



PBS

Presents

DARK MONEY



A Kimberly Reed Film

****Official Selection—Documentary Competition—Sundance Film Festival 2018****
****WINNER—Sundance Institute / Amazon Studios Producer Award—Sundance Film Festival 2018****
****Official Selection—Full Frame Documentary Film Festival 2018****
****Official Selection—Big Sky Documentary Film Festival 2018****

Release Date: July 13, 2018 at IFC Center in NYC and July 27, 2018 at Landmark Nuart in LA

Running Time: 98 minutes

Language: English

darkmoneyfilm.com | Facebook: darkmoneyfilm | Instagram: darkmoneyfilm | Twitter: darkmoneyfilm

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SYNOPSIS

DARK MONEY, a political thriller, examines one of the greatest present threats to American democracy: the influence of untraceable corporate money on our elections and elected officials. The film takes viewers to Montana—a frontline in the fight to preserve fair elections nationwide—to follow an intrepid local journalist working to expose the real-life impacts of the US Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision. Through this gripping story, DARK MONEY uncovers the shocking and vital truth of how American elections are bought and sold. This Sundance award-winning documentary is directed/produced by Kimberly Reed (PRODIGAL SONS) and produced by Katy Chevigny (E-TEAM).

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

When I heard about the Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision on the radio in 2010, I froze in the middle of my apartment. Like many Americans, I found the ideas that *corporations are people* and *money is speech* to be ludicrous. But worse than that was the easily foreseeable outcome that political power would be controlled by fewer and fewer, richer and richer people. And I knew that I was not alone. Approximately 80% of Americans have consistently disapproved of this decision. [CBS Poll, 2016]

For a few years, I didn’t quite know what to do about my frustration with our crippled campaign finance system. As a filmmaker, my first impulse was to make a documentary about it.

When I heard my home state of Montana would be the only state to fight back against Citizens United in the U.S. Supreme Court, everything changed. I knew I could tell a compelling story of campaign finance through the eyes of real people. I grabbed the best camera I could get and started filming.

The only way to really understand how the dark money shell game works is to follow the nonprofit corporations over multiple election cycles as they pop up, disintegrate, reconstitute, and wreak havoc once again. It usually takes journalists years to uncover the damage that dark money causes, and by that time it is too late.

I played this game of Whack-A-Mole over three election cycles in what became the perfect environment to tell the campaign finance story. Montana was not only the first and hardest hit with dark money but also the state that fought back the hardest with grassroots citizen outrage. DARK MONEY puts a human face to that fight.

Told through the lives of real people, our film makes a concerted effort to share stories from both sides of the aisle. It was important to me to remind folks that campaign spending is not just a liberal or conservative issue; and it affects all Americans, not just Montanans, regardless of ideology.

The role money plays in our politics has never been more crucial. Or timely. Dark money contributions increased a stunning 60-fold in 2012 (the first election after Citizens United) and spending for the 2018 campaigns has already far outpaced that of 2016. And, as we have seen with recent breaking news, the spending is getting more sophisticated, more insidious, and harder to track.

I am excited our film is being released in the midst of the 2018 election cycle. Campaign spending is the most fundamental political problem facing our democracy, and I believe our film comes at a critical time to help solve some of those problems, educate viewers, and inspire citizens to “follow the money” all the way to the campaign finance reform Americans consistently say they want.

- Kimberly Reed (Director/Producer)

