

INTRO ([00:04](#)):

Welcome to The Bill Walton Show featuring conversations with leaders, entrepreneurs, artists and thinkers, fresh perspectives on money, culture, politics and human flourishing, interesting people, interesting things.

Bill Walton ([00:24](#)):

There are almost 1.5 billion paying subscribers to global streaming services. Annual worldwide spending on film and TV production has reached almost a quarter of a trillion dollars. The United States alone just four networks. Netflix, Disney, Amazon Prime, and HBO Max alone spend more than \$75 billion every year. And almost all this spending goes towards woke progressive themed entertainment and the progressive left has come to dominate our institutions and our culture. They've been deadly serious about using the art of storytelling to promote their agenda and so far they've succeeded. Centre-right Americans complain that we're losing the culture wars and we are, but that won't change until we actually produce culture. We need to commit real money to producing entertainment that embodies our values and we need to get into the business of storytelling. You can't win unless you're in the game.

([01:31](#)):

Welcome to The Bill Walton Show. I'm Bill Walton. Joining me today to talk about how we can reclaim our culture through film and it's a big opportunity, is my friend Michael Pack, a documentary filmmaker and the former CEO of the US Agency for Global Media. I'm also joined by his son, Thomas Pack, who is heading up an exciting new adventure, Palladium Pictures, which aims to fight back in the culture war by producing feature length films, documentary shorts, and training a next generation of filmmakers through an incubator film training program. Michael brings a powerful resume to this, having produced over 15 award-winning award-winning documentaries for public television. Most recently, a terrific film that I recommend everybody see Created Equal, Clarence Thomas in his own words. Michael, welcome back. Thomas, great to have you and you've got your own strong background in this, but you're not quite up to Michael's yet, so we'll do your whole bio after you've made Palladium World famous. Well, let's start talking about you, Michael. You had a recent feast in real clear, real clear politics, I believe

Michael Pack ([02:44](#)):

That's right.

Bill Walton ([02:44](#)):

And the title is ... Great title. You Can't Fight the Culture War Without Making Movies.

Michael Pack ([02:49](#)):

Exactly. Just the same theme as you sounded very eloquently a few minutes ago, Bill, I always say about the culture war that you can't win a culture war when only one side is fighting. Imagine if we had a real battle where one side had an army in the field and the other side just complained about what that army was doing, wrote articles and denounced it. I mean, who would win the war? I mean, it's a no contest. So as you said in your introduction, we on the sort of conservative libertarian right side of the spectrum have to start producing culture. We can't blame the left for fighting for their ideas. We have to fight for our own.

Bill Walton ([03:26](#)):

Well, I agree. Now, Thomas, you're now heading this up, this incubator. This is part of not just talking but doing. What's the incubator about?

Thomas Pack ([03:36](#)):

Yeah, well, the incubator is about actually training the next generation of filmmakers. I think that this idea of, as you were saying, all these streaming services being part of the left, I think that finally can service are paying attention to that and there's a movement toward alternatives in streaming alternative conservative film studios. But you can't just fund conservative film studios or conservative streaming services and assume you'll start making good movies right away. And the left has understood this for a really long time. They've been cultivating talent by working with young people from early on in their career from film school on up, and as a result, they're making great movies. And so we're sort of starting that process for more conservative filmmakers or filmmakers that question the hetero [inaudible 00:04:31] mainstream media.

Bill Walton ([04:31](#)):

Well, the problem with most conservative documentaries is they're incredibly pedantic. It's like some of them are like PowerPoint presentations with lots of video clips and things like that, and they don't have a principal character. I mean, they're really not very good at framing good versus evil and telling a story and how we prevail over it. I mean, you're the storyteller, what do you ...

Michael Pack ([04:54](#)):

I think that is exactly right. The left is master of the art of storytelling, and we sometimes use the term, but we don't really do it. Conservatives are best at documentaries that at most are preaching to the choir that pound themes that we all already agree on and don't tell human stories. So they are not really convincing to a broad swath of people. And we really want in Palladium as really in my previous films to reach the center to reach most of America who I think instinctively reject the woke progressivism you refer to. And we need to give them stories that they can respond to and believe in rather than simply reject wokeism.

([05:43](#)):

And as Thomas says, you can't tell stories without storytellers. And that's really the idea of the incubator is to ... Thomas has gone around searching for right of center filmmakers who want to get this money from us. We're going to fully fund and distribute these films if they apply on our website, palladiumpictures.com. But the point really is that by making a film under our direction, we will be the executive producers and own it. By making it under our direction, we will make sure they tell a story that it won't just be propaganda, it won't be just conservative talking heads telling you what to think, for example, but they'll find a human story and the ideas will be embedded in the story instead of the other way around.

