

# DATELINE-SAIGON

Directed by Thomas D. Herman

Narrated by Sam Waterston

[www.dateline-saigon.com](http://www.dateline-saigon.com)



Photo: Horst Faas



David Halberstam  
*New York Times*

Malcolm Browne  
*Associated Press*

Neil Sheehan  
*United Press International*



Peter Arnett  
*Associated Press*



Horst Faas  
*Associated Press*

## LIES, DECEPTION, AND THE DANGEROUS SEARCH FOR TRUTH

“If the government is telling the truth, reporters become a minor, relatively unimportant conduit to what is happening. But when the government doesn’t tell the truth, begins to twist the truth, hide the truth, then the journalist becomes involuntarily infinitely more important.”

David Halberstam, *The New York Times*, in *Dateline-Saigon*

# DATELINE-SAIGON

## PRAISE FOR DATELINE-SAIGON:

“The best film about journalism and Vietnam I’ve ever seen.” **Bob Schieffer**, former anchor of *CBS Evening News* and moderator of *Face the Nation*.

“**DATELINE—SAIGON**” brings us back to an era when journalists pursued a noble mission and what they reported mattered. Its five heroes shaped history and elevated their craft. I hope this terrific film can inspire us today to restore that sense of calling and honesty, both to journalism and to our society. — **Walter Isaacson**, author of *Steve Jobs*; *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life*; and *Kissinger: A Biography*; former editor of *Time* magazine and president of CNN.

“In the era of Trump, “**DATELINE—SAIGON**” tells a vital tale of a group of journalists who fought to tell the world a painful and important story even as their own government tried to discredit them. Narratively powerful, this film is a distant mirror on a present-day drama: the ability of courageous citizens to speak truth to power.” **Alex Gibney**, Academy Award-winning director of *Taxi to the Dark Side* and *Zero Days*.

“Powerful, haunting, and important...Every reporter’s dream is to have the fate to cover such a big story.” **Charles Sennott**, co-founder *Global Post*, *Ground Truth*, former *Boston Globe* foreign correspondent.

“**DATELINE — SAIGON** produced a wave of sad nostalgia for a war and a time when America lost its innocence and later a conflict in which it had only marginal national interest. It was a time though when young journalists learned to cover a different kind of war, and became the educational tool for informing the American people about the realities of what was happening in Vietnam.” **Marvin Kalb**, award-winning correspondent for CBS and NBC News.

“One of the finest films ever made about contemporary journalism. It shows how a handful of brave reporters brought truth about the Vietnam War to Americans, despite every effort by our government to stop them. A moving tribute to the power of the press and the ability of journalists to resist the dictates of power.” **Stephen Kinzer** award-winning author of *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War*; former *New York Times* and *Boston Globe* correspondent.

"A compelling tale of young reporters telling truth to power in a bygone era of journalism in the dawn of America's ill-conceived military interventions overseas." **HDS Greenway**, *Washington Post* Saigon reporter; author of *Foreign Correspondent, a Memoir*.

“America’s descent into full-scale war in Vietnam remains a puzzle. **DATELINE — SAIGON** --at once riveting and sobering--moves us closer to an answer.” **Thomas Patterson**, Bradlee Professor of Government and the Press, Harvard University.

“A masterful epic. The film’s lessons have clearly not been properly absorbed, which makes the Vietnam pattern so deftly conveyed so relevant today.” **Peter Grose**, former editor of *Foreign Affairs* magazine and former *New York Times* Saigon bureau chief.

“Riveting, utterly gripping, beautifully edited, couldn’t take my eyes off it for a second... an incendiary document.” **Christopher Lydon**, former *New York Times* correspondent; WBUR’s Radio Open Source.

“A splendid account of the remarkable group of reporters who went to Vietnam at the dawn of America’s military involvement and told the story as they saw it—to remarkable and lasting effect. If it’s true that journalism is the first rough draft of history, theirs is a collective effort that endures. A wonderfully absorbing film.” — **Fredrik Logevall**, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Embers of War: The Fall of an*

# DATELINE-SAIGON

*Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam*, Laurence D. Belfer Professor of International Affairs, Harvard University.



