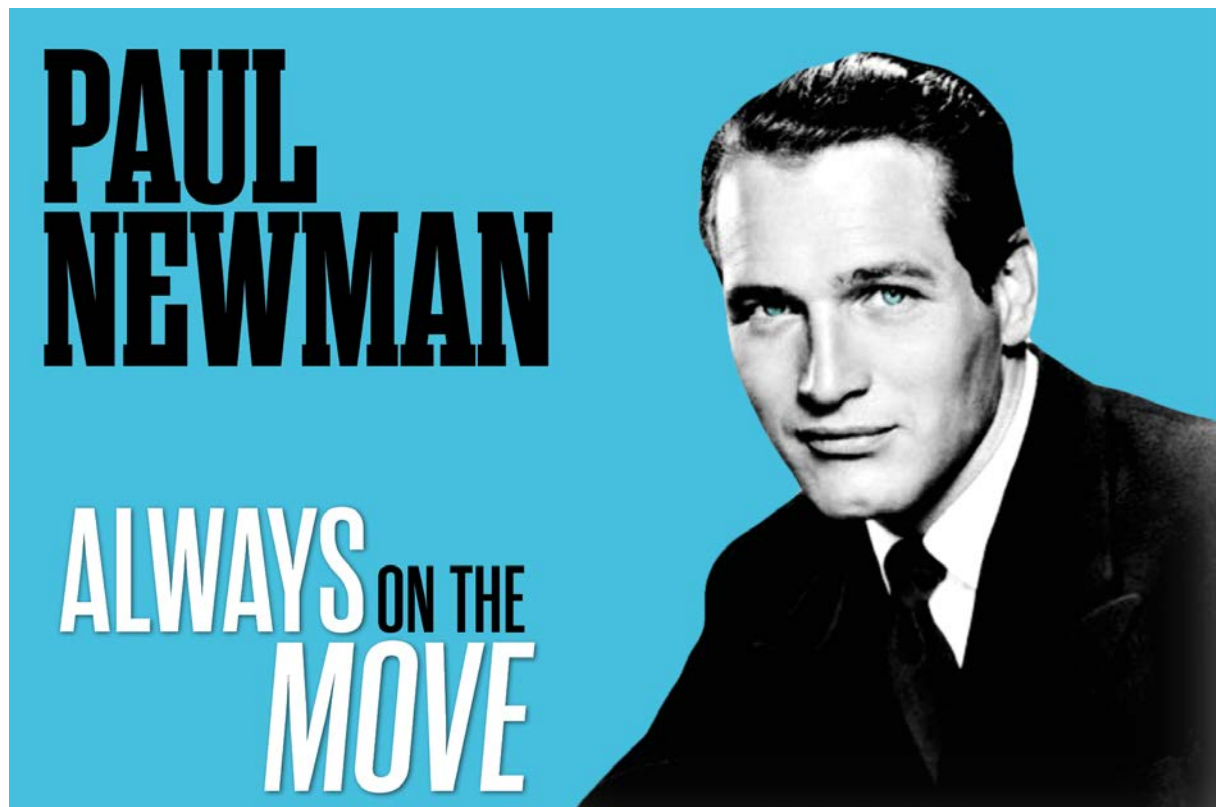


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presents

PAUL NEWMAN
ALWAYS ON THE MOVE

A documentary by Jean Lauritano



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LOGLINE

The portrait of a perpetually dissatisfied man who lived his life free from Hollywood's shackles, driven by perfectionism but also by a hidden anxiety.

SUMMARY

Endowed with the physique of a Greek statue and azure blue eyes, Paul Newman might have settled for being the epitome of a Hollywood star.

And yet, he would spend his life surprising everyone.

Notoriety weighed heavily upon this superstar. The rising talent wanted to prove that he was more than just a pretty face. He spent more than 50 years reinventing himself: producer, director, racer, entrepreneur, activist...

This is the story of a restless soul who lived his life free from Hollywood's shackles, driven by perfectionism but also by a hidden anxiety.

SYNOPSIS

PROLOGUE

August 1965, Malibu. Actor Roddy McDowall immortalizes his comedian friends having fun on the beach with his super-eight camera.