Bill Walton ([06:27](#)):

The website palladiumpictures.com. If you're listening or watching, you ought to take a look at it, particularly if you're a young person or maybe even a middle-aged person, or how about old people for your incubator, whatever age.

Michael Pack ([06:42](#)):

Whatever age.

Bill Walton ([06:43](#)):

Whoever wants us among us to start telling stories. But there's this notion that we're not good at it. I think we're all good at stories. If you stop that and think about how you communicate with your friends and people you want to persuade, we just don't do it in films. Now, you talk about this in your article. In the 1940s, 1930s, Hollywood made a fortune, a bunch of Jewish immigrants came to America, loved the country, and told stories that celebrated American culture.

Michael Pack ([07:14](#)):

Well, that's right. So the idea that it can't be done is disproven by the golden age of Hollywood.

Bill Walton ([07:19](#)):

Yeah.

Michael Pack ([07:19](#)):

The idea that artists are naturally left wing and progressive and anti-establishment and anti-American and rule breakers. What about the Hollywood Golden Age from the westerns to the films of Frank Capra that celebrated family and values and America not in uncritical way, and those movies weren't uncritical either, so it can be done. So I think the left does not have a natural advantage in storytelling. They have cultivated it, as Thomas was saying earlier, by 50 years of investing in it and teaching people it.

Thomas Pack ([07:55](#)):

Right. Yeah, I mean I think it's true. I think the incentive structure is off on the right. It's not that people don't want to tell great stories, it's just that we're sort of incentivized toward the quick hits types of documentary that you described. Although I will say the most PowerPoint documentary that I know of is the Inconvenient Truth, which is sort of on the other side, but I think that-

Bill Walton ([08:22](#)):

Yeah, but all of its models were flat wrong.

Thomas Pack ([08:25](#)):

That's possibly true-

Bill Walton ([08:27](#)):

Except for that. It was a great story.

Michael Pack ([08:28](#)):

Except for being wrong.

Thomas Pack ([08:29](#)):

But it actually lacks storytelling elements. We always say in documentary, it's a mixture of real journalism, which means actual thoughtful interview all sides get the whole story and real cinematic storytelling where you have to understand characters and plot and bring your audience along. And that's a hard thing, I think, for a lot of people to digest and to do both. And it's not really correctly incentivized on the right, even though we do have this long history of film and also in the arts. I think it's a great

history of conservatives from Michelangelo and everybody else. We appreciate aesthetics and what makes art great.

Bill Walton ([09:11](#)):

Well, why the focus ... I probably know the answer to this. Why focus on documentary as opposed to feature film?

Michael Pack ([09:20](#)):

Well, we think that document, first of all, they're less expensive. You can control them, you can make them and get them done. You don't have to do it through the Hollywood apparatus. If you want to do a Marvel superhero movie, you've got to have hundreds of millions of dollars and stars and a big team behind you to make it happen. Documentaries can be done and controlled, and in fact, most of these young people who are graduating from film school are going to go into nonfiction programming. There's just more jobs there. Every website in the world has video on it. So the world of nonfiction programming is big and it's big on these streaming services. It's big on Netflix and Amazon and HBO. It's an increasingly large percentage of their programming from true crime to political documentaries.

Bill Walton ([10:12](#)):

Well, we joke last, it wasn't really a joke, but it's a fact. How many colleges are there in America? 4,000?

Michael Pack ([10:19](#)):

They're like 4,000.

Bill Walton ([10:19](#)):

And every one of them has got a film department.

Michael Pack ([10:21](#)):

That's right.

Bill Walton ([10:21](#)):

And everyone leans left.

Michael Pack ([10:23](#)):

Everyone leans left. Most of them are out front about, or they use a term like, "We're going to teach you to make social justice documentaries or advocacy documentaries," but it's all advocacy on one side. So, that's right. 4,000 colleges with a film school, if they graduate 50 to a hundred people a year, that's hundreds of thousands every year of wannabe filmmakers. So maybe 5% have talent and the rest, I don't know, go find another kind of job. So the left has a funnel to siphon off the cream of a very large group, and we end up with people who simply reject that orthodoxy, as Thomas was saying earlier. So we need to just do better in that area. I mean, we are not even being kind to the people who are rejecting the orthodoxy, which are the ones that Thomas is now seeking out people who are tired of being even from college on being pushed with these woke progressive ideas and want to express a different point of view. And that was actually my own experience. When I came out of film school, all my friends were making-

Bill Walton ([11:32](#)):

Where'd you go to film school?

Michael Pack ([11:33](#)):

NYU?

Bill Walton ([11:35](#)):

How'd you escape?

