

#### **SYNOPSIS**

If fear has a scent, what does it smell like?

The Scent of Fear takes you on a first-hand journey across the globe with those that enjoy fear and those paralyzed by it. Stories that include a woman alone on a survival quest in the arctic, to communities who make their homes in bomb-proof, sunless bunkers to a young man in South-Korea so afraid of being a failure that he takes part in a "Happy Dying" seminar. Along for the ride are leading experts in neural science, psychology, political sciences and more, providing the insight of fear lovers and fear mongers and showing us that as a society we are surrounded and exploited by fear-driven messaging in our politics and consumerism. With exhilarating characters and intellectual scholars, The Scent of Fear analyzes the universal question of why fear causes so much fear.

narrated by Sophie Okonedo

with scientists
Joseph LeDoux
Lutz Jaencke
Ortwin Renn
Elisabeth Wehling
Peter Schneider
Thomas Bernauer

and extreme athlete Evelyne Binsack

written, directed and produced by Mirjam von Arx

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#### **PROTAGONISTS**

## Joseph LeDoux

Director Emotional Brain Institute, New York University



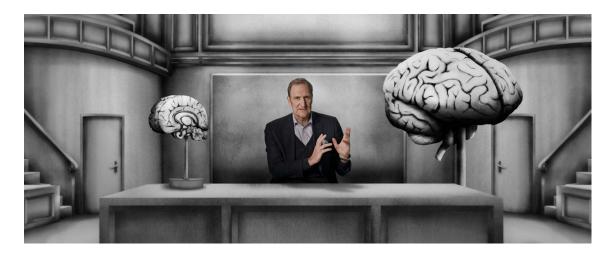
Renowned American neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux has spent more than 30 years researching the neural basis of fear, during which time he has gained fundamental insight into the human fear response. He is one of the founders of the biological field of emotions research and studies how profound experiences become burned into our memory. LeDoux is a professor of psychology and neuroscience at New York University and head of The Ledoux Lab in the (NYU) Center for Neural Science and the director of the Emotional Brain Institute. In his comprehensive book Anxious: Using the Brain to Understand and Treat Fear and Anxiety, LeDoux explains the latest research findings – many of which come from his own laboratory. He is the author of numerous other publications and international bestsellers, including Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are and The Emotional Brain.

Joseph LeDoux is also vocalist and lyricist for the band The Amygdaloids, a successful rock group of scientists who write and perform songs about the mind, the brain and mental disorders.

#### Lutz Jäncke

Head of Neuropsychology University of Zurich, Switzerland

Lutz Jäncke researches how the brain influences our thoughts, actions and feelings. In his book lst das Hirn vernünftig? (Is the brain reasonable?), the world-renowned neuroscientist and neuropsychologist uses enlightening experiments and the latest scientific knowledge to explain the effect of our subconscious on our thoughts and actions, how we make decisions, and how memory works.



Lutz Jäncke studied psychology and neuroscience at the universities of Bochum, Braunschweig and Düsseldorf. Since graduating, he has completed research internships at the Beth Israel Hospital of Harvard University in Boston, received a Heisenberg fellowship from the German Research Foundation (DFG), and was appointed as a full professor at the University of Magdeburg. Since 2002, he has been professor of neuropsychology at the University of Zurich. Jäncke has authored numerous scientific publications and is one of the most cited scientists worldwide in his field. Jäncke is also known for his lecturing skills, which have won him the Credit Suisse Award for Best Teaching (from the University of Zurich) as well as the Golden Owl – a prize awarded to lecturers by students at ETH Zurich.

Ortwin Renn Director, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies Potsdam, Germany



Ortwin Renn is an internationally recognised risk researcher who understands why we fear the wrong things. His research examines which risks we overestimate and which we underestimate. He also looks at how fear helps shape the processes and structures of community life.

