

# *LIVING IN THE AGE OF AIRPLANES*

## SYNOPSIS

*Living in the Age of Airplanes* offers a fresh perspective on a modern-day miracle that many of us take for granted: flying. Narrated by Harrison Ford, the documentary employs spectacular nature photography and dazzling aerial shots to illuminate how airplanes have empowered a century of global connectedness our ancestors could never have imagined.

Filmed by director Brian J. Terwilliger and his team in 18 countries over the course of several years, *Living in the Age of Airplanes* highlights the astonishingly rapid advancements that have led to a world in which 100,000 flights take off and land every day. During the vast majority of mankind's 200,000-year existence, walking was the fastest means of travel. Yet today, just 175 years after the introduction of the steam engine, boarding a jet to travel thousands of miles in a matter of hours is more often viewed as an inconvenience than a world-changing technological marvel.

“Since we were all born into a world with airplanes, it’s hard to imagine that jet travel itself is only 60 years old, just a tick on the timeline of human history,” said Terwilliger. “But our perception of crossing continents and oceans at 500 mph has turned from fascination to frustration. I want to reignite people’s wonder for one of the most extraordinary aspects of the modern world.”

In its celebration of aviation, *Living in the Age of Airplanes* takes viewers on an extraordinary journey across all seven continents to some of the most remote, fascinating and picturesque places in the world.

Presented by National Geographic Studios, *Living in the Age of Airplanes* is directed by Brian J. Terwilliger and produced by Terwilliger and Bryan H. Carroll. Director of Photography is Andrew Waruszewski. Music is by James Horner. Editor is Brad Besser.

The film will be released on giant screen, digital, IMAX® and museum cinemas worldwide beginning on April 10, 2015.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Brian J. Terwilliger first became fascinated with airplanes as a kid, when he witnessed the precision formation flying of the U.S. Navy’s Blue Angels. As an adult, he fused his passion for aviation with a gift for documentary filmmaking to produce and direct the feature-length film, *One Six Right*, which focused on the life of a small Southern California airport, and the short, *Flying Full Circle*, which chronicled his experience flying in an F-18 Hornet with the Blue Angels.

In 2008 Terwilliger decided to tackle the subject of aviation from a different point of view. “Rather than capturing the beauty and romance of flying as the pilot sees it, I wanted to get across that same idea of how incredible it is to be living in a time when we can fly, but this time from the

passenger's perspective. I wanted to make the subject accessible to people who fly in the back of the plane and don't otherwise find it fascinating. The pursuit of sharing a new perspective is what took me down the path to make *Living in the Age of Airplanes*."

### Getting the Shots

To dramatize the remarkably fluid global traffic enabled by contemporary air travel, Terwilliger traveled with his crew to 95 locations in 18 countries searching for some of the most exotic spots on earth. "Capturing the most beautiful images was very important to me," says Terwilliger. In order to get soul-stirring shots of Brazilian waterfalls, Cambodian ruins, the Australian outback, South Pacific sea turtles, the African Savannah and dozens of other wild and man-made wonders, Terwilliger knew he needed to find an extraordinarily gifted cinematographer who shared his passion and dedication.

*Living in the Age of Airplanes* producer Bryan H. Carroll introduced the director to cinematographer Andrew Waruszewski.

"Brian [Terwilliger] pitched the film to me for three hours and we really hit it off," recalls Waruszewski. "I'd just finished a National Geographic piece on Bugatti. Brian saw the attention I gave to shooting the world's fastest supercar. He was looking for someone who had a good eye who he wouldn't mind traveling with for weeks at a time."

"Andrew is amazing, and he totally got what I was trying to do with this film," says the director. "I knew his attention to detail and willingness to put in the time and energy to get the shot would be critical to the film's success."

"It was really important that every image be shot carefully, like a commercial," Terwilliger continues. "Sometimes we'd only get one usable shot in a day but we'd be chasing something at a location and working really hard to get it. Right out of the gate, Andrew and I both shared this determination to capture the best possible images."

