

Pennebaker Hegedus Films and HBO Documentary Films present

# UNLOCKING THE CAGE

A film by Chris Hegedus and D A Pennebaker

91 min / 2016 / Color / USA / Digital



## FIRST RUN FEATURES

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## **LOGLINE**

*Unlocking the Cage* follows animal rights lawyer Steven Wise in his unprecedented challenge to break down the legal wall that separates animals from humans, by filing the first lawsuits that seek to transform a chimpanzee from a “thing” with no rights to a “person” with legal protections.

## **SYNOPSIS**

*Unlocking the Cage* follows animal rights lawyer Steven Wise in his unprecedented challenge to break down the legal wall that separates animals from humans. After 30 years of struggling with ineffective animal welfare laws, Steve and his legal team, the Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP), are making history by filing the first lawsuits that seek to transform an animal from a “thing” with no rights to a “person” with legal protections.

Supported by affidavits from primatologists around the world, Steve maintains that, based on scientific evidence, cognitively complex animals such as chimpanzees, whales, dolphins and elephants have the capacity for limited personhood rights (such as bodily liberty) that would protect them from physical abuse. Using writs of habeas corpus (historically used to free humans from unlawful imprisonment), Wise argues on behalf of four captive chimpanzees in New York State.

*Unlocking the Cage* captures a monumental shift in our culture, as the public and judicial system show increasing receptiveness to Steve’s impassioned arguments. It is an intimate look at a lawsuit that could forever transform our legal system, and one man’s lifelong quest to protect “nonhuman” animals.

## **LONG SYNOPSIS**

“They used to bark at me when I walked into the courtroom,” says renowned animal rights attorney Steven Wise. After 30 years of struggling with ineffective animal welfare laws, Wise and his legal team, the Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP), have found a novel way to protect animals. They are making history by filing the first lawsuits that seek to transform an animal from a thing with no rights to a person with legal protections.

*Unlocking the Cage* documents Wise’s unprecedented challenge to break down the legal wall that separates animals from humans. He argues that based on scientific evidence, cognitively complex animals such as chimpanzees, whales, dolphins, and elephants have the capacity for fundamental personhood rights (such as bodily liberty) that would protect them from physical abuse.

In December 2013, Wise and his legal team, using writs of habeas corpus (historically used to free humans from unlawful imprisonment), filed three lawsuits demanding limited personhood rights for four captive chimpanzees in New York State. Supported by affidavits from scientists and primatologists around the world, the NhRP urged the courts to release the animals to “Save the Chimps,” a Florida sanctuary. The New York Times, CNN, The Guardian, and other international media reported on the groundbreaking lawsuits with a mix of curiosity and skepticism.

The first plaintiff was Tommy, a 26-year-old chimp who began his life in Hollywood movies and was found living alone in a garage on a used trailer lot. The lower court judge was sufficiently impressed with the merits of the case to direct the lawsuit up to the Appellate Court in Albany, where five judges heard Wise’s argument in October 2014. This was the first time that a U.S. court openly debated the issue of whether or not a nonhuman animal should be considered a legal person.

Two months later, the Appellate Division in Rochester considered a second case for a chimpanzee named Kiko, an abused showbiz chimp living in a Niagara Falls storefront. The initial decisions on these cases were wildly divergent, and showcased the legal disarray wrought by Wise’s efforts to enlarge our legal system to include other sentient beings.

But it was Wise’s final case on behalf of two chimpanzees, Hercules and Leo, used for research at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, that truly challenged the court. Arguing against the New York Assistant Attorney General, he made an impassioned plea that inspired Supreme Court Justice Barbara Jaffe to openly question, “Why can’t a chimpanzee be deemed a person for the sole purposes Mr. Wise says, of permitting the habeas writ to the very limited extent sought. Why isn’t that an appropriate use of this great writ?” This historic declaration – along with the legal ground that was broken when Jaffe first granted the writ – was a milestone in animal rights.

From Wise’s speech at the 2015 TED Talks Conference to his press appearances around the world, *Unlocking the Cage* captures a monumental shift in our culture, as the media and public show increasing receptiveness to expanding legal rights to animals. It is an intimate look at a lawsuit that could forever transform our legal system, and one man’s quest to break down the wall that separates us from animals.

## DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

How does a thing become a person? In December 2013, attorney Steven Wise showed the world how, with a little legal jujitsu, an animal can transition from a thing without rights to a person with legal protections. He filed the first-ever lawsuits demanding limited personhood rights for animals, on behalf of four captive chimpanzees in New York State.

Steve has spent more than 30 years developing his strategy for animal personhood. After starting his career as a criminal defense lawyer, he was inspired by Peter Singer's book "Animal Liberation" to dedicate himself to justice for animals. He helped pioneer the study of animal rights law, in the 1980s, and he was the first person to teach it at Harvard Law School, in 2000. Steve began developing his animal personhood strategy after struggling with ineffective welfare laws and regulations that do not keep animals out of abusive environments. Unlike welfare statutes, legal personhood would give animals irrevocable protections that recognize the animals' critical needs to live in the wild and to not be owned or abused.

Our films, such as *Dont Look Back*, with Bob Dylan, and *The War Room*, on Bill Clinton's first presidential campaign, are known for following exceptionally talented and passionate people who have devoted their lives to a particular pursuit. For the past three years, we have watched Steve as he pursues his lifelong dream of giving animals legal rights. We've seen the countless hurdles he's faced, such as losing his first two chimpanzee plaintiffs, and have been there with him for moments that have moved us in ways we had not anticipated, like when Kanzi the bonobo spoke to us through his lexicon board.

Steve is determined to change the system, and his optimism and perseverance may very well do it. Already, Steve's three lawsuits have brought animal personhood to the forefront of the conversation surrounding our society's relationship with animals. The science is on his side and our culture is shifting. We believe that years from now, Steve's lawsuits will be seen as a landmark moment that changed the course of the animal rights movement. Looking to the future, Steve describes his work: "Our lawsuits are not the end, or even the beginning of the end, but they are the end of the beginning."

Our goal is that *Unlocking the Cage* will ultimately inspire people to think differently about animals and why they deserve protection. We hope that the film can be used to support the primates at the sanctuaries that we visited during the making of this film and that our chimpanzee subjects will find their final homes there with other chimpanzees.

- Chris Hegedus and D A Pennebaker

## LEGAL TIMELINE

- 12/10/11     **Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP) 1<sup>st</sup> meeting**  
Volunteer lawyers Steven Wise, Elizabeth (Liddy) Stein and Monica Miller discuss the strategy for their historic legal effort.
- 03/31/13     **NhRP meeting**  
Wise, Stein, Miller and Exec. Director Natalie Prosin decide their first plaintiffs will be the chimpanzees Reba and Merlin, at the Bailiwick Zoo in Catskills, NY.
- 04/27/13     **Steven Wise visits Merlin at the Bailiwick Zoo, and learns that Reba has died.**
- 05/15/13     **Steven visits Save the Chimps sanctuary in Florida.**  
Wise proposes moving Merlin there if the lawsuit is successful.
- 09/21/13     **Natalie Prosin discovers Merlin has died.**
- 09/28/13     **NhRP meeting**  
The group identifies two new chimpanzee plaintiffs, Charlie and Kiko, at The Primate Sanctuary in Niagara, NY (owned by Carmen Presti).
- 10/11/13     **Steven Wise visits The Primate Sanctuary.**  
Wise discusses Charlie “The Karate Chimp” and Kiko, a former showbiz chimpanzee, with owner Carmen Presti.
- 10/10/13     **Steven Wise discovers Tommy the chimpanzee being housed in a garage at Circle L Trailers in Gloversville, NY.**
- 11/06/13     **Charlie “The Karate Chimp” dies.**
- 11/07/13     **NhRP meeting**  
The group decides to file three lawsuits on behalf of all chimps found in NY State.
  - Tommy – in Gloversville
  - Kiko – in Niagara
  - Hercules and Leo – two chimpanzees being used for locomotion research at The New York State University at Stony Brook.
- 12/02/13     **Tommy lawsuit: *Filing & Decision***  
The NhRP files the first-ever lawsuit on behalf of a chimpanzee (at the New York Supreme Court, Fulton County, 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District). They ask that the court grant Tommy the right to bodily liberty, via a common law writ of habeas corpus. The NhRP are given a hearing before the Honorable Richard E. Sise, who denies the NhRP’s petition for the writ of habeas corpus but states:

*“Your impassioned representations to the Court are quite impressive. The Court will not entertain the application, (and) will not recognize a chimpanzee as a human or as a person who can seek a writ of habeas corpus under Article 70. Sise added: “Good luck with your venture. I’m sorry I can’t sign the order, but I hope you continue. As an animal lover, I appreciate your work.”*