Michael Pack ([11:36](#)):

I only went for one summer. I took two courses and right away I wanted make a film. And all the people else who were graduating in my class and who were there wanted to make radical left-wing films. And I thought, "Well, we'll make ..." My then partner. And I just said, "We'll make the alternative." And we thought we would be able to demolish their films. It would be take a matter of a year and we'd turn American culture back towards where it should be. But as you know, Bill, we didn't actually succeed doing it.

Bill Walton ([12:02](#)):

Didn't work out.

Michael Pack ([12:03](#)):

And it didn't really work out-

Bill Walton ([12:04](#)):

Well, you personally though, we're very successful.

Michael Pack ([12:06](#)):

I've managed to do it, but it was harder process than I thought, and I have not yet given up, but we want those same people like myself as a young man who rejects the orthodoxy. They're being pushed and want to make a film and don't have a vehicle to do it. Thomas has scoured the country looking for those people, young people predominantly, but as you said, Bill, they don't have to be young.

Bill Walton ([12:26](#)):

This is The Bill Walton Show. I'm Bill Walton. I'm here with Michael and Thomas Pack. We've got a very interesting new venture called Palladium Pictures. I like the use of pictures. It's very old Hollywood.

Michael Pack ([12:36](#)):

Right. It's very. It is.

Bill Walton ([12:38](#)):

Talking about making pictures. That's very cool. Anyway, for all of us who love stories and films and old movies and just basically narrative, we need to see more of that that reflects our values and we're not, I think about Avatar by James Cameron where the villains basically were the human race and it was a very environmentally correct movie, but nevertheless, totally one side and a point of view. I think a story

needs to be told from the other side, and you all are going to be set up to do that. Now, it seems to me that the key though is high quality content because we can all dream that we're going to make a great movie, but then the idea of thinking about we're going to do it and doing it, how do you teach storytelling? And I want to give you a little credentials on this because you made a terrific film Rickover about the admiral who invented really the nuclear submarine and-

Michael Pack ([13:47](#)):

And the power plant even.

Bill Walton ([13:47](#)):

And the power plant in it. And I think I sent you an email. I'm so glad you got Buster Scruggs to chart star and who was that? Tim ...

Michael Pack ([13:53](#)):

Tim Blake Nelson. He was a great admiral Rickover. He was a great.

Bill Walton ([13:57](#)):

But what you did with that is you not only did the documentary part explaining, but you made it a really good story.

Michael Pack ([14:04](#)):

That's right. Each project has its own form and you have to find it. And that's sort of the work of storytelling. As you say, my Rickover film, which is still streaming on Amazon, has a lot of dramatic recreations, whereas the Clarence Thomas film, we simply let Clarence Thomas speak. So we found the form appropriate to the story and filmmakers need to do that work. So when ... The people we accept in the incubator, we will make sure their stories meet our standards. I say too, that they have to equally start with a story idea. There are so many conservative films that simply have a thesis that they're proving, but a thesis is not a story and a thesis with a series of anecdotes proving it isn't a story. Story is something that happens to a protagonist over time. So they have to start with an idea like that and we have to help them find the story. I mean, that's the mentorship part of it. We will not let those films be released until those young filmmakers have done the work of finding the documentary and narrative proof.

Bill Walton ([15:17](#)):

Is a story almost like the hero's journey?

Michael Pack ([15:20](#)):

Yeah, a hero's journey I think is clearly one type of story. Right. So Hollywood is very focused on that. As soon as you cross into the border in Los Angeles, they give you those books about that. And that's good. I mean, it's a kind of focus, but there are other ways of telling other things that are a story, but at least a hero's journey has those basic elements. Got a hero, precipitating event that causes him to go into action, things happen to him or her over time, and then there's a climax and a conclusion. That is a kind of story rather than you have a thesis, even one that we agree with, like as you say, environmental issues are wrongly covered in the media and you don't want to just then have a series of criticisms of environmentalists. You have to find a way to make that idea come across through someone's story.

Thomas Pack ([16:20](#)):

Yeah, I mean I think also the mentorship element, there's something you left out when talking about why we picked documentary is the really obvious reason we picked it, which is that you are a very established documentarian and can be a good mentor. And so an example, so most recent film was about Clarence Thomas. As you say, we let him tell his story-

Bill Walton ([16:41](#)):

And you worked on that?

Thomas Pack ([16:42](#)):

I did a little bit. I was working full-time elsewhere, but I was on set at a couple of his interviews, which is really an amazing experience. But he tells his life story. Clarence Thomas' life story, luckily for us has multiple arcs, not just as he rise out of poverty, but also other twists and turns happen to him. He developed an ideology in an interesting way, and our liberal friends liked the story and I don't think it changed their mind about his jurisprudence. They still don't like his jurisprudence, but at the end of the day, he was in the news again recently and they viewed him as more of a human as a result. And that's I think because they were pulled along by the great storytelling, I think it's very important in narrative film, we do need to be making the next bit Avatar films.

