

From Academy Award® nominated documentary filmmaker Marshall Curry



**"An Exciting,
poignant tale of growing up fast
with adult ambitions."**
- NY Magazine

**"The best film
of the year...
make no mistake,
this one is an instant classic."**
Los Angeles Times
THE ENVELOPE

COMING OF AGE IN A FAST WORLD

RACING DREAMS

GOOD and WHITE BUFFALO ENTERTAINMENT present a MARSHALL CURRY and RACING DREAMS
ORIGINAL IDEAS BY DOEL GOODMAN ^{WRITER} FOR THE NATIONAL ^{EDITOR} MATTHEW HAMACHEK MARSHALL CURRY and MARY MANHARDT ^{CO-MANAGING EDITOR} MARSHALL CURRY ALAN JACOBSEN WOLFGANG HELD and PETER GORDON
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS KRISTIN LOEB PRODUCED BY BRISTOL BAUGHAN and MARSHALL CURRY DIRECTED BY JACK TURNER BEN GOLDBUSH DANY GARCIA and DWAYNE JOHNSON ^{EXECUTIVE PRODUCER} MARSHALL CURRY



A documentary by Marshall Curry

Executive Produced by Dwayne Johnson

Produced by GOOD and White Buffalo Entertainment

RACING DREAMS

Runtime: 96 minutes

SYNOPSIS

RACING DREAMS is the award winning coming-of-age story about three kids who dream of one day racing in NASCAR.

Academy Award® nominated documentary filmmaker, Marshall Curry, takes us into the lives of Annabeth (11 years old), Josh (12), and Brandon (13) as they compete for the championship in the World Karting Association's National Series -- widely considered the Little League for professional racing.

Clocking speeds of up to 70 mph, these young drivers race their way through the year-long National Series that spawned many of NASCAR's top drivers. And at the same time, they navigate the treacherous road between childhood and young adulthood.

Josh, who started racing when he was five, is bright and focused beyond his years. He studies both the driving styles and the interview styles of NASCAR drivers, and he understands that success in this sport requires professionalism above all.

Brandon is funny and charismatic, but his hot temper often leads him into trouble. He is gunning to win the championship that he lost last year when he was disqualified for rough driving. With a difficult home life, racing is as much of an escape as a passion for him.

And Annabeth, the talented daughter of a retired racecar driver, spends nearly every weekend at the track and struggles to balance a love for racing with a desire to be a regular kid.

In intimate moments of young love and family struggle, this exciting and often humorous story has been fondly described as "part *Catcher in the Rye*, part *Talladega Nights*."

Q&A with Director Marshall Curry

- **Why did you choose to make a film about kart racing?**

Before I started making this film, I didn't really know anything about car racing and I didn't understand the appeal. It just seemed like a bunch of guys driving around in circles-- flooring it and turning left. I'd say that attitude is pretty typical in New York, where I live.

But I knew it wasn't typical for the country as a whole. NASCAR is reportedly the second biggest spectator sport in the country after football - bigger than baseball or basketball. And I have family in North Carolina, so I knew how much passion there was out there for racing.

I began to think about that: we New Yorkers think of ourselves as so worldly and broad minded, but we don't know anything about a sport that's a huge part of our own country's culture. So I wanted to learn a little about it.

Then one day I read about the World Karting Association series for 11 and 12 year olds who race karts that go 70 mph, and has become the unofficial Little League for NASCAR, producing some of the sport's biggest drivers.

I thought that sounded pretty amazing, and one of the things I love about making documentaries is it lets me spend a year or two learning about things I don't know about. So I went to a race to scout it out, and it was better than I imagined. The racing was fast and noisy and dangerous. The kids were smart, funny, and at that perfect age where they are young enough to be honest and open, but old enough to be interesting and insightful. So I put aside the project I was working on and got to work on this film.

- **How did the project come together?**

After I read an article about the World Karting Association series, I thought it sounded great, but I wanted to make sure that there was a movie there. How would the racing look on film? What would the kids and their families be like? So I took a camera to a few races, began scouting, shooting some footage, and meeting kids. People kept saying, "Have you met that Josh Hobson yet?" When I finally found him, he'd just come off the track after winning his fourth Grand National race. He began talking to me about his passion for racing in this professional way—like an adult in an 11 year old body—and I knew then that this was a rich mine.

