

# Catalyst Media Productions

presents

# LABOR DAY

A film by  
**Glenn Silber and Claudia Vianello**

Press contact (NY):

Weiman Seid

Jenny Lawhorn

Brandon Rohwer

FAT DOT

[weimanseid@fatdot.net](mailto:weimanseid@fatdot.net)

[jennylawhorn@fatdot.net](mailto:jennylawhorn@fatdot.net)

[brandonrohwer@fatdot.net](mailto:brandonrohwer@fatdot.net)

T: 212-691-4224 F: 212-202-7727

Press contact (Chicago):

John Iltis

[jiltis@iltischicago.com](mailto:jiltis@iltischicago.com)

T: 773-989-8888

C: 312-953-5411

[www.labordaythemovie.com](http://www.labordaythemovie.com)

2009 – Digibeta – Color – 76 minutes

# ***Labor Day***

## ***Short Synopsis***

***Labor Day*** dramatically reveals the largely unknown story of how one union, thousands of activists, and a commitment to change turned Election Day into Labor Day. Two-time Oscar nominee Glenn Silber captures the exuberance and urgency of the 2008 Election in his feature documentary.

***Labor Day*** follows a group that played a pivotal role in the electing of Barack Obama: the SEIU (Service Employees International Union), the nation's fastest-growing labor union, with more than two million members. ***Labor Day*** is a chronicle of this union's engagement and mobilization to ensure a Democratic victory in 2008. For Labor, the Presidential campaign was mission critical. After eight years of Republican policies, the union felt an incredible sense of urgency to change the direction of the economy and the country.

***Labor Day*** relives the passion and excitement of this moment in American history with vibrant, cross-country footage from the Presidential campaign—conventions, concerts, rallies, speeches, door-to-door canvassing, and interviews with union members and prominent politicians about their hopes for a better future. ***Labor Day*** features a Who's Who in American politics, journalism and entertainment, including clips from the 2008 campaign with Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Joe Biden, Ted Kennedy, John McCain, and Sarah Palin; interviews with prominent journalists, including Jonathan Alter (Newsweek), Karen Tumulty (Time), and Ted Koppel, as well as with political figures Gov. Bill Richardson, Rep. Dennis Kucinich, and Rep. George Miller. The film also features appearances and interviews with entertainment figures Mos Def, Tom Morello, Steve Earle, Allison Moorer, and hip hop phenoms Atmosphere and The Pharcyde.

## ***Long Synopsis***

The 2008 Presidential Campaign was an extraordinary moment in U.S. history—not only because of the race and gender of the candidates, but also because of the passions they inspired.

Millions of Americans and hundreds of organizations became actively engaged in the democratic process of choosing the next president. ***Labor Day***, a new feature documentary directed by two-time Oscar Nominee, Glenn Silber, tells the inspiring, largely unknown story of one of them, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the nation's fastest-growing labor union with more than two million members.

***Labor Day*** is a chronicle of this union's mobilization to ensure a Democratic victory in 2008. For Labor, the Presidential campaign was mission critical. After eight years of Republican policies, the SEIU felt an incredible sense of urgency to change the direction of the economy and the country.

Our story begins in early 2007 -- nearly two years before the election -- when the union's leaders came up with a strategy to mobilize as many members as possible to become "Member Political Organizers" (MPOs).

By the Spring of 2007, the union had fully engaged in the process, putting healthcare reform on the front burner by sponsoring an early, major Presidential Candidate Forum solely on that issue. They also told every candidate seeking the union's support that they had to "Walk A Day" in one of their member's shoes, to remind them what it's like to be a worker in America today. In September 2007, SEIU invited every Democratic candidate to their Member Political Action Conference where those seeking the nation's highest office would present themselves and their plans for the country to more than 1,000 members, who in turn would vote on which candidate the union should endorse.

Although the union could not reach a consensus around a single candidate at their September 2007 political conference, they endorsed the "change" candidate, Barack Obama, after John Edwards dropped out and worked hard to help Obama win the Democratic Party nomination for President.

By the summer of 2008, thousands of SEIU members would leave their homes and jobs to spend months working for change: canvassing, calling, registering voters, and knocking on doors in more than a dozen critical swing states.

