 2011

Audience Award for Best Documentary- Woodstock Film Festival 2011

Best Documentary Award-San Diego Film Festival 2011

*Official Selection- SilverDocs 2011

* Official Selection- Woodstock Film Festival 2011

*Official Selection- Camden Film Festival 2011

*Official Selection-San Diego Film Festival 2011

*Official Selection-Denver Film Festival 2011

* Official Selection- Hawaii Film Festival 2011

*Official Selection- International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) 2011

*Official Selection- Cineworld Film Festival 2011

TECHNICAL SPECS

76 Minutes

English

Color

Exhibition Format: HDCam

5.1 Surround Sound/Dolby E or Stereo

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

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