

LIGHTWORKERS



A Bobby Roth Film

Written and Directed by Bobby Roth

Produced by Bobby Roth, Jesse Kane, Monica Valdes

Music by Paul Haslinger, Edited by Jesse Kane, Executive Producer Lon Bender

Featuring Louis Abramson, Ed Begley, Jr., Debora Benchoam, June Berk, David Brooks, Rabbi Sharon Brous, Robbie Conal, Peter Coyote, Shepard Fairey, Jim Himes, David Hogg, Robert Hubbell, Adam Kinzinger, Ann Kuster, Charley Lang, Wendie Malick, Tom Morello, Keith Olbermann, Betty Osceola, Carmen Perez-Jordan, Peggy Dammond Preacely, John Quigley, Jamie Raskin, Adam Smith, Steve Van Zandt, Henry Winkler, Richard Wolff

ABOUT THE FILM

Logline

Thirty-five diverse men and women confront the problem of saving their democracy from fascism.

Synopsis

What can we do? I posed that question to fifty-two people I respect and they immediately understood what I meant. They acknowledged our country has been taken over by fascists. Our democracy is being disassembled. Forces from a formerly disenfranchised, but aggressive minority are destroying every aspect of decency and the rule of law.

I posed ten questions to a diverse and dynamic group of American citizens who I considered positive forces and recognized them as LIGHTWORKERS

I first asked what constitutes “activism” and followed with “what can you do?” I was interested in how “good people” lived their lives. I asked how people became who they were. I asked what is courage, empathy and joy. I approached these questions from a socio-historic perspective that I thought would be the best context for my audience, but who was I trying to reach?

Despite my desire for inclusivity, I knew I could not reach everyone, but I wanted to reach the widest swath of Americana that was possible. I decided to focus on the voting public, particularly those who might shift the balance of power in the congress... those voting in the midterms.

As I have never been active in party politics I was flying blind. I tried to use my ignorance as a springboard for an educational exercise. This was a journey. I would use the very tools I was trying to examine, particularly the “kindness of strangers.” As in GOOD MEN, I interviewed fifty citizens I identified as “do-gooders,” people who lived their lives prioritizing helping others... people who saw themselves as part of a social order they felt an allegiance to. I call them LIGHTWORKERS. This is the story of my journey.

Key Points

- **Origins of Courage:** Moments of early resistance often shape a lifelong commitment to justice.
- **Formation of Belief:** Education, mentors, and personal experience forge an individual's moral and political identity.
- **Energy of Resistance:** The drive to stand up continues through activism, art, teaching, or community work.
- **The State of Power:** Understanding who holds power—and how it's used—reveals the moral challenges of our time.
- **Action and Responsibility:** Civic participation and protest remain vital expressions of conscience in a democracy.
- **Personal Integrity:** Doing the right thing strengthens empathy and gives life deeper meaning beyond recognition.
- **Spiritual Dimension:** Faith, mindfulness, and connection to something greater often sustain resilience and hope.
- **Legacy and Hope:** The film asks what wisdom we can carry forward—what joy, courage, and humanity look like today.



Contact

Producer: Bobby Roth

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Phone: 213-705-6130

Fiscal Sponsor:

SIMA
STUDIOS

Websites

Movie Site: lightworkersdoc.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lightworkersdoc>

Trailer Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/1182274536>

YouTube: https://youtu.be/Rr6X6k_pXuk

IMDB: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt41804306/>

TECHNICAL INFO

- Camera: iPhone 14
- Format: 4K
- Length: 84 minutes
- Edited: 16 x 9

Bobby Roth — Writer / Director / Producer



“I call them lightworkers because each, in their own way, casts a light forward.” — Bobby Roth