SUBJECTS *(in order of appearance)*

- Jon Tester - U.S Senator, Montana (D)
- Debra Bonogofsky - Republican Candidate for Montana Legislature
- Jim Peterson - Montana Senate President (R)
- Ellie Hill - Montana State Representative (D)
- Amanda Curtis - Montana State Representative (D)
- Llew Jones - Montana State Senator (R), finance chair
- John S. Adams - investigative journalist, Great Falls Tribune
- John Ward - former Montana State Representative (R)
- Ed Bender - Executive Director, National Institute of Money in State Politics (FollowTheMoney.org)
- Ann Ravel - former FEC Commissioner
- Chuck Johnson - Capitol bureau chief, Independent Record
- Jonathan Motl - Commissioner of Political Practices
- Steve Bullock - Governor of Montana; former Montana Attorney General
- Mike Wheat - Montana Supreme Court Justice
- Rick Vadi - Montana voter
- Gabi Cote - Montana voter
- Verner Bertelsen - former Montana Secretary of State (R)
- Jim Brown - Attorney, American Tradition Partnership (ATP)
- Jim Nelson - Montana Supreme Court Justice
- Margot Barg - Attorney, Wittich Law Firm (*footage*)
- Tom Goldstein - SCOTUSblog founder and publisher
- Jeffrey Toobin - CNN Legal Analyst & New Yorker columnist
- Trevor Potter - former FEC Chairman (R); founder Campaign Legal Center, Issue One
- Art Wittich - Montana State Senator (R), Attorney, ATP/WTP (*footage*)
- Rob Cook - Montana State Representative (R)
- Sheila Krumholtz - Executive Director, Center for Responsive Politics (OpenSecrets.org)
- Mary Bottari - Deputy Director, Center for Media and Democracy
- Paul S. Ryan - VP of Policy & Litigation, Common Cause
- David Parker, Professor of Political Science, Montana State University
- Jaime MacNaughton - Staff Attorney, Commission of Political Practices
- Gene Jarussi - Special Attorney General, Montana
- John Heenan - Special Attorney General, Montana
- Zach Lahn - Montana State Director, Americans for Prosperity (*footage*)
- Jeff Welborn - Montana State Senator (R)
- Frank Garner - Montana State Representative (R) (*footage*)
- Chuck Hunter - Montana State Representative (D) (*footage*)
- Ellen L. Weintraub - FEC Commissioner (D)
- Don McGahn - FEC Commissioner (R) (*footage*)
- Matthew S. Peterson - FEC Commissioner (R) (*footage*)
- Caroline Hunter - FEC Commissioner (R) (*footage*)
- Lucinda Leutkemeyer - Art Wittich's Defense Attorney (*footage*)
- Sarah Arnold - former staff, ATP / National Right to Work

SELECT SUBJECT BIOGRAPHIES



John Adams

Intrepid investigative reporter John Adams has spent his career holding politicians and other power players accountable. When he is forced to leave his position at the Great Falls Tribune due to restructuring, he strikes out on his own to launch Montana Free Press, as he chases down the most significant campaign finance case in the state's history.



Jonathan Motl

A steadfast defender of the right to free and fair elections, Jonathan Motl is Montana's top campaign law enforcement official. In a career-defining risk, he is taking one of Montana's most powerful legislators to court, and in the process, uncovering a vast dark money conspiracy to take over state legislatures and bust unions nationwide.



Ann Ravel

In 2013, Ann Ravel was sworn in as Commissioner at the FEC, in the hopes of helping shape and enforce the few remaining campaign finance regulations protecting the electoral process in the post-Citizens United landscape. What she found was a regulatory body more interested in obstruction than in upholding the law.



Art Wittich

As the former Senate Majority Leader in Montana, Art Wittich is an influential politician and the lawyer for the dark money group launching a broadside attack on Montana's campaign finance laws: American Tradition Partnership.



Gene Jarussi

An accomplished trial lawyer for over 30 years, Gene Jarussi came out of retirement to prosecute Wittich for alleged campaign finance violations. After thousands of hours meticulously poring over documents, he's pieced together the mystery of how dark money flows through Montana's electoral process and elections nationwide. He won't rest until he is able to show what he's found to the world.



Steve Bullock

As Montana's Attorney General, Steve Bullock led half of the states in the US to challenge Citizens United, taking the case all the way to the US Supreme Court. When he is elected Governor, he vows to continue to protect Montana's democracy from corporate corruption by any means necessary.

THE FILMMAKERS

Directed by KIMBERLY REED

Produced by KIMBERLY REED
KATY CHEVIGNY

Executive Producers MICHAEL BLOOM
ADAM PINCUS

Executive Producers NANCY STEPHENS & RICK ROSENTHAL
DAVID J. CORNFIELD & LINDA A.
CORNFIELD

Co-Executive Producer KATY DRAKE BETTNER

Written By KIMBERLY REED
JAY ARTHUR STERRENBURG

Cinematography By KIMBERLY REED
ERIC PHILLIPS-HORST
JAY ARTHUR STERRENBURG

Edited By JAY ARTHUR STERRENBURG

Original Score By MIRIAM CUTLER

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Kimberly Reed (Director/Producer)

Kimberly Reed's work has been featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show, CNN, NPR, The Moth, and in Details Magazine. One of Filmmaker Magazine's "25 New Faces of Independent Film," she directed/produced *PRODIGAL SONS*, a "whiplash doc that heralds an exciting talent" (SF Weekly). *PRODIGAL SONS* (First Run Features, Sundance Channel) premiered at Telluride, landed on many Best of the Year lists, screened at more than 100 film festivals, and garnered 14 Audience and Jury awards, including the FIPRESCI Prize. Ms. Reed was recognized as one of *OUT Magazine's* "Out 100," and as *Towleroad's* "Best LGBT Character of the Film Year." She also produced/edited/wrote *PAUL GOODMAN CHANGED MY LIFE* (Zeitgeist Films) and produced *THE DEATH AND LIFE OF MARSHA P. JOHNSON* (Netflix). With a background in journalism, her work in broader artistic fields has also been acclaimed. She was published in the NY Times bestselling "The Moth - 50 True Stories," and has co-authored three operas, including *AS ONE*, the most frequently produced American opera in decades.

