

WHAT'S UP, AMERICA?

DOCUMENTARY - 55 MIN **VIMSFILM**

Manuel Scheuernstuhl, a journalist from Germany, follows the journey of Trump and his supporters over four years from the January 6th riots to his Inauguration in 2025 in Washington DC.

During times of political turmoil, he wants to find out:

- What do the events in DC tell us about our world?
- Why did Americans vote for Donald Trump twice?
- And, did they really vote for a “fascist?”

Manuel Scheuernstuhl's dream came true. Since he started voice acting for American Disney movies, he always wanted to study in the United States. In 2021, he then got the chance to study in New York. Shortly before leaving Germany, he hears about Trump Supporters storming the Capitol. By a desire to see history unfold, he decides to fly to Washington DC to film the inauguration of President Joe Biden. Travelling together with his German friend Philipp Antony, they want to understand what is happening in the country they admire. In the country's capital, they speak to Trump supporters, residents, journalists and Black Lives Matter activists. Most of them were relieved that Trump is leaving office.

The friends want to finish the movie, but they have to go back to Germany to complete their degree. After finishing his diploma, Manuel decides to become a journalist. Being accepted to Columbia Journalism School in New York City, he returns. Four years later, he is in the US again - during the Presidential election between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. On Election Day, he reports from Washington D.C together with Andrew Mercein, an American Journalist. The city looks different. In front of the White House the two friends interview voters, cover protests, and join a Trump celebration party in the only Republican bar in town. In January 2025, Manuel visits Washington D.C for a third time. This time, both of his friends join him. They want to report on Donald Trump's inauguration. Exactly four years ago, people in DC were relieved he was out. Now, many are in shock, but the majority celebrate his return.

Manuel is not from the US but from Germany; he did not grow up with CNN or Fox News, and he is not able to vote in the US. He follows his curiosity about the country he admired as a kid. This outsider perspective invites both sides of the political spectrum to follow the reporter on a journey that is less biased to understand the political landscape. Also, following his background, growing up in the country that has the worst past with a fascist dictator, he wants to understand the rising Trump-Hitler comparison, by talking to experts.

Trump will be the elected President for the next four years. It is more important than ever not to fall into fatigue but to understand the people who voted for him. Instead of demonizing the other side, as legacy media outlets did in the last eight years, journalists need to go into conversation. They need to understand the drivers behind the voter's views and see the humans behind them.

STYLE & INSPIRATION



The documentary does not follow the traditional expository or observational documentary style. There are no staged studio interviews, objective third-person view, or authoritative narration. Instead, it is a participatory documentary involving the reporter in the story. Filmed with the Sony FX3, we see POV-footage, down on the ground, guided by the reporter's voice-over narration. The combination of an extended YouTube video of Andrew Callaghan and a Vice documentary, a style that perfectly fits today's Gen Z watching behavior.

The Reuters News Report 2024 highlights a significant shift towards individual creators as news sources. Creators are often surpassing traditional media organizations in views and engagement on platforms like Youtube and TikTok. This reflects a trend towards independent individuals. The election outcome prove this change, with Joe Rogan as the biggest podcasters generating nearly as much viewership as the debate between Harris and Trump on national TV. This film is an authentic production by someone who grew up with watching YouTubers regularly. It's edited in the style of the videos, millions worldwide like to watch: Raw, authentic, and Independent. This style will satisfy the demand for individuals driven content, while adhering to facts and journalistic standards. The goal is to also attract people, who distrust the "established media", without teaching them from an authorian standpoint, but let authenticity and good work speak for itself.



TRUMP BAR ON ELECTION NIGHT

After realizing it is not looking good for Kamala Harris, Manuel and Andrew decide to drive to the only Republican bar in town. They arrive when Fox News called Trump elected president after winning Pennsylvania.

The two friends experience the moment of celebration and talk with several Trump Supporters including the head of the Young Republicans who organizes the event.



REPORTER

www.scheuernstuhl.net

Manuel Scheuernstuhl is a video journalist from Munich, Germany. As the German voice of Bran Stark in Game of Thrones, Manuel has honed his skills as a voice actor, while also hosting his podcast “Steps with Manu”, featuring guests like EU Vice President Katarina Barley. He is currently pursuing a Master’s in Journalism at Columbia University as a Fulbright Scholar and recipient of the prestigious John Chancellor Scholarship for Excellence in Journalism. Manuel holds a degree in Media Economics from Stuttgart Media University and also studied at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications in Syracuse, New York. Manuel’s work has been recognized through scholarships from Columbia University, Syracuse University, Fulbright, the Foundation of German Business, Heinx Nixdorf Stiftung and others. Now based in New York City, he is passionate about creating impactful documentaries that explore the intersection of culture, politics, and society.