([17:29](#)):

I think that it's clear that often the subtext of the big feature films that are coming out is what's affecting the culture. I mean, just look at how abortion has been portrayed in film over the past few decades and how that's affected people. But we can't really teach narrative as well as we can teach documentary, and it's so common in documentary for people to just go for what they think is the easier film to make. And that is the film that doesn't take story seriously and doesn't take its viewership seriously and doesn't take its viewership seriously doesn't try to actually affect and change minds, but just goes through quick hits.

Bill Walton ([18:08](#)):

What kind of budget do you have to produce each film that comes through?

Thomas Pack ([18:12](#)):

For the incubator?

Bill Walton ([18:13](#)):

Yeah.

Thomas Pack ([18:13](#)):

So these are five to 15 minute shorts. So we believe in learning by doing. So we will be funding five to 15 minute shorts. We're up to \$30,000. So this will fully cover the cost of the film, which I think is a great opportunity for, as you say, young people or people that are just sort of early career in documentary, pivoting into it maybe from corporate video or some other video space.

Bill Walton ([18:40](#)):

Does the less expensive technology today make it easier to get out on location and do things on site as opposed to in the studio? What's your balance between ... Your website shows a very interesting shot in a studio, but I assume you're going to be taking most of these documentaries out and producing them where you find them.

Thomas Pack ([19:01](#)):

Well, so for our documentaries it's a little different, but for the incubator documentaries, these are actually people that are on their own producing it how they want and where they want. So they have this budget that they can-

Bill Walton ([19:14](#)):

\$30,000?

Thomas Pack ([19:16](#)):

Up to \$30,000. And that on the production side, we are also doing the distribution of these films as well. So we'll have different funds for actually putting it out.

Bill Walton ([19:24](#)):

Well, that was my next question. I've been involved in making some [inaudible 00:19:28] feature films and you can make a great movie, but then getting it distributed is just unbelievably hard to do. And with the demise of the neighborhood movie theater, particularly after COVID, I mean that whole industry seems to be tough to break into even with high quality content.

Michael Pack ([19:49](#)):

Well, we have one set of problems. As Thomas just said, I'm still making longer documentaries and short documentaries at higher budgets. And at higher budgets you have a different kind of distribution problem, these relatively inexpensive shorts by beginning filmmakers, we can give them a kind of distribution that would at least start their career. We can get them on major media websites that are right of center. We can get them a kind of attention that they wouldn't get if they're say in Indiana somewhere and they're just trying to make a film. So the point of distribution is to sort of get them attention. But the main part of the incubator is training. So hopefully, they'll go on from these short films to make bigger and more expensive, more elaborate, and even more successful films. It's primarily training, whereas the other parts of Palladium Pictures where we're still making our regular films, the primary emphasis is on the film itself.

Bill Walton ([20:52](#)):

Now, so what do you think about what Tucker's doing with Twitter or X or whatever? We took his show off of, get kicked off of Fox, and now he's trying to do it through Twitter.

Michael Pack ([21:05](#)):

And I am not sure what he's doing with his documentary unit that he had at Fox or whether he's still making documentaries. I've only seen his talk stuff on Twitter.

Bill Walton ([21:17](#)):

Well, they were the only content on Fox Nation that was remotely good. So I don't know what they're going to do without him.

Michael Pack ([21:24](#)):

But I think it's a pretty bold move on Tucker's part. I think he's got real talent and a huge audience, and I will look to see whether he can maintain it. It's tough to do. He benefited a lot from the structure of Fox, but I root for him. I believe that we on the right have to hope for as many ways to reach your people and as many entities that are doing it as possible. And even the ones ... I often put down, these people who are making these preach to the choir films, but I actually celebrate anyone who's making any film on our side of the [inaudible 00:22:05]-

Bill Walton ([22:05](#)):

Anybody can get it done. Exactly.

Michael Pack ([22:06](#)):

That's right.

Bill Walton ([22:07](#)):

Yeah, I'm with you on that.

Michael Pack ([22:08](#)):

Right. So I don't want to be negative about that or anybody else. And Tucker definitely included.

Bill Walton ([22:13](#)):

Well, this is The Bill Walton Show. I'm Bill Walton here with Michael and Thomas Pack, and we're talking about the really fun business of making films. And it is fun having been involved in that a bit and why more people ought to be doing it. But I'm about to ask a skeptical question.

Michael Pack ([22:31](#)):

Okay.

