

RICHARD TRANK
Biography and Filmography

Richard Trank is an Academy Award winning documentary filmmaker whose current feature documentary project is *It Is No Dream*. The latest production of Moriah Films of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, *It Is No Dream* tells the story of Theodor Herzl, the father of the modern state of Israel. Herzl, an assimilated, Budapest born Jew was a playwright and journalist whose life changed when he covered the Dreyfus trial in Paris in 1894. Watching a high ranking French military officer from a prominent Jewish family be falsely accused and tried for treason led Herzl to conclude that the only solution to the anti-Semitism that had ravaged Europe for centuries was for the Jewish people to establish their own state in their historic homeland in Palestine. He devoted the rest of his short life of 44 years to this goal. *It Is No Dream* follows Herzl as he meets with royalty, Prime Ministers, and even the Pope as he builds a political movement that becomes the most popular and largest within the international Jewish community. Narrated by Academy Award winner Sir Ben Kingsley and starring the voice of Academy Award winning actor Christoph Waltz reading the words of Theodor Herzl, *It Is No Dream* is directed by Trank, who also serves as the documentary's co-writer along with Rabbi Marvin Hier. In 1998, Trank and Hier won the Academy Award for the 1997 Feature Documentary, *The Long Way Home*.

In Fall 2010, Trank's feature documentary *Winston Churchill: Walking With Destiny*, narrated by Academy Award winner actor, Sir Ben Kingsley, was released in theatres across the United States. The film screened throughout 2011 and was one of the highest grossing theatrical documentaries of the year. Also a production of Moriah Films, *Winston Churchill: Walking With Destiny* focuses on Winston Churchill's years in the political wilderness, his early opposition to Adolf Hitler and Nazism, and his support for Jews under threat by the Nazi regime, and his return to government as Prime Minister in May 1940 by the demand of the British people. Sir Martin Gilbert, historical consultant for the film and Winston Churchill's official biographer, theorizes that Western Civilization as we know it was saved by Churchill during the period when he, alone among the world's leaders, stood up to Hitler and Nazism. He adds that had Churchill's warnings about Nazi Germany's racial policies towards Jews been heeded in the early 1930's, the Holocaust would never have occurred. As historian John Lukacs explains in the film, Winston Churchill did not win the war in 1940. The war was won once the Americans and the Soviets entered the battle in 1941. But Lukacs points out that in 1940, the war could have been lost if it was not for Churchill. Among those featured in the film are Winston S. Churchill (his grandson and namesake), Celia Sandys (one of his granddaughters), best selling author and historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, singer and actress Dame Vera Lynn and many eyewitnesses who survived the Battle of Britain.

Featuring rare stills and archival film footage, the documentary also includes newly filmed sequences at Churchill's country home, Chartwell, the War Cabinet Rooms, the Parliament, Dunkirk, among other locations. A cable TV and DVD release is scheduled for early 2012.

In 2009, Trank wrote the screenplay and directed *Against The Tide*, narrated by Academy Award winning actor Dustin Hoffman. *Against The Tide* examines the conflict that erupted in the American Jewish community in the late 1930's and 40's over the best means to rescue the Jews of Europe during the Holocaust. It tells the little known story of Peter Bergson, who stood up against the American Jewish leadership and the Roosevelt Administration in his tireless efforts to save the Jews of Europe. The documentary, which is a production of Moriah Films, the documentary film division of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, also looks at how European Jews desperately tried to get the word to the outside world about what was happening to them to no avail. Shot on location in England, Germany, and Israel and featuring a never before seen interview with Bergson filmed by Claude Lanzmann (*Shoah*), the film also includes an original score composed and conducted by Emmy and Grammy Award winner Lee Holdridge. The screenplay for *Against The Tide* was nominated by the Writers Guild of America for Best Original Documentary Screenplay.

In 2007, Trank directed, wrote and produced *I Have Never Forgotten You*, a comprehensive look at the life and legacy of Simon Wiesenthal, the famed Nazi hunter and humanitarian who died in 2005. Narrated by Academy Award winning actress Nicole Kidman, it features interviews with longtime Wiesenthal associates, government leaders from around the world, friends and family members. Wiesenthal's only child, Pauline, appears in the film giving her very first interview about her mother and father and their almost 70 year relationship. *I Have Never Forgotten You* was a selection of the 2007 Berlin International Film Festival, the Vienna International Film Festival, the Seattle International Film Festival as well as the Tribeca Film Festival where it was one of the top 10 films in the Audience Award category. It also won the Audience Award at the Cinevegas Film Festival and a Special Mention at the Jerusalem International Film Festival. *I Have Never Forgotten You* had successful theatrical releases in US, the UK, France, Germany and Austria and has been a best selling DVD in North America, Europe and Australia. It is currently available on DVD through Starz Entertainment, which owns its broadcast rights as well.