- 12/03/13      **Kiko lawsuit: Filing & Decision**  
NhRP files at the Niagara County Supreme Court, 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District on behalf of Kiko the chimpanzee. The Honorable Ralph A. Boniello III grants a hearing over the telephone. Justice Boniello allows the NhRP to place its arguments on the record, but denies the petition on the grounds that “Kiko is not a person for purposes of habeas corpus.” He wishes the NhRP luck, and states that he did not want to be “the first to make that leap of faith.”
- 12/05/13      **Stony Brook chimpanzees Hercules and Leo lawsuit: Filing & Decision**  
NhRP files in Suffolk County Supreme Court, 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of New York on behalf of Stony Brook chimpanzees Hercules and Leo. Honorable W. Gerard Asher gives a brief written decision, without holding a hearing, denying the NhRP’s petition for habeas corpus for Hercules and Leo.
- 09/20/14      **Moot Court, St. John’s University Law School, Queens, NY**  
Steven is grilled by NhRP advisors, including NYU Professor/corporate lawyer David Wolfson, in preparation for the upcoming court hearings.
- 10/08/14      **Tommy lawsuit: Appellate Hearing**  
A hearing is held on behalf of Tommy the chimpanzee at the State of New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Third Judicial Department, Albany County, NY. This is first time an appellate court has heard a case involving the personhood of a non-human animal, and Steven’s passionate arguments are fiercely debated by the five-justice panel (Presiding Justice Karen K. Peters, Justice Michael C. Lynch, Justice Robert S. Rose, Justice John A. Lahtinen, and Justice Elizabeth A. Garry).
- 12/04/14      **Tommy lawsuit: Appellate Decision**  
The court decides that chimpanzees, as a species, cannot bear rights and responsibilities – which is considered a legal qualification for personhood. They therefore conclude that a chimpanzee is not a “person” entitled to the rights and protections afforded by the writ of habeas corpus.
- 12/02/14      **Kiko lawsuit: Appellate Hearing**  
A hearing is held at the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Appellate Division, Fourth Judicial Department Rochester Appellate Division Rochester, NY, on behalf of Kiko the chimpanzee. Justice Erin M. Peradotto, Justice Nancy Smith, Justice Joseph D. Valentino, Justice Stephen K Lindley, and Justice Gerald J. Whalen hear the case and ask about the nature of Kiko’s confinement.

- 01/02/15 **Kiko lawsuit: *Appellate Decision***  
The Court concludes that “habeas corpus does not lie where a petitioner seeks only to change the conditions of confinement rather than the confinement itself.” In other words, the court declined to rule on whether or not Kiko is a “person,” but stated that habeas corpus does not apply when a prisoner is moved from one place of confinement to another place of confinement.
- 02/25/15 **Tommy lawsuit: *NhRP seeks Permission to Appeal Directly to Highest Court***  
The Nonhuman Rights Project files a Motion to Appeal directly to the Court of Appeals – the highest court in New York State.
- 03/19/15 **Stony Brook chimpanzees Hercules and Leo lawsuit: *Refiles case in NYC***  
Capitalizing on the fact that New York law allows habeas corpus cases to be filed multiple times on behalf of a prisoner, the NhRP refiles their case on behalf of Hercules and Leo in New York County Supreme Court, New York County (Manhattan).
- 04/20/15 **Stony Brook chimpanzees Hercules and Leo lawsuit: *Habeas writ issued***  
Justice Barbara Jaffe grants a writ of habeas corpus and an “order to show cause” – a historic step widely reported by the press. This requires the New York Attorney General – on behalf of The State University of New York at Stony Brook – to appear in court to defend their right to imprison Hercules and Leo.
- 04/21/15 **Stony Brook chimpanzees Hercules and Leo lawsuit: *Habeas writ rescinded***  
In response to the press reports that she tacitly conferred personhood on Hercules and Leo when she granted the writ, Justice Barbara Jaffe amends her order, striking out “writ of habeas corpus,” but leaving the “order to show cause.” She sets a hearing for the New York Attorney General and Steven Wise to appear in court.
- 05/27/15 **Stony Brook chimpanzees Hercules and Leo lawsuit: *Hearing Manhattan***  
Hearing at the New York State Supreme Court, New York County (Manhattan). The Honorable Barbara Jaffe presides, and engages Wise and Assistant Attorney General Christopher Coulston (representing Stony Brook) in a spirited debate on the issue of personhood for non-human animals.
- 07/30/15 **Stony Brook chimpanzees Hercules and Leo lawsuit: *Hearing Decision***  
Justice Barbara Jaffe rules that, despite the merits of Wise’s case, she is bound to follow the previous determination of a state appellate court in the case of Tommy (which is now before the New York Court of Appeals pending the NhRP’s request for further review). However, Judge Jaffe concludes that “efforts to extend legal rights to chimpanzees are thus understandable; some day they may even succeed. Courts, however, are slow to embrace change, and occasionally seem reluctant to engage in broader, more inclusive interpretations of the law ...