***Labor Day*** follows SEIU members and leaders at the Democratic National Convention, where the party was finally able to unify behind Barack Obama's candidacy, capped by his dramatic acceptance speech at Denver's Mile High Stadium.

The day after the convention, a contingent of SEIU members and leaders get on a bus in St. Louis to be part of the "Take Back Labor Day" bus tour through the Midwest. The tour's destination is St. Paul, Minnesota, where the union stages a "Take Back Labor Day" concert event for more than 15,000 people on the opening day of the Republican National Convention - Labor Day 2008.

The film highlights clips of the St. Paul Labor Day concert and interviews with featured musicians Steve Earle, Allison Moorer, Tom Morello (Rage Against the Machine), and hip-hop artists Mos Def, The Pharcyde and Atmosphere – all performing just a few hundred yards across the river from where Republicans were gathering.

Two-time Grammy Award-winning musician Steve Earle summed up the feelings of many at the concert when he said, “This election is really important. We are at a moment in time where, if nobody takes anything for granted and people work really, really hard right up to the last minute in November, we really could change things.”

The campaign takes a dramatic turn a day later when Sarah Palin accepts the nomination to be John McCain’s running mate and the GOP base goes wild. But on September 15<sup>th</sup>, the financial meltdown hit Wall St. like an 8.0 earthquake and changed the momentum of the campaign.

Now the economy had become the central issue in the campaign, which was where SEIU wanted the debate. Even before the collapse of Wall Street in September 2008, union leaders and members alike knew the economy was in trouble, which is why many felt the 2008 Presidential race was going to be the most important election of their lifetimes.

As the 2008 Campaign hurtled into its final weeks, **Labor Day** shows SEIU’s Get Out The Vote operation in action in swing states from Pittsburgh to St. Petersburg, from Las Vegas to St. Paul, and from Columbus, Ohio and Hammond, Indiana where union members mobilized in an all-out effort to take back the White House. The final stop on this remarkable political journey is Grant Park in Chicago on November 4, 2008, where the nation witnessed the election of the first African American President.

Change is hard work – and **Labor Day** reminds people who became activists in this campaign why so many worked passionately for Barack Obama as the candidate who could best deliver the promise of real change. Now, as we approach the 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Obama’s historic election, and the President struggles with two wars, a teetering economy and to pass major healthcare reform legislation, **Labor Day** tells a story that is still playing out today.

As President-elect Obama said on election night during his victory speech in Grant Park in Chicago: “This victory is not the change we seek. It is only the chance for us to make that change.”

By revisiting the passion behind the 2008 Presidential campaign, **Labor Day** dramatically reveals what one union, thousands of activists, and a commitment to change the country did to help turn Election Day into Labor Day.

## ***Director's Statement***

I never really started out to make a documentary about SEIU's role in the 2008 Presidential campaign, but as a filmmaker and producer I'm always looking for a big or inspiring story. I found both in what became ***Labor Day***, a feature documentary that chronicles 18 months in the life of a major labor union, and their members' role in Barack Obama's historic win.

After George W. Bush's disastrous administration, the country seemed like it was teetering on the brink: Iraq and Afghanistan, the fallout from Katrina, the housing bubble, Wall Street excess, and the massively expensive financial meltdown that followed. As the 2008 Presidential campaign began, millions of Americans, myself included, were desperate for change.

At the same time, I was ready for a career change. For the previous twenty years, I'd been happily producing for a string of primetime TV newsmagazines at CBS and ABC News, the last ten with *20/20*. Wanting to somehow be part of the "change" I wanted to see, I decided to take a break from broadcast journalism and set up my own shop again.

My partner and wife Claudia Vianello and I decided to restart our company, Catalyst Media Productions, the same banner under which I'd produced a number of award-winning independent feature documentaries earlier in my career, including ***An American Ism: Joe McCarthy, The War At Home, El Salvador: Another Vietnam, and Troupers***. These films were witness to dramatic, political conflict in our nation's history, and as the 2008 campaign approached, I felt America was heading into another such historic moment.

