



# UNSYNCABLE

TELL TALE PRODUCTIONS INC.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH VISIONTV / ZOOMERMEDIA Limited PRESENTS  
**UNSYNCABLE**

FEATURING SUE BAROSS NESBITT, JOYCE CLARKE, LUTHER GALES,  
MONICA HALE, CRIS MEYERS-WINDE, ELLEN SCOTT

DIRECTED AND WRITTEN BY MEGAN WENNBERG

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MOSES ZNAIMER, PRODUCER EDWARD PEILL  
PRODUCER ERIN OAKES

EDITED BY WARREN JEFFERIES, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY PAUL McCURDY

**ZOOMERMEDIA**



**ROGERS.**  
Documentary Fund

**NOVA SCOTIA**

**SCREEN**  
NOVA SCOTIA

**Canada**



**Tell Tale**  
PRODUCTIONS

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## LOGLINE

**Unsyncable follows six senior artistic swimmers (aged 63 – 82) pushing physical, emotional and societal boundaries as they prepare for the U.S. Masters Artistic Swimming Championships (formerly synchronized swimming).**

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

*Unsyncable* follows six senior artistic swimmers (aged 63 – 82) as they prepare for the U.S. Masters Artistic Swimming Championships (formerly synchronized swimming). One is going for gold, another knows she'll come last, and others are going for community and the love of their team. They will all push physical, emotional and societal boundaries to get there. Collectively, they have lost partners, suffered injuries and contended with ageist assumptions about what they can do. But through it all, they keep swimming - and they do it with a smile. These athletes are a testament to perseverance, the resilience of the human spirit, and our endless capacity for growth at any age.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

*Unsyncable* follows six senior artistic swimmers (aged 63 – 82) as they prepare for the **U.S. Masters Artistic Swimming Championships** (formerly synchronized swimming). They will all push physical, emotional and societal boundaries to get there, but through it all, they keep swimming - and they do it with a smile.

World champion **Sue Nesbitt** (68) is a synchro legend. She dominated the sport as an elite athlete in the 1970s, and she's doing it again as a master. Sue has always pushed her body to the brink in her quest for perfection, but the older she gets the more challenging it is. As the returning U.S. Masters champion, Sue is going for gold in both solo and team categories, but she's worried that an injury and her flagging memory will hold her back.

While Sue is going to win gold, **Ellen Scott** (63) sees it as a win just to attend the meet. Striding onto the pool deck in an extra-large red one-piece, snapping her fingers at the crowd before the music even starts, Ellen proudly smashes every stereotype of an artistic swimmer. You'd never guess she battles chronic pain and mental health issues. Ellen came to synchro in her fifties, during a low point that nearly broke her. She credits the sport for giving her back her life. Ellen knows she'll never beat the likes of Sue, but it doesn't matter. She's reclaiming herself.

**Cris Meyer-Windes** (68) wasn't allowed to do synchro as a child, so he became a champion speed swimmer. But as a gay athlete he faced a lot of discrimination, so he and his partner Rick founded San Francisco Tsunami swim team in 1986 to create a safe space for other gay swimmers. After Rick's tragic death in 2004, Cris couldn't go back to swimming, so he picked up synchro. Now 68, Cris and the Tsunami team push the gendered limits of the sport every chance they get. They're crowd favourites on the Masters circuit for their amazing music and costumes, and they like to win.

**Luther Gales** (82) grew up under the stereotype that 'Black people don't swim,' but he was determined to learn anyway. A retired marine, Luther is now the assistant coach of North America's only all Black artistic swimming team, The Harlem Honeys and Bears. The Honeys and Bears have never attended the U.S. Masters, but they want to connect with the wider community so Luther and teammates **Monica Hale** (68) and **Joyce Clark** (71) will attend for the first time. They have their own unique style and they're nervous about how they'll be received, but they're excited to bring back new skills to their team.

Through their commitment to their sport, Sue, Ellen, Cris, Luther, Monica and Joyce are a testament to perseverance, the resilience of the human spirit, and our endless capacity for growth at any age.

