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**MG2 Productions**

in association with



**BBC Television**

&

**The Raffy Manoukian Charity**

presents

***SCREAMERS***

**Conceived by Peter McAlevey and Carla Garapedian**

**Produced by Nick de Grunwald Tim Swain  
Carla Garapedian and Peter McAlevey**

**Featuring  
System of a Down**

**a film by  
Carla Garapedian**

**91 Minutes—This film is not yet rated**

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## SCREAMERS short synopsis

Documentary feature examining the history and politics of genocide in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Through the rock band System of a Down's personal campaign to stop all genocides, Pulitzer prize-winner Samantha Power, survivors and whistleblowers, the film examines the Armenian genocide in 1915 and its links to the Holocaust, Rwanda, Bosnia, the Iraqi Kurds and today's genocide in Darfur. The film shows how successive Presidents and corporate interests have conspired to turn a blind eye to genocides as they are happening. We say 'never again' but we don't mean it.

### The Holocaust, Pol Pot's Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur....

And every time a U.S. president, a British Prime Minister, a U.N. Secretary General says, "**Never again.**"

Yet it happens—again, and again, and again....

Why? Because, our leaders say, **We didn't know.**

Yet **they did know**—recent studies have shown that the British knew conclusively what was going on at Auschwitz...yet buried that knowledge in their files because it would have forced them to change their war plans.

Everyone knew what was going on in Cambodia, post-the Vietnam War, as the **Academy Award-winning** movie "The Killing Fields" demonstrates ... yet the powers that be declined to admit it, for fear they would have to do something.

In Carla Garapedian's **powerful new film**, "Screamers," Pulitzer prize-winner Samantha Power says President after President, Democrat and Republican, have known about genocides as they were happening ... but have chosen not to act.



**Bodies in Trees**

In Iraq, Reagan did not want the horrors of Saddam Hussein's massacre against the Kurds to come out, because then he would have to do something to stop him. In Bosnia, **world television coverage** of the genocide convinced the international community to step in...but only after 200,000 had been murdered.

In Rwanda, Bill Clinton did not want the true horrors to come out ...because then he would have to do something. And now, in Darfur, George Bush has **finally declared** the desolation of the Southern Sudan a "genocide"—yet refused to do what it takes to stop it.

Why? Because, once again, as in 1915, when the U.S. ambassador to Turkey, Henry Morgenthau, first reported the **wholesale extermination of the Armenian population** by the Ottoman Turks in Anatolia, it was denied so the United States would not be forced to act. That reaction gave Hitler his impetus for the Holocaust: "Who remembers the Armenians?" he declared in 1939, before ordering the murder of 6 million European Jews.

In "Screamers," Garapedian traces the history of modern-day genocide from the fertile "Holy Mountains" of Anatolia to Darfur. This documentary as shattering as it is powerful, includes interviews and live performance footage from System of a Down, the multi-platinum, Grammy award winning rock band, all of whose members are Armenian-American. The film is laced with seven of their most famous songs from "Holy Mountains" to "P.L.U.C.K." to the #1 hit "B.Y.O.B." that illuminate the band's views on political and social issues.

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Conceived by longtime collaborators Peter McAlevey and Carla Garapedian (herself an Armenian-American and documentary director of "Lifting the Veil" and "Children of the Secret State"), "Screamers" came together in the summer 2004 after producer McAlevey ("Radio Flyer," "Shadow Hours") approached System of a Down's legendary record-label head Rick Rubin about partnering with the band to make a documentary about one of their main causes – recognition of the Armenian genocide.



Serj at Rally

With Rubin's support, Garapedian met System of a Down who endorsed the film's important message -- how the world's denial of the Turk's Armenian genocide contributed to the continuing crisis of international genocides ever since -- from Armenia to present-day Darfur.

The cameras followed System of a Down on their European and American tours last summer and fall as they promoted their new, two-album set, "Mesmerize" and "Hypnotize". Their collective record sales have totaled over 16 million albums worldwide. With the band's cooperation, McAlevev and Garapedian, along with British producer Nick de Grunwald, secured a deal with BBC Television for UK TV rights. The film was mainly financed by The Raffy Manoukian Charity in the UK.