Katy Chevigny (Producer)

Katy Chevigny is an award-winning filmmaker and a co-founder of Big Mouth Productions. She co-directed the Emmy-nominated *E-TEAM* with Ross Kauffman, which won the award for Best Cinematography at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival and was acquired by Netflix for a worldwide release. She also directed *ELECTION DAY* (2007), which premiered at the SXSW Film Festival in 2007 and was broadcast on PBS in 2008. With Kirsten Johnson, she co-directed *DEADLINE*, an investigation into Illinois Governor George Ryan's commutation of death sentences. Chevigny's films have been shown theatrically, on HBO, Cinemax, POV, Independent Lens, NBC, Netflix, Arte/ZDF, Britain's Channel 4, and others, and have played at festivals around the world, including Sundance, Tribeca, Full Frame, SXSW, IDFA, Sheffield and Berlin.

Miriam Cutler (Co-Producer/Composer)

Miriam Cutler, Documentary Branch Academy member and Emmy-nominated composer, has an extensive background scoring for independent film and TV projects. Her passion for documentary film has led to a focus in nonfiction: Academy Award® Nominated *THE HUNTING GROUND* (CNN), *KINGSPPOINT* (HBO) and *POSTER GIRL* (HBO), Emmy winners *GHOSTS OF ABU GRAHIB* (HBO), *DESERT OF FORBIDDEN ART* (PBS) *VITO* (HBO), Emmy-nominated *ETHEL* (HBO), *THIN* (HBO), BAFTA-nominated *LOST IN LA MANCHA* (IFC), Sundance winners *AMERICAN PROMISE* (PBS), *SCOUTS HONOR* (PBS) and *LICENSE TO KILL* (PBS), and Peabody Award-winning *THE CASTRO*. Her enthusiasm for documentaries has continued to escalate her involvement and has led her to becoming part of the production team. Miriam co-produced and scored *ONE LUCKY ELEPHANT* (OWN) and now is embarking on her second project as a co-producer of *DARK MONEY*. Miriam has served numerous times as a Lab Advisor for the Sundance Institute Documentary Composers Lab, and on film festival and awards juries including Sundance, Ashland, Bend, AFI, Independent Spirit Awards and IDA Awards. Miriam also is part of the American Film Showcase, a cultural exchange program sponsored by the US State Department and USC.

Jay Arthur Sterrenberg (Editor/Writer)

Jay Arthur Sterrenberg is a Canadian American editor and director whose work has appeared in theaters, on HBO, CNN, Arte, ESPN, and PBS. He's a founder of the Meerkat Media Collective, an award-winning arts collective & cooperatively run production company that prioritizes shared authorship and consensus in their creative process. Documentary editing credits include the Sundance premiering films TROPHY and NARCO CULTURA, Tribeca award-winning UNTOUCHABLE, Academy Award-nominated REDEMPTION as well as the collaboratively directed Meerkat Media films BRASSLANDS and STAGES. Since 2009 he's also been a proud member of New Day Films documentary distribution cooperative.

Michael Bloom (Executive Producer)

Michael Bloom is President & CEO of First Look Media -- a bold independent media company that empowers the most ambitious voices in journalism, arts and entertainment. Launched by eBay founder and philanthropist, Pierre Omidyar, First Look Media today operates across several areas, including an entertainment studio, Topic, which develops, produces and finances feature films, documentaries, television and digital content; the newly launched digital storytelling destination, Topic.com; the award-winning investigative journalism outlet, The Intercept; the critically acclaimed documentary film unit, Field of Vision; and the popular political satire cartoon, The Nib.

The company's first feature film, SPOTLIGHT, won the 2016 Academy Award® for Best Picture. Key Topic Studio films include the recently released ROMAN J. ISRAEL, ESQ., a legal drama starring Academy Award® winner Denzel Washington; LEAVE NO TRACE directed by Debra Granik and starring Ben Foster, which premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival; ON THE OTHER SIDE, currently in development and starring Carey Mulligan as veteran war correspondent Kate Webb; Rodrigo Prieto's directorial debut of BASTARD with Martin Scorsese, Emma Tillinger Koskoff, and Jordan Horowitz, also in development; the Netflix documentary NOBODY SPEAK: TRIALS OF THE FREE PRESS directed by Brian Knappenberger; HUNGER, a TV drama under development with Alex Garcia Lopez attached to write; and GOLD FAME CITRUS, another scripted drama with writer Jack Paglen attached. The studio also produced one of the top podcasts of the year, "Missing Richard Simmons," among others.