- **What drew you to Annabeth, Brandon, and Josh as the subjects of RACING DREAMS? Did you follow more kids and then narrow it down in the editing?**

I knew from the beginning that I didn't want to make another "kid competition film." That had been done really well in *Spellbound* and other movies that followed, and it didn't really need to be done again. So rather than follow a lot of kids and find out who becomes the champion, I wanted it to be a more in-depth character story about a year in the lives of three kids who happen to race really fast go karts.

I met Josh at one of the first races I was scouting and thought he was an incredible character.

To find Brandon and Annabeth, I went to a racing awards ceremony that is right next to a big karting convention in NC. We fanned out and met maybe 50 or 75 kids, and we'd ask them all kinds of questions – mostly having nothing to do with racing -- to try to find out what made them tick: What does your room look like? What do you like to read? Do you believe in God? You can learn a lot about someone in about 5 minutes of those kinds of questions.

The test footage we shot of Annabeth at that first meeting is actually in the movie. I remember standing there hearing her say, "Ever since I was just a little five year old I said 'Daddy I want to be the first woman to win the Daytona 500.' But my friends are like, 'That's weird.'" I couldn't stop grinning—she's just so spunky and original.

I met Brandon at the end of the day. He was there with his grandfather and I sensed a story in him. He had a mischievous twinkle in his eye, and an intelligent charisma that's hard to explain—like a sweet kid who had charmed his way through a lot of rough times.

• **What were your biggest challenges during filming?**

I wanted this film to be photographed well—to capture the colors of the races and the characters' lives. But I also really wanted to keep a small presence while shooting. I think that intimacy and comfort are the most important elements to getting magical moments.

We shot with two-person crews—I would shoot and someone else would do sound, or I would do sound with a cameraperson. I felt like the big, shoulder-mounted HD cameras would be intimidating to our characters and they wouldn't allow as much mobility as we ducked into crowded trailers, or jumped into the backseat of a car. So we decided to shoot with a new, compact HD camera that shot onto memory cards rather than tape. Now it's becoming a lot more common, but just a couple years ago, no one was shooting vérité docs this way, and each card only held 20 minutes of footage. We had to constantly have a third guy run the cards out to our van, download the footage onto a hard drive, and then run the empty card back to the shoot. It made for a complicated workflow, but I was really happy with the balance of beauty and intimacy.

The editing was also a huge job. We shot 500 hours of footage, so it took about three months just to screen the material once. Selecting the best material and structuring it into a film that flowed like a narrative film was a pretty grueling 16 month process. Our characters were constantly asking me how we were going to tell the story without a narrator, and when they watched it for the first time, we were happy to hear Annabeth's mom say, "That didn't seem like a documentary at all. It was just a movie." It's funny—I think the highest praise you can give a documentary filmmaker is to tell him that his work doesn't seem like a documentary.

The editing was also challenging because we had to keep in mind two very different audiences—how can we make something that's interesting and compelling both to the documentary crowd and to the NASCAR crowd?

We spent a lot of time on that shading, and I think in the end we got it right. It won Best Documentary at the Tribeca Film Festival and had 8 sold out screenings to New York audiences of non-NASCAR fans. And then it played at the Indianapolis Film Festival the weekend that the NASCAR race was there, and so drivers and NASCAR teams and general racing fans showed up—and it got a great reception, and won the Audience Award.

- **What do you think people love about racing?**

When I first began this movie, I remember wondering whether NASCAR was really a sport. But no one who understands racing well asks that question. It's an amazing act of endurance, strength and reflexes. A professional racer will drive a car at 180 mph for three hours without stopping, maintaining perfect focus the whole time and missing the 42 other cars on the track by inches. All of that is done with the realization that a single mistake could mean death. Viewed through that lens, it's a pretty exciting and intense sport.

For the kids in our movie, racing means something slightly different. For Brandon, racing is an escape from a tough situation at home. He says in the film, "When I get to the track everything else goes away - I don't think about nothing except racing." For Annabeth, and for most of the kids I spoke with, it's a big part of the transition from child to teenager. She says, "When you are 11 or 12 years old, everyone always tells you what to do. But when you are racing, you are totally independent. You have to decide whether to pass that guy. It's totally up to you."

- **What did you learn from working with these three kids and their families?**

Making the film opened me up to a world of racing, that, honestly, I wasn't sure I could care about.