Bill Walton ([22:32](#)):

And my skeptical question is this, I talked about \$75 billion from four studios alone and 250 billion worldwide going into mostly progressive woke entertainment. Not all of it, but most of it. Where do you get enough money to really make a dent against that onslaught of bad ideas?

Michael Pack ([22:54](#)):

Well, let me answer that in two parts. I mean, we at Palladium have to do whatever we can do and just move forward with the funding, the skills and the ability we have. And we can't say we're only going to help start two or three a year when really the country needs 50 or a hundred. You got to at least start to do what you can do. But I think your question is a question overall for all those of us that are critical of progressive woke ideology. For the whole group of us, there has to be vastly more investment in this sector. Conservative donors are just not comfortable investing in media, whereas left-wing donors have no trouble at all. They're more comfortable giving money to academic institutions, they're more comfortable giving money to political races, to the Federalist Society, to some good causes to the

Heritage Foundation. So they are not comfortable funding film and television, and they have to get comfortable and really up their contribution by a huge margin.

Bill Walton ([24:01](#)):

Well, I share your view though. I think most of the money goes into conservative organizations that preach to the choir and they don't really move the needle for the larger culture. It's just making people feel good about what they already think and hopefully they can fix America, but we're not seeing much evidence that that's happening. The only way you can do it is to reach people who are not already in that group. And the theory here is we can do it with good stories.

Michael Pack ([24:25](#)):

That's right. And I'm not putting down those other institutions, but it can't be only them-

Bill Walton ([24:33](#)):

Well, as a donor, I would like them to be a lot more effective.

Michael Pack ([24:36](#)):

Well, that's like another show there, Bill.

Bill Walton ([24:38](#)):

Okay.

Michael Pack ([24:40](#)):

Right. Thomas.

Bill Walton ([24:42](#)):

Getting value out of your donor dollar. That's a topic I'm very interested in.

Thomas Pack ([24:46](#)):

But I mean, I actually think it's coming and I think there's a lot to be excited about in this space. I think we can see sort of movement. I mean you talked about Tucker and X, and I think there's a lot of change happening in how we reach people and people are interested in conservative films because they're frankly better. I mean, it's more inspiring to hear a story that's pro-America and pro-individualism than it is to hear something focusing on grievances or sort of the progressive agenda, which has been done so much. And so you're seeing not just X, but you're seeing Angel Studios is breaking out with Sound of Freedom and other shows that go out of the Hollywood norms and how they approach things and Daily Wires coming out with now, Fantasy Shows and Blaze TV.

([25:33](#)):

So people are moving toward this. People are trying to fix this problem. What you need is as you're saying, to affect the conservative donor class. And to do that, you have to just convince them that it is true, that conservatives can be creative and can tell good stories, which is why have to create a network effect. You have to sort of build it out. Our project is ... [inaudible 00:25:59] project is a small piece of a big problem, but it's sort of the first block of the infrastructure that's going to create every year more

and more filmmakers that people watch the films than they see, "Okay, great stuff is coming out of the right." And that will lead to more investments and the flywheel will turn.

Bill Walton ([26:17](#)):

You need some breakthrough films too. You need something that really captures an audience, and I can't remember the name, but CPAC's involved in the film on human trafficking.

Thomas Pack ([26:26](#)):

I think that is Sound of freedom. Yeah. Is that what you're thinking of?

Bill Walton ([26:29](#)):

Was that?

Thomas Pack ([26:29](#)):

Yes, Sound of freedom.

Bill Walton ([26:31](#)):

That's what, 150 million?

Thomas Pack ([26:32](#)):

Yes, that's right.

Bill Walton ([26:33](#)):

And that seems to me as a private equity type, which I am, if you see people making that kind of money, you think, "Well, maybe there's a much bigger audience for this than we previously thought."

Michael Pack ([26:44](#)):

I think there really have been enough breakout films to prove it. Sound of Freedom is one. I think in the documentary realm, our Clarence Thomas film was hugely successful. It proves that you can make hugely successful documentaries too. I think that someone beyond my pay grade needs to mobilize this group. I mean, someone has to start putting hundreds of millions of dollars in it, not just the small amounts that we're talking about. And I hope that that does happen. I agree with Thomas and you too, Bill, that enough of these things that are successful enough attention to it and maybe the money will start to flow. I mean, I hope that happens.

Bill Walton ([27:24](#)):

Well, it is ultimately about the money because to do a real picture, you need a lot more than \$30,000.