Not far from there, Paul Newman pops can after can of his favorite brand of beer, while keeping an eye on his kids frolicking in the Pacific.

At forty years old, he has everything going for him: he has just become a father for the sixth time, and is a highly bankable actor, currently the most sought-after in Hollywood. And yet, he feels increasingly weary. He wonders what could be the next step in a career that has taken him to the height of Hollywood stardom, less than ten years ago.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL EYES IN HOLLYWOOD

It only took one movie – *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 1958 – for Newman's career to take off. Starring opposite him: Elizabeth Taylor.

Between the four most beautiful eyes of Hollywood, sparks fly. The couple steal all their scenes in this intimate family drama which tells the story of the confrontation between a father and his son, played by Newman. True to the Actors Studio's method, Newman drew inspiration for his character from his tumultuous relationship with his own father.

Director Richard Brooks films Newman's gaze as closely as possible to better capture the interiority and complexity of the character and his actor.

The film paints a vivid picture of his tormented beauty and marks the actor's rise to stardom.

Paul Newman's gaze is unforgettable. And not just his eyes, his face too. The figure of a Greek statue, the straight nose, the moody lip. The whole physique of a movie actor.

However, it would take him time and a lot of work to become more than just a pretty face in everyone's mind. It would also take him a lot of time to come to terms with his status as a star, all while trying to escape its inherent constraints.

A GOOD FOR NOTHING

Born in 1925 to an Ashkenazi Jewish father and a Slovak Catholic mother, little Paul Newman's future is set: to take over the family store.

His father considers him a good-for-nothing. And to his dismay, Newman is only interested in theater.

He gets married at 24 and becomes the father of his first child when his father dies prematurely. With a heavy heart, Paul agrees to take over the family store. But his love for theater is stronger.

IN THE SHADOW OF BRANDO AND DEAN

Almost by chance, Newman is admitted in 1952 to the Actors Studio, a school that offers a whole new take on acting, called "The Method".

After Marlon Brando's success in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Hollywood starts taking a keen interest in the students of the Actors Studio. Warner then signs a contract with Newman for three years. For the actor who is approaching thirty and has just become a father for the third time, it is a relief. But the competition is tough.

For Elia Kazan's *East of Eden* (1955), Newman auditioned opposite a young actor of 23 years: James Dean. From this audition, one clip in particular would become legendary. One where Newman shows himself much less comfortable than his younger counterpart. Dean ends up landing the role. And the film would make him a star.

When Dean declines the script for the sword-and-sandal *The Silver Chalice* (1954), the role falls to Newman – it will be his first film. The shooting will be a trial by fire for the actor. When the movie comes out, the press calls him "A poor man's Marlon Brando". A false start that Newman would not forget anytime soon.

Dean's tragic death in September 1955 would change everything. Newman is chosen to replace Dean in what should have been his next film: *Somebody Up There Likes Me* (1956) by Robert Wise. Two years after the fiasco of *The Silver Chalice*, the film is a great critical and public success. Newman is again compared to Brando, but this time to emphasize their resemblance and the similarity of their acting style.

Yet Newman does not rest on his laurels. He still has a lot of work to reach Brando's level. But he can count on his discipline and his iron will.

IN CONTROL OF HIS DESTINY

On the shooting set, Newman applies what he learned at the Actors Studio, a method based on introspection. He never stops questioning the director about his character, sometimes going so far as to ask for changes in the script. Soon, he becomes known as a perfectionist. Even a pain in the ass.

Newman knows that he is becoming one of Warner's stars, but he is frustrated by the Studio's choices regarding his career.

His agent advises him to make a bold move: break free from the studio system and become a freelance actor. But to do this, Newman must buy back his contract from Warner for half a million dollars. A hefty sum. But he takes the wager.

One of his first freelance projects is *Exodus* (1960): Otto Preminger's new blockbuster about the birth of the State of Israel through the odyssey of Holocaust survivors, led by a leader played by Newman.

