

# ***A Note of Triumph: The Golden Age of Norman Corwin***

**Director: Eric Simonson  
USA, 2005, 40 minutes, in English**

**SYNOPSIS** Norman Corwin is one of those historical curiosities that arise every so often: he is famous, yet today few people know him. He is enormously influential, yet his work is seldom broadcast. It is more likely you know the work of his protégés - Corwin has been an inspiration to and a primary influence upon such notables as Edward R. Murrow, Charles Kuralt, Walter Cronkite, Stan Freberg, Robert Altman, Norman Lear, Rod Serling and Ray Bradbury.

In reality, Corwin is one of the greatest living American writers - working in various media - writing for newspapers, radio, stage, television and the movies. His books include "Trivializing America," and "Holes In A Stained Glass Window," plus a multitude of essays, articles, poetry and stage plays. His movie script for *Lust For Life*, won him an Oscar nomination and his other screenplays include *The Story of Ruth*, *The Blue Veil*, *Forever and a Day*, *The Naked Maja*, and *Once Upon a Time*.

According to Cronkite, "Back in the early 40s Norman Corwin was nearly as well known as FDR, and much admired. His brilliant dramas, documentaries and fantasies reached into American homes and across the ocean as far as radio waves could carry his words. Norman Corwin was considered the poet laureate of radio's Golden Age."

In his **Oscar-winning** documentary short film, "**A Note of Triumph: The Golden Age of Norman Corwin**," director Eric Simonson explores the lasting impact of radio broadcasting legend Norman Corwin's work and focuses on his landmark 1945 piece, "On a Note of Triumph," and how it remains eerily prescient in light of today's current events.

America came to a stop for that CBS broadcast, heard by nearly half of the country's 140 million citizens and re-aired on competing networks in subsequent days, in which Corwin delivered his famous reflections on freedom and peace to commemorate VE (Victory in Europe) Day on May 5, 1945. That radio program galvanized and electrified the nation and was a moment that would mark the end of a long national struggle, and in another sense, set a new standard for the art of radio drama.

The film includes interviews with Corwin contemporaries such as Walter Cronkite, Studs Terkel and Robert Altman, and Corwin himself, who at age 95 is teaching at the University of Southern California and hasn't lost a bit of his brilliance. But the real magic in this work is generated by Corwin's words, spoken in vintage radio broadcasts by the likes of Jimmy Stewart, Edward G. Robinson and Orson Welles. Corwin's goodness, decency, and belief in principles sends a message that is just as important today as it was sixty years ago.

# ***GOD SLEEPS IN RWANDA***

**Directors: Kimberlee Acquaro & Stacy Sherman**

**Narrator: Rosario Dawson**

**Rwanda, 2004, 28 minutes, in English and Kinyarwanda, subtitled**

**SYNOPSIS** Uncovering amazing stories of hope in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, the award-winning GOD SLEEPS IN RWANDA captures the spirit of five courageous women as they rebuild their lives, and in doing so, are part of a much larger change to redefine women's roles in Rwandan society and bring hope to a wounded nation. Other films -- "The Last Just Man," "Hotel Rwanda" -- have documented the carnage in great detail. This film offers strong testimony to the hope, resilience and dedication of the women of Rwanda as they rebuild their lives and their country.

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide left the country nearly 70 percent female, handing Rwanda's women an extraordinary burden and an unprecedented opportunity. Now, girls are attending school in record numbers, and women now make up an increasingly large part of the country's leadership. Working with two cameras and no crew except for their translator - a genocide survivor herself - the filmmakers document incredible stories: an HIV-positive policewoman raising four children alone and attending night school to become a lawyer, a teenager who has become head of household for her four siblings, and a young woman orphaned in her teens who is now the top development official in her area.

Heart-wrenching and inspiring, this well-made film is a powerful reminder of the consequences of the Rwandan tragedy, and a tribute to the strength and spirit of those who are moving forward.



# ***The Death of Kevin Carter: Casualty of the Bang Bang Club***

**Director: Dan Krauss**  
**South Africa/USA, 2005, 27 minutes, in English**

**SYNOPSIS** Dan Krauss' "The Death of Kevin Carter: Casualty of the Bang Bang Club" focuses on the tragic death of the South African photojournalist who covered war, apartheid, starvation and other harrowing events in several African nations in the 1990s.