Bobby Roth is an acclaimed writer, director, and producer whose five-decade career spans feature films, acclaimed television dramas, and global film education. A Los Angeles native, Roth studied literature and creative writing at UC Berkeley before earning a B.A. in Cinema from USC and an MFA in Motion Picture Production from UCLA. He has written, directed, and produced sixteen independent feature films—including *Heartbreakers*, *The Man Inside*, *Jack the Dog*, *Berkeley*, and *Pearl*—which have screened at festivals such as Berlin, Toronto, and Sundance. In television, Roth has directed over 100 episodes of network television, including *Lost*, *Prison Break*, *Grey’s Anatomy*, *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, *The Mentalist*, *Criminal Minds*, and *Miami Vice*. Roth is a founding member of the Independent Feature Project and former co-chair of the Directors Guild of America’s Independent Feature Committee. Roth also teaches masterclasses worldwide, sharing his expertise with students and professionals in over 20 countries. Known for storytelling with emotional depth and moral complexity, he continues to create socially conscious films, including the recent documentary *Good Men* (2024), making *Lightworkers* a natural extension of his lifelong exploration of courage and humanity.

Selected Filmography:

- *Good Men* (2024)
- *Our Ukrainian Sky* (2023)
- *Pearl* (2016)
- *Berkeley* (2005)
- *Manhood* (2002)
- *Jack The Dog* (2000)
- *The Man Inside* (1989)
- *Heartbreakers* (1984)

KEY CREATIVE PERSONNEL

Jesse Kane – Editor / Producer

Jesse Kane is a veteran producer and editor with over 20 years of experience in broadcast television, documentary, and independent film. A graduate of California State University, Northridge with a B.A. in Film Production, Kane has worked on projects for ABC (*20/20*, *Nightline*, *Good Morning America*), Barbara Walters specials, and programs for VH1 and NBC. After decades in Los Angeles, Kane returned to his home in the San Francisco Bay Area, where he now focuses on independent projects that emphasize authentic storytelling. For *Lightworkers*, he collaborates closely with Roth in the edit, shaping over sixty hours of footage into a feature-length documentary, and oversees technical workflows for post-production.

Monica Valdes – Producer

Monica Valdes brings more than 20 years of experience in film festival programming, education, and community engagement. She is the co-producer of *Good Men* (2024) and *Lightworkers* (2026), leading festival strategy, publicity, outreach, fundraising, partnership development, accessibility planning, and the creation of educational resources and impact campaigns. Valdes founded and directed the DocMiami International Film Festival (2009–2016). Throughout her career, she has curated hundreds of film screenings, panel discussions, and educational workshops, and continues to serve as a juror and screener for film festivals across the United States. In addition to her work in film, Valdes is an award-winning educator and the author of *Pocket Full of Love: A Pocket Book for Grieving Parents*, written following the loss of her son. Her work is grounded in the belief that storytelling can foster empathy, strengthen communities, and inspire meaningful civic engagement.

Jesse Kane



Monica Valdes



Lon Bender, Executive Producer

Lon Bender is an Academy Award-winning supervising sound editor, sound designer, and entrepreneur with decades of experience in film and audio innovation. He won the Academy Award for Best Sound Effects Editing for *Braveheart* (1995) and has received additional recognition for his work on films including *The Revenant* (2015), *Drive* (2011), and *Blood Diamond* (2006). Bender is the co-founder of Soundelux, a leading post-production sound company known for its groundbreaking contributions to cinematic sound.

In addition to his work in feature films, Bender has designed sound for major commercial campaigns, developed sonic branding for global corporations, and created the immersive soundscape for Disney's Broadway production of *Tarzan*. As an innovator, he has also founded and contributed to ventures focused on advancing audio technology, including tools and devices that support individuals experiencing hearing loss.

Paul Haslinger – Composer

Paul Haslinger is a composer and musician known for his distinctive approach to film scoring, blending classical training with innovative sound design. Educated at the Music Academy of Vienna, he first gained international recognition as a member of the pioneering electronic group Tangerine Dream, where he helped shape the evolution of techno-ambient music.

Haslinger has composed music for a wide range of films, television, and video games, including projects such as *Underworld: Awakening* (2012), *The Three Musketeers* (2011), and *Death Race 2* (2011), as well as contributions to major game franchises like *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. His work has earned industry recognition, including a Grammy nomination for *Canyon Dreams*, an Emmy nomination for the television series *Sleeper Cell*, and a BMI Film Music Award for *Underworld: Awakening*.

Lon Bender



Paul Haslinger



FAQS

What sparked the idea for this film?

As I traveled around the country with GOOD MEN everyone kept saying, "What can we do?" I knew what they meant.