The film is a huge success. It is the first film in which Newman plays a positive hero, a character of almost mythical proportions – of those who found a country. He is no longer, as in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, the child who must follow in his father's footsteps, but a full-fledged adult, free and in control of his destiny. Filmed in color and in scope, Newman's eyes have never looked so blue.

ANTI-HERO

Exodus is the swan song of an industry that is reinventing itself. Times are changing and so are the audience's tastes. Heroic paragons of virtue have become old-fashioned. Newman adapts quite well to this new complexity and depth, made possible by the relaxation of censorship, the crisis of the studios and the rise of independent producers.

He then makes full use of his fame to play characters on the fringe of the American dream, *losers*, whether in *The Hustler* (1961) by Robert Rossen, where he plays a small-time pool player; in *Hud* (1963) by Martin Ritt, a western that he produced; or *Cool Hand Luke* (1967), in which he plays a rebel, a christ-like figure caught in a prison system that will crush him.

These films' mass appeal feeds into the "Newman mania". A phenomenon that the actor, who values his tranquility, could do without and in which he will soon feel trapped.

These films are also personal successes for Newman, nominated each time for the Oscar for best actor. But his introspective acting style holds him back, and the Academy of the Oscars sulks him. Yet Newman does not seem to really care. In 1963 he does not even hesitate to declare that he will vote for another nominee: Sydney Poitier, thinking that it is high time that a black actor is distinguished.

CITIZEN NEWMAN

Newman is also a man of conviction: he supports the civil rights movement. In 1963, he participates in the March on Washington organized by Martin Luther King.

The following year, he joins the Democratic Party – where he is an active campaigner. His statements against the re-election of Richard Nixon even earn him to appear on a list of conspirators considered enemies of the President.

He remained stalwart in his commitment to progressive causes for his entire life.

SICK OF PLAYING

On the beach in Malibu, Newman takes a look at Roddy McDowall's other guests: Natalie Wood, Lauren Bacall, Kirk Douglas, Ben Gazzara. All of them have experienced the Hollywood of the Studios, and all of them have had the desire to take control of their careers to escape the studios' formatting.

Despite the successes, Newman begins to feel a glass ceiling as an actor: *"I'm getting tired of acting because I'm no longer able to come up with something I haven't done before"*.

He grows weary. The solution? To disappear from the screen.
He would also take the opportunity to pay back a debt.

BEING MRS PAUL NEWMAN

In 1958, Newman is torn between New York, where his wife and three children live, and Hollywood, where he is deeply in love with the actress Joanne Woodward. When the press reveals this double life, Newman chooses to divorce his wife in order to marry Woodward. *"I felt horribly guilty about leaving my first wife and children, and all my life I will carry this burden. But the fact that Joanne and I are still together proves to me that it was the right decision"* he would confide.

Despite a very promising start, Woodward decides to put her career on hold, content to become Mrs. Paul Newman.

Ten years later, Newman will remember his wife's professional sacrifice and become a director. He would direct two films in which he did not appear and Joanne Woodward played the lead role: *Rachel, Rachel* (1968) and *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds* (1972). To carry out these two projects, the couple renounces all salary. Today, these films in which Newman magnificently directs his wife are being rediscovered. They echo the films that John Cassavetes, himself an actor turned director, shoots at the same time with his wife, Gena Rowlands: *Faces* (1968) or *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974).

Portraits of women left on the sidelines of the American dream.

A female counterpart to the characters played by Newman in the 60s.

And despite the ups and downs, they remain together. They settle down in Connecticut, far from Hollywood. Over the years, their couple's longevity becomes inspiring.

TRANSFER OF POWER

In 1968, Fox, which produces *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, is looking for an actor to star with Newman. Joanne Woodward suggests an up-and-coming actor: Robert Redford. Newman and Redford play off each other very well. Their detachment and their humor seem aligned with the counterculture of the time while the film, by its breaks in tone, reflects the spirit of the New Hollywood, a cinema freed from codes.

The film is a turning point in Newman's career: watching *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* feels like witnessing a transfer of power. Newman is 44 years old,

eleven years older than Redford. And from now on, he is no longer the young lead, the mad dog. This would allow Newman to shed his old image a little more and to try out a whole new acting style, where he would gain in intensity and try to play more iconoclastic roles, with directors who were free from the yoke of Hollywood conventions (whether it was Robert Altman or John Huston).