There's a scene I love in the film where Annabeth's mom says, "Some people don't understand racing—they think it's just cars going around in circles. But we don't understand, like, baseball. To us, it's just guys standing out in a field hoping someone might hit them the ball—and he might not even hit it to them." It's such a great comment because it reminds us that anything that you don't understand—whether it's racing or baseball or jazz or documentary film—seems absurd when you look at it as an outsider. But once you get inside a little bit and start to understand – for instance -- what makes a good pass in a race, it suddenly comes into focus and life becomes a little richer. It's a nice lesson about stretching yourself and paying attention to the world.

After we'd shot the scene where Brandon and his grandfather watch the Daytona 500 on TV, I called my wife and said breathlessly, "Oh man-- did you see that finish?!" She asked, "Finish of what?" She laughed later that she never thought she'd see the day when her Brooklynite, documentary-making, vegetarian husband would be excited about watching a NASCAR race on TV.

- **After making this film do you want to race? If so, have you or will you try it?**

After our last shoot, some of the kids let our crew take their karts out on the track. I had

been watching them do it for a year and I thought I had a pretty good idea of how it was done. I got out there and was screaming "Whoooo!" in my helmet, sure that I was setting track records-- wondering if the kart was going to break into pieces under the intense g-forces. When I got in all of the kids were laughing, saying I'd been going the speed that the 5 year olds go when they race.

• **What do you want people to take away from this film? What makes this film important?**

We have joked that racing is the McGuffin in our movie, and that Racing Dreams is actually a coming of age story disguised as a racing movie. I think that pre-adolescence is probably the most important, poignant and under-explored stage in our lives. It's really when we are beginning to figure out who we are, how we relate to our parents, what romance feels like, and what we want to do.

I hope that this movie will take people back to that age, and remind us of the dreams we had - to be President, or a baseball player, or whatever. Back before we knew about the importance of money or connections or how hard things were going to be, and we just dreamed.

ABOUT THE CAST



Annabeth Barnes

11-year-old Annabeth Barnes has become one of the hottest female racers in the karting world, with 53 poles and 32 wins, including some of the biggest races in the country. A third generation racer, Annabeth started out as a 7-year old in the Nascart Kids class, with her kart painted like Terry Labonte's #5 car. Tall and thin with short cropped hair, some boys on the track have called her "Man-a-Beth," but their teasing always stopped when they saw her race. She resides in Hiddenite, NC, near the heart of "NASCAR Valley," and she often spends Saturday nights watching stock car races at the Hickory Motor Speedway with her family or re-watching her favorite movie, "Talladega Nights."

2010 Update: Annabeth is now 14 years old and finishing her first year of high school in the fall. She received the "Young Racer" Award at the 2nd Annual NASCAR Diversity luncheon at the Daytona International Speedway in February. Annabeth ilast year raced Bandoleros and will be moving into a new full sized stock car this summer. Annabeth continues to be sponsored by the NASCAR Drive for Diversity program for talented female and minority drivers. She was profiled in the Dec. 08' issue of Sports Illustrated as a "Racer to Watch."



Josh Hobson

Josh was born and raised just north of Flint, MI and started racing when he was 5 years old. At 12 years old, Josh stands 4'10", but is a professional both in school and on the track. He is well spoken and polite, and understands that in addition to being a great driver, it's important to represent your sponsors well if you want to be able to keep racing. With seven Grand National wins and four National Championships under his belt, he is hoping to move up into a full sized ASA racecar after this season.

2010 Update: Josh is now 16 years and competing in the ASA late model racing series. Last year he had numerous top-5 finishes in the series but missed being named rookie of the year because of a crash that made him miss crucial crucial points races. He recently got his license and has a 4.0 GPA. Josh was elected as President of the student body last year and has been selected this year for the National Junior Honor Society.



Brandon Warren

13-year-old Brandon Warren lives with his grandparents in rural Creedmoor, N.C., in a home filled with racing memorabilia (two matching Richard Petty rocking chairs sit in the living room beside a stack of racing magazines and Brandon's airbrushed helmet). Brandon's grandfather does paint and body repairs for a Hooters Pro-Cup driver, and Brandon is not afraid to trade some paint on the track himself. Brandon's quick temper and daredevil side worry his grandmother who thinks he should follow in Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s footsteps and attend military school where he could get the discipline he needs.

