

Homer, AK Film Descriptions – 2016

Thursday, January 14, 2016 PLAYLIST

A Line in the Sand

The director of Mountainfilm on Tour from 2006 to 2011, Justin Clifton now devotes his talents to making films with the specific aim of helping environmental and social justice organizations tell their stories. *A Line in the Sand* is one of three short films done in collaboration with The Grand Canyon Trust, aimed at raising public support for protection of threatened parts of Canyonlands. Co-directed by Clifton and Chris Cresci, *A Line in the Sand* is a spirited call to arms, illustrating some of Edward Abbey's most inspiring and passionate language with beautiful 3-D animation.

Rabbit Island

In the middle of the vast watery stretch that is Lake Superior sits Rabbit Island, 91 acres of rocks, earth, trees and wild habitat. Rabbit Island has never been divided or cut. Nor will it ever be. In collaboration with a land trust, a conservation easement has been placed on the island, ensuring that it will remain protected forever. This place offers a new kind of wild experience, where the point is to do nothing to an ecosystem and see what it teaches us.

We Are Fire

Orlando von Einsiedel's documentary [Virunga](#) mesmerized audiences at Mountainfilm 2014 and was later nominated for an Oscar. His new short features an impressive collection of Indian women, called the Gulabi Gang, who live in Uttar Pradesh in northern India, one of the poorest districts in the country and a place where domestic and sexual violence is common. The Gulabi Gang's goal is to help victimized women gain economic security, emotional confidence and physical safety. With their bright pink saris and fierce-looking bamboo sticks, members of the Gulabi Gang are emblematic of courage, resilience and the power of women united by a cause.

California: Paradise Burning

The collapse of California's Central Valley, as the region's worst drought in recorded history enters its fourth year, is shot in artful black and white in this short film. *California: Paradise Burning* can't help but evoke the Depression-era work of Walker Evans, especially given this film's focus on the individual farmers and farmworkers who are most immediately affected by the disaster and soon to be out of work and out of business. Photographers [Matt Black](#) and [Ed Kashi](#) alternate still images with interview footage, producing a shattering portrait of an agricultural paradise, albeit an irrigated one, rapidly turning into a desert. The causes, the solutions and the broader implications are all left to the viewer's imagination.

Japan By Van

If you're tired of drooling on your phone while scrolling through your friend's eyelid-deep "Ja-pow" vacation photos, this film won't help. Sweetgrass rents a van and explores some top-secret backcountry on the main island.

The Reinvention of Normal

Toothbrush maracas, an umbrella with plant pots, a tea cup cooling fan and the reverse bungee. "Go straight off the wall," said his father, and Dominic Wilcox listened. This short film follows the London artist/inventor/designer on his quest to come up with something creative every day. The result is a font of productivity as he transforms the mundane and ordinary into surprises, wonders and, sometimes, just plain absurdities.

Strange Rumbings: Iceland Segment

Amazing cinematography, stunning landscapes, brave surfing and beautiful direction by Joe G. Surfers Nate Tyler, Dion Agius and Brendon Gibbens trace graceful lines amid icebergs in the frozen waters of Iceland.

Knee Deep

In 2013, the city of Boulder, Colorado, was devastated by floods following a 1,000-year downpour. Small communities nestled in the foothills above the city were the most damaged — with homes destroyed, roads washed out and lives forever altered. With the infrastructure that allows access to those communities swept away, evacuations were orchestrated using helicopters. Long-term disaster recovery and assistance, at least the type offered by big aid organizations, had to wait until the roads were repaired — or so everybody thought.

Enter an impromptu brigade of volunteers armed with shovels, buckets and a strong desire to help in whatever way they could. Being outdoorsy meant they were undaunted by the bushwhacking it sometimes took to get to those most in need. Eventually dubbed the Mudslingers, the group made an indelible impact in the lives of those whose had been uprooted unexpectedly.

This Kickstarter-funded documentary highlights the selfless efforts of the Mudslingers and the power of lending a hand in the face of monumental disaster.

Eddie Masters Gets Fat

Pro rider Eddie Masters takes a little time out from his enduro schedule to extol the virtues of fat bikes, crush cheeseburgers and shred downhill on what is considered by many to be the minivan of the mountain bike world.