Can you talk about a tough moment during filming and how you handled it?

The conditions have been pretty ideal, though it is a challenge to show up at people's homes/businesses and have to shoot without having seen the space before. My years of TV helped a lot.

What's one memory from production that stands out?

Scheduling has always been a problem. People are busy with their on-going lives, especially these people. I was leaving for an interview one morning in DC when Jamie Raskin's people called to say he had been summoned for a congressional vote at the time of his interview and asked if I could be there in an hour, instead. As it happened, I had an interview scheduled right next door just prior and so I only had to walk twenty steps to interview Jamie at the only time he had. He's become one of the stars of the film.

How did you select who to interview?

It was mostly gut instinct and the kindness of strangers and friends who led me to most of the people. Only about half the people I interviewed will figure prominently. It's mostly about the way the interviews intercut and its impossible to know ahead of time. And some of the people I asked felt they were too busy. Only one person turned me down because they were afraid of repercussions.

What do you hope people get from watching your film?

I'm learning more about this question every day. My initial hope was to inspire people to vote in the upcoming elections. I still harbor that hope, but as we edit the film I see how it is valuable placing a historical and rational context the madness of our world's politics.

How is this film different from your previous work?

I continue to learn as a documentary filmmaker, trying to capitalize on all of what I learned from my days directing drama.

What techniques did you use to give the film its unique style?

I simply tried to be as personal and quiet as possible.

How did you manage your budget and resources for this film?

I mostly depend on friendships and the kindness of others.

What projects are you working on next?

I have something like ADHD or OCD that prevents me from working on two projects at the same time. I hope to continue making documentaries, though. Presently it's my favorite form.

Any tips for someone just starting out in filmmaking?

The world I grew up in is gone. The only constant I can offer is to be mindful and work as hard as you can. The enjoyment must come from the work.

Responses/Quotes

Bruce Springsteen: Rock Star

Excellent ! Tom Morello , Jamie the Congressman, and so many others did a wonderful job.

I'd find a way to use Rocky Ground at the end. Maybe in the background as they talk about hope and let it play out over the credits. It was so effective in the trailer. Great work! Congratulations.

Jamie Raskin: US Congressman

Hey Bobby! This is beautiful—what a great, powerful statement with some extraordinary voices.

I feel very content with my passages, although I realized watching that I had promised to send you some photographs but never did! Let me know if it's not too late—I have a picture of me as a 3-year kid in the Washington Post picketing at a Civil Rights Rally and I can also send one with my Dad.

Anyway, great work—a very meaningful statement.

All best,
Jamie

Mark Harris: Oscar winning documentary filmmaker

Bobby,

The beginning statement from Quigley is a fantastic opening and really sets up the film. Sharon Brous is excellent and says several wise things, like the need for a redemption narrative. Peter Coyote, Tom Morello, Shepard Fairey also stand out. I thought Morello's story about not speaking up at KFC was very strong and connects to Quigley's opening statement, which I saw as the main theme of the film.

“A film that really speaks to our present crisis and the need for all of us to speak out against the cruelty and injustice we're witnessing and resist the dark forces that are destroying our democracy. Bravo to you for doing this. I hope it will find a wide audience in the new year.”

Warmly,
Mark

Ken Burns - filmmaker

“This is great. Scary, sobering, thoughtful, with some really genuine heroes in there.

Greg Gorman: Celebrity Photographer

It's terrific, your strongest movie that you've made in a long time. It's really organized and laid out really well. I really love some of the interviews a lot... Shepard Ferry and Robbie Conal are really great. Granddaughter of slaves was great, Lee Grant was great... really, really, really well done.

Sharon Brous: Rabbi/founder of IKAR

Bobby,

Thank you again for including me in this beautiful doc. Thank you, Bobby. There are many brilliant and beautiful moments. I was most struck by the idea that hope is a choice. So is rage and despair. But all of the people whose story you tell choose to engage, sometimes relentlessly because of the belief that there is something better for all

of us. I love that about the way you tell these stories.”

Shelly Johnson – President of the ASC (Cinematographer’s Union)

Hi Bobby,

I just wanted to tell you how deeply impactful I found your film. You have done an extraordinary job, approaching such a complex and sensitive series of subjects with remarkable integrity, compassion, and thoughtfulness.