As part of a fearless and cocky group of South African photojournalists, Kevin Carter was a dashing figure who dodged bullets to photograph the violence in the townships of Johannesburg in the years before apartheid ended. His group was known as the Bang-Bang Club, after a township phrase describing gunfire and violence, and included fellow photographers Ken Oosterbroek, Joao Silva and Greg Marinovich

Later, traveling to the Sudan to record the civil conflict (a war that is still going on), he came back with a photo of an emaciated child crawling along the ground while a vulture lurks in the background. The image was so heart-wrenching and horrifying that it immediately became the symbol of the Sudanese conflict. This iconic photo, which ran in the New York Times, earned Carter a 1994 Pulitzer Prize.

This documentary film is an attempt to understand the suicide of the South African photographer just weeks after he won the 1994 Pulitzer Prize. Carter was a handsome, charismatic but often tormented white man who so identified with the travails of South Africa's black population that he numbed his anger and pain with drugs and alcohol. But through it all, Carter was committed to using his camera as a tool for change.

Haunted by visions of the killings and corpses in South Africa, and the full horror of starvation in the Sudan, Carter found himself tormented by doubts about the ethical implications of his work. And, as the film conveys, Carter had difficulty with his sense of guilt: guilt over getting paid for photos while people in Africa were starving; and guilt over the death of his close friend, photojournalist Ken Oosterbroek.

The film acknowledges Carter's individual shortcomings, but as a photojournalist himself Krauss' cinematic explorations go further, leading the viewer to the realization that it has taken journalism far longer than other first-responder professions to recognize the job-related risks that come with covering trauma and extreme human distress.

Because they're meant to be objective, dispassionate and distanced in the reporting they do, the myth prevails that journalists are also armored against the emotional impact of war, violence and tragedy. Not so. Reporters and photographers are vulnerable human beings like anyone else, and can be hurt by the things they see and report. They can become depressed and anxious. They can drink too much and abuse drugs. Their relationships and personal lives are often disastrous. Journalists are neither invulnerable nor invincible. And the horrendous, despair-laden events they document can exact a terrible price.



# ***The Mushroom Club***

**Director: Steven Okazaki**  
**Japan/USA, 2005, 35 minutes, in English and Japanese**

**SYNOPSIS** As nuclear weapons situations in North Korea and Iran escalate, THE MUSHROOM CLUB offers a timely look at the consequences of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, on Aug. 6, 1945. It is a reminder of the destructive legacy of war and a plea for more thoughtful engagement.

THE MUSHROOM CLUB is a journey to Hiroshima, sixty years after the bomb. Academy Award-winning filmmaker Steven Okazaki, who first visited the city in 1980, takes a very personal look at Hiroshima - the place, the people, the historical event, the idea. It is a compelling collection of everyday images - a class photo, a spool of thread, a handful of buttons - and the powerful stories that come with them. Okazaki decided to make the film in 1995 when he observed that the 50th anniversary of the bombing came and went with little media coverage. He wanted to point out how history is written and how easily it can be forgotten.

Commemorations are for survivors, those who were there or at least living when the hardships of note took place. But what do they mean to twenty-, thirty-, and even forty-somethings unconnected to that distant past? What happens when the few remaining survivors die out or move on and people start to forget?

THE MUSHROOM CLUB aptly addresses the struggle of remembering in its interviews with "hibakusha" - atomic bomb survivors. The oldest was a 25 year old newlywed and the youngest weren't born yet when the atomic bomb was dropped on August 6, 1945. On that day, all of their lives were unalterably changed, beyond what most of us can imagine.

Best friends Narumi and Toshiko, in-utero at the time of the blast, were born with microcephaly and have the mental capacity of small children. Both are members of Kinoko Kai, the Mushroom Club, an organization formed by journalist Minoru Ohmura for "children of the bomb." They are the nation's in-betweeners, those born at the border between prewar and postwar Japan, who've been permanently affected by the bomb without having experienced it themselves.

Comic book artist Keiji Nakazawa has devoted his life to telling the Hiroshima story through anime. Nakazawa, then six years old, lost his father, brother and sister in the bombing. Eighty-five-year-old Toshiko Saiki preserves the souls of the dead by collecting old buttons that wash up near the river, where scores of Japanese perished soon after the bombing. Yoshiko Kajiyama, four years old then, clutches a spool of red thread, the only thing she has to remember her mother by.

Yuriko Hatanaka was three months in-utero when her mother witnessed the bomb. She is now 59 years old but has the mental capacity of a two year old. She was diagnosed as microcephalic, but it took thirty years for Japanese and American scientists to admit to her parents that her mental and physical disabilities are caused by radiation exposure.

Today, as Ohmura says at the end of THE MUSHROOM CLUB, "Japan is at a turning point," and the few who do remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki are worried the events will soon slip away into a forgotten past.

The Japanese, and indeed the world's memory of Hiroshima is under the threat of time. Filmmaker Okazaki sends an important message: We must never forget. We are our history, for better or for worse.