Prof. Ortwin Renn is scientific director at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam and professor for technology assessment and environmental sociology at the University of Stuttgart. He holds, among other titles, an honorary doctorate from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich. Ortwin Renn's publications include over 30 monographs and edited anthologies as well as more than 250 scientific articles. Prominent works include his 2014 book Das Risikokoparadox. Warum wir uns vor dem Falschen fürchten (The risk paradox. Why we fear the wrong things) and his 2019 work Gefühlte Wahrheiten. Orientierung in Zeiten postfaktischer Verunsicherung. (Perceived truths. Orientation in times of post-factual uncertainty).

# Elisabeth Wehling Cognitive linguist



Political communication expert Elisabeth Wehling was born in Hamburg in 1981. She studied sociology, journalism and linguistics in Hamburg, Rome and Berkeley, where she became a cognitive researcher at the International Computer Science Institute. Here, Wehling led research projects on ideology, language and unconscious opinion formation. In her book Political framing. How a nation persuades itself to think – and makes politics out of it, she demonstrates the impact of language in politics and how it can influence us. She examined the influence of the post-9/11 Bush administration on political and public discourse in the US, and analysed the presidential race between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton from a linguistic standpoint.

#### Peter Schneider

Clinical psychologist University of Zurich, Switzerland

Psychoanalyst Peter Schneider lives and works in Zurich. He studied philosophy, psychology, and German language and literature. After graduating, Schneider went on to work as Privatdozent (PD) for psychoanalysis and professor of developmental

psychology at the University of Bremen, and as a lecturer in the history and epistemology of psychoanalysis at the International Psychoanalytic University in Berlin.



Since 2014, he has been PD for clinical psychology at the University of Zurich. He has also worked for many years as a satirist and columnist, and is the author of numerous books. Peter Schneider has written widely on the themes of fear and security.

Thomas Bernauer
Director, Institute of Science, Technology and Policy
ETH Zurich, Switzerland



Thomas Bernauer's research focuses on society's desire to minimise risk. He sheds light on the driving forces behind our (utopian) desire to live risk-free and examines, for example, whether this societal demand for ever greater security can overwhelm state and political systems.

Bernauer is a Swiss-Canadian political scientist and full professor of international politics at ETH Zurich. He previously worked as a research assistant at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and is the author of numerous books and articles.

## **Evelyne Binsack**

Extreme athlete

Evelyne Binsack is a qualified mountain guide, helicopter pilot, extreme mountaineer, adventurer and best-selling author.



After leaving school, Binsack trained as a sport's equipment salesperson while pursuing a career in athletics – but then she discovered her passion for mountaineering. She quickly learned that, in order to survive on a sheer rock face, it is essential to respect the laws of nature and to relentlessly train both the body and mind. In 1991, Evelyne Binsack was one of the first women in Europe to become a qualified mountain guide. She climbed Mount Everest in 2001 – the first Swiss woman to do so – and has scaled the north face of the Eiger three times (1990, 1994, 1999), including solo. She has also conquered the highest peaks of the Himalayas and the Andes.

Binsack is the only person to have reached the South Pole (starting on her doorstep in Switzerland) using muscle power alone. Over a total of 484 days, she passed through 16 countries and covered 25,000 kilometres – by bike, on foot, by ski and by sled. In 2017, she took on another extreme challenge that she documented for THE SCENT OF FEAR: on 12 April 2017, after 11 months of planning, a first aborted attempt and an expedition lasting 105 days, she reached the North Pole.

#### Sophie Okonedo

**English Narration** 

Tony & Evening Standard Theatre Award-winning, and Emmy, Academy, BAFTA & Olivier Award-nominated actress Sophie Okonedo was born in London and trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Sophie has worked in a variety of media including film, television, theatre, and audio drama. She received an OBE in the 2010 Queen's Birthday Honours and received a CBE on 26 February 2019 from Her Majesty the Queen.