Returning to the USA, Garapedian teamed up with McAlevev stalwarts -- DP Charles Rose, editor Bill Yahraus, post-production supervisor Robin M. Rosenthal and production manager Don West -- as the band continued its tour in the States. She attempted to track down House Speaker Dennis Hastert (who, according to Vanity Fair magazine, has been suspected of taking \$500,000 in campaign contributions from the Turks in return for allowing an Armenian genocide recognition bill from ever being passed in Congress, visited a 100-year-old survivor and, most importantly, spent time with lead vocalist's, Serg Tankian's grandfather, one of the few remaining eyewitnesses of the genocide.

Finally, just this spring, seven months after staging a protest rally at Dennis Hastert's offices in Illinois (dubbed "Dennis, Do the Right Thing"), Tankian and drummer John Dolmayan confronted Hastert in the Capital Rotunda ... luckily, the cameras were there.

With an ending filmed in the actual village in Turkey where the massacre of Tankian's ancestors began, set against the ghostly strains of the hit "Holy Mountains," Garapedian's film comes full circle from 1915 through the horrors of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century genocide in Darfur ... to a finale of ghostly images of real ancestors that will never be forgotten.

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While most of the concert footage had been handled in Europe, Garapedian faced the harder challenge of linking it all to the current political debate on genocide -- in Europe, Turkey and the United States. In America, the pressure was on the Bush Administration to acknowledge its own historical record and recognize the first genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, thus setting the stage for a worldwide recognition and reparations. Here luck played a hand again--while age alone has decimated the population of eyewitness survivors of the massacres, one turned out to be Serj's own grandfather, Stepan Haytayan. Stepan is one of the only survivors who survived the death march from Efkere, the village Serj's family came from in Turkey.

Fortunately, despite being in poor health, Serj's grandfather had been videotaped by Serj a few years earlier and that, combined with Carla's research on the village from historical archives in Harvard and Britain, helped flesh out the story of what happened the day the massacres started and the forced death marches that followed.



**Heads on Shelf**

Then, luck intervened again—in the middle of this process word reached the filmmakers that an Armenian-American survivor of the genocide had just turned 100 in Connecticut ... and received a letter from Vice-President Dick Cheney congratulating her on her good fortune in surviving the “Armenian genocide.” It was the first time a ranking American vice-president had ever used the “g-word” officially to

describe what the Turks had done. All of this just at the time the State Department was in the process of recalling its U.S. Ambassador to Armenia for using the “g-word” in connection with the Armenian genocide. And also at a time when Congress was being asked to recognize the genocide and Speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, was in the political hot-seat, not least by the FBI whistle-blower, Sibel Edmonds, who consented to appear in the film.

Racing to Connecticut to interview this survivor before the White House could recall the letter, Garapedian also had the good fortune to interview Henry Morgenthau III, whose grandfather had been the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey at the time and witnessed the massacres with his own eyes, as well Pulitzer prize-winning Harvard Professor Samantha Power, whose 2002 book “A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide” demonstrates how all the subsequent genocides of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries date back to our simple inability to admit what the Turks did to the Armenians. Again, as Hitler said in ordering the destruction of European Jewry, “Who remembers the Armenians?”

Well, Power does—as does every Armenian, anywhere in the world. As do Rwandans who have an exhibit on the Armenian genocide at the very sight where the worst killing there was perpetrated. As Power argues in the movie, the problem with genocide is “you can’t kill them all; there are always survivors.” And those survivors, Power says, become the “Screamers,” the ones who can’t rest until the world knows what has happened — Elie Wiesel on the Holocaust, David Puttnam making “The Killing Fields” about what happened in Cambodia, Dennis Quaid giving a year of his life to a film about Bosnia or Don Cheadle starring in the acclaimed “Hotel Rwanda.”

And, in the end, that’s what “Screamers” is all about—an internationally produced film by an equally international crew that uses the music of a band of genocide survivors to explicate one of the great questions of our time: can we stop genocide? Do we really mean never again?

In the end, as lead singer Serj Tankian stands, surveying mountains very like those of his native Anatolia (and System's mournful song "Holy Mountains" plays in the background), Garapedian's cameras track through the rocky remains of Efkere, his grandfather's ruined village, as images of the sacrifice in each household appear and the roll call of the dead continues: "Armenia—1.5 million dead; The Holocaust—6 million dead; Cambodia—2 million dead; Rwanda—800,000 dead; Bosnia—200,000 dead; Darfur— 400,000 dead...and counting."