As Justice Kennedy observed in *Lawrence v Texas*, ‘times can blind us to certain truths and later generations can see that laws once thought necessary and proper in fact serve only to oppress.’ For now, however, given the precedent to which I am bound, it is hereby ordered that the petition for a writ of habeas corpus is denied.”

- 07/30/15      **Stony Brook chimpanzees Hercules and Leo lawsuit: *Announcement***  
Following the much-publicized hearing, Stony Brook announces it will no longer use Hercules and Leo in research. Wise immediately begins negotiations to have them retired to Save The Chimps.
- 09/01/15      **Tommy and Kiko lawsuits: *Decision High Court Direct Appeals denied to NhRP***  
The New York State of Appeals denies NhRP’s motions for leave to further appeal in both Tommy and Kiko’s cases. In response the NhRP states:
- “The 3<sup>rd</sup> Department Tommy court ruled against us because it claimed – without any evidence being presented – that chimpanzees could not shoulder duties and responsibilities, despite the fact that a vast number of humans cannot shoulder duties and responsibilities either.”
  - “The 4<sup>th</sup> Department Kiko court twice assumed, without deciding, that Kiko could be a “person,” then decided the case on the ground that our use of habeas corpus was improper because we were not demanding absolute release of Kiko, but his transfer to a sanctuary. No court in New York has ever held this.
- 11/24/15      **Stony Brook chimpanzees Hercules and Leo: *Public Campaign***  
After negotiations break down with New Iberia (the medical facility that owns the Stony Brook chimpanzees), the NhRP mounts a public campaign to release Hercules and Leo to Save The Chimps.
- 12/02/15      **Tommy lawsuit: *Refiles in Manhattan***  
NhRP refiles the Tommy case at the New York State Supreme Court, NY County (Manhattan), demanding that Tommy the chimpanzee be released from captivity pursuant to a common law writ of habeas corpus. Armed with affidavits from Jane Goodall and renowned constitutional law scholar Laurence Tribe, they intend to argue that chimpanzees have the capacity to bear rights and responsibilities. Encouragingly, Justice Barbara Jaffe is assigned to the case.
- 2016 TBD      **Elephant lawsuit**  
Steven Wise and the Nonhuman Rights Project plan to file a new habeas corpus lawsuit on behalf of two elephants in a travelling zoo (location to be revealed). This will be the first case of its kind on behalf of elephants.

## FILMMAKER BIOS

### **CHRIS HEGEDUS – Director / Producer / Cinematographer**

Chris Hegedus has been making films as a director, cinematographer and editor for 40 years. She received the 2001 DGA Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement for *Startup.com*. With her husband and partner, D A Pennebaker, she directed *The War Room*, a behind-the-scenes look at Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign. The film received an Academy Award® nomination and won the National Board of Review's D.W. Griffith Award for Best Documentary. Hegedus has received the Golden Eagle CINE award and lifetime achievement awards from several organizations, including the International Documentary Association.

Hegedus began her cinematography career shooting experimental films in Art College. After graduation she was hired by the University of Michigan Hospital to document new advances in one of the most devastating areas of medicine, burn surgery. In 1975, Hegedus moved to New York City and became part of an emerging group of independent filmmakers. She filmed on a variety of projects, including Lizzie Borden's feminist feature *Born in Flames*. In 1976, she first partnered with D A Pennebaker, who engineered one of his early camera rigs for her, and through the decades the team filmed on a wide variety of projects. Hegedus was a principal cinematographer on *Dance Black America* for PBS' American Masters series and on several feature-length music films, including *Depeche Mode 101* and *Only The Strong Survive*. Additionally, Chris shot and directed the theatrically released documentaries *Startup.com*, with Jehane Noujaim, and *Al Franken: God Spoke*, with Nick Doob. Most recently, Hegedus filmed and directed *Kings of Pastry*, which was released in theaters in North America and broadcast on PBS as well as on television stations throughout the world.