Columbia
Journalism
School 

 FULBRIGHT
Germany


Newhouse School of
Public Communications

PEOPLE WE SPOKE TO



Illeana Blackshair

New Yorker
on the train
to DC



**Tatjana Jinkins
with Son and dog**

(afternoon,
MLK Memorial Library
Polling Station):



Isaac Smith

Trump Supporter



Paula Molina

Chilean journalist,
Harvard Nieman Fellow,
radio and TV host



Hazami Barmada

Pro Palestine Protester,
Harvard Public Policy,
Leading Figure in Pro
Palestine Movement



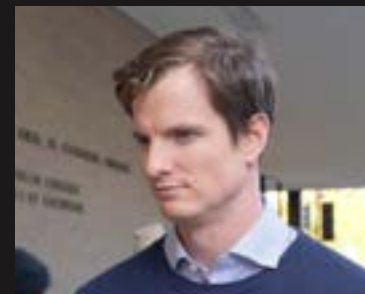
Peter Minettos

Trump Supporter



Sterling,

lives in a Refugee/
Homeless Shelter in DC,
originally from South Carolina



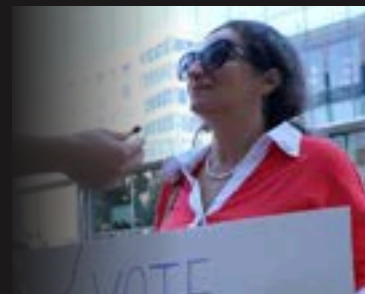
Oliver

From Austria
voting on a local Election



Mackenzie Harms

From Virginia,
Government Relations for Shein
Trump Supporter



Lina

Pro Palestine Protester



Jaylen

young women,
Harris Supporter



Daryl

Trump Supporter
with Apocalypse Truck



Corrin Brown and Tim Brown

(afternoon,
MLK Memorial Library
Polling Station)