As Serj Tankian says at the end: "I think we should all be Screamers."

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## Filmmakers' Profiles

### CARLA GARAPEDIAN, DIRECTOR

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The only American ever to anchor the famous BBC World News, Carla Garapedian earned her Ph.D. in international relations at the prestigious London School of Economics, before cutting her teeth as a correspondent for NBC and later being swept up by the BBC as a director and anchor.

Since leaving the BBC (where, among other stories, she exposed major faults in Europe's most dangerous nuclear reactors), she has cut a swath as an international documentary director, working for Hardcash Productions, the company that produced the Emmy award-winning film about women in Afghanistan, "Beneath the Veil." Her sequel, "Lifting the Veil," premiered in the US on the Sundance Channel in August 2003. In her film "Dying for the President" she made world headlines by sneaking into Chechnya to document Russian war crimes. More recent headlines surrounded her 2005 film, "My Friend the Mercenary" about the attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea, linked to Mark Thatcher and the notorious mercenary, Simon Mann.

Garapedian beat President Bush to the punch in exploring that other "axis of evil," North Korea, in the acclaimed documentary "Children of the Secret State" that details starvation, human rights abuses and cannibalism in that impoverished nation. In 2005, her film "Iran Undercover," about the student movement in Iran, won the prestigious Edward R. Murrow award, as part of the PBS Frontline World series.

In addition to anchoring for BBC World News, Garapedian has been a correspondent for NBC Sunrise, NBC Nightly News and CNBC financial news. She narrated the Armenian genocide film, "Voices from the Lake" by the acclaimed filmmaker, J.M. Hagopian, as well as co-writing his award-winning film "Germany and the Secret Genocide."

The headline about her in the LA Times Calendar section is probably the best description of her work so far -- "Documenting Truth in Dangerous Places."

## **CARLA GARAPEDIAN:**

*Family village in Turkey: Van and Sivas, Born USA*

I grew up in Los Angeles with two identities – Armenian and American. Both sets of grandparents were survivors. So I knew who I was. I left the U.S. in 1979 to make films about human rights atrocities in other countries -- I've travelled to many countries in the world, trying to tell other people's stories. But it wasn't until this film that I could tell the story of my own people.

**The denial of the Armenian genocide has motivated me in my work for as long as I can remember. It's not a conscious thing – it's just there, simmering under every story I've done about atrocities governments would like to keep hidden, truths people would seek to deny.**

All of the Armenians I know are scarred by this event. We are children and grandchildren of survivors – how can we forget? Elie Wiesel says denial is the last stage of genocide. It is when the perpetrator seeks to become the victim and make the victim the perpetrator. That is why we can't rest until our own government stops speaking out of both sides of its mouth – our historical records can't say one thing, and our politicians another. We can not rewrite history. That's Orwellian.

**I remember seeing a documentary about a war crime in Croatia. A grave was being dug up by forensic pathologists. It was very difficult to watch because the bodies had not completely decomposed. But it was compelling because the chief forensic pathologist said something I can never forget: dead men can't speak, but their bodies do not lie about their deaths. So how is it that the death of over a million people can be denied? Is it only the passage of time that allows such a monstrous atrocity, which was so well publicized at the time, to be forgotten?**

System of a Down gave me the chance to tell this story. Their music, their passion – and the young people who follow them – have made this film possible. Their music is the music of life, of survival – it is saying, *we are here. We remember.*

**The Armenian genocide wasn't the first in history – but it is the first that was within our collective memory. "Why do genocides continue in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?" asks one of our contributors. "Because those who perpetrated them in the 20<sup>th</sup> century got away it." That is the message. Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it.**

## **PETER McALEVEY, PRODUCER**

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After spending the last 18 months as the President of 'bel Films, Peter McAlevey is returning to his roots as a writer/producer. While at 'bel, Mr. McAlevey acquired, developed and scheduled for production three films—"The Girl Who Struck Out Babe Ruth," starring LeAnn Rimes; "Conquistadora," starring Academy Award-winners Merryll Streep and Chris Cooper; and "Thomasina," a remake of the '60s Disney classic—before



the Wall Street financiers of 'bel, citing market conditions, informed him they were closing the office.

