

# The Seeds of Isaac

*(Working Title)*

A Documentary Series for Television



**Fascinating Learning Factory**

WGAW Regis. 2002

# The Seeds of Isaac

*The Seeds of Isaac is a landmark documentary television series detailing the outstanding contributions of Jews throughout history in a variety of significant human endeavors.*

*In an age when hatred is running rampant throughout the world and much of it is focused in the Middle East, The Seeds of Isaac will remind us of Jewish contributions and strengths.*

## Format

Each one-hour program will focus on a specific area of endeavor and, through archival footage, dramatic recreations, and in-depth interviews, reveal some of the remarkable contributions that Jews have made throughout time.

We will select a well-known and respected Jewish person (or perhaps a rotating series of people; i.e. Richard Dreyfus, Winona Ryder, Paul Newman, etc.) as our host(s). The host will open each segment in an appropriate historic location, setting the context of what is to follow. We then are led, through flowing visuals and relevant music, into the first segment, which will most likely be in the past since the shows will follow a chronological timeline.

Each person featured will be presented with the most dramatic and relevant visual and auditory materials available. We will strive to uncover new images and archival materials.

Imaginatively produced on-location footage will create a sense of immediacy and presence, even for places and events that occurred thousands of years ago. Woven into the narrative about the individuals' lives and contributions will be interviews with scholars, historians and others with important perspective and insight.

As each story is told, we will see how the larger context of a specific field, such as science or medicine, was shaped and moved forward by the work of four to



six individuals, and how that person's particular gifts, whether skill, wisdom or passion, reflect certain aspects of the Jewish upbringing and culture. The host will return periodically, providing important background and bridge material that will carry us from one individual to the next.

Each show will close with a summation of the important points. The topics and some names under consideration include:

### Science / Medicine

Albert Einstein, Jonas Salk, Sigmund Freud, Gregory Pincus

### Literature

Theodore Herzl, Philip Roth, Gertrude Stein, Noam Chomsky, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Marcel Proust

### Art

Marc Chagall, Mark Rothko, Man Ray, Frida Kahlo, Amedea Modigliani

### Philosophy

Karl Marx, Baruch de Spinoza, Ayn Rand, Moses Mendelssohn

### Classical Music

Artur Rubinstein, Yascha Heifetz, Leonard Bernstein, Felix Mendelssohn

### Modern Music

The Gershwins, Irving Berlin, Beastie Boys, Bob Dylan, Carole King, Leonard Bernstein, Phoebe Snow

### Sports

Hank Greenberg, Sandy Koufax, Mark Spitz, Red Auerbach, Agnes Keleti, Sasha Cohen

### Government

David ben Gurion, Joe Lieberman, Golda Meir, Barbara Boxer, Bella Abzug



## Military

Moshe Dayan, Bibi Netanyahu, Sarah Aaronson,  
Alfred Dreyfus

## Inventors

Emile Berliner, Denis Gabor, H. Joseph Gerber,  
Charles Ginsberg, Hedy Lamarr

## Business

Baron von Rothschild, Gerald Levin,  
Michael Eisner, Maurice Greenberg

## Publishing/Journalism

Arthur Ochs Adler, Mort Zuckerman,  
Cy Newhouse

## Entertainers

The list is endless

## Entertainment Business

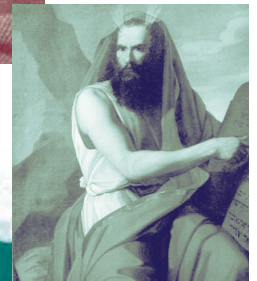
Louis B. Mayer, Irving Thalberg, Sam Goldwyn,  
Sid Bernstein

## Religion

Jesus, Mary, Saul of Tarsus, Moses, Sarah,  
Abraham, Noah

## Times of Crisis

unknown heroes of the Holocaust,  
the Exodus and the development of Israel



There will be 13 programs in the first series but, because of the wealth of resources on these topics, it is possible that more than one program can be produced on any given area. The programs will be engaging, entertaining, and enlightening. They will increase the self-esteem and awareness of the Jewish audience and educate everyone about the contributions Jews have made to civilization past and present, and relate them to the larger tapestry of Jewish Culture.





Our research has not turned up any other documentaries that deal with these topics in this way although there are some that touch on these issues. We will continue seeking programs that might conflict in order to avoid going over existing material.

## Distribution

The series will initially be offered to PBS in the United States, BBC in Great Britain and Israeli Television. After the first window of exhibition, second and third opportunities will be explored with cable networks such as *Mosaic TV*, *The Discovery Channel*, *The History Channel* and others.

In addition, videotapes of the series, along with companion study guides, will be made available to schools, JCCs and Synagogues through an educational distributor, such as NETA (National Educational Telecommunications Assn) and the use of experienced distributors in that marketplace.

The series will also be distributed on video and DVD to libraries throughout the world.

A companion website will also be created to allow viewers to explore in depth the lives and lessons of these exceptional individuals. It will link to other websites for fuller historical backgrounds and cultural enrichment.