The clarity and conviction of the film’s message, combined with the intelligent and measured perspectives of your interview subjects, offers viewers not only a deeper understanding of an enormous circumstance (or many circumstances occurring on top of each other), but also a meaningful path forward. You transform what can feel like an overwhelming and insurmountable issue into something that can be approached with purpose and thoughtful action. I especially appreciated the historical perspective and the reminder that what we are experiencing today is not unlike the moments in history when previous generations found the courage to speak with conviction and humanity. Equally powerful is the film’s compassionate spirit and its suggestion that calm understanding, respectful dialogue, and empathy are among the most effective tools we have to communicate with one another.

Bobby, this is an exceptionally thoughtful piece of filmmaking. You and everyone who appears in the film have given your audience not only a way to better understand and organize their own beliefs, but also a framework for engaging with others in a constructive and meaningful way. My hat is off to you and everyone involved. It is truly outstanding work..And YES, your film ends on a note of hope. Congratulations!

Shelly Johnson ASC

Charley Lang: Psychologist/filmmaker

Bobby, I am so moved and inspired by this film of yours, and honored to be a part of it. Such engaging personal stories beautifully interwoven with powerful and provocative images.

A testament of our time and an exquisite call to action that will no doubt continue to instruct and inspire. What a beautiful gift to all of us...with faith in the possibility of a more sane 2026, and beyond.

Warm regards,
Charley

Stephen Mamber, PHD – Professor Emeritus UCLA

Hi Bobby,

I want to thank you profusely for sending me the link to your film. It is a really extraordinary and inspiring work. The people you assembled are quite amazing, and what a task it must have been to round them all up. I also very much liked how different is the work each does, and that you have such a solid number of artists in there. I admire how well structured your film is because I imagine how the whole thing could easily have run off the rails, but you've organized it so thoughtfully and intelligently and the position of each piece and topic makes so much sense. It's also wonderful of course that you aim toward optimism and hope, even though you also manage to bring in pieces of historical and recent material that are anything but. It's quite a balancing act you pull off so successfully. And also so appropriate that the name Trump is never mentioned once. I hope your film gets the widest exposure and most extensive distribution, as you're clearly a great example yourself of a lightworker. I guess I've seen six or seven of your films (and every Prison Break of course) and I've liked them all, but this is on a whole other level. My congratulations, thanks, and admiration.

Best,
Steve

Maggie Haberman – Star writer of REGIME CHANGE.

Hi Mr. Roth,

I just finished LIGHTWORKERS; it is incredibly powerful. Among the stories that stayed with me: Tom Morello's turn at a student newspaper and him being haunted 40 years on by not stepping in to help someone being badgered for not being "American," Steve VZ's deeply disturbing memory of a cabbie hitting an African man for sport, the recollections of the woman in the entertainment industry who was blacklisted for 12 years.

The film deftly captured the assault on every aspect of American civil society that the administration is engaging in. I loved - and was so grateful for the fact - that you ended with several minutes devoted to underscoring the importance of voting, especially this year, especially now.

Thank you for sharing this with me. I miss a lot of emails these days, so I'm better over text

All my best,
Maggie

Photos



Betty Oceolola with Director Bobby Roth.
Everglades National Park Florida



Jamie Raskin and the founders of Indivisible
(Leah Greenberg and Ezra Levin) with Bobby
Roth.
Washington, D.C.



Henry Winkler and Bobby Roth



Robbi Conal with Director Bobby Roth.
California



Bobby Roth, Nicole Wallace and
Dominic Patten



Congressman Jaime Raskin, Bruce
Springsteen and Bobby Roth
Washington, D.C.

The Lightworkers

Meet the people who have shared their stories with us in the film.



Louis Abramson - Astrophysicist and Civic Advocate
Bridges science and community action through data-driven solutions to social and environmental challenges in Los Angeles.