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## DIRECTOR STATEMENT BIO

**Megan Wennberg** is a documentary filmmaker based in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Her first feature documentary *Drag Kids* follows four brave young drag queens on a journey to acceptance and acclaim in their first group performance at Montreal Pride. *Drag Kids* premiered at Hot Docs in 2019, and went on to win multiple awards and screen at top festival around the world. Megan's second film *The Killing of Phillip Boudreau* explores the less publicized events and context around Nova Scotia's infamous 'Murder for Lobster.' It won the Screen Nova Scotia Award for Best Documentary in 2021, and Megan won WIFT-AT's Award for Best Director.



### *Director's Statement*

This project was conceived in the early days of the pandemic, when we thought we could 'wait it out' for a few months, then start shooting. We were obviously very wrong. But we were right to stick with our characters, in the hopes that one day they would be allowed back in the pool to do the thing they love best. And I can't imagine a better group of people to celebrate with on the other side.

Sue, Ellen, Cris, Monica, Luther and Joyce are some of the strongest, most passionate, most determined and most youthful (numbers be damned) people I have ever met, and I am honoured they trust us to share their stories with the world.

As we get older, staying healthy, feeling connected and finding meaning in our lives is extremely important. But it is increasingly difficult in a society biased towards youth. By jumping in the pool and pushing their limits every practice, Sue, Ellen, Cris, Monica, Luther and Joyce kick back against the expectation that getting older means slowing down and succumbing to our limitations.

In a culture that abhors aging, we need more stories like theirs that can help us as we move forward in our lives. I am confident they will inspire audiences to see aging in a new light – not as something to dread, but as something to aspire to as we all 'rage against the dying of the light' in our own unique ways.

*Megan Wennberg*

## BROADCAST & SCREENINGS

Sue, Ellen, Luther, Monica, Joyce and Cris are testaments to the power of physical activity at any age. Still, you don't have to be a competitive athlete to enjoy the rewards of an active lifestyle.

The benefits of remaining active are numerous and well-proven. They include staying strong and mentally fit, reduced risk of chronic disease and the ability to live independently longer. Today in Canada, only 1 in 3 older Canadians achieve the recommended 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week based on the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines. That's a problem. Lack of physical activity later in life is a public health issue that will continue to grow as Canada's population ages.

We want to help bring awareness to this problem. Following the Fall 2023 broadcast premiere of *Unsyncable* on VisionTV, we're launching a community outreach campaign to encourage active living amongst older adults. The campaign will provide community organizations with free moderated screenings, educational materials and discussion guides.

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## PRODUCER BIOS

### ERIN OAKES - PRODUCER

Erin Oakes has worked in the film and television industry for 20 years. Since joining Tell Tale Productions in 2011 she has produced one-off and documentary series including *Free Reins* (CBC FirstHand), *The Power of Play* (CBC The Nature of Things) and *Radical Age* (VisionTV). Her feature documentary *Drag Kids* (CBC POV, 2019) premiered at Hot Docs Film Festival 2019 and was the winner of the Best Canadian Feature at Inside Out Film Festival and selected as the closing night film at RIDM. Most recently Erin produced *The Killing of Phillip Boudreau* (CBC's POV) and *Creature Comfort* (VisionTV). In addition to positions in film and television production, Erin spent ten years as a programmer for the Atlantic Film Festival Association (AFFA), including three years as the lead programmer for the Documentaries: Canada and The World programming strand.

### EDWARD PEILL – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Prior to establishing Tell Tale Productions in 2003, Edward spent five years as the Director of Production for Topsail Entertainment and oversaw the development and production of more than 40 hours of drama, documentaries, lifestyle, and comedy series including the hit series *Trailer Park Boys* and the verité documentary series *Tall Ship Chronicles*. Since starting Tell Tale Productions, Edward has produced more than 200 hours of factual series and one-off documentaries for Canadian, US, and International broadcasters. The company has also developed video games and service produces for numerous broadcasters including History, Discovery, National Geographic, and RMC Decouverte. Recent credits include *Spirit Talker* (APTN), History's *The Curse of Oak Island* (Service Producer), *The Big Downsize* (VisionTV) and *The Killing of Phillip Boudreau* (CBC).

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Tell Tale  
PRODUCTIONS

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