Hegedus first collaborated with Pennebaker as editor of *Town Bloody Hall*, filmed at the infamous 1971 women's liberation debate moderated by Norman Mailer. Their other films include the three-part PBS special *The Energy War*, which followed the unprecedented congressional fight and filibuster over President Carter's Energy Bill; *DeLorean*, featuring auto entrepreneur John DeLorean; *Rockaby*, written by Samuel Beckett specially for their project, starring his muse, Billie Whitelaw; and the acclaimed 1998 feature *Moon Over Broadway*, which chronicled Carol Burnett's tumultuous return to Broadway theater.

Hegedus and Pennebaker have devoted much of their creative energies to short and feature-length films about music. Before MTV, they filmed Randy Newman's song "Baltimore," helping establish the music video format. Their music documentary features include *Depeche Mode 101*; *Down From the Mountain*, a companion concert film to the Coen Brothers' *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*; and the soul musical tribute *Only The Strong Survive*. Other music-related shows are *Branford Marsalis: The Music Tells You*; *Open Hand*, Suzanne Vega's concert tour; the 1994 series, *Woodstock Diary*; and *Searching for Jimi Hendrix*. Their HBO special *Elaine Stritch at Liberty* won a 2004 Primetime Emmy™ Award for Best Music, Comedy or Variety Show. And for American Express, they filmed one of the first streamed concerts on the Internet, *The National Live on You Tube*.

## **D A PENNEBAKER – Director**

D A (Donn Alan) Pennebaker is widely regarded as one of the pioneers of cinéma vérité filmmaking. In the early '60s, Pennebaker and his colleague Richard Leacock developed one of the first fully portable 16mm synchronized camera and sound recording systems, which revolutionized filmmaking and introduced the immediate style of shooting so popular today. Pennebaker's many professional honors include the IFP's Gotham Award and a Lifetime Achievement Academy Award.

Pennebaker first film was the 1953 expressionistic short *Daybreak Express*. In 1959, he joined Drew Associates, which produced the celebrated *Living Camera* series for Time-Life in the early 1960s. The subjects ranged from Jane Fonda's Broadway debut, *Jane*, to Kennedy's 1960 Wisconsin Democratic primary, *Primary*, to the desegregation of the University of Alabama, *Crisis*.

In 1967, Pennebaker released his seminal classic *Dont Look Back*, which followed Bob Dylan's last acoustic concert tour in England. The film was one of the first feature-length documentaries to be released in theaters. He continued to capture the musical moment in subsequent films, including the influential *Monterey Pop*, which launched the careers of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, and *Keep On Rockin'* with America's '50s legends Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard and Bo Diddley. A longer version, *Sweet Toronto*, included a performance by John Lennon and Yoko Ono. 1970 brought *Company – The Original Cast Album*, about the recording of the Stephen Sondheim musical's cast album featuring Elaine Stritch's memorable performance of "The Ladies Who Lunch." In 1974, Pennebaker filmed David Bowie's performance in *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*.

In 1976, Pennebaker began his collaboration with his partner and future wife, Chris Hegedus, co-directing such acclaimed films as 1998's *Moon Over Broadway* and 1993's *The War Room*, which received an Academy Award® nomination and won the National Board of Review's D.W. Griffith Award for Best Documentary. The team's early films include the three-part special *The Energy War; Town Bloody Hall*, and *DeLorean*. Their many films about the performing arts and popular music include *Rockaby; Elliott Carter at Buffalo; Depeche Mode 101; Searching For Jimi Hendrix; Down From The Mountain; Only The Strong Survive*; and the HBO special *Elaine Stritch at Liberty*, winner of the 2004 Emmy Award™ for Best Music, Comedy or Variety Show. Other credits include *Vote for Change*, for Sundance Channel; *Assume the Position* with Robert Wuhl for HBO; and *The Return of the War Room* for Sundance Channel, and a segment for the highly regarded HBO special *Addiction*.

Pennebaker was executive producer for *Startup.com* and *Al Franken: God Spoke*, both directed by Hegedus.