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Sophie began her film career in 1991 in the British coming-of-age drama YOUNG SOUL REBEL before appearing as Wachati Princess in ACE VENTURA: WHEN NATURE CALLS (1995) and Stephen Frears' DIRTY PRETTY THINGS (2002). She received an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Tatiana Rusesabagina in the 2004 film HOTEL RWANDA. Sophie also received a Golden Globe nomination for the miniseries TSUNAMI: THE AFTERMATH (2006) and BAFTA TV Award nominations for the drama series CRIMINAL JUSTICE (2009).

Sophie made her Broadway debut in the 2014 revival of A RAISIN IN THE SUN and won the Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Play for her portrayal of Ruth Younger.

Sophie Okonedo is currently seen alongside Kenneth Branagh in his latest Agatha Christie adaptation, DEATH ON THE NILE, and will soon star alongside Ewan McGregor and Ethan Hawke in Apple Studios' film RAYMOND AND RAY.

# Noëmi Manser

Face Model



Noëmi Manser was born in Basel, but spent her childhood and early teenage years in New Zealand. At the age of 15, she returned to Switzerland and began a successful modelling career, which gained her international recognition. Today, Manser lives in her adopted home of New York and devotes more time to her art. Part of her practice involves painting faces with her left and right hand simultaneously – a project she calls "Connecting Brains". This technique connects the two halves of the brain, i.e. the emotional and rational sides.

#### **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

My motivation for the cinematic exploration of fear stems from a personal trauma. Roughly twelve years ago, I lost my partner in an extreme sports accident while I myself was undergoing chemotherapy – an experience that simultaneously shook me up and woke me up. I spent a lot of time in Lauterbrunnen, where the base jump accident happened. During these visits, and contrary to expectations, I learned more about life than I did about death. I would never jump off a cliff myself, but the base jumpers gave me the courage to confront my fears and focus on those things in life that are important to me.

This was all going well until I became a mother for the first time. The birth of our son (and, 16 months later, our daughter) awakened in me a great need for security, which felt massively threatened by the media hysteria and horrifying news reports that were constantly flooding in. I found myself annoyed by this situation and started thinking a lot about real and fake danger – and the individual's perception of such.

It should also be said that I have already dealt with the themes of fear, risk and safety in some of my earlier films. SEED WARRIORS focuses on a facility (supposedly the safest of its kind) in Svalbard, Norway, some 1,000 kilometres from the North Pole, where three million foil-wrapped seed samples from all over the world are to be stored to ensure the survival of biodiversity. VIRGIN TALES, meanwhile, follows seven children growing up like birds in a gilded cage due to their parents' desire to protect them from harmful influences – including those of a secular worldview, sex and the risk of a broken heart. And in FREEFALLING – A LOVE STORY, I tell of my own experience of cancer and loss. In this respect, my latest film represents a natural continuation of my cinematic work.

When I started working on this material, I would never have thought it possible that US citizens would elect Donald Trump as president – and, even worse, that "Europe is also facing its own Trump moment", as one Swiss Handelszeitung reporter put it. We Europeans are appalled by America's decision, yet we forget that populists are also on the rise in our countries, stirring up fear and unrest and causing great anxiety among the general population. They influence our thoughts with the use of specific language like "waves of refugees", "tax burdens" and "black sheep". This constant conflict, the judging and categorising into good and evil, paralyses our society and leaves us with a deep sense of unease. According to research, humans make decisions on the basis of emotions, not facts. This means that populists are already half way towards achieving their goal, as frightened people are easier to convince of the need for new laws, authoritarian positions of power, borders between countries (including physical ones), and even wars.

In my film, however, I do not want to examine the question of who is to blame for this manipulation, but rather to reveal the mechanisms behind it to explain how and why such manipulation works. With the support of experts in the field, I want to show which processes in particular determine – and sometimes cloud – our judgement. My aim is

not to stir up fear, but to help society find more effective ways to deal with risk. After all, it is only by learning ourselves how to process risk and draw conclusions from information about risk that we gain the tools we need to deal appropriately and effectively with our fears and the risky situations we face every day. In this sense, my film is a plea *for* fear – because without fear and our efforts to deal with it, humanity would come to a standstill.