Michael Pack ([27:32](#)):

My article and real clear that you mentioned is really focused on the left-wing infrastructure ecosystem that they have built up over many decades. You need all of these elements from, as Thomas alluded, and you also mentioned film school, starting with film school, but they have their own vast network of training programs, not just one incubator. And they have film festivals from Sundance and Telluride, and they have the divisions of big foundations like Ford and MacArthur that are devoted to social justice

films. They have for-profit film companies that declare themselves to be woke and progressive. And then distribution companies that are pretty clearly have that aspect too from Netflix to Amazon to HBO. So there's an entire way to get these films out. It is admirable that Sound of Freedom was able to break out in spite of not having that being in that network. But we need to build some of these other less glamorous institutions than just producing distribution streaming. And I hope that there's interest in doing that.

Bill Walton ([28:45](#)):

Just to plug your article again, it is on real clear politics and it came out, when? Last week? Recently, and it's a very ... yeah, September 11th. That's an auspicious date. And it really goes through this whole story about how we can succeed and why we need to succeed. So how have you raised your money for your previous documentaries? Have those been funded by NPR or have those been funded by wealthy donors?

Michael Pack ([29:14](#)):

Well, both. We've had some from wealthy donors. Our our last film that was funded by public broadcasting was this film called The Last 600 Meters, which was principally funded by the corporation for-

Bill Walton ([29:29](#)):

Tell that story. That's an interesting story.

Michael Pack ([29:31](#)):

Well, we did this film several years ago about the biggest battles in Iraq, Fallujah and Najaf, and we tell it as a battle story. It is not ideological, it's just from the firsthand testimony of the people who fought there, from people from corporals up to sort of the one store general in the field. And it's a great story whether you agree or disagree with the war. These young men and women are heroic. And although that was mainly funded by public Broadcasting Money Corporation for Public Broadcasting, PBS declined to run it. It was just too pro-military for them.

([30:08](#)):

So it never happened to me before and they had money in it and we could never get on the other hand, and I tell the story a little bit in the real clear piece, conservative donors we then went to felt it was not ideological enough. They said it needed a call to action at the end. It needed to take a stand on the war, whereas PBS was right. You could really see what these young men and women are like without my actually telling you by watching the film. So we still hope to release that film. Actually, I think now that Ukraine is at war and now that Israel-

Bill Walton ([30:45](#)):

The left has moved into a very militant mode now, look at Ukraine.

Michael Pack ([30:50](#)):

Well, that's right, and Israel is going to be engaged in urban warfare, not dissimilar from Fallujah in the next week or so. And that's a punishing experience with its PR problems that are illustrated in the film. The film is not pro or anti this kind of war. I mean we've had originally both people who were very pro the Iraq war like Richard Pearl thought it was great, and people who were against the war, like Steve

Bannon also thought it was great and they felt it buttressed their arguments, but my take is if we're going to be involved in this and our allies are going to be involved in it, let's at least understand what's involved and what the cost is.

Bill Walton ([31:34](#)):

So let me circle back to our initial thought about the incubator and the teaching people how to tell stories. How are we going to do that?

Thomas Pack ([31:45](#)):

Right. Well, I mean there's sort of two elements to it. I mean, I think part of it is these ideas that we have had and that you've cultivated over many years of making great documentaries, understanding storytelling elements and understanding how to ... We're in a unique position that we sort of speak to the center left because films have been on PBS. Another part of it is the other thing you get out of film school beyond the technical skills is you learn by doing while you're there and you're part of a system. I mean, this is a hard business actually, even if you are on the left and you have this ecosystem. But the way it works is the film professors that have had success in film, they come back, they teach and then they pick the best people and they move those people along.

([32:38](#)):

And then feeds off talent. Good people are around each other and they learn from each other and they pair good producers with good directors, it's a whole system and it works fabulously. And as you're saying, there's lots of great movies coming out of the left, but they're kind of at a sort of moment of weakness right now in a lot of ways. People are looking for something new. So, the way we'll teach them is that people are going to have a chance to make their films. We're looking for producer directors, people who can demonstrate in their application they've done something before-

Bill Walton ([33:13](#)):

Where do I find your application on the website?

Thomas Pack ([33:16](#)):

Right on palladiumpictures.com. We've got a giant button that says incubator.

Bill Walton ([33:18](#)):

You have a giant button? Apply here?

Thomas Pack ([33:20](#)):

It says incubator.

Bill Walton ([33:21](#)):

Okay.

Thomas Pack ([33:22](#)):

And so you can click that, read all about it.

Bill Walton ([33:24](#)):

Incubator, apply now. Do you have an age requirement here? I'm getting back in. I may go anyway. So it's got all your background and your social media coordinates, and you've got a description here of the film that you want to shoot your elevator pitch and then the philosophy about what you want to be doing. Yeah, it's in a budget overview. It's interesting. It requires somebody who's already thought about this a fair amount, but it's a great structure.