In Redford, Newman found an alter ego with whom he would play again in *The Sting* (1973), where we observe the same dynamic between the two actors.

BEFORE DISAPPEARING

In the 70s, Newman achieves superstardom. From great successes (*The Sting*, *The Towering Inferno*) to ringing failures (*Buffalo Bill and the Indians* – 1976, *Quintet* - 1979, both by Altman), his following does not wane.

So he uses his influence again, but for personal reasons this time. Newman has a conflicting relationship with his eldest son Scott, born from his first marriage. In order to bond with him, and also to remove him from alcohol and drugs, Newman makes him get several small roles. To no avail. On November 20, 1978, Scott dies of an overdose. A devastated Newman decides to devote more time to his family life, spending less time filming, and only working on projects that are dear to him.

In 1982, Newman is 57 years old. While his legendary good looks are still there, he is not the same man anymore. In his face, a certain melancholy, a certain gravitas... This change will allow him to enter a new phase in his career.

In Sidney Lumet's *The Verdict*, his role as a washed up and alcoholic lawyer is unforgettable: his performance seems to feed off a whole life, past trials, challenges, successes, pain contained. He says so himself: "*I can safely say that I didn't know much about acting until I was in my 50s*". And indeed, he seems like a changed man.

In 1986, he finally wins an Oscar for his role in *The Color of Money* (1986), the Martin Scorsese film in which he reprises his character from *The Hustler*. Newman's reaction when he got the much-denied award? "*It's like courting a beautiful woman for eighty years. And when she finally relents you say: 'I'm really sorry, but I'm a little tired'*".

From then on, Newman only returns to film sets very occasionally: for a few films in which he plays the lead, then secondary roles and brief appearances.

THE ONLY GUY IN AMERICA WHO DOES NOT WANT TO BE PAUL NEWMAN

This temptation to take a break from acting actually goes back many years.

In addition to directing, Newman discovers a new passion at the end of the 60s: car racing. A world he discovers when Universal offers him the script for *Winning*. Coached by a former Formula 1 champion, Newman then joins a professional team and adopts the pseudonym P.L. Newman. For the sports journalist, Jim Murray: "He's probably the only guy in America who doesn't want to be Paul Newman".

What drives Newman, the driver, to race? Is it to outrun the weight of celebrity? To anesthetize his doubts and worries by running laps? In any case, he comes to consider racing as a new career.

And if at the end of the 80s he makes himself even scarcer on the silver screen, he continues to race: in 1995, he becomes the oldest driver to win a car race, at 70 years old.

And for his last film, Newman will not even appear in the picture. He will play the role of a car: in the animated film *Cars* (2006) produced by Pixar, he lends his voice to Doc Hudson, a character inspired by a legendary car of the 50s.

After announcing his retirement as an actor, Newman races for one final lap on the Lime Rock racetrack on August 13, 2008. A few weeks later, he passed away due to a disease. He was 84 years old.

Paul Newman's greatest pride?

The success of his food brand, Newman's Own, created in the early 80s. The sale of the products (including a salad dressing developed by Newman himself) still raises tens of millions of dollars that are redistributed for humanitarian projects.

Newman mischievously kept a letter from a fan of his spaghetti sauce, which he was careful to show to journalists who came to interview him:

"I hear you're in movies. I'd like to know which ones, because I'd go see them. And if you act as well as you cook, that must be something!"

NOTE OF INTENT

In contrast to the rugged destinies of his contemporaries (Montgomery Clift, James Dean or Marlon Brando) Paul Newman is the picture of a successful life – because he led it in righteousness, generosity and loyalty to his commitments.

It is difficult at first to decipher what lies behind this image, because Newman is part of this generation of men who reveal themselves little and use irony to avoid any indiscretion.

To tell his story, I want to proceed by concentric circles, by ellipses, by uncovering layer upon layer, sometimes disregarding chronology in order to show the different sides to the man, and to the actor Paul Newman.