An early adopter of digital-video technology, Terwilliger had secured one of the first iterations of its groundbreaking Alexa cameras. "We had the seventh Alexa, before they were even available for public use," Waruszewski says. "The cameras were hugely important to the look of the film because they're very cinematic."

While the quality of the cameras yielded stunning visual benefits, the relatively heavy equipment often proved physically demanding for *Living in the Age of Airplanes*' globe-trotting four-person crew. "One of the biggest challenges was the fact that the camera and lens weighs 55 pounds, the tripod weighs around 60 pounds, and we had to backpack another 45 pounds worth of additional camera gear," says Waruszewski. "Just getting to the locations could be a real challenge. One day in Costa Rica, we went to shoot suspension bridges and ended up hiking four and a half

miles in and out of the forest with all this gear. On a project like this, half the job is carrying equipment, the other half is actually shooting.”

In their quest for jaw-dropping images, the filmmakers had to contend with uncooperative weather that sometimes caused shoots to go way over schedule. “Our goal was to make every image stand alone but it’s tough when you’re going around the world because you’re always waiting for the sun to break or the rain to clear. We were only meant to spend four days in the Maldives, but it kept raining and raining, so we ended up staying two weeks to get enough sunny footage to make a three-minute sequence.”

And often, hours turned into days as the crew strove to capture an elusive scene in a remote location. “In Alaska, we’d start when the sun came up and shoot for 16 hours,” says Waruszewski. “Something that wound up being four seconds in the final film we might spend 26 hours shooting to get it just right.”

### **Shaping the Story**

Although the imagery of *Living in the Age of Airplanes* was captured in far-flung locales, the film’s story was crafted in the editing room, where Terwilliger and editor Brad Besser whittled 260 hours of raw footage down to a 47-minute feature with five discreet “chapters.”

“The story structure itself was the biggest challenge in making this film,” Terwilliger says. “A film like this doesn’t have a linear storyline with a beginning, middle and end, so we really needed to put all these concepts into a cohesive narrative that made sense to the audience.”

Before the crew shot a single scene, Terwilliger and Besser gathered clips from the Internet to build a rough video storyboard for the entire film. “Then Brian would go out and find amazing locations we never even knew existed,” says Besser. “They’d capture these places so beautifully, it would inspire us to change the story and add these extra layers. Brian’s process was to try a lot of things and then refine and refine until we got this visually arresting film.

“They shot so much great stuff, you’d fall in love with all this footage even though you realized not all of it was going to make it into the film,” Besser adds. “We had to choose the best of the best and figure out which images best fit the story. That was one of our biggest challenges because there easily could have been a four-hour version of this film that would have been filled with the same visual splendor.”

## Flower Capital of the World

To illustrate the global marketplace made possible only by modern aviation, *Living in the Age of Airplanes* pulls back the curtain on the world's largest flower hub, just outside of Amsterdam. "Five million flowers fly in and out of Amsterdam every day so by going to this warehouse, we were able to show how quickly things move around in the age of airplanes," says Terwilliger. "Flowers are extremely perishable, so of course the speed of transportation is really important. Because most people don't know about this huge market, I thought it would be interesting to follow the story of how something otherwise very ordinary comes into your home in a quite extraordinary way."

As seen in the movie, flowers from 60 countries arrive at the Amsterdam flower mart before getting sorted and air-shipped to 130 countries. "When we first went to Amsterdam and scouted the flower mart, we really got a sense of this operation's scope and scale," says the director. "That became the centerpiece for this chapter of the story that lets audiences see how the world comes to us through aviation. Not that long ago, when the top speed of transportation was the speed of a horse, a cut flower couldn't travel more than a couple hundred miles before it would die."

But today, roses grown in Kenya can be transported to Amsterdam, then shipped to FedEx headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee, before arriving in a snow-covered Alaska home, where their blooms can be enjoyed for 10 more days.

## Private Plane, Private Man: Harrison Ford

Terwilliger recruited Harrison Ford, one of the world's biggest movie stars and an expert pilot, to narrate *Living in the Age of Airplanes*.