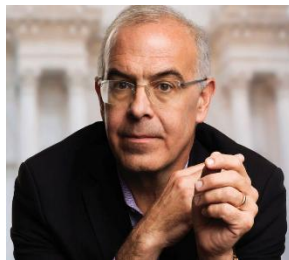
Ed Begley Jr. - Actor and Environmentalist
Emmy-nominated performer and lifelong sustainability advocate known for living his environmental values with humor and practicality.



Debora Benchoam - Human Rights Attorney and Survivor
Argentine political prisoner turned international advocate defending vulnerable communities through global human rights law.



June Berk - Educator and Survivor
Japanese American elder sharing testimony of wartime incarceration to preserve memory and promote justice.



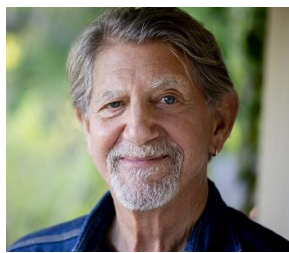
David Brooks - Writer and Social Commentator
Best-selling author and columnist exploring the moral and cultural foundations of community, empathy, and democracy.



Rabbi Sharon Brous - Spiritual Leader and Founder, IKAR
Faith leader uniting spirituality and social justice to inspire moral courage and civic renewal.



Robbie Conal - Street Artist and Satirist
Renowned for his guerrilla posters of political figures that blend art, activism, and public dialogue.



Peter Coyote - Actor, Author, and Zen Priest
Emmy-winning narrator and activist blending storytelling, spirituality, and social conscience.



Shepard Fairey - Artist and Activist
Creator of the iconic "HOPE" poster, merging design and dissent to inspire civic engagement worldwide.

The Lightworkers

Meet the people who have shared their stories with us in the film.



Lee Grant - Actor and Director

Oscar-winning performer and filmmaker who turned blacklisting adversity into a legacy of fearless, compassionate storytelling.



Jim Himes - U.S. Congressman

Advocates pragmatic, bipartisan governance focused on opportunity, innovation, and integrity in public life.



David Hogg - Activist and Organizer

Co-founder of March for Our Lives, transforming grief into a powerful national movement against gun violence.



Robert Hubbell - Attorney and Writer

Publishes a daily newsletter translating complex legal events into accessible civic insight and engagement.



Adam Kinzinger - Former U.S. Congressman and Air Force Veteran

Stood for constitutional accountability and decency in public service despite political cost.



Ann McLane Kuster - U.S. Congresswoman

Bipartisan problem-solver focused on veterans' care, addiction recovery, and mental health advocacy.



Charley Lang - Psychotherapist and Educator

Founder of the Narrative Counseling Center, advancing healing and inclusion through narrative practice.



Wendie Malick - Actor and Philanthropist

Beloved performer and advocate supporting environmental protection, arts education, and animal welfare.



Tom Morello - Musician and Activist

Guitarist and songwriter whose music channels resistance and solidarity across generations and movements.

The Lightworkers

Meet the people who have shared their stories with us in the film.



**Keith Olbermann -
Broadcaster and
Commentator**

Known for incisive, outspoken journalism defending truth, accountability, and democratic values.



**Betty Osceola -
Miccosukee Elder and
Environmental Advocate**

Leads prayer walks and education efforts to protect the Everglades and preserve Indigenous stewardship.



**Matt Palevsky - Civic
Entrepreneur and
Organizer**

Connects grassroots activism with practical policy reforms through technology and storytelling.



**Carmen Perez-Jordan -
Civil Rights Leader and
Organizer**

Co-founder of major national movements for racial and gender justice rooted in healing and accountability.



**Peggy Preacely -
Freedom Rider and Civil
Rights Activist**

Risked her life for racial equality and continues to mentor new generations of advocates for justice.



**John Quigley - Artist and
Environmental Activist**

Creates large-scale aerial artworks uniting communities in symbols of solidarity and action.



**Jamie Raskin - U.S.
Congressman and
Constitutional Scholar**

Defends democracy with intellect, compassion, and courage shaped by personal and national trials.



**Jennefer Russo - Clinician
and Health Advocate**

Promotes equitable, compassionate health care through community-based leadership and education.



**Adam Smith - U.S.
Congressman**

Focuses on responsible governance, human rights, and pragmatic, results-oriented leadership.

The Lightworkers

Meet the people who have shared their stories with us in the film.