By early 2007, the Presidential Campaign was already looming large on the political landscape and the stakes for the Labor Movement could not have been higher. As the nation's second-largest union with more than two million members, SEIU (the Service Employees International Union) was determined not to let this election be a repeat of the bitter defeats of 2000 and 2004.

This election was a chance for regular working people – SEIU members - to make a difference in their own lives by fighting for what was important to them: healthcare reform, the economy, and workers rights. For too long the issues and concerns of working people had been invisible to government and to the media. I knew from my years at the networks that labor was a story they generally ignored.

Our company, Catalyst Media Productions, produced a number of short videos for the union, including a ten-minute video about the SEIU's history with Obama in Illinois. After he won the Democratic Nomination, I began to sense the possibility of doing something bigger.

SEIU was about to launch the biggest ground operation ever by a single organization in a presidential campaign. By early summer, thousands of union members were recruited and were leaving their jobs and families to spend months working in key swing states—battlegrounds that would likely determine the outcome of the election.

I was convinced there was a big story unfolding here that went beyond the union—a remarkable story others would want to see after all the votes were counted. The risk? If Obama lost, no one would want to watch it.

That summer, we covered the events from the Democratic National Convention to SEIU's "Take Back Labor Day" concert in St. Paul outside the Republican Convention. Shooting SEIU's Get Out The Vote action in the last month of the campaign was all pretty much done on the fly.

We never had the time to "cast" which members would be featured at any given location. Our video crew would just show up in a swing state, catch up with SEIU's ground game and simply do our best to keep up with it. We had crews covering the action in eight swing states to document the union's final push to help seal Obama's victory. One member political organizer, Loretta Reddy, a nursing assistant from Florida, undoubtedly spoke for many calling the 2008 campaign "a life-changing experience for us".

The resulting film, ***Labor Day***, chronicles how one labor union, thousands of activists and sheer determination helped elect the candidate they believed could make the changes most important to them.

As we approach the first anniversary of Barack Obama's historic election, I see ***Labor Day*** as an inspiring story that shows how regular working people, when mobilized and empowered, played a key role in helping to elect Obama President. A year later, they're still hoping and waiting to see the "change" they believe in come true. It's time.

## *Who's Who in Labor Day*

### **ANDY STERN**

#### **President of Service Employees International Union (SEIU):**

In the August 2009 issue of *Modern Healthcare* Andy Stern was named one of the top ten most powerful people in healthcare. It is the fifth year in a row that Stern has been recognized as one of the 100 most influential players on the quest for healthcare reform in America. He advocates affordable quality healthcare for everyone, superior public service, and globalization that mutually benefits individuals and large corporations.

In 1973 Stern began his work as a social service worker and member of SEIU Local 668. After many years as SEIU's Director of Organizing, Stern was elected SEIU president in 1996 and under his leadership the membership of SEIU to more than 2 million members. In 2005 Stern led SEIU out of the AFL-CIO and founded the organization Change to Win, a 6 million-member federation comprised of seven major labor unions committed to giving workers a right to be heard at their jobs. Author of the book, *A Country That Works* Stern recommends political and economic reforms that he believes will help ensure a brighter future for America.

### **ANNA BURGER**

#### **Chair; Change to Win; International Secretary- Treasurer of SEIU:**

Anna Burger is a top ranking officer at SEIU, and the first chair of America's newest labor federation, Change to Win. She has been called, "the most powerful woman in the labor movement" by *Fortune Magazine* and recognized as one of "The Top 50 Women to Watch" by the *Wall Street Journal* in 2007. Burger manages SEIU's national political operations. In 2008, she led the SEIU's grassroots election work that helped Obama win the presidential election. In what is regarded as the largest mobilization by a single organization in the history of U.S. politics, over 13,000 SEIU members worked coast to coast to bring change to Washington, D.C. and make the American dream possible for working families.

Burger began her career in 1972 working as a Pennsylvania state caseworker and union activist and was later elected as the first female president for SEIU Local 668. She moved on to run the statewide political program before becoming the SEIU's national field director. Burger has been an active delegate to the Democratic National Convention since 1984. She has played a significant role in developing the infrastructure of the progressive movement by partnering with and developing organizations to ensure presence of progressive leaders at all levels of government. In 2009, Burger was named to President Obama's Economic Recovery Advisory Board, which is responsible for helping guide the President's economic recovery policies. She currently resides in Washington, D.C. with her husband and daughter.