Thomas Pack ([33:53](#)):

Right. I think that's a key piece is that this particular program is for people that are producer directors, so they have to demonstrate that they have talent and that they can put together a crew because we're investing in them and they need to be able to complete a film with our oversight as executive producers. So it's for a certain level of person and it's for people that want to do a conservative film, meaning a film on a conservative topic that's still real journalism. It still looks at all sides.

Bill Walton ([34:27](#)):

But I still want to get back. Those are the topics I want to get into the story. I mean, we talked last time you hear about how you tell a story. What are you going to be saying? "Look, this is okay, but you're missing this element or that element?"

Michael Pack ([34:43](#)):

I think this making films, documentaries like this is very hands-on micro oriented. I mean, for example, I was at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for three years in charge of senior vice president in charge of television programming. And one of the reasons they brought me in was they wanted to get, as they're legally obligated to do a diversity of viewpoints on public broadcasting. And I was told to go out and look for right of center filmmakers. I've had this experience once before.

Bill Walton ([35:11](#)):

We don't know any.

Michael Pack ([35:12](#)):

Yeah.

Bill Walton ([35:14](#)):

Can you find us some writeup?

Michael Pack ([35:17](#)):

I did try. I mean, that was 15 years ago. So actually the situation is better now. But then I would get these things from conservatives and I'd say, "Well, you're showing me this to me, but you bring things up and then you don't go back and tell us what happened to those things. There are bad edits in the middle," and I've had people say to me, "Well, it's no worse than left-wing filmmaking." And I thought, "Well, that's unbelievable that you say that to me, a funder, a donor." I was then in the donor situation, so I just could not believe it. So our filmmakers in the incubator not going to get away with that. If there's something that doesn't work in the film, I'm not going to let them call it finished until it's fixed.

([36:04](#)):

One of the things that's funny about documentary and non-fiction programming is you can just declare it finished. It can have lots of bad edits. No, not make sense. You can just color correct it, make the sound

okay and call it a finished film. But they're often just plain not finished and they start filming. Here's another example on the other end of the spectrum, before they found a story, people want to film, they want to shoot. It's fun to shoot, as you said, it's fun to make films. Period. And you emphasize that. And we don't emphasize that enough.

Bill Walton ([36:34](#)):

The fun piece, this is fun.

Michael Pack ([36:38](#)):

It is fun, but people-

Bill Walton ([36:39](#)):

The people involved are interesting people. There are a lot of gypsies in the movie making world, people that go from project to project and they're characters.

Michael Pack ([36:48](#)):

Yeah. And they're interesting. And in documentary, you get to meet a whole swath of other ordinary real people, but people want to be shooting. So I find young filmmakers frequently start shooting before they know why they're shooting. And so I'm not going to let them do that. They can't start shooting until they've convinced us that they've got to plan for what to shoot. Now, that may sound kind of basic, Bill, but it actually isn't basic. And in terms of a particular project, you have to know how to make them do that work before they actually can turn the camera on. So it's a lot of micro-coaching, let's say.

Thomas Pack ([37:26](#)):

I think the story elements that you find missing most often, and there's lots of story elements, but often it's lack of in documentaries, lack of characters or it's lack of tension. So sometimes you'll do a film where you'll try to tell them what to think, and especially that's tempting in documentary because you're interviewing experts, you can just tell them what to think even if you do sort of a both sides' thing, you don't bring the audience along and you don't get buy-in. And then often you think you got buy-in because you did put in characters, but you forgot that the characters need to go on a journey with your audience. So these things are often missing. The way to teach it, you're right, will prevent people from not doing the story elements, but it's a teach by doing. That's the only way it's ever worked in film. You have to have a camera and have high stakes.

Bill Walton ([38:17](#)):

Character development. And people also want to know what's going to happen next.

Thomas Pack ([38:22](#)):

That's right.

Bill Walton ([38:23](#)):

If you can set up that kind of structure, like your Rickover piece did that.

Thomas Pack ([38:26](#)):

Yeah, that's right.

Bill Walton ([38:27](#)):

You sort of knew he was going to end up transforming the Navy.

Michael Pack ([38:29](#)):

Yeah, he did not.

Bill Walton ([38:30](#)):

But on the other hand, it still wasn't clear in the way he told the story that he wasn't going to quite get slugged first before that.

Michael Pack ([38:37](#)):

Well, that's right.

Bill Walton ([38:38](#)):

That he was such an ornery character.

Michael Pack ([38:40](#)):

That's what Thomas was saying, you need that opposition. So he's got his vision and you have the people who are lined up against him, including the bureaucracy of the Navy. Many, many secretaries of defense and everybody. So to see them against that, and that's right, you need those elements and people have to look for them, find them, be clear about them. So we will have them do that by working on something in particular to make that happen.