Prior to 'bel, Mr. McAlevey had completed principal photography on *NAKED MOVIE* (starring Tori Spelling, Carmen Electra, Christian Slater and Lou Diamond Phillips) and overseen the release of Sundance pick *SHADOW HOURS* (starring Balthazar Getty, Peter Weller and Rebecca Gayheart), making him among the hottest independent producers in Hollywood.

Before *NAKED MOVIE* and *SHADOW HOURS*, McAlevey served as producer on another Sundance nominee, *KLASH* (starring Jasmine Guy and Giancarlo Esposito), *CHAMPIONS* (starring Ken Shamrock) and MGM's remake of the classic fight movie, *BODY & SOUL* (starring Joe Mantegna, Rod Steiger and Jennifer Beals), as well as the hot documentary *GUEST LIST ONLY*, about sexy celebrity offspring, Paris Hilton.

McAlevey is a former VP of Production at Michael Douglas' Stonebridge Entertainment. There he oversaw development and production on such films as *RADIO FLYER*, *FLATLINERS*, *HARD PROMISES* and numerous others. Prior to Stonebridge, McAlevey served as VP of Production at Walt Disney Pictures where he reported directly to Studio chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg.

Before his involvement in the entertainment industry, McAlevey spent many years as an internationally known journalist. He was a correspondent for *NEWSWEEK* in Los Angeles as well as a business reporter for *NEWSWEEK* in New York. In addition, McAlevey worked as an editor for *INSIDE SPORTS* Magazine, and a writer for such publications as *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, *LOS ANGELES TIMES*, *BUSINESSWEEK*, *FORBES* and *TV GUIDE*.

Since 1992, McAlevey has been a member of the board of directors of the American Film Institute's Third Decade Council and has taught a course at UCLA called "Surviving as an Independent Producer." A native of upstate New York, he is a 1978 graduate of Columbia College of Columbia University in New York, where he distinguished himself as a recipient of the Bennett Cerf Memorial Prize for Writing.

## **TIMOTHY F. SWAIN, PRODUCER**

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From 1999 to 2000 Tim was Senior Vice President and General Manager VP at [MOVIEWEB.COM](http://MOVIEWEB.COM) (Millennium Internet Corporation) where he was responsible for all MovieWeb entertainment functions, interfacing with the entertainment distribution community as well as development of high-level studio relationships, including theatrical, video and television areas. He collaborated with the executive team in developing and executing the business model and strategic direction of the company and helped recruit 2<sup>nd</sup> layer of executive talent.

At TRI MARK ENTERTAINMENT, from 1990 to 1999 he was Executive Vice President, Domestic Distribution (1996-1999), Senior Vice President, Domestic Distribution (1992-1996), Vice President, Domestic Theatrical (1990-1992) where he oversaw all aspects of Domestic Distribution operations including Trimark Theatrical, Trimark Home Video/DVD,



Trimark Domestic Television and Trimark Non-Theatrical. These divisions were directly responsible for over 65% of Trimark's worldwide revenue and profitability. Tim left the company preceding its merger with Lions Gate Films to join a start up Internet venture.

From 1984 to 1990, at NEW WORLD ENTERTAINMENT Tim was the Vice President of General Sales and Domestic Distribution where he contributed to the success of the \$400 million dollar entertainment company which produces and distributes feature films, television programming, video products and, through its wholly owned subsidiary Marvel Comics & Productions, provides publications and animated programming for children and young adults. The company was then the dominant independent US Theatrical distributor with successful releases ranging from "Soul Man" to "Hellraiser" to "Children of the Corn" and "Heathers".

Since 2000 Tim has been working as an independent producer, with both private equity sources and Distribution companies to develop, produce and deliver quality commercial films under his Beartooth Entertainment banner. Films produced/executive produced include: "Dahmer" (2002), "Gacy" (2003), "Gang Of Roses" (2003), "Nora's Hair Salon" (2003), "Debating Robert Lee" (2004), "Brothas In Arms" (2004), and "Class C" (2005). Currently in production, this documentary, produced with Wally Kurth, centers on girls' high school Class C basketball in Montana.