## **FRAZER PENNEBAKER – Executive Producer / Producer**

Frazer Pennebaker, executive producer and producer, has produced all of Hegedus and Pennebaker's films since 1980, including the Emmy Award-winning *Elaine Stritch At Liberty* and *Al Franken: God Spoke*. Pennebaker also produced *Jimi Plays Monterey* and *Shake! Otis At Monterey*, featuring unused performance footage that his father shot at the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival. In 1989, he produced the feature-length *Depeche Mode 101*, which went platinum upon its release. Teaming up with co-producers Wendy Ettinger and R.J. Cutler, Pennebaker's 1993 film *The War Room* was nominated for an Academy Award®. 1998 saw the release of *Moon Over Broadway* starring Carol Burnett, followed by *Startup.com*, *Down From the Mountain* in 2001, *Only the Strong Survive* in 2003, *Al Franken: God Spoke* in 2006, and *Kings of Pastry* in 2009. In addition to his role as producer, Pennebaker oversees film distribution and sales for Pennebaker Hegedus Films.

## **ROSADEL VARELA – Producer**

After growing up in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Rosadel Varela moved to New York to pursue a career in television and film. Early in her career she worked at MTV Networks in the News/Documentary and Production divisions as a producer. Some of her TV credits include *Unfiltered*, *The State*, *House of Style*, and programs for the "True Life" documentary series. At VH-1, she worked with Joel Gallen and 10th Planet Productions on the VHI Fashion Awards.

She then switched gears to fiction film and became a member of the highly selective Directors Guild of America Assistant Director Training Program. There, she worked on the directors' teams of such acclaimed filmmakers as Woody Allen, Penny Marshall, John Singleton and Nicole Holofcener. Her work with the Directors Guild also included key roles on some of the most successful television series in history, including *Law & Order* and *Sex & the City*.

In 2004, Varela partnered with award-winning director Jehane Noujaim to produce the highly acclaimed documentary *Control Room*, about Al Jazeera and the Iraq war. On a global scale, she worked with TED Conferences and Events for Change as a producer for Pangea Day, a four-hour live, multi-platform event in the effort to unite the world through the power of film.

## **PAX WASSERMANN – Editor**

Brooklyn-based Pax Wassermann is a film editor and producer with twenty years in features, television and documentaries. In addition to *Unlocking the Cage*, his recent work includes the 2015 Sundance Award winner *Cartel Land*, 2013 Jury Award winner *Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer* and *Salero*, which recently premiered at the IDFA. Other past documentaries includes *Devil's Playground*, *Knuckleball!*, the Sally Mann documentary *What Remains*, *Elaine Stritch: Shoot Me* and *Which Way Home*, which was nominated for an Academy Award® in 2009. His fiction work includes Peter Bogdanovich's *She's Funny That Way* and Noah Buschel's directorial debut *Bringing Rain*.

### **JOHN PAUL “JOJO” PENNEBAKER – Co-Cinematographer**

Jojo Pennebaker has worked as a cinematographer on both television and feature documentaries. Some of his credits include *We have Arrived*, *After Innocence*, *Empathy*, *Our Brand is Crisis*, *My Secret Record*, *Youssou N'dour* and *Meru*. Pennebaker has directed and filmed nearly eight seasons of the PBS and A&E international series *Live From the Artists Den*. He was the original director for Jerry Seinfeld's online series *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee* as well as of several episodes of *Live from Daryl's House*. Pennebaker has filmed some of the most celebrated musicians of the last twenty years telling their stories and recording their performances around the world. He is the son of the director D A Pennebaker.

### **JULIA McINNIS – Associate Producer**

Julia McInnis is a first-year MBA student at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business. She is passionate about media and entrepreneurship, is the host of the podcast “That Startup Moment with Chicago Booth,” and is a contributor for the Financial Times's Business Education blog. Before Booth, McInnis worked as an associate producer for the award-winning filmmakers Chris Hegedus and D A Pennebaker. While working with Pennebaker Hegedus Films, she started a NYC-based international film festival and launched new ventures for two New York-based environmental groups. Prior to her film career, McInnis worked in sales at the media optimization startup Accordant Media. She holds a bachelor degree in International Studies and English Literature from Trinity College in Hartford, CT.