2010 Update: Brandon joined Jr. ROTC program at his high school at the end of our shoot and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He is now 16 years old and currently not competing but hopes to find a sponsor and get back to racing.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Marshall Curry (Director, Producer)

Marshall Curry was the director, producer, director of photography, and editor of the Academy Award-nominated documentary, *STREET FIGHT*.

STREET FIGHT won numerous awards, including the Audience Awards at the Tribeca Film Festival, AFI/Discovery SilverDocs Festival, and Hot Docs Festival. It also received the Jury Prize for Best International Documentary at Hot Docs and was nominated for a Writers Guild of America (WGA) Award. In 2006, it was nominated for a News and Documentary Emmy.

The critically praised film was called "extraordinary" by David Denby (The New Yorker), "vastly entertaining" by John Anderson (Variety), and "filmmaking of the first order" by Scott Foundas (L.A. Weekly).

In 2005, Marshall was selected by Filmmaker Magazine as one of "25 New Faces of Independent Film," and he was awarded the International Documentary Association (IDA) Jacqueline Donnet Filmmaker Award.

In 2007, he received the International Trailblazer Award at MIPDOC in Cannes.

His next feature documentary film, *IF A TREE FALLS*, is a rare behind-the-curtain look at the Earth Liberation Front, the radical environmental group that has claimed responsibility for arsons that destroyed millions of dollars of property over the past decade. It will air on PBS and the BBC next year.

Marshall has been a guest lecturer at Harvard, Duke, NYU, and other colleges, and he has served on juries for the International Documentary Association and Hot Docs Film Festival.

Prior to filmmaking, Marshall taught English in Guanajuato, Mexico, worked in public radio, and taught government in Washington, D.C.

He is a graduate of Swarthmore College where he studied Comparative Religion and was a Eugene Lang Scholar. He was also a Jane Addams Fellow at Indiana University's Center on Philanthropy, where he wrote about the history, philosophy, and economics of non-profits.

Marshall lives with wife and children in Brooklyn, NY.

Bristol Baughan (Producer)

Bristol Baughan is an award-winning, freelance film director, producer and consultant. She became a TEDIndia Fellow in 2009 and will be participating in the State Department Documentary Showcase in the Summer 2010.

Baughan Co-Founded Reason Pictures / GOOD Magazine in September 2004 to develop and produce relevant and entertaining film and video. She Executive Produced the Academy Award Nominated Documentary WHICH WAY HOME directed by Rebecca

Cammissa and *BY THE PEOPLE: THE ELECTION OF BARACK OBAMA* alongside Edward Norton. She produced the feature documentary *RACING DREAMS* by Oscar Nominated director Marshall Curry. *RACING DREAMS* won the jury prize for Best Documentary at the Tribeca Film Festival 2009 and will be released in theaters in May 2010. The film has also been optioned by Producers Steve Kurtzman and Bob Orci (*STAR TREK* and *TRANSFORMERS*) to adapt to a fiction feature film. Baughan Executive Produced *SON OF RAMBOW* distributed by Paramount Vantage and now available on DVD. Film credits also include *THE POWER OF THE GAME* directed by Michael Apted to be released by National Geographic. Bristol's experiences expand into the online video and literary spheres as she spearheaded the launch of GOOD's online video content in 2006 and co-wrote a novel called *Sophia's Journey* with her father Dr. David Baughan.

Bristol served on a panel at the TED Conference in Palm Springs in 2009 as a Sci-Fi Channel "Social Visionary of Tomorrow" Fellow. She was also invited to participate in the United Nations Global Insight Summit at Jackson Hole in 2008.

Baughan holds a B.A. in International Studies from the American University School of International Service and served under President Bill Clinton as a White House intern in the Fall of 2000. Bristol is currently writing a feature film for her directorial debut in Los Angeles.

Jack Turner (Executive Producer)

Turner is currently a managing partner in the film equity fund, White Buffalo Entertainment. Previously, he had worked as a studio development and production executive for over ten years. Having started out in the acquisition and development departments of October Films and USA Films, he was most recently the Vice President of Acquisitions and Production, heading up the New York office of United Artists, a subsidiary of MGM. As a buyer for North American and International distribution rights, he has negotiated multi-platform theatrical and ancillary deals as well as overseen the development, physical production, post-production, marketing and distribution of theatrical features as well as documentaries.