**GERALD HUDSON**  
**International Executive Vice President of SEIU:**

Recently honored by Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations for his extraordinary leadership, Gerald Hudson continues to support the cause to improve the lives of working families and their communities. He has served on the board of several labor-based organizations including the Apollo Alliance as well as the nation's leading public policy think tank, the Board for Redefining Progress. Hudson has served as the Executive Vice President of SEIU since June 2004.

Hudson has been a member of SEIU since 1978 when he was a nursing home worker and where he was a member of SEIU Local 144 in Riverdale, NY. In 1989 he was elected as executive vice president for former-District 1199. Hudson spent over a decade supervising 1199 New York's political action, education, publications and cultural affairs departments. Hudson coordinated the merger of 30,000- member Local 144 into SEIU/1199. He founded the 1199 School for Social Change, and served as a trustee of the Local 1199 Training and Upgrading Fund, Home Care Workers Benefit Fund, and Michelson Education Fund. Additionally, Hudson is politically active and in 1996 he served as political director of the New York State Democratic Party as well as making significant contribution to the election of H. Carl McCall, the first African American controller in New York State. He leads SEIU efforts to obtain affordable healthcare for all, immigration reform, and create alliances with other community groups. Currently he lives with his wife and their two children in Washington, D.C.

**TOM BALANOFF**  
**SEIU Local 1 President:**

Tom Balanoff is president of SEIU Local 1 and the SEIU Illinois State Council. SEIU Local 1 represents 50,000 property service workers throughout the central United States. SEIU's Illinois membership has doubled during Balanoff's presidency, after the Illinois unions restructured into industry-focused locals and organized more than 75,000 low-wage workers in the health care and child care industries.

Balanoff, the son of a steelworker, graduated with a Master's Degree in Labor and Industrial Relations from the University of Illinois in 1974, and worked for the Fire Fighters Union, the Allied Industrial Workers' Union, and the Cement Workers Union before joining SEIU as international research director in 1988. Within a year, he was promoted to Building Service Division director, where he joined SEIU's senior staff and played a crucial role in the Justice for Janitors campaigns. He was elected to the SEIU international executive board in 1995 and became an international vice president in 1996. In 1999, he led the reorganization of the largest building service local in the country, the 75,000-member Local 32 BJ in New York City. In 2000, Balanoff returned to Chicago, where he was elected president of Local 1. Balanoff led the international union to endorse Obama in the Presidential Primary. Balanoff was one of the founders of Chicago Jobs with Justice, a founding member of United Power, and has served on the boards of the Chicago Anti-Defamation League, Citizen Action Illinois, and the Illinois Coalition for Better Health Care.



**JONATHAN ALTER****Senior Editor and National Affairs Columnist *Newsweek*:**

Jonathan Alter is an award-winning columnist, television analyst and author. Since 1991, Alter has written a *Newsweek* column that examines politics and a wide range of social and global matters. Over the past decade he has worked as a contributing correspondent for NBC News and has made regular appearances on broadcasts including frequent appearances on "*Countdown with Keith Olbermann*" on MSNBC. The 2008 election marked the seventh presidential election that Alter covered for *Newsweek*. Alter has earned many awards for his political columns, including first prize from the National Headliner Awards for Special Column on One Subject for a series of columns on life after 9/11. He was also part of the teams of *Newsweek* reporters and editors awarded the prestigious National Magazine Award for General Excellence in 1993, 2002, 2004.

A Chicago native, Alter received his B.A. in history with honors from Harvard in 1979. Alter joined *Newsweek* as an associate editor in the Nation section in March 1983, and became media critic the following year. He was named a senior writer in February 1987 and a senior editor in September 1991. For two years prior to joining *Newsweek*, Alter was an editor at *The Washington Monthly*. He has also freelanced articles for such publications as *The New Republic*, *Esquire*, *Slate* and *The New York Times*. He resides in New Jersey with his wife and children.