Bill Walton ([39:09](#)):

But there's a lot of 101 things, character for example, I was involved with a film, short film that as an actor and not in any authoritative role, I just did what I was told as an actor, but they introduced a new character at the very end of the movie. And so that new character wanders in the last two minutes of whatever. And you're sort of thinking, "Well, what happened to the rest of the story and the other characters?" Sort of basic, but that's the kind of thing we're talking about here. When do you introduced a character? How did he develop? Who the good guys? Who the bad guys are? We can tell I'm ready to sign up. Well, I think this is very exciting. What else do we cover that we haven't covered except that people ought to go on the website and try to get into the program?

Thomas Pack ([39:58](#)):

Well, they ought to go-

Bill Walton ([39:59](#)):

And also if you're a donor watching, you also ought to be in touch because this is the kind of place we need to be putting our money.

Thomas Pack ([40:06](#)):

Right. People ought to go on the website if they're a filmmaker or if they're interested in learning more about this. And I think the most important thing is if you know someone that this sounds great for, let them know. It's a great opportunity. I think for people, funding and distribution are really tough. It's a

hard business, and we are going to create not ... There's this mentorship element, but there's also this springboard element of we'll help you fund the idea that the documentary that you've been wanting to do, you can do it and then we'll make sure people see it. Because we have distribution channels we've been developing for many decades, and it will from there, it's sort of easier to find funding and distribution afterwards. So this is for people that want to make conservative documentaries. They know how to produce and direct, and they can sort of demonstrate that.

Bill Walton ([40:59](#)):

It's embedded in what you're saying. But I think what we're also saying is that being a creative is a lonely business.

Thomas Pack ([41:05](#)):

It really is.

Bill Walton ([41:06](#)):

It's hard. It's lonely. You're never sure whether you've got as any good, and if you're a conservative creative, it's even worse. And so with this, you can find kindred spirits

Thomas Pack ([41:15](#)):

That's right.

Bill Walton ([41:16](#)):

People that are facing the same creative challenges, but also share your value system. That's unusual.

Thomas Pack ([41:23](#)):

Right. And we're committed to doing this every year. So we'll have every year a growing number of people who've been through this program. And they'll have the fellowship they get from being with their specific cohort, but also they'll be part of a network.

Bill Walton ([41:35](#)):

I need a bigger number than what you're offering, though.

Thomas Pack ([41:37](#)):

You do. Yeah. Well, we'll get there.

Bill Walton ([41:40](#)):

Anyway, I'm just having fun. But anyway, I'm so happy you're doing this. We've been talking about this for a couple of years now.

Michael Pack ([41:47](#)):

We have.

Bill Walton ([41:47](#)):

Finally, happening.

Michael Pack ([41:48](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

Bill Walton ([41:48](#)):

And you've lured a very talented young man to run it.

Michael Pack ([41:51](#)):

Indeed. He's really kick-started it. Thomas has. That's right.

Bill Walton ([41:54](#)):

Well, Thomas, great to meet you on set, and I'm looking forward to being involved with you guys as you develop this.

Michael Pack ([42:00](#)):

Absolutely. Absolutely. Thank you, Bill.

Thomas Pack ([42:03](#)):

Thanks for having us.

Bill Walton ([42:03](#)):

Final words, Michael?

Michael Pack ([42:04](#)):

Well, I also suggest that people watch the films, previous films. As you said, the Clarence Thomas film is streaming on Amazon and elsewhere, and the Rickover film also on Amazon called Rickover, the Birth of Nuclear Power. And hopefully the others will be back streaming soon too, the other 12 or 13.

Thomas Pack ([42:26](#)):

And we'll have more coming out in the future to follow along on social media. Keep up with us.

Michael Pack ([42:31](#)):

Our new projects are described on the website.

Bill Walton ([42:33](#)):

Great. Fantastic. Michael and Thomas Pack, filmmakers extraordinaire, creating a new studio called Palladium Pictures. Great name and hope you'll all learn about it on the website and support their efforts going forward and watch their movies when they come out. This has been The Bill Walton Show. You can find us on YouTube, Rumble, Substack, all the major podcast platforms. We're in CPAC now on Monday nights, and please subscribe to our emails if you haven't already done so, and encourage your friends to do so. Like-minded people. We're a growing group of people, interested in the same ideas and fixing our culture. And I hope you found today's program a worthy effort in that category. So thanks for joining, and we'll be talking soon.

([43:25](#)):

I hope you enjoyed the conversation. Want more? Click the subscribe button or head over to the billwaltonshow.com to choose from over a hundred episodes. You can also learn more about our guests on our Interesting People page, and send us your comments. We read everyone and your thoughts help us guide the show. If it's easier for you to listen, check out our podcast page and subscribe there. In return, we'll keep you informed about what's true, what's right, and what's next. Thanks for joining.