Over the course of six years, Turner was specifically involved in the acquisition of the controversial *OSAMA*, the cult hit *BUBBA HO-TEP*, Michael Moore's *BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE*, the development of Terry George's *HOTEL RWANDA*, and Bennett Miller's *CAPOTE*. The library of films that he has been involved with has garnered over 20 Golden Globe nominations; 25 Academy Award nominations including four for Best Picture.

Turner has lectured at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and the Temple University Film Department. He has been mentioned in such publications as *Variety*, *Hollywood Reporter* and *indieWire*. Turner is also a founding member of Norwood, the New York based arts club.

Among the projects that Turner has produced through White Buffalo are: John Walter's *THEATRE OF WAR* starring Meryl Streep, the upcoming holiday film *LOVELY, STILL* (starring Martin Landau, Ellen Burstyn and Elizabeth Banks), the upcoming animated feature *HOLY COW!* and the HBO film *WHICH WAY HOME*.

Dwayne Johnson (Executive Producer)

Dwayne Johnson is an actor and retired professional wrestler. He has starred in movies such as THE MUMMY RETURNS, RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN, and most recently PLANET 51. His autobiography, *The Rock Says...* was a New York Times No. 1 bestseller. He is the founder of The Rock Foundation which has a mission to educate, empower and motivate children worldwide through health education and physical fitness.

Matt Hamachek (Editor)

Matthew Hamachek first collaborated with Marshall Curry on the Oscar nominated *STREET FIGHT*. In addition to editing *RACING DREAMS*, he also served as Post-Production supervisor.

Matthew has edited projects that have aired on HBO, IFC, PBS, and the Discovery Channel. His titles include *FILM SCHOOL* with Nanette Burstein and *THE ONE PERCENT* with Jamie Johnson.

Hamachek holds a B.A. in Cinema from Denison University and worked for Peter Weir and Russell Crowe on the Mexico set of *MASTER AND COMMANDER*. Matthew resides in Manhattan.

Mary Manhardt (Editor)

Mary Manhardt is an Emmy-award-winning documentary film editor based in New York. Her work has aired on HBO, PBS, ABC and MTV, and been honored in film festivals worldwide, including Sundance, IDFA, Tribeca, Hot Docs and SXSW.

Her credits include *AMERICAN TEEN*, which won the directing award at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival. She also edited Marshall Curry's Academy Award nominated *STREET FIGHT*, and *FARMINGVILLE*, which won the Special Jury Prize at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival. Prior to that she worked on *THE EXECUTION OF WANDA JEAN*, directed by Liz Garbus, which was at Sundance in 2003 and broadcast on HBO. Mary received an Emmy Award for Non-Fiction Picture Editing, with her work on *THE FARM: ANGOLA, USA* directed by Liz Garbus and Jonathan Stack.

COMPLETE CREDITS

GOOD and White Buffalo Present

A Film by Marshall Curry

Directed and Produced by
Marshall Curry

Produced by
Bristol Baughan

Executive Producers
Jack Turner

Executive Producers
Ben Goldhirsh
Dwayne Johnson
Dany Garcia

Edited by
Marshall Curry
Matthew Hamachek
Mary Manhardt

Directors of Photography
Marshall Curry
Peter Gordon
Wolfgang Held
Alan Jacobsen

Music by
Joel Goodman
The National

Supervising Producers
Xan Parker
Jordan Roberts

Additional Camera
Hope Hall
Daniel Carter
Axel Baumann
Benjamin Wolf
Clark Caldwell

Assistant Camera
Daniel Carter

Post-Production Supervisor
Matthew Hamachek

Associate Producer
Kristin Loeb

First Assistant Editor
Tina Grapenthin

Production Manager
Bill Gallagher

Story Consulting
Elizabeth Davis

Post-Production Coordinator
Mandy Goldberg

Production Sound Supervisor
Bryan Dembinski

Production Sound Recordists
Bryan Dembinski
Elizabeth Davis
Julia Landau
Marshall Curry
Bristol Baughan
Matthew Hamachek
Jeremy Sides
Josh Duncan

Sound Designer
Al Nelson

Supervising Dialogue Editor
Christopher Barnett

Motion Graphics Designer
Motion Graphics Assistant
Production Research
Music Consultant
Music Clearance