Nature Rx – 1

Feeling tired, irritable or stressed out? Try nature. This harmless prescription has been shown to relieve the crippling symptoms of modern life — indifference, cynicism, narcissism, even murderous rage — and is healthy for people of all ages and even pets. Side effects may include authenticity, confidence, spontaneous euphoria or being in a good mood for no apparent reason.

James Kelly – Burn it Down

Too fast to be sorry, James Kelly. Thanks for skating that one so we never have to.

Vasu Sojitra: Out on a Limb

After developing a blood infection at 9 months of age, Vasu Sojitra lost his right leg in an amputation. That didn't stop him from discovering — and pursuing whole heartedly — an unbounded love of skiing that shaped his life. Today, Sojitra shreds bumps, hucks rocks, plunders powder and, with the help of outriggers and incredible will, accesses backcountry lines. *Out on a Limb* is a short profile of an individual proving that disability can be a mere hiccup instead of an impediment to your dreams.

The Important Places

When Forest Woodward was born, his father wrote a poem for him about the secret places of sublime beauty that he would find in life. “May you always remember the path that leads back, back to the important places,” it concluded.

Nearly three decades later, Forest came across the poem in a box of family books and was propelled by the words to challenge his father to recreate a 1970 trip down the Grand Canyon. Together they set off on a 28-day journey down the Colorado River, where, surrounded by towering canyon walls and powerful whitewater, Forest watches his father “not just alive, but living again.”

This poignant short about the father-son bond teaches us that although we may sometimes go astray — stuck in eddies and in life — the path back to the important places is never too far away.

Sufferfest 2: Desert Alpine

Sequels are like chicken pox; you've suffered once and thus earned the right to never suffer through it again. Cedar Wright and Alex Honnold break that stereotype with *Sufferfest 2*. Dragged with them on an exhausting quest to bag more than 40 desert towers in a couple of weeks by bicycle, we vicariously spelunk deep into their pain cave.

Taxco Urban Downhill: Kelly McGarry

Margaritas, mariachi and something you've never done in Mexico. Kelly McGarry rides an outrageous urban line down cobbled alleys and otherwise.

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The Coast

Just before he turned 30, Hayden Peters was forced into the terrifying position of confronting his own mortality because of a health issue. The experience came with a seismic shift in perspective, priorities and the way he approaches life. Trading city life for cold saltwater, Peters finds balance, inspiration and solace in the Oregon coastline — a place of crashing waves, elegant sea stacks and blunt, breathtaking, uncaring beauty. This short film by Skip Armstrong is a meditation on the power of the ocean and the lessons it can impart about what truly matters in life.

Delta Dawn

Many people have taken river trips down the Colorado River, but few know the final miles of the river like Pete McBride. His short film [Chasing Water](#) (Mountainfilm 2011) chronicled his hearty attempt to follow the river to the Mexican delta, where he found a hard, barren landscape that hadn't seen water in more than two decades.

In the spring of 2014, U.S. authorities released a "pulse" of water that temporarily brought the river back into Mexico and, of course, the inveterate McBride followed the water to its end, this time on a standup paddleboard. On this strenuous SUP expedition, he finds ecosystems returning to life and people partying along the shore because, as McBride puts it, "It's been a long time since the river kissed the sea."

Making Waves

Morocco has some terrific surf breaks, but for most local Muslim women these waves are off limits. Not so for Oumaima Erhali, a 17 year old determined to partake in the sport she loves.

Denali

There's no easy way to say goodbye to your best friend. Especially if that best friend stuck by your side during the darkest time in your life — licking your feet, shadowing your footsteps and going insane with joy every time he saw you. This short film by [Ben Knight](#), [Ben Moon](#) and [Skip Armstrong](#) celebrates the human-dog bond and illuminates the incredible resilience we can conjure with the help of our friends.

Afterglow

Hailed as one of the most cinematically profound ski films ever made, *Afterglow* is a testament to the Sweetgrass legacy of creating bold, uncompromising, creative imagery. Filmed at night in B.C. and Alaska's backcountry with powerful lights and ski suits studded with LED lights.