Eric

Trump Supporter

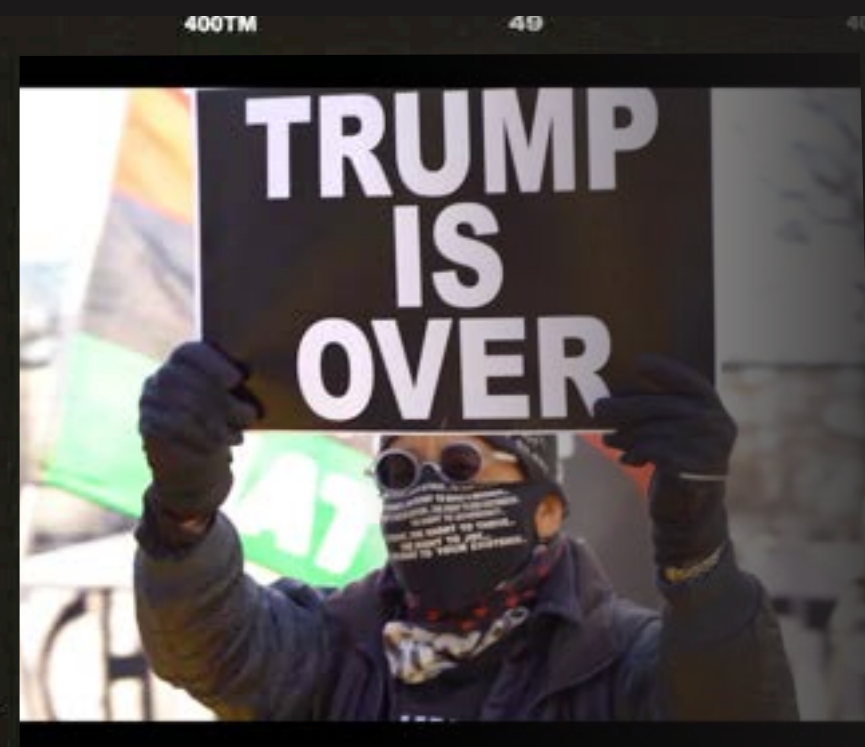
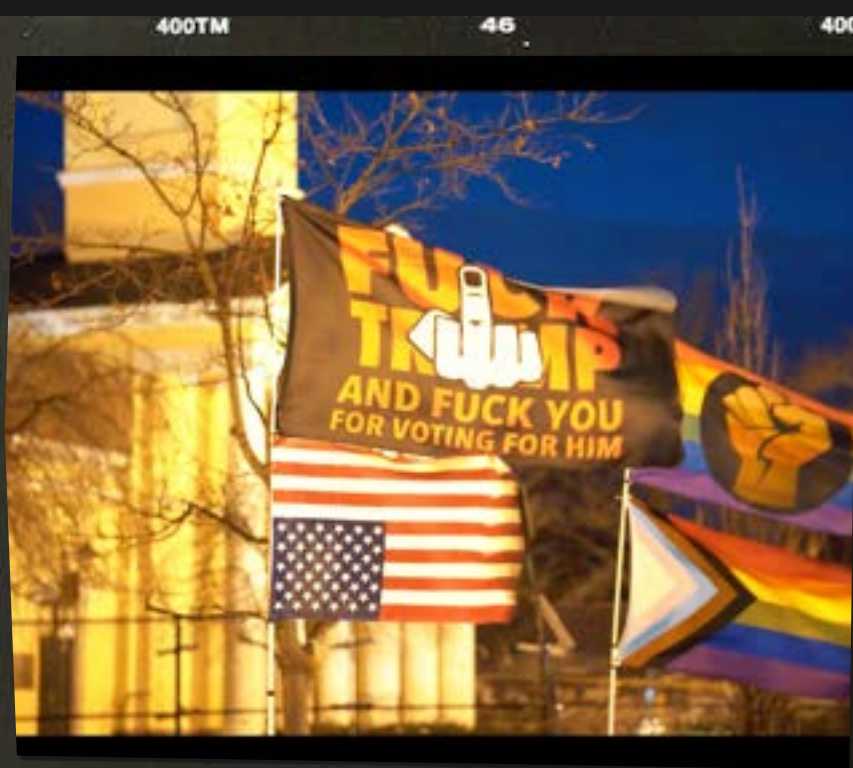
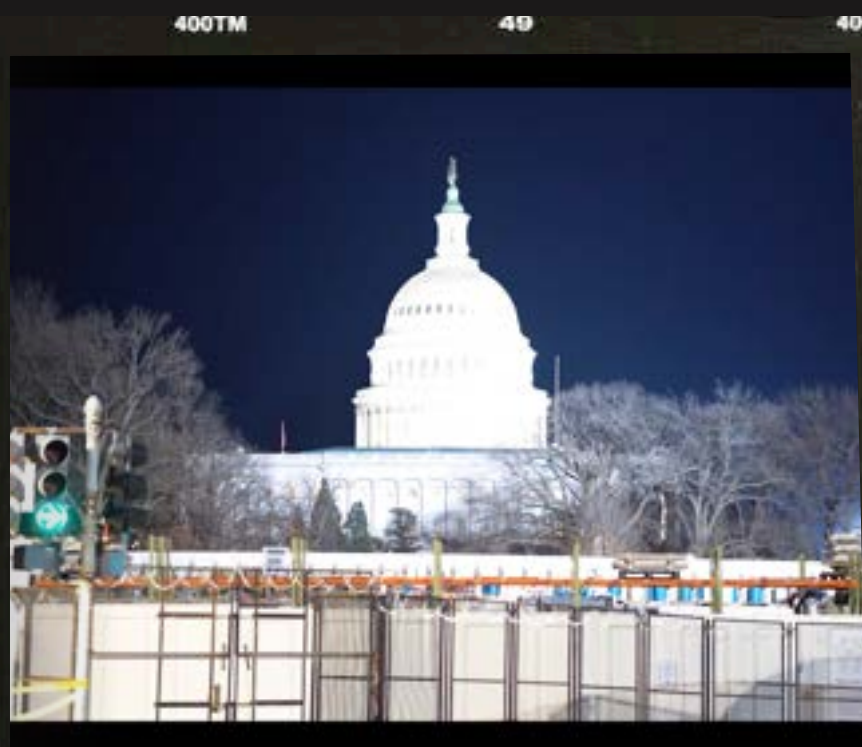
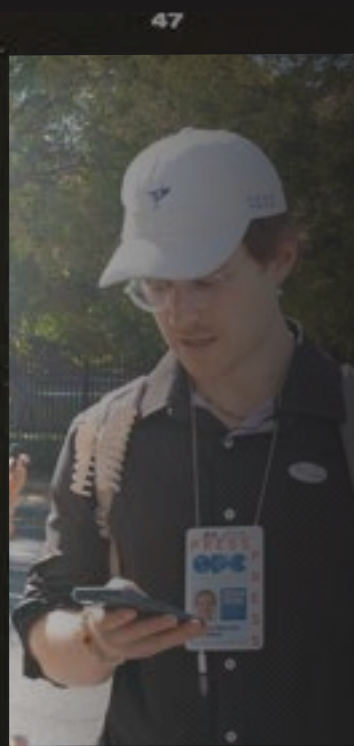