Mirjam von Arx

## Biography / Filmography Filmmaker

Mirjam von Arx studied journalism and worked for close to two decades as an editor and writer for various magazines. In 1991, she moved to New York and started producing and directing her first films. In 2001, she moved to London and began filming the documentary BUILDING THE GHERKIN about the planning and construction of Norman Foster's iconic building in the City of London. In 2002 she founded the production company ican films gmbh, through which she has produced several award-winning theatrical documentaries including SEVEN DUMPSTERS AND A CORPSE about compulsive hoarding, SEED WARRIORS about the world's first global seed bank located just 1000 kilometers from the North Pole, VIRGIN TALES (picked up by Showtime USA) about the Colorado family who started the now (in)famous Purity Balls, and the acclaimed documentary features FREEFALLING - A LOVE STORY (also directed by Mirjam von Arx), THE DAY THE SUN FELL by director Aya Domenig and I AM GENTRIFICATION: CONFESSIONS OF A SCOUNDREL by director Thomas Haemmerli. Von Arx' latest film THE SCENT OF FEAR is the Winner of the 7. CH-Dokfilm Competiton and has been shown at numerous festivals.

Mirjam von Arx is a member of the European Film Academy as well as the Swiss Film Academy.

#### 2021/22 THE SCENT OF FEAR

produced by ican films gmbh, in co-production with SRF

Director: Mirjam von Arx Production: Mirjam von Arx

HD, 90'

Winner 7. Migros-Kulturprozent CH-Dokfilm Competition

Nomination Prix de Soleure 2021

#### Festivals:

CPH:DOX Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival 2021 Pariscience Int. Science Film Festival, Grand Écran Competition, 2021

Bergen International Film Festival 2021

Contemporary Science Film Festival Moscow, 2021

Krakow Film Festival, Poland, 2022

#### 2019 BEYOND THE MUSIC – THE BARENBOIM-SAID ACADEMY

produced by ican films gmbh and FLARE FILM, Berlin

in co-production with SRF, rbb, ARTE

Director: David Bernet

Production: Mirjam von Arx, Martin Heisler

HD, 52'

#### Festivals:

Jerusalem Jewish Film Festival, Israel, 2019

Master of Art, Bulgaria, 2020

Winnipeg Jewish Film Festival, Canada, 2021 Vancouver Jewish Film Festival, canada, 2021

TV Distribution: Swiss TV, arte, rbb, Deutsche Welle

#### 2017 I AM GENTRIFICATION: CONFESSIONS OF A SCOUNDREL

produced by ican films gmbh, in co-production SRF, SRG SSR

Director: Thomas Haemmerli Production: Mirjam von Arx

HD, 90' / 52'

Winner Zurich Film Prize 2018

Special Mention, Int. Documentary Competition, Zurich Film Festival 2017

Nomination Prix du Public, Solothurner Filmtage 2018

#### Festivals:

São Paulo International Film Festival, Brazil, New Filmmakers Competition, 2017

Filmfest Hamburg, Germany, Competition Political Film, 2017

Solothurner Filmtage, 2018

DOK.fest München, Best of the Fest, 2018

#### 2015 THE DAY THE SUN FELL, produced by ican films gmbh

in co-production SRF, SRG SSR

Director: Aya Domenig Producer: Mirjam von Arx

HD, 90' / 52'

Premiere: Int. Film Festival Locarno (Semaine de la Critique) 2015

Nomination Swiss Film Award 2016 Best Documentary

Winner Swiss Film Award 2016 for Best Music

Winner Prix Anthropologie et Development Durable und Prix Mario Ruspoli, Festival International Jean Rouch 2016 and the David Plath Media Award for

