



Chris Palmer

Adventures in Wildlife Filmmaking

Chris Palmer is an environmental and wildlife film producer who has swum with dolphins and whales, confronted sharks, come face-to-face with Kodiak bears, camped with wolf packs, and waded hip-deep through an Everglades swamp. He was recently named recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award for Media at the International Wildlife Film Festival.

Chris has spent 25 years producing more than 300 hours of original programming for prime time television and the giant screen (IMAX) film industry. His films have been broadcast on the Disney Channel, TBS Superstation, Animal Planet, Home and Garden Television, The Travel Channel, The Outdoor Life Network, the Public Broadcasting System, and in the global system of IMAX theaters. His IMAX films include Whales, Wolves, Dolphins, Bears, India: Kingdom of the Tiger, Coral Reef Adventure, and Grand Canyon Adventure.

He joined the full-time faculty at American University in August 2004 as Distinguished Film Producer in Residence and founded the Center for Environmental Filmmaking at the School of Communication, which he now directs. Chris continues to produce films, give speeches, and conduct workshops across the country. He is writing two books: *Adventures in Wildlife Filmmaking* (for Sierra Club Books) and another about a different kind of wild life—his three daughters and how to be an effective father.

At American University, Chris created three groundbreaking classes: Producing Environmental and Wildlife Films, which teaches students the keys to being a successful film producer; Classroom in the Wild, which takes students to wilderness areas in Florida and Alaska to learn the basics of natural history filmmaking; and Environmental and Wildlife Production, which gives students the opportunity to produce environmental films for network television.

Environmental and wildlife films and new media are powerful and important tools in the struggle to protect the environment. It is this belief that drives the Center for Environmental Filmmaking. The Center has four signature initiatives: creating partnerships with blue-chip organizations that will give students the opportunity to produce professional films; bringing to the AU campus world-class filmmakers to mentor students; providing innovative educational programs and classes; and advocating for the ethical treatment of wildlife and the environment.

Chris is also president of the MacGillivray Freeman Films Educational Foundation, which produces and funds IMAX films as well as companion educational outreach materials and programs. MacGillivray Freeman Films is the world's largest and most successful producer and distributor of IMAX films. The foundation launched a program last year to help disadvantaged and underserved students in different parts of the country.

Chris also serves as chief executive officer of VideoTakes, Inc., a film production company in Arlington, VA, where he produces environmental films, videos, DVDs, and new media. At VideoTakes, students (through AU's Center for Environmental Filmmaking) can make major contributions to films and videos as interns or employees. Recent films have focused on rain forests, coral reefs, the impact of war on the environment, environmental education, peace parks, water conservation, the Chesapeake Bay, and prairie restoration.

In 1983, Chris founded the nonprofit National Audubon Society Productions, serving as president and CEO for

11 years. In 1994, he founded the nonprofit National Wildlife Productions (part of the National Wildlife Federation, the largest conservation organization in the United States) which he managed as president and CEO for 10 years, directing NWF's launch into broadcast, cable, syndication, home video, new media, IMAX, and international markets.

Chris and his colleagues have won numerous awards, including two Emmys and an Oscar nomination. His movies, music videos, documentaries, and computer software all focus on documenting threatened species and habitats and exposing damaging commercial enterprises and practices while celebrating environmental success stories. In 1994, Chris was honored with the Frank G. Wells Award from the Environmental Media Association for "contributing to environmental protection year after year." He has worked with many celebrities in his films, including Robert Redford, Paul Newman, Jane Fonda, Ted Turner, and Ted Danson.

Profiles about Chris have appeared in many publications, including the Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post. He has been interviewed on the Today Show, the Fox News Channel, and other networks. He publishes articles regularly, the most recent being a series of articles in RealScreen magazine on best practices in the film industry.

Chris is a frequent speaker at conferences and film festivals. He also gives workshops on how to live a fulfilling life, how to raise money, how to give effective presentations, how to network effectively, and how to triple one's productivity. He is a stand-up comedian and performs regularly in DC comedy clubs. He has jumped out of helicopters, worked on an Israeli kibbutz, and was a high school boxing champion. He hosts the television show EcoViews for Maryland Public Television, which is produced by AU film students.

Chris serves on the boards of thirteen nonprofit organizations: International Wildlife Media Center and Film Festival, Natural Resources Council of America, MacGillivray Freeman Films Educational Foundation, Media Group, BearTrek, Environmental Film Festival in DC, Population Media Center, Philanthropy Network, Imaging Foundation, Green Planet Films, ecology.com, International Film Academy of Jackson Hole, and Blue Ocean Film Festival.

In the 20 years before becoming a film producer, he was a naval officer, an engineer, a business consultant, an energy analyst, chief energy advisor to a senior U.S. senator, a political appointee in President Jimmy Carter's EPA, and an environmental activist.

He has a B.S. with First Class Honors in Mechanical Engineering and an M.S. in Ocean Engineering and Naval Architecture from University College London, and a second master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University where he was a Kennedy Scholar.

Born in Hong Kong, Chris grew up in England and immigrated to the United States in 1972. He is married to Gail Shearer and the father of three grown daughters (Kim, Christina, and Jenny).

PRESENTATIONS:

- **HOW TO MAKE WILDLIFE FILMS WITHOUT GETTING EATEN BY BEARS, SHARKS AND WOLVES**

I will describe how filmmakers obtain those amazing shots you see on television of close ups of wild and dangerous animals like sharks, bears and wolves. I will show many dramatic film clips and explain how they were achieved.

- **IS EVERYTHING YOU SEE ON WILDLIFE TELEVISION SHOWS NATURAL?**

Much of what you see on wildlife programs is staged, fabricated, and unnatural. I will give the audience the inside scoop about what goes on behind the camera and show many revealing clips.

- **HOW GIANT SCREEN IMAX FILMS ARE MADE**

I'll explain the extraordinary stories and "trade secrets" behind the making of IMAX films and illustrate the lecture with many film clips from my IMAX films.

- **FIFTY WAYS TO RADICALLY IMPROVE YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE, TRIPLE YOUR PRODUCTIVITY, AND FEEL FULFILLED**

This presentation, which I have given all over the US, focuses on how people can radically improve their lives. It is interactive and fun. It gives people the opportunity to reflect on their lives, redesign them, and learn some new time management techniques.

- **THE ART AND POWER OF NETWORKING**

Going to a party? Starting a new career? Playing an active role in your community association? I will explain how to transform your life through networking and making friends, and I will explain how to become highly skilled at doing it.

- **THE ART OF RAISING MONEY FOR YOUR FAVORITE CAUSE**

Raising money, something we all have to do at some point in our lives, is an important skill. This presentation teaches the fundamental skill of how to raise money, whether it's for the local PTA or to feed the hungry.

- **HOW TO MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH**

In this participatory presentation, I will teach the art of telling a joke, why humor is important, how to create humor from the ordinary happenings of our everyday lives, how to become a stand-up comic, and how to create a first "set."

- **HOW TO BE A STAR PRESENTER**

This presentation delves into how to become a superb presenter, whether it's giving a wedding toast or a talk to a group of VIPs. The audience will learn how to construct a speech, deliver it, and make it memorable.

- **HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE FATHER AND PRODUCE HAPPY AND SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN**

Some of the lessons I learned from raising three daughters, and what I wish I had known 28 years ago.

LINKS / PDF's available at <http://www.talentplus-green.com/speaker.php?name=chrispalmer>

- Filmmakers for Conservation
- How To Network Effectively
- SOC's Center for Environmental Filmmaking