The documentary will open with Super 8 footage from actor Roddy McDowall's collection of home movies shot in the 1960s. In many of these films, shrouded in a nostalgic aura, Newman appears as he really is: striking, radiant, relaxed. Yet, as is often the case with him, anxiety is brewing.

The film's challenge will be to uncover the restlessness that drove Newman throughout his life and career, beyond the character's apparent coolness.

To do this, the documentary will move forward by counterpoint, by confronting the various voice and image archives that are left of him, to draw a kaleidoscopic portrait of a complex man.

- The narration will be mainly carried by the voice of Paul Newman himself, through excerpts of the numerous filmed interviews the actor has given over the years. This voice in itself is already a first layer to analyze, a first complexity. For there is a gap between the actor, the public figure and the man: As much as Newman has always been a perfectionist in his work as an actor, in his public appearances he was keen to distance himself from his profession, by playing up his dilettante side. As if his apparent lightness and casualness hid something.
- This is why, in addition to these filmed interviews, I would like to have an actor interpret short excerpts of interviews given by Newman to his biographers, or remarks reported by the latter – because they often reveal the anxiety and dissatisfaction of the actor and the man behind.
- In addition to Paul Newman's voices, the voices of those who lived or worked with him will be added. Thus, as in *Les guerres de Coco Chanel* (Coco Chanel's Wars), one of my previous documentaries, I wish to use archives where people who worked with the actor testify. The choice of archives (and not interviews shot today) allows me to give a fluidity to the narration: these archives are themselves marked by time, they have a distinct identity, in sound and visual, which allows to link in the same momentum stories and anecdotes that will come to weave in with the film extracts.
Among those whose testimonies I wish to convey, there is first of all of course Joanne Woodward, his companion for half a century. But there will also be the voices of Elia Kazan, Martin Ritt, John Huston, Sidney Lumet, Alfred Hitchcock or Otto Preminger.
- Finally, a voice-over will be added at the beginning of the documentary to set the time frame and the stakes, and will seldom appear afterwards.

Regarding the image archives, in addition to the talk shows mentioned above, I intend to use numerous extracts from the films in which Newman played. These excerpts will be used to different ends:

- First of all, to weave the story of Newman's life. Because each film reflects a stage, not only in his career but also in his life: from the tormented young actor, still in Brando's shadow, to the mature man with a melancholic look filmed by Lumet or Scorsese.
And it will be a question of using the narrative and the editing to identify the motifs that resonate with his choices and decisions in an existence that is constantly in motion.
Some movies will speak to the ruptures in Newman's life for themselves – since he literally steps out of view to get behind the camera and film his wife in five films. These films will make it possible to talk about the couple that Newman formed with Joanne Woodward, but also to discover a long-kept secret; because Paul Newman was a great director who shed a harsh light on the America of the

workers and the downtrodden and offered his wife magnificent roles as a woman.

- Beyond the biographical aspect, I also wish to show how Newman's physical appearance, his magnetic gaze and his acting style made directors commit to certain filming styles. How to film him? How do you direct an actor who has acquired such an aura throughout his long career? Each filmmaker will answer these fascinating questions differently, and I want to show how each one deals with what makes Newman an actor; by using the films themselves.
- Home movies shot in the 50s and 60s – such as those of Roddy McDowall that we already mentioned – will add an intimate dimension, giving another insight into Hollywood. This dimension will be reinforced by the photos that exist of the Woodward-Newman family, which let a select few photographers document the life of the couple, from the end of the 50s to the 80s.
- Finally, archives of current events will contextualize Newman in the history of his country and his struggles.

Regarding the music, I would like to favor, as a counterpoint to the often orchestral Hollywood music heard in the film extracts from the 50s and 60s, an atmospheric music, using light echoes and reverberations; in order to create a sonic climate conducive to introspection and which still allows us to grasp the character's interiority.

Ultimately, this is the documentary's challenge: to understand an actor and a man without pretending to understand it all, and to tell, through the play on visual and narrative motifs, through correspondences and recurrences, the roads and paths taken in the course of a life.

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