No Ordinary Passenger

As a winner of the World Sidecar Championship in 1953, Stan Dibben was a prototype of today's extreme sport athlete: gutsy, talented and willing to put his body on the line for speed. In this short film, the 86-year-old Brit recounts the thrills and perils of his former profession, a no-margin-for-error postwar endeavor that has mostly faded into the history books.

The Thousand Year Journey: Oregon to Patagonia

Jedidiah Jenkins quit a job that he loved to ride his bicycle from Oregon to the southern tip of Patagonia. Friend and filmmaker Kenny Laubbacher joined him for a month and a half to pose the question: Why? Jenkins' poignant answers are woven together with sun-soaked travel footage and shots of life on the move in this short film about shattering routines, staying open hearted and keeping the flames of inspiration not just burning, but raging. *The Thousand Year Journey* is a paean to travel, adventure and, as Jenkins puts it, "turning your 100 years on this planet into 1,000."

I Am Able

[Frederick Ndabaramiye](#) emerged from the darkest depths of the Rwandan genocide to find new life through painting. His story is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of recovery and reconciliation after the horrors of violence.

In 1994, Interahamwe militia members robbed Ndabaramiye of his hands during a concentrated, 100-day spree of violence that claimed more than 800,000 lives and made international governments examine how they should respond to mass atrocities.

After emerging from a coma and struggling to accept his new reality, Ndabaramiye found that creating art on canvas helped him, and others also traumatized by the violence, to cope. Now, his Ubumwe Community Center helps children and adults with disabilities challenge the idea of what it means to be "able" across the country and the world.

Darkwoods BMX

Somewhere deep in a dark forest of South Wales, BMX riders Drew Benzanson and Morgan Wade built their dream playground of ramps, rollers and walls — an ideal setting for physics-defying tricks that don't even make sense.

Nature Rx – 2

Feeling tired, irritable or stressed out? Try nature. This harmless prescription has been shown to relieve the crippling symptoms of modern life — indifference, cynicism, narcissism, even murderous rage — and is healthy for people of all ages and even pets. Side effects may include authenticity, confidence, spontaneous euphoria or being in a good mood for no apparent reason.

Leave it As it Is

More than 100 years ago, President Teddy Roosevelt, who like so many before and after him had fallen in love with the Grand Canyon, implored Americans to preserve the wondrous site in a speech. “Leave it as it is,” he said. “ You cannot improve upon it.” Today, his words set off alarm bells as the Grand Canyon and Colorado River are surrounded on all sides by threats: uranium pollution, water diversion and proposal for a highly impactful gondola project. This short film by [Peter McBride](#) lays bare these threats and reminds us that the Grand Canyon belongs not to developers or industrialists — but to the people.

Angel Collinson: Part of TGR’s Almost Ablaze

In her *Almost Ablaze* segment, 24-year-old Angel Collinson makes an indelible mark in ski history, while also making the best of some incredibly challenging conditions in Alaska. The segment also won Powder Award’s Best Female Performance, and it was the first female segment to ever open a [Teton Gravity Research](#) film.

A Line Across the Sky

The “line” referred to in the film *A Line Across the Sky* is the Fitz Roy Massif, the mother of all climbing traverses. Patagonia’s iconic toothy skyline traces seven summits, spans four miles and includes 13,000 imposing vertical feet of rime- and snow-covered climbing. Who better to attempt the first-ever successful traverse of the ambitious alpine route than legendary American climbing sensation [Tommy Caldwell](#)? For this trip, Caldwell brings along fellow all-star [Alex Honnold](#), who isn’t shy about his preference of warmer climates for the sport, for the ultimate crash course in alpinism. *A Line Across the Sky* is a work in progress that follows Caldwell and Honnold on their five-day push to complete the epic route during a rare window of good weather in February 2014. What unfolds is high-flying adventure, complete with mishaps, hilarity and camaraderie.

Drainage Ditch Kayak

In the suspense novel *Gone Girl*, Gillian Flynn writes, “...if you're about to do something, and you want to know if it's a bad idea, imagine seeing it printed in the paper for all the world to see.” But sometimes bad ideas become brilliant films.