## Budget

The production budget for the series is approximately \$300,000 per show for 13 shows (\$3,900,000.). We have the possibility of two or more 13-program series. We are currently seeking initial development funds of \$100,000. (see attached budget)

## Funding

There are several ways to participate in the funding of this project:

- 1 A tax deductible donation to the Fascinating Learning Factory, a (501c3) non-profit corporation and designate it 'restricted' to the production of *Seeds of Isaac*.
- 2 A corporate donation to the production, which can be tax-deductible as a marketing/promotional expense.
- 3 A direct investment in the production company, which would allow the possibility of some return on investment.



The potential return on investment from the production company are based on the following possibilities and their relative (conservative) estimated income:

- First airing on PBS or a cable channel: \$50,000 to \$100,000 per hour.
- 2nd-5th airings: \$45,000 to \$65,000 per hour
- Merchandising and ancillary sales:
  - Videotapes for home viewing: \$19.95 per episode — unknown number of sales.
  - Videotapes to schools or synagogue groups: \$150-\$200 per episode 500-1000 possible sales.
  - Supplemental materials to accompany videos — TBD



## Production Team

### Bunnie Strassner

**Executive Producer** — is an award winning writer and producer with 30 years experience in the entertainment industry. She has produced for *Entertainment Tonight*, music videos and educational/documentary programs. She produced a live stage show in Hollywood called the *Magic Mirror*, an improvisational program for children.

She was Director of Corporate Communications for Videomedia, Inc., a broadcast Technology company in Northern California.

She is the managing Partner/President of Flashback Productions. She is the executive producer for all programs produced by Flashback and writes and produces most of them.

She is the Executive Director of the Fascinating Learning Factory, a 501c3 non-profit corporation dedicated to seeking out and developing educational series for television and funding their production.

### Brian Doubleday

**Producer/Writer** — Mr. Doubleday is an Emmy winning film and video producer/director whose career began in 1973. He recently co-produced *Instinct*, a Touchstone Films production starring Anthony Hopkins and Cuba Gooding, Jr. In recent years he was producer/director for the Emmy award-winning *Venturing*, a thirteen part documentary series exploring the challenges and rewards of entrepreneurship. He also produced and directed the Emmy-nominated *The New Workplace*, a four part documentary series that examined the underlying values upon which companies have built successful workplace environments. Both were distributed through PBS stations nationally. Mr. Doubleday produced, directed, and hosted *The Next Revolution* a one-hour documentary exploring the dazzling and perplexing potential of the information superhighway. In addition, Mr. Doubleday has produced hundreds of commercials and marketing, training and documentary programs.

### Miriam Birch

**Writer/Producer** — Ms. Birch has won many awards, including the coveted Alfred I. Dupont-Columbia Award, the Peabody, three Emmy nominations, the Japanese's Art and Culture Competition. Other credits include The American Film Festival, Chicago International Film Festival, International Film and Television Festival New York, Ireland's Golden Harp Award, Golden Eagle Cine Awards, and more.



Birch's critically acclaimed films include eleven Emmy-winning National Geographic Society Specials. Birch also produced and wrote the largest one-day documentary project in history, *A Day in the Life of America*, a PBS special for which she utilized twenty-three film crews scattered throughout the country to film during one twenty-four period.

Birch began her career with Bill Burrud Productions' *Animal World*, one of the pioneering series to deal with and popularize conservation-oriented documentaries. Assignments have taken her to Jerusalem, Bali, Egypt, Japan, the Soviet Union, Ireland, France, Spain, the People's Republic of China, and other countries, providing her with extensive experience in dealing with foreign governments and institutions.

### Norman H Strassner

**Director** — is an award winning, DGA director with 18 years of broadcast experience in Hollywood. He worked on such programs as *Entertainment Tonight* and *Real People* as well as in-house for CBS and NBC news.

He has directed and co-written several educational series for classroom distribution and has directed, written, edited and produced many programs for various corporate, educational and broadcast clients.

By way of his experience as a broadcast video editor, he created the Strassner line of broadcast linear editing systems which is still in wide use throughout the industry. He is an accomplished software designer and engineer with a wide knowledge of broadcast and computer technology.

### Richard Lerner

**Director of Photography** — is an accomplished cinematographer/videographer, and lists the following documentary programs among his many credits: *Nova*, *PBS Bookmark*, *BBC Horizon*, *BBC Nature*, *BBC Audubon World*, *PBS Scientific American Frontiers*, *PBS/Chedd Angier Race to Save The Planet*, *PBS/Chedd Angier Pride Of Place*, *PBS/Malone Gill BreakThrough*, *PBS/Blackside Portrait Of America: Alaska*, *Turner Broadcasting Jacques Cousteau's 75th Birthday Party*, *Turner Broadcasting Omnibus*, *BBC The Nitty Ditty Dirt Band's Alaskan Caravan*, *Nashville Network*.

Lerner was also the Director of Photography for the Academy Award Winning documentary, *A Story of Healing*. He was a co-producer of Touchstone's *Instinct* and has also served as producer on several independent feature films.





## Contact Information

For more information about *The Seeds of Isaac*, please contact:

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