"It was important to me that the narrator truly owned the story and had a passion for the subject," says Terwilliger. "I didn't want to have a celebrity simply 'lend' their voice, because this project is very personal to me, and the narrator plays such an important role. With a documentary like this there are the visuals, the music and the narrator—and that's it. I wanted the delivery to come from someone with passion. Harrison was very committed to telling the story and getting it right."

A licensed pilot, Ford bought his first plane, a Gulfstream II, in the mid-1990s. He keeps a small fleet of planes and a helicopter in a Santa Monica hangar and served as a member of Teton County Search and Rescue, helping to save Wyoming hikers with his Bell 407 helicopter. Ford also belongs to the Experimental Aircraft Association and has given rides to 280 children in his DHC-2 Beaver as part of its Young Eagles program.

"When you hear Harrison Ford saying those words, you can tell they're coming from a place of authenticity," says Besser. "He loves film, science, airplanes, and that really shines through. And besides, he played Han Solo, so that's really cool."

## Hitting a High Note with James Horner

To create the music for *Living in the Age of Airplanes* Terwilliger partnered with another kindred spirit, composer James Horner, who has scored such Hollywood blockbusters as *Avatar*, *Titanic* and *Braveheart*. Equally important, Horner, like Ford, pilots his own private airplane. “I met James many years ago when the project was in its infancy,” Terwilliger recalls. “I asked him if he’d be interested in scoring the film’ and he said ‘I’d love to as long as we could make the schedules work.’ Years went by and I called him, had him over to the office and showed him some of the footage we shot. The schedules worked out and the rest is history.”

Though Horner rarely scores non-fiction films, his gift for crafting soaring musical themes made him the perfect composer for *Living in the Age of Airplanes*, says editor Besser. “Brian had always hoped to have him do the score,” he says. “His scores are so eloquent and engrossing, we wanted to use that kind of tone from the beginning, so we bought every score James had ever done and used them in our temp score. Then, not surprisingly, he went off and really knocked it out of the park.”

## Polar Cinema

To lend genuine global scope to *Living in the Age of Airplanes*, Terwilliger and his team wanted to shoot in locations on all seven continents, including Antarctica. For his first and only expedition to the South Pole, Terwilliger hired wildlife cinematographer Doug Allan, whose resume includes dozens of nature documentaries filmed in the Polar regions, including Werner Herzog’s 2007 feature *Encounters at the End of the World*.

There was no guarantee the filmmakers would reach the South Pole, however. “Antarctica is one thing, but then it’s two more flights to get to the pole,” explains the director. “Three airports have to line up with perfect weather in order for you make the journey. “Doug’s spent 30 summers in Antarctica but never made it to the South Pole, which shows you how rare it is to actually go there.”

As it turned out, fate—and the sun—shone on the filmmakers and they were able to get to the southernmost spot on earth. Setting up camp on the nearly two-mile-thick ice sheet, Terwilliger and company made it their mission to film the pristine region no matter how cold it got. The filmmakers made the expedition in January, knowing they had to capture their shots before daylight ran out. “There’s only a four-month window when you can go there,” Terwilliger explains. “When summer turns to fall, it gets dark for seven or eight months. We spent 11 nights in Antarctica sleeping in tents.”

## A Matter of Perspective

Terwilliger hopes *Living in the Age of the Airplanes* restores a sense of wonder for aviation during an era when many people take air travel for granted. “Flying has become more accessible to more people than at any time in history,” he says. “It’s no longer just for the elite as it was 60 years ago.”

But now that mankind has realized its dream of flying after 200,000 years of earthbound evolution, air travel has lost some of its luster. “It’s become such a commonplace experience that it doesn’t seem to kindle people’s interest anymore,” Terwilliger says. “You have a lot of disgruntled passengers where their focus is on the inconvenience and the delays. My hope with this film is that it inspires audiences to see aviation with a new sense of appreciation and awe. If somebody goes to see *Living in the Age of Airplanes* and comes away thinking ‘I’ll never think about flying the same way again,’ then it worked.”