First Look Media staunchly supports the First Amendment and houses the Press Freedom Defense Fund, through which it has awarded several million dollars in grants to strengthen the ability of journalists, filmmakers, non-profits and whistleblowers to pursue legal fights where a substantial public interest is at stake. Early in his career, Bloom built and sold several internet startup companies including Stockpoint.com, and iAmaze, an early cloud company acquired by AOL. He next led Viacom's MTV Networks digital music business as Sr. VP and General Manager for Digital Media. Prior to First Look Media, Bloom was CEO of Guardian News & Media, North America, which he led into becoming one of the top digital journalism brands.

Adam Pincus (Executive Producer)

Adam Pincus is an award-winning creative executive with a diverse background that spans documentary, film, television and digital programming and production. Currently, as EVP of

Programming and Content for First Look Media, Pincus oversees all development, content and production under FLM's branded entertainment studio, Topic Studios and the newly launched digital storytelling destination, Topic.com. With the company's first feature film, SPOTLIGHT, having won the 2016 Academy Award® for Best Picture, the studio has grown its slate to include co-producing and co-financing the recently released ROMAN J. ISRAEL, ESQ., a legal drama starring multiple Academy Award® winning actor Denzel Washington; LEAVE NO TRACE, directed by Debra Granik and starring Ben Foster, which premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival; and the Netflix documentary NOBODY SPEAK: TRIALS OF THE FREE PRESS directed by Brian Knappenberger. Topic Studios also produced one of the top-rated podcasts of 2017, "Missing Richard Simmons," and has several television projects in development, including COMPANY 8, executive produced by Channing Tatum's production company Free Association; the drama GOLD FAME CITRUS, with writer Jack Paglen attached and ATOMIC BAZAAR (working title) co-developed with Pulse Films and written by Greg Burke (71, 7 DAYS IN ENTEBBE).

About First Look Media's Topic

Topic is the ambitious new storytelling brand (Topic.com) and entertainment studio (Topic Studios) from First Look Media, dedicated to supporting creators at the forefront of culture. From Academy Award®-winning films (Spotlight) to television, audio and digital (Missing Richard Simmons podcast), we explore a wide range of subject matter, both fiction and nonfiction. Our approach – challenging, compelling and unconventional – reflects our commitment to discovering and amplifying independent new voices and supporting established ones.

ADDENDUM

Chart: Americans' Views on Money in Politics

Source: The New York Times / CBS News Poll, June 2015

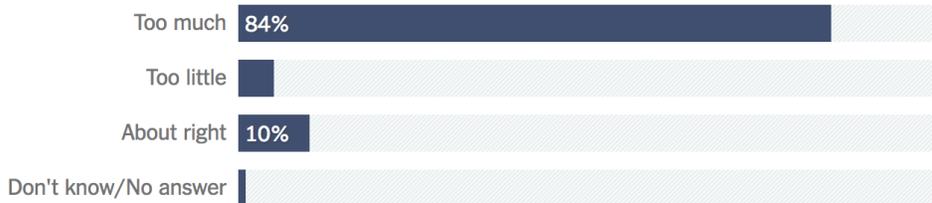
Influence of Money on Elections

In a rare show of unity, Americans, regardless of their political affiliation, agree that money has too much influence on elections, the wealthy have more influence on elections, and candidates who win office promote policies that help their donors.

Thinking about United States elections, do you think all Americans have an equal chance to influence the elections process, or do you think wealthy Americans have more of a chance to influence the elections process than other Americans?



Thinking about the role of money in American political campaigns today, do you think money has too much influence, too little influence or is it about right?



How often do you think candidates who win public office promote policies that directly help the people and groups who donated money to their campaigns — most of the time, sometimes, rarely or never?