Buddhist monk interviewed by AP's Malcolm Browne during the Buddhist crisis - Saigon, 1963

## SYNOPSIS:

Southeast Asia, 1960's. Flash point of the Cold War. **DATELINE – SAIGON** tells the inspiring story of a small group of Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists — *The New York Times*' **David Halberstam**, United Press International's **Neil Sheehan**, The Associated Press' **Malcolm Browne**, **Peter Arnett**, and the great photojournalist **Horst Faas** — who fought to report a truth that was vastly different from the rosy version put forth by the White House and the Pentagon during the early years of the Vietnam War...even as their own government sought to discredit them.

Involuntarily, they are drawn into a war of their own that pits the journalists against government officials and ushers in a new era of journalism that seeks to hold the government accountable.

“We all arrived rather innocent. We didn't think we were innocent. I thought I was an experienced reporter, but I'd never had this kind of thing before.”  
David Halberstam, *The New York Times*.

Narrated by Sam Waterston, the documentary combines the drama and high stakes of *All the President's Men* with the romance and intrigue of *The Year of Living Dangerously*.

## BACKGROUND:

**DATELINE - SAIGON** was filmed over a 12-year period in the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Vietnam, and Iraq. The film features multiple, original interviews with key characters, some of whom are no longer living, and rare archival motion picture and still photographs, many from private archives and seen publicly for the first time.

**DATELINE - SAIGON** illuminates the difficulties of reporting conflict by focusing on America's most important and controversial case study: Vietnam, the war that established many of the ground rules for coverage of conflict that have followed and ignited an antagonism between the media and the military that

# DATELINE-SAIGON

unfortunately endures. The parallels to the challenges journalists face in reporting today's conflicts - and the consequences of not getting the story out - will become disturbingly obvious to the viewer.

Today we know the story's end. But few then realized how important their reporting was; how our protagonists and their colleagues continue to serve as role models for today's front-line reporters around the globe.

"In Iraq, when the official version didn't match what we were seeing on the streets of Baghdad, all we had to do -- and we did it a lot -- was ask ourselves: 'what would Halberstam have done?' And then the way was clear," says *The New Yorker's* Dexter Filkins. "David taught us a great lesson--and not just to the reporters in Iraq, but to anyone who has ever tried to hold his government to account. And that is, truth is not just a point of view. Truth does not adhere to the person who shouts the loudest. And truth does not necessarily belong to the people with the most power."

## THE FILMMAKER: THOMAS D. HERMAN

**DATELINE - SAIGON** is Thomas D. Herman's directorial debut. Prior to directing **DATELINE - SAIGON**, Herman was a Co-Producer of the Emmy-award winning feature film, *Live from Baghdad*, which starred Michael Keaton and Helena Bonham-Carter. Before that, Herman was a freelance producer for CNN as well as a correspondent for National Public Radio.

Herman received a BA with honors from the University of Pennsylvania and continued his education at Harvard, Oxford, and Northeastern Universities.

When he's in between films, Herman practices law in Boston. "Being a lawyer helps me pay the bills while I pursue my passion, filmmaking," he says.



Herman's interest in the story began after reading Halberstam's seminal book, *The Best and the Brightest*. "I'd always been curious about the heated controversy surrounding his reporting and that of others critical of the war. Was their reporting fair? Were the reporters responsible for our "losing" the war, as some charged? While in Vietnam as a CNN field producer during the 25th anniversary of the end of the war, I met a number of men and women who had covered the war. Not only were their stories dramatic and moving, but the reporters themselves were compelling characters," Herman recalls. "They wrote the first draft of one of the most controversial chapters in American history. The stories behind that first draft are fascinating and largely unknown."

For more information about **DATELINE — SAIGON**, please contact the distributor, First Run Features, at: [marcm@firstrunfeatures.com](mailto:marcm@firstrunfeatures.com); or the director, Tom Herman, at: [tom@dateline-saigon.com](mailto:tom@dateline-saigon.com)