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

**BRIAN J. TERWILLIGER (Producer, Director)** is a filmmaker whose unrelenting pursuit of excellence has taken him to all seven continents in search of compelling stories and stunning imagery. A licensed pilot captivated by flight since childhood, Terwilliger has produced, directed and secured the financing for three documentaries, each looking at aviation from a different perspective.

His first film, the 2005 feature *One Six Right*, focuses on the romance of flight as seen through a day in the life of the Van Nuys Airport, a local general-aviation airport in a Los Angeles suburb. As a result of making that film, Terwilliger was granted the rare opportunity to fly in an F-18 Hornet with the Blue Angels, the elite team of precision Navy jet pilots that first sparked Terwilliger's interest in flying when he was a boy. He chronicled that experience in the 2008 short film *Flying Full Circle*.

Terwilliger has spent the past several years making *Living in the Age of Airplanes*, which looks at the dramatic ways aviation has transformed the world. Narrated by Harrison Ford, with an original score by James Horner (*Avatar*, *Titanic*), the film uses spectacular images shot in 18 countries to illuminate how airplanes have empowered a century of global connectedness our ancestors never could have imagined. The film will be released by National Geographic on giant screen, digital, IMAX® and museum cinemas worldwide beginning on April 10, 2015.

After spending his early years in Connecticut, Terwilliger moved with his family to Southern California at age 16. He took his first solo flight at 19 and earned his private pilot license the following year. More recently, Terwilliger was honored to serve as emcee at the 46th Annual National Aviation Hall of Fame enshrinement ceremony, considered the "Academy Awards of Aviation."

Terwilliger attended California State University, Northridge, where he created his own major in business and entertainment. After graduating in 1999, determined to learn every facet of the film industry, he began working in various capacities, from movie-theatre projectionist, to production manager and 1<sup>st</sup> assistant director on independent films, to visual effects coordinator on the features *Big Fish* and *The Core*.

**ANDREW WARUSZEWSKI (Director of Photography)** is an award-winning cinematographer and camera operator who has been shooting feature films, commercials, and documentaries for the past 15 years. His cinematography has screened in theaters worldwide as well as on Discovery, National Geographic, NBC, ABC, PBS and ESPN. Recent commercial clients include Walmart, Lee Jeans, Gatorade, Rock & Republic and Ford Motor Co.

Waruszewski has recently been immersed in the world of documentaries. His best-known credits are the award-winning *Why We Ride*, *Justin Bieber's Believe*, *Justin Bieber: Never Say Never*, *Dear Mr. Watterson* and *Last Stop at the Oasis* (from the creators of *Food, Inc.*). He is currently shooting his fourth season of “Dancing with the Stars,” for ABC.

Waruszewski is a graduate of USC's School of the Cinematic Arts. He loves traveling for the opportunity to discover new cultures and his goals include becoming a proficient bread baker and pianist.

**BRAD BESSER (Editor)** is an award-winning editor whose dedication and expertise help him tell compelling visual stories. For nearly two decades, Besser has built a career editing documentaries, feature films, television series and commercials. He has worked on the miniseries “The Pacific,” executive produced by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks, and the series “Luck,” both for HBO. Besser edited the feature documentaries *Farmland* (for Academy Award®-winning director James Moll), *Beaver Trilogy Part IV*, *Born and Bred* and *The World of Z*.

Besser is originally from Salt Lake City, Utah. He got his start as an intern for the CBS television series “Touched By an Angel” and was a sports editor for KJZZ, the broadcast station of the NBA's Utah Jazz. After relocating to Chicago, he continued his career editing documentaries and commercials. Besser then moved to Los Angeles and edited Barbie and Hot Wheels commercials for Mattel. He has spent time in the comedy world working for Will Farrell and Adam McKay at FunnyOrDie.com.

**JAMES HORNER (Composer)** is among the world's most prolific and celebrated film composers, having composed the music for more than 130 film and television productions including dozens of the most memorable and successful films of the past three decades. He won two Oscars® and two Golden Globe Awards® for his music from James Cameron's *Titanic* (one for Best Original Score and one for the Best Original Song “My Heart Will Go On”). He's received eight additional Academy Award nominations and five more Golden Globe nominations. Equally comfortable with lush orchestral scoring and contemporary electronic techniques, Horner has likened his approach in composing to that of a painter, with the film serving as the canvas and musical color being used to describe and support the story's emotional dynamics.