best film work on East Asian Anthropology

#### Festivals:

68. Locarno International Film Festival, Semaine de la Critique, 2014

Weltfilmtage Thusis, 2015

Hiroshima International Film Festival, 2015

This Human World, Wien, 2015

Solothurner Filmtage, 2016

Filmfestival Max Ophüls Preis Saarbrücken, Wettbewerb, 2016

Mumbai International Film Festival, Int. Wettbewerb, 2016

DOCfeed Eindhoven, Wettbewerb, 2016

Thessaloniki Documentary Festival, 2016

Green Image Film Festival, Tokyo, Wettbwerb, 2016

Bolzano Filmfestival, Wettbewerb, 2016

26. Filmkunstfest Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Wettbewerb, 2016

13th Göttingen Int. Ethnographic Film Festival, 2016

Int. Filmfestival Innsbruck, Wettbewerb, 2016

EDOC - Encuentros del Otro Cine, Ecuador, 2016

Seoul Human Rights Film Festival, Korea (SHRFF), 2016

Festival Interational Jean Rouch, Paris, 2016

#### 2014 FREEFALLING – A LOVE STORY, produced by ican films gmbh,

in co-production with SRF SRG SSR, BR and ARTE

Director/Producer: Mirjam von Arx

HD, 90' / 52'

Premiere: 10th Zurich Film Festival 2014

TV Distribution: Swiss TV, BR, ARTE

Festivals:

Zurich Film Festival, 2014

DOK.fest Munich, Wettbewerb, 2015

Solothurner Filmtage, 2015

Int. Bergfilm Festival Tegernsee, 2015

Bergfahrt Bergün, 2016

#### 2012 VIRGIN TALES, produced by ican films gmbh,

in co-production with SRF SRG SSR, ARTE G.E.I.E.

Director/Producer/Co-Author: Mirjam von Arx

HD/35mm, 87' / 57'

Winner Zurich Film Award 2012

Finalist Maysles Brothers Award 2012

TV Distribution: Swiss TV, arte, Showtime USA, CBC Canada, DR Denmark, YLE

Finland, Sky Network New Zealand, Austrian TV ORF, 3sat

Festivals (selection):

Visions du Réel, Nyon 2012 (Schweiz)

AFI/Discovery Channel Silverdocs Festival, Int. Competition 2012 (USA)

Festival del Film Locarno 2012, Appellation Suisse (Schweiz)

Vancouver International Film Festival 2012, Nonfiction Features (Canada)

Woodstock Film Festival 2012, Int. Competition (NY, USA)

46. Internationale Hofer Filmtage 2012 (Deutschland)

DOK Leipzig 2012, Int. Programme (Deutschland)

36. Duisburger Filmwoche 2012 (Deutschland)

STARZ Denver Film Festival 2012, Int. Competition (USA)

Solothurner Filmtage 2013 (Schweiz)

## 2009 SEED WARRIORS, produced by ican films gmbh,

in co-production with ARTE/ZDF, SF

Directors: Mirjam von Arx / Katharina von Flotow,

Producer: Mirjam von Arx HD/35mm, 86' / 52'

Nomination Int. Green Film Award, Cinema for Peace Gala Berlinale 2011

TV Distribution: Swiss TV, arte, TSI, NRK Norway, UR Sweden, TVE Spain, TVP

Poland, Film Media Group (USA), True Visions (Thailand), Link TV (USA)

# 2007 SEVEN DUMPSTERS AND A CORPSE, produced by ican films gmbh,

in co-production with SF Director: Thomas Haemmerli Producer: Mirjam von Arx DV / Super 8mm, 81'

Winner Zurich Film Award 2007

Nominated for Swiss Film Award 2008

TV Distribution: Swiss TV, 3Sat, SBS Australia, YES Israel, Canadian Documentary

Channel

## 2005 **BUILDING THE GHERKIN**, co-produced by ican films gmbh,

Director / Exec. Producer: Mirjam von Arx

Digibeta / 35mm, 89' /52'