### **JAMES LAVINO – Composer**

James Lavino's music for film and television includes scores for Oscar®-nominated and Emmy®-winning HBO documentaries, songs for Disney and two collaborations with Radiohead's Colin Greenwood. His music for the opening ceremony of the National 9/11 Museum in New York City was an integral part of President Obama's museum-dedication speech.

His current film work includes Todd Solondz's *Wiener-Dog*, starring Greta Gerwig, Danny DeVito and Ellen Burstyn, and Camille Thoman's *You Were Never Here*, starring Mireille Enos and Sam Shepard.

Lavino's choral music has been performed throughout Europe and the USA, and has been broadcast on NPR, the BBC and Classic FM. Commissions include pieces for the choirs of Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral (London) and Merton College, Oxford.

## **CHARACTER BIOS**

### **STEVEN M. WISE – President, Nonhuman Rights Project**

Steven M. Wise is an animal protection attorney who pioneered the study of animal rights law and developed the strategy of using legal personhood as a means for protecting animals. He holds a J.D. from Boston University Law School and a B.S. in Chemistry from the College of William and Mary and is admitted to the Massachusetts Bar.

In 1990, Wise taught the first-ever law school course on animal rights, and in 2000 he was the first person to teach it at Harvard University. Over the course of his 30-year career, he has written three highly acclaimed books that explore our relationship with animals and our legal system, among them the 2005 New York Times front-page reviewed “Though the Heavens May Fall – The Landmark Trial That Led to the End of Human Slavery,” about the 1772 Somersett Case in which the first slave transitioned from a legal thing to a legal person. Other books are “Rattling the Cage – Toward Legal Rights for Animals” (2000); “Drawing the Line – Science and the Case for Animal Rights (2003); and “An American Trilogy – Death, Slavery, and Dominion Along the Banks of the Cape Fear River” (2009). He is also working on a fifth, a memoir about the Nonhuman Rights Project.

Wise is the founder of the legal organization the Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP), the only organization of its kind, which is pursuing legal rights for highly intelligent animals like chimpanzees, elephants and dolphins. Wise and his work have been featured on Dateline NBC, CNN, the BBC, NPR, The New York Times and The Guardian, among others. His 2015 TED Talk in Vancouver about the Nonhuman Rights Project has more than 900,000 views. He regularly travels the world lecturing on animal rights jurisprudence and the Nonhuman Rights Project.

### **NATALIE PROSIN – Former Executive Director, Nonhuman Rights Project**

Natalie Prosin served as the Executive Director of the Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP) from 2011-2015 having already spent two years conducting legal research for the organization while in law school. During her tenure at the NhRP, she oversaw the organization’s growth and strategic direction, as well as its public outreach. Prosin has appeared in The New York Times, Washington Post, Science Magazine and Rolling Stone, among others. In October 2015, Prosin joined Harvard Law School where she will be developing and managing the new Animals, Law, and Religion Project in the Islamic Legal Studies Program. Prosin graduated summa cum laude from Northeastern University. She holds a Masters in Public Policy from Brown University and a J.D. from Boston College Law School.

### **LIDDY STEIN – Animal Rights Lawyer**

Elizabeth Stein is a solo practitioner with an office in New Hyde Park, New York where she focuses exclusively on legal issues pertaining to animal rights, welfare, legislation and advocacy. Stein is New York counsel and staff attorney for the Nonhuman Rights Project, Inc. and is general counsel to and sits on the board of various animal-related organizations. She served as the co-chair of the Nassau Bar Association's Animal Law Committee, was appointed to and served on the Town of Smithtown Animal Shelter Advisory Council, and serves on the New York City Bar Association's Animal Law Committee. Stein lectures, participates in panel discussions and appears frequently on radio and television.

Stein holds a J.D. from St. John's University School of Law and a B.S. in German from the State University of New York at Albany where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude. She began her legal career in the corporate/banking arena as in-house legal counsel to Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company and later changed career paths to practice animal law.

### **MARY LEE JENSVOLD – Director of the Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute**

Mary Lee Jensvold is Primate Communication Scientist at Fauna Foundation in Carignan, Quebec, Canada. She is Senior Lecturer in the Primate Behavior & Ecology Program and Department of Anthropology and Museum Studies at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, WA, and is the former director of the Chimpanzee & Human Communication Institute. She worked with the CHCI family of signing chimpanzees since 1986. In 1985, she received a B.A. in Psychology from University of Oregon, in 1989 a M.S. in Experimental Psychology from Central Washington University, and in 1996 a Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from University of Nevada-Reno.