Most recently, Horner worked on Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Wolf Totem* and director Patricia Rigen's *The 33*. Horner is now composing a concerto for four horns and orchestra that is scheduled to receive its world premiere this year, performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Horner has won six Grammy Awards® including Song of the Year in 1987 (for “Somewhere Out There”) and 1998 (for “My Heart Will Go On”). In 1998 his *Titanic* soundtrack album on Sony

Classical completed an unprecedented run of 16 weeks at No. 1 on the *Billboard* Top 200 Album Chart, setting a new record for the most consecutive weeks on top for a film score. It remains the largest-selling instrumental score album in history, selling nearly 10 million copies in the U.S. and more than 27 million copies worldwide. Sony Classical's multi-platinum sequel album *Back to Titanic* featured additional music from the film as well as several new Horner compositions based on themes from his original score.

The composer is noted for his integration of unusual ethnic instruments into the traditional orchestral palette, achieving exotic colors and textures. An accomplished conductor, Horner prefers to conduct his orchestral film scores directly to picture and without the use of click tracks or other mechanical timing devices.

Other film credits include *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Black Gold*, *For Greater Glory*, *Karate Kid*, *Apocalypto*, *Flight Plan*, *The New World*, *The Legend of Zorro*, *The Chumscrubber*, *The Forgotten*, *Troy*, *House of Sand and Fog*, *The Missing*, *Beyond Borders*, *The Four Feathers*, *Radio*, *Windtalkers*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *Iris*, *Enemy at the Gates*, *The Perfect Storm*, *Freedom Song*, *Bicentennial Man*, *The Mask of Zorro*, *Deep Impact*, *The Devil's Own*, *Ransom*, *Courage Under Fire*, *Braveheart*, *Apollo 13*, *Casper*, *Legends of the Fall*, *Clear and Present Danger*, *The Pagemaster*, *Bopha*, *The Pelican Brief*, *The Man Without a Face*, *Patriot Games*, *Thunderheart*, *Sneakers*, *The Rocketeer*, *Glory*, *In Country*, *Field of Dreams*, *The Land Before Time*, *Willow*, *An American Tail*, *The Name of the Rose*, *Cocoon*, *Gorkey Park*, *Cocoon* and *Cocoon: The Return*, *48 Hours*, *Another 48 Hours*, *Star Trek II* and *Star Trek III*.

Horner has also composed several concert works, including one called "Spectral Shimmers" that was performed by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. "A Forest Passage" was commissioned by the Cleveland Orchestra in celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreational Area in Ohio. His most recent concert work is "Pas de Deux," a double concerto for violin, cello and orchestra that was commissioned by artists Mari and Håkon Samuelson.

Born in Los Angeles in 1953, Horner spent his formative years living in London, where he attended the prestigious Royal College of Music. His initial interest was to become a composer of serious, avant-garde classical music. Returning to his native California, Horner continued his music education at USC and earned a Bachelor of Music in composition. He then transferred to the master's program at UCLA, where he received his doctorate in music composition and theory.

In 1980 Horner was approached by the American Film Institute and asked to score a short film. He then left the academic world and began working for Roger Corman at New World Pictures. During this time he developed his craft and became acquainted with a number of young directors including Ron Howard, for whom he would later score such films as *Willow*, *Cocoon* and *Apollo 13*. Also during his time at New World Horner met a young cameraman named James Cameron, with

whom he would later collaborate on the hit sequel *Aliens* and the two highest-grossing films of all time, *Titanic* and *Avatar*.

In the ensuing years Horner has gone on to collaborate with many of Hollywood's most successful filmmakers including Ed Zwick, Joe Johnston, Phil Alden Robinson, Steven Spielberg, William Friedkin, Mel Gibson, Oliver Stone, Philip Noyce, Michael Apted, Lasse Hallstrom, Norman Jewison and Francis Ford Coppola.