Supervising Sound Editor
Additional Sound Recording
Sound Mix Facility
Sound Mixer
Additional Re-Recording Mixer
Colorist
Video Post Services
Still Photographer

Karting Research Consultant
Writer

Guido Jiménez Cruz
Brittany De Nigris
Julia Landau
Linda Cohen
Brooke Wentz, Music Rights Workshop
Annie Lin
Al Nelson
Harmonic Ranch
Soundtrack New York
Bob Chefalas
Christopher Barnett
Will Cox
Final Frame
Kent Smith Photography
Trujillo/Paumier
Bruce and Susan Walls
Marshall Curry

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Andrew Batista
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Dave Herron
Andy Keleman
Jeff Leidersdorff
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Andrew Ferris
Patrick Groneman
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Kyle Rougeau
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Elia Weg

Film Legal

Sloss Law
Shatzkin & Mayer, P.C.

Production Accountant
Production Insurance

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Bruce Warren
Jason Petty

The Appel Family

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All of the 2007 WKA National Pavement Series karters and their families.

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Bill Davis	Buddy Long	Scotty Utz
Ned and Adelaide Davis	Jeffrey Mandel	Cynthia Weisberg
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Bryce Dessner	Jim Martin	Jenny Widmer
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The Downing Film Ctr.	Bobby Merrill	Tim Woodin
		Stuart Wrede

Classical American Homes Preservation Trust and Preservation North Carolina

"Mr. November"

Written by Matthew Berninger and Aaron Dressner
Performed by The National
Courtesy of Beggars Banquet

"100 Miles"

Written and Performed by Abra Moore
Courtesy of Red House Records

"Friend of Mine"

Written by Matthew Berninger and Aaron Dressner
Performed by The National
Courtesy of Beggars Banquet Limited

"Cold Hard Bitch"

Written by Cameron Muncey, Christopher Cester and Nicholas John Cester
Performed by Jet
Courtesy of Atlantic Recording Corp
By arrangement with Warner Music Group Film & TV Licensing

"I Feel Alright"

Written by Steve Earle
Performed by Steve Earle
Courtesy of Warner Bros. Records Inc.
By arrangement with Warner Music Group Film & TV Licensing

"Peanut Butter and Jelly"

Written by L. Clopton, T. Rogers and D. Sharp

"99 Problems"

Written by Norman Landsberg, Felix Pappalardi, Tracy Marrow, Billy Squier, John Elias Ventura, Leslie A. Weinstein and Alphonso Henderson

"Rest of Years"

Written by Matthew Berninger and Aaron Dressner
Performed by The National
Courtesy of Beggars Banquet Limited

"About Us"

Written by Jason Boyd, Paul Slayton and Scott Storch

"Is That A Tear"

Written by Kenny Beard and Jason Jarrard

"This Little Light of Mine"

Written by Harry Dixon Loes

"National Anthem"

Written by Francis Scott Key
Performed by LeAnn Rimes
Courtesy of Curb Records

“Station”

Written by Mike Sullivan, Dave Turncrantz, and Brian Cook
Performed by Russian Circles
Courtesy of Suicide Squeeze
By Arrangement with Mixtape Music

"Time Marches On"

Written by Bobby Braddock

“Screwdriver”

Written by Jack White
Performed by The White Stripes
Courtesy of The White Stripes XL Records & Third Man Records

“Hypnotize”

Written by Jack White
Performed by The White Stripes
Courtesy of The White Stripes and XL Records & Third Man Records

“My Winding Wheel”

Written and Performed by Ryan Adams
Courtesy of Bloodshot Records

"Happy Birthday to You"

Written by Mildred Hill and Patty Hill

"Ride"

Written by Craig Nicholls
Performed by The Vines
Courtesy of Capitol Records
By arrangement with EMI Film & Television Music

"Run Thru"

Written by Jim James
Performed by My Morning Jacket
Courtesy of ATO Records

"The Only Moment We Were Alone"

Performed by Explosions in the Sky
Written by Christopher Hrasky, Michael James, Munaf Rayani and Mark T. Smith
Courtesy of Temporary Residence Ltd.

“Fake Empire”

Written by Matthew Berninger and Aaron Dressner
Performed by The National
Courtesy of Beggars Banquet Limited

This film is dedicated to Paul Newman (1925 – 2008),
an inspirational actor, philanthropist, and racer.

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