Winner First Prize Int. Film Festival sur l'Art, Montréal

TV Distribution: Swiss TV, 3Sat, SKY Artsworld, ABC Australia, MICO/NHK Japan,

NRK Norway, Arts Channel New Zealand, Public TV Taiwan, FOX Int. Italy,

CzechTV

## **Full Credits**

Narration Sophie Okonedo

Scientists Joseph LeDoux

Lutz Jaencke Ortwin Renn Elisbeth Wehling Peter Schneider Thomas Bernauer

Extreme Athlete Evelyne Binsack

Face Model Noëmi Manser

Directed and Produced by Mirjam von Arx

Written by Mirjam von Arx

Livia Vonaesch

Editing Daniel Cherbuin

Editing Consultant Sabine Krayenbühl

Science Adviser Nadine Romann

Narration written by Mirjam von Arx

Jen Ziegler

Original Score Adrian Frutiger

Sound Design Peter Bräker

Christian Beusch

Sound Supervisor Christian Beusch

Animation Nino Christen

Graphic Design and Title Sequence Signe Fleischmann

Effects Model Sequences Eric Lehner

ColoristTimo InderfurthVFXUrsula DeissCoordination PostproductionRoger Limacher

Postproduction Cinegrell

## Trip to the North Pole

With

Evelyne Binsack

Camera and Sound Technical Adviser Equipment Support Evelyne Binsack Richard Grell, Cinegrell Fujifilm Switzerland

#### Vivos xPoint South Dakota

With

Robert K. Vicino, Founder & CEO Mary Soulsby Tom Soulsby Mark Bowman

Camera Sound Elia Lyssy Lee Frank

## Fear of Spiders Seminar

With

Ursula Galli, Psychotherapist Gianandrea Pallich, Psychotherapist Elia Heule, Zoologist Fabian Klimmek, Zoologist

Camera Sound Production Assistant Music Sergio Cassini Jean-Pierre Gerth Andreas Eberhard Jojo Mayer

# Happy Dying Seminar in Seoul

With

Lee Jae-Gyun Kim Gi-Ho

Segment Producer Camera Fixer Translation Loretta Dalpozzo Michael Glowacki Eunice Yoo-Jung Kang Seo Woo Kim Hae-Sup Sin

## Swiss Re Trendspotting

With

Matthias Weber Kirsten Hernan

CameraStéphane KuthyCamera AsisstantHannes CullumSoundJean-Pierre GerthProduction AssistantDiogo Almeida

## New York Lockdown

Camera Martin F. Suter &

Marianne Suter Lévai iStock.com/SVTeam,

iStock.com/OrlowskiDesigns

Jojo Mayer

Green Screen Production

Studio Gutenswil

Stock Footage

Music

Camera Sergio Cassini

Stéphane Kuthy

Sound Jean-Pierre Gerth

Oscar van Hoogevest

Gaffer Thomas Meyer

Make-Up Kim Petri

Laura Moser Andina Knöpfel

Digital Arts New York

Service Production Apograph Productions

**Rob Rapley** 

Camera Sergio Cassini

Sound Judy Karp

Production Assistant Jenny Catherall

Gaffer Jeffrey Collier

Make-up Dani Scarcella

Aga Choinska

Legal Services Werder Viganò AG

Kai-Peter Uhlig

Clearance Counsel Donaldson + Callif LLP

Alexandre Yousefzadeh

Archivists Bonnie Hlinomaz

Diana Frei

Transcripts Vera Bruggmann

Jane Eller

Translation Services Babelfisch Translations

#### Music

"When I Think of Her"
Written and performed by Jiha Park
Published by District 6 Music Publishing Ltd
Courtesy of District 6
Recording courtesy of Glitterbeat Records GmbH

"New Nap City" written and performed by Jojo Mayer

"Tingle Jingle" written and performed by Jojo Mayer

"Fearing"
performed by Joseph LeDoux and Colin Dempsey
Lyrics by Joseph LeDoux (based on Emily Dickinson)
from the Album "Theory of my Mind" by The Amygdaloids" (2010)

Produced by ican films

in Co-production with SRG SSR / Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen Sven Wälti, Urs Augstburger

Supported by
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Succès Passage Antenne SRG SSR
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