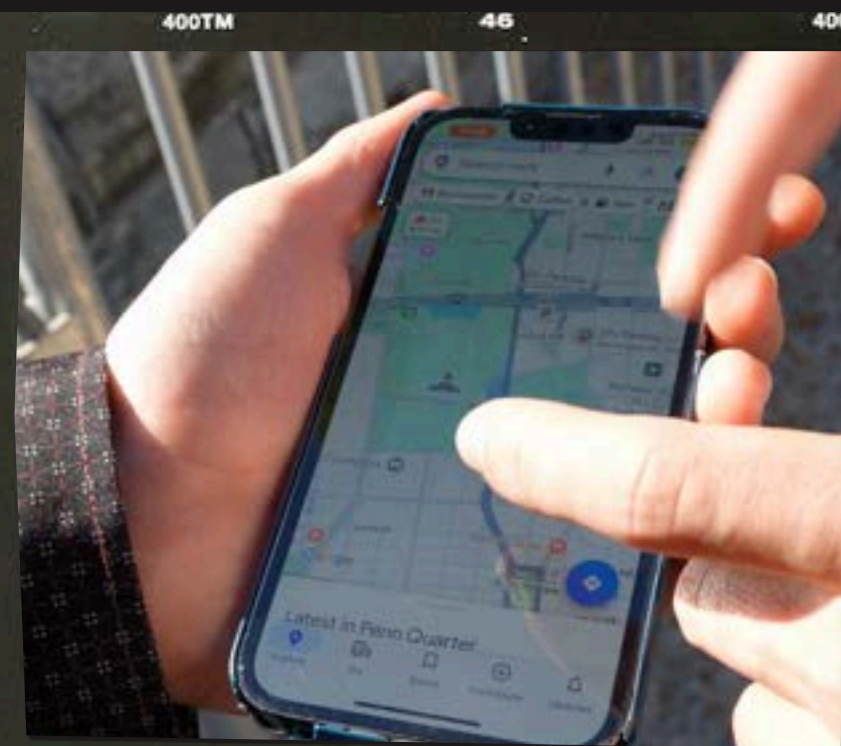
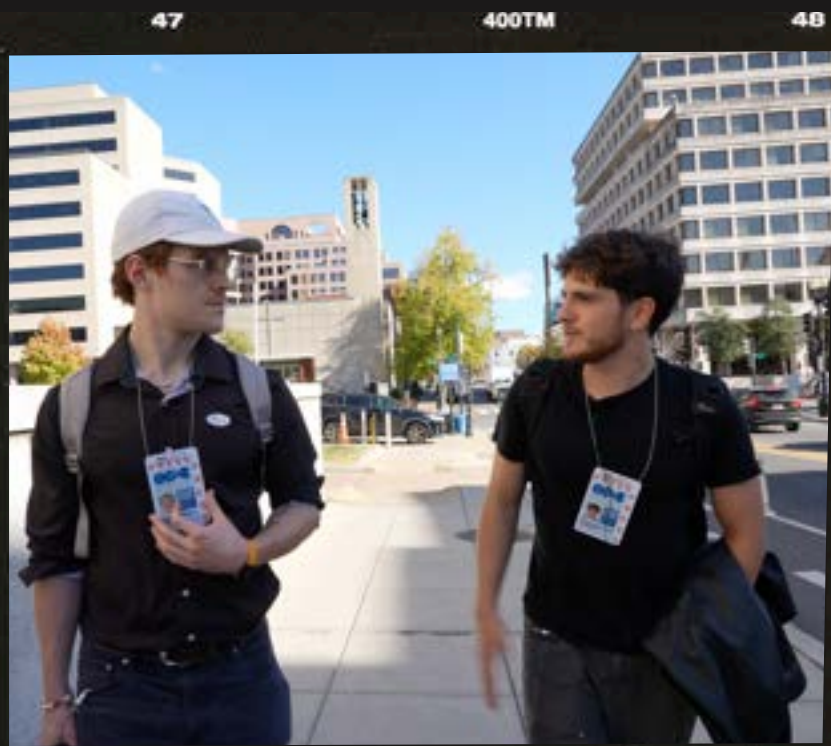
PIVOTAL EVENTS IN WASHINGTON DC OVER 4 YEARS



INAUGURATION OF JOE BIDEN

ELECTION DAY

INAUGURATION OF DONALD TRUMP





THANK YOU