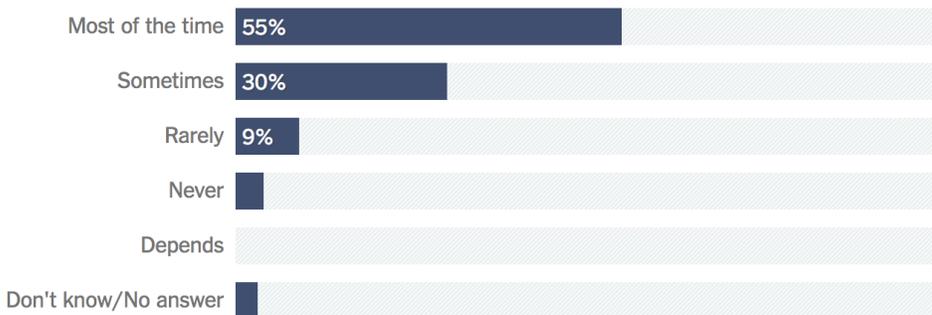


Chart: Total spending by Nondisclosing Groups, as of August 24, 2017
 Source: OpenSecrets.org

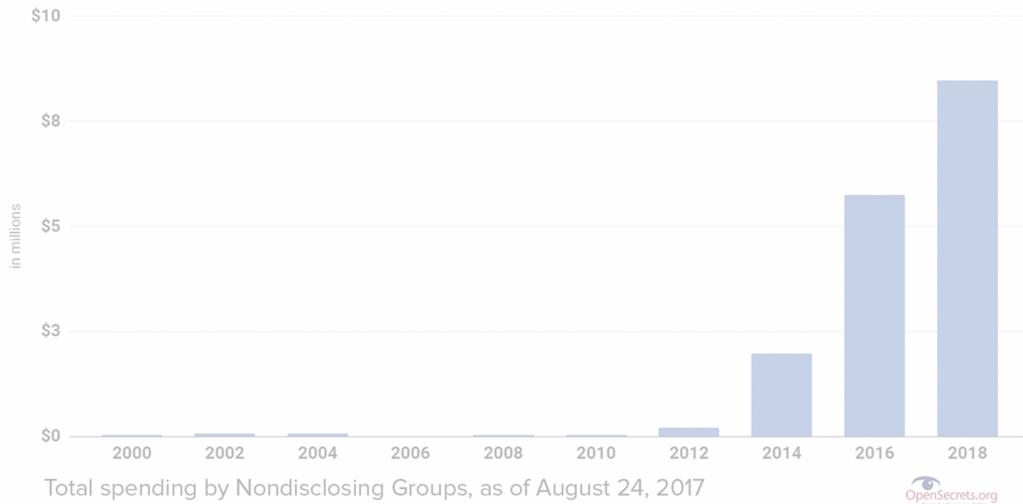


Chart: The Cost of Winning an Election, 1986-2016 (in nominal and 2016 dollars)
 Source: Campaign Finance Institute analysis of Federal Election Committee Data

Table 3-1 The Cost of Winning an Election, 1986-2016 (in nominal and 2016 dollars)

| | House Winners | | Senate Winners | |
|------|-----------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|
| | Nominal Dollars | 2016 Dollars | Nominal Dollars | 2016 Dollars |
| 2016 | 1,516,021 | 1,516,021 | 10,464,068 | 10,464,068 |
| 2014 | 1,466,533 | 1,486,795 | 9,655,660 | 9,789,066 |
| 2012 | 1,596,953 | 1,669,382 | 10,351,556 | 10,821,044 |
| 2010 | 1,434,760 | 1,579,196 | 8,993,945 | 9,899,359 |
| 2008 | 1,362,239 | 1,518,564 | 7,101,029 | 7,915,916 |
| 2006 | 1,259,791 | 1,499,795 | 8,835,416 | 10,518,659 |
| 2004 | 1,038,391 | 1,319,328 | 7,183,825 | 9,127,413 |
| 2002 | 911,644 | 1,216,237 | 3,728,644 | 4,974,434 |
| 2000 | 845,907 | 1,178,999 | 7,198,423 ^a | 10,032,938 |
| 1998 | 677,807 | 998,027 | 4,655,806 | 6,855,374 |
| 1996 | 686,198 | 1,049,664 | 3,921,653 | 5,998,879 |
| 1994 | 541,121 | 876,335 | 4,488,195 | 7,268,544 |
| 1992 | 556,475 | 951,945 | 3,353,115 | 5,736,073 |
| 1990 | 423,245 | 777,213 | 3,298,324 | 6,056,778 |
| 1988 | 400,386 | 812,303 | 3,746,225 | 7,600,340 |
| 1986 | 359,577 | 787,418 | 3,067,559 | 6,717,478 |

Note: Inflation adjustment based on average 2016 CPI.
<http://www.bls.gov/cpi/tables.htm>

a. Jon Corzine (D-N.J.) spent \$63,209,506. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) spent \$29,941,194. The remaining Senate winners in 2000 spent an average of \$4,737,365.

Source: Campaign Finance Institute analysis of Federal Election Commission data.