**Atossa Soltani -
Environmental Advocate
and Founder, Amazon
Watch**

Defends Indigenous rights and rainforests through global campaigns for justice and sustainability.



**Dr. Monica Soni -
Physician and Health Care
Leader**

Innovates equitable care models combining compassion, data, and teamwork in public health systems.



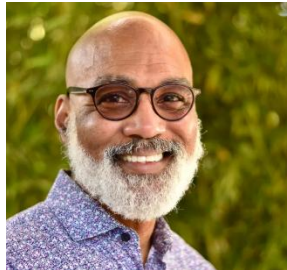
**James Thornton -
Environmental Lawyer
and Founder, ClientEarth**

Uses law to drive systemic environmental protection and global accountability.



**Steven Van Zandt -
Musician, Actor and
Educator**

E Street Band guitarist and founder of TeachRock, promoting music education and cultural activism.



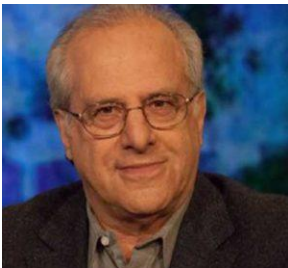
**Phill Wilson - HIV/AIDS
Activist and Founder,
Black AIDS Institute**

Champion for health equity and racial justice leading efforts to end the HIV epidemic.



**Henry Winkler - Actor,
Producer, and Author**

Award-winning performer and literacy advocate whose career embodies kindness, humor, and perseverance.



**Richard Wolff - Economist
and Educator**

Explains how economic systems shape daily life and advocates for more equitable, democratic models.

CREDITS

Dedicated to Robert M. Young

Written and Directed by

Bobby Roth

Produced by

Bobby Roth, Jesse Kane and Monica Valdes

Executive Producer

Lon Bender

Edited by

Jesse Kane

Music by

Paul Haslinger

Protools Engineer

Travis Smith

Score Mixing Engineer

Mitch Zelezny

Associate Producers

Emma Weir and Barbara Williams

Consulting Producer

Jonathan Dana

Camera

Bobby Roth

Additional Camera

Daeil Kim

Austin Ramey

Nick Roth

Pam Springsteen

Sound

Lon Bender

Rerecording Mixer

David Forshee

Sound Editor

Alex Nomick

Dialog Editors

Dan Newman
Jake Reichart

Colorist

Nick Roth

VFX Supervisor
William Mesa

VFX Producer
Lincoln Kupchak

Trailer

Smitty Smith and Jeff Farrow

Publicity

Jonathan Taylor & Ric Robertson

Interviewees

Louis Abramson
Ed Begley, Jr.
Debora Benchoam
June Aochi Berk
David Brooks
Rabbi Sharon Brous
Robbie Conal
Peter Coyote
Shepard Fairey
Lee Grant
Jim Himes
David Hogg
Robert Hubbell
Adam Kinzinger
Annie Kuster
Charley Lang
Wendie Malick
Tom Morello
Keith Olbermann
Betty Osceola
Rev. Matthew Palevsky
Carmen Perez-Jordan
Peggy Damond Trotter Preacely
John Quigley
Jamie Raskin
Jennefer Russo
Adam Smith

Atossa Soltani
Monica Soni
James Thornton
Steve Van Zandt
Phill Wilson
Henry Winkler
Richard D. Wolff

Consultants:

Lilan Bowden
Barbara Carrasco
Francine Epstein
Jodie Evans
Gabriella Karin
Diane Luby Lane
Rob Nilsson
Adolfo 'Fito' de la Parra
Ankur Patel
Julia Ponsin
Eurydice Stanley
Lauren Tom
Jack Waksal
Stacey Williams
Lori Woodley
Zev Yaroslavsky

Thanks to:

Jack Baran
Beth Broday
Steve Burns
Gary Fleder
Bruce Alan Greene
Richard Greene
Brian and Cathy Kane
Sara Nichols
Laura Owens
Joyce Hyser Robinson
Deborah Ross
Jay Roth
Nancy Stephens
Peggy Damond Trotter Preacely
for the poem
Lightworkers

Special Thanks to

Bruce Springsteen
for Rocky Ground