In 2006, Trank wrote, produced and directed *Ever Again*, which examines the resurgence of anti-semitism in Europe and its connection to international terrorism. *Ever Again* is narrated by Kevin Costner and was released in the US by Rocky Mountain Films in December 2006 and was the selection of a number of film festivals in North America and Europe. In early 2005, Trank completed production on *Beautiful Music*, the first short subject documentary produced by Moriah Films and the winner of the 2005 Hollywood

Film Festival for Best Documentary. Narrated by Brooke Shields, *Beautiful Music* tells the emotional story of the relationship between an Orthodox Jewish music teacher and her blind and autistic Palestinian student. In 2004, Trank wrote and directed *Unlikely Heroes*, narrated by Sir Ben Kingsley, chronicling seven extraordinary people who either resisted or defied the Nazis during the Holocaust. *Unlikely Heroes* was a selection of the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival as well as the Hollywood Film Festival, among others. In 2001, Trank wrote and directed *In Search of Peace, Part One: 1948-1967*, an exploration of the first decades of Israel's existence, narrated by Michael Douglas. *In Search of Peace* was featured at film festivals throughout North America, South America, Europe, Israel and South Africa.

Throughout the 1980's, Trank was an accomplished producer of radio news and public affairs programming, having written and produced more than 5,000 one minute radio features and more than 300 half-hour radio documentaries aired nationally by the **Public Affairs Broadcast Group**. In 1990, he co-produced the documentary *Echoes That Remain*, about life in pre-WWII Eastern Europe, narrated by Martin Landau and Miriam Margolyes. The film won the 1992 Houston International Film Festival's Gold Jury Award. In 1994, he was the Executive Producer of *Liberation*, the inaugural production of Moriah Films. Narrated by Sir Ben Kingsley, Whoopi Goldberg, Sir Patrick Stewart, and Miriam Margolyes, the documentary tells the story of the liberation of Europe and Hitler's death camps by the Allies. Screened at the 1995 Berlin International Film Festival, among others, it was selected by the State of Israel as its official film commemorating the 50th anniversary of VE Day. In 1997, he produced *The Long Way Home*. Narrated by Morgan Freeman, the film examines the period between 1945-48, when the survivors of the Holocaust rebuilt their lives and helped to create the state of Israel. In addition to the Oscar, *The Long Way Home*, was selected as part of the documentary competition at the Sundance Film Festival and won the Golden Hugo at the Chicago Film Festival. The film has also been broadcast on Showtime and the Sundance Channel.

Trank earned his BA degree at the University of California, Berkeley and did graduate work at the University of Southern California. He serves as Executive Producer of **Moriah Films** and has been the Center's Media Projects Director since 1984. He also serves as the Executive Producer of the films for the Center's Museum of Tolerance. His wife, Kathy, is the Vice President of Finance for Danjaq, LLC, which produces the James Bond series of action films. His son, Joshua, is a film editor and his daughter, Emma, recently graduated with honors and distinctions from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts with a degree in Dramatic Writing.

PRINCIPAL FILMOGRAPHY:

<i>Echoes That Remain</i> (1991)	Co-Producer
<i>Liberation</i> (1995)	Executive Producer
<i>The Long Way Home</i> (1997)	Producer
<i>In Search of Peace</i> (2001)	Co-Writer, Director
<i>Unlikely Heroes</i> (2003)	Co-Writer, Director
<i>Beautiful Music</i> (2005)	Co-Writer, Director
<i>Ever Again</i> (2006)	Co-Writer, Director
<i>I Have Never Forgotten You</i> (2007)	Co-Writer, Director
<i>Against The Tide</i> (2009)	Co-Writer, Director
<i>Winston Churchill: Walking With Destiny</i> (2010)	Co-Writer, Director
<i>It Is No Dream</i> (2011)	Co-Writer, Director