Jensvold specializes in ethological studies of apes, animal intelligence, communication, language and culture. Her studies include conversational behaviors, private signing, phrase development, chimpanzee to chimpanzee conversation, imaginary play and artwork in chimpanzees. Other research includes caregiving practices, zoo visitor effects and public education about chimpanzees. She is active in improving conditions for captive chimpanzees through research and advocacy. Jensvold is on the boards of the Animal Welfare Institute, Fauna Foundation and Friends of Washoe. She was a Sigma Xi distinguished lecturer and has numerous publications on chimpanzee communication, behavior and care.

## **SUE SAVAGE-RUMBAUGH – Primatologist**

Sue Savage-Rumbaugh is a psychologist and primatologist, the first and only scientist to conduct language research with bonobos. Savage is most known for her work investigating the linguistic and cognitive abilities of bonobos using lexigrams and computer-based keyboards. Her work with Kanzi, the first ape to learn language in the same manner as children, was detailed in "Language Comprehension in Ape and Child," published in Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development (1993). It was selected by the "Millennium Project" as one of the top 100 most influential works in cognitive science in the 20th century by the University of Minnesota Center for Cognitive Sciences in 1991.

Originally based at Georgia State University's Language Research Center in Atlanta, Georgia, she worked at the Iowa Primate Learning Sanctuary in Des Moines, Iowa from 2006 until her departure in November of 2013. She currently sits on the Board of Directors of Bonobo Hope.

# UNLOCKING THE CAGE

A film by Chris Hegedus and D A Pennebaker

## SELECT MEDIA COVERAGE OF STEVEN WISE'S LAWSUITS



*CNN.com*, "Rights Group Seeking 'Legal Person' Status for Chimps," Dec. 3, 2013

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<http://www.wired.com/2013/12/chimpanzee-personhood-nonhuman-right/>

## **CREDITS**

HBO Documentary Films  
presents

a Pennebaker Hegedus Films  
production

in co-production with  
BBC  
Arte France  
VPRO

### ***Unlocking the Cage***

a film by  
Chris Hegedus & D A Pennebaker

#### **Directed by**

Chris Hegedus  
D A Pennebaker

#### **Produced by**

Chris Hegedus  
Frazer Pennebaker  
Rosadel Varela

#### **Edited by**

Pax Wassermann

#### **Camera**

Chris Hegedus  
Jojo Pennebaker

#### **Composer**

James Lavino

#### **Executive Producer**

Frazer Pennebaker

#### **Associate Producer**

Julia McInnis

**Featuring**

Steven M. Wise  
Gail Price-Wise  
David Favre  
Mary Lee Jensvold  
Gloria Grow  
Natalie Prosin  
Elisabeth Stein  
Monica Miller  
Liz Holtz  
Lori Marino  
Sue Savage-Rumbaugh  
Jen Feuerstein  
Charles Siebert  
Carmen Presti  
David Wolfson  
David Cassuto  
Amy Trakinsky  
Mariann Sullivan  
Selma Wise  
Helen Anderson  
Dean Sommer  
Ron Kuby  
Christopher Coulston  
Justice Elizabeth A. Garry  
Justice Barbara Jaffe  
Justice John A. Lahtiner  
Justice Stephen K. Lindley  
Justice Michael C. Lynch  
Justice Erin M. Perdotto  
Justice Karen K. Peters  
Justice Nancy Smith  
Justice Joseph D. Valentino  
Justice Gerald J. Whalen

**Primates**

Tatu	Teco
Kanzi	Charlie
Kiko	Merlin
Tommy	Hercules
Leo	Koko

**Additional Camera**

Kit Pennebaker  
Eric Westpheling  
Elia Lyssy  
Alessandro Rafanelli  
Mitchell Wu  
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Andrew Coffman  
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**Court Audio**

Hunt Beaty/Silver Sound

**Additional Audio**

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Mitchell Wu  
Alan Barker

**Research**

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Nate Pennebaker

**Assistant Editing**

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Mitchell Wu  
Nicholas Biagetti  
Andrew Coffman

**Graphics**

The Media Darlings

**Post Sound**

Gigantic Post

**Post Production Services**

Final Frame

“I Shall Be Released”

Written and Performed by Bob Dylan

Courtesy of Columbia Records

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