**KAREN TUMULTY****National Political Correspondent, *TIME Magazine*:**

Karen Tumulty was named national political correspondent for TIME in 2001. She joined the magazine as a congressional correspondent in 1994. Tumulty has written or co-written more than 25 cover stories for TIME, the most recent of which "*So You Think You're Insured (Think Again)*" in March 2009 was a story about her own brother's struggle to get healthcare for a life-threatening disease. She contributes regularly to TIME.com's political blog, "Swampland," and has also held positions with TIME as congressional correspondent and White House correspondent. Before joining TIME, Tumulty spent 14 years at the *Los Angeles Times*, where she covered a wide variety of beats, including Congress, business, energy and economics out of Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C.

Tumulty holds a Bachelor of Journalism from the University of Texas-Austin and an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School. In 1982, Tumulty was awarded the Gerald Loeb Award for distinguished business and financial journalism, and, in 1993, she won the National Press Foundation Edwin Hood Award for diplomatic correspondence. She currently lives in Maryland with her husband and two children.

**Glenn Silber**  
**Director/Producer**

Glenn Silber has been a documentary director and producer for more than 30 years, both as an independent and a network television news magazine producer. His work has been nominated for two Academy Awards and he has won the George Polk Award (***"The Great American Bailout"***), an Emmy, a WGA Award and the Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Award for Excellence in Broadcast Journalism. He is now a partner and co-founder of Catalyst Media Productions, a media production and consulting firm, since 2007.

Silber began his filmmaking career as a college student at the University of Wisconsin in the 1970s. In 1978, he completed his first feature documentary, ***"An American Ism: Joe McCarthy,"*** which traced the rise to power of Sen. Joseph McCarthy through interviews with people who knew him from his humble beginnings in rural Wisconsin to his prominence as America's best known post-war "anti-Communist" demagogue. The film aired on PBS and won a Columbia DuPont Silver Baton Award.

While producing ***"An American Ism,"*** Silber was also working on a feature-length documentary about the anti-Vietnam War movement on the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison after discovering an archive of long forgotten local TV news film. ***"The War at Home,"*** was released in 1979 and was nominated for an Oscar as Best Feature Documentary.

Silber's next film, ***"El Salvador: Another Vietnam,"*** the first American documentary on the crisis in that country, was also nominated for an Academy Award as Best Feature Documentary after it was released in 1981. Charting the course of the Salvadoran civil war and military dictatorships during the late '70s leading up to the U.S. intervention in the conflict, the film features interviews with military brass and political leaders, rebels, and Salvadoran citizens caught between them.

After graduating from the American Film Institute's Center for Advanced Film Studies and receiving a Guggenheim Fellowship, Silber worked as a staff producer for various prime time TV newsmagazines from 1987 to 2007, first for CBS (1987-1994) and later for ABC (1994-2007). While at CBS, he specialized in social issue investigations, producing the Emmy Award-winning ***"Children of the Homeless"*** as well as segments on racial bias in southern California law enforcement, Los Angeles gangs, Hollywood plagiarism, the Savings and Loan Bailout and a hidden-camera investigation into telemarketing charity fraud, among many others.

At ABC News ***20/20***, Silber's stories ranged from producing profiles with Barbara Walters (including the first post-2000 interview with Al Gore) to investigative pieces with John Miller regarding the terrorist movements in New Jersey before 9/11, to producing the first prime-time interview with an Abu Ghraib prison guard. Silber also co-produced the one-hour re-examination of the Matthew Shepard homicide for ***20/20*** which received a Writers Guild of America Award in 2005.

## **Claudia Vianello** **Co-Producer**

Claudia Vianello has more than 30 years of producing, consulting and creative development experience across the complete spectrum of production, from documentaries, industrials and corporate media, to independent features. She is currently a partner with Glenn Silber of Catalyst Media Productions, a media production and consulting firm, since 2007.

A graduate of the Center for Advanced Film Studies, American Film Institute, Los Angeles, Ms. Vianello was a story analyst for IPC (Jane Fonda) Films, Marble Arch Productions, Kings Road, Embassy Pictures, and the Phil Gersh Agency in Los Angeles before she went into production. During the '80's she worked in development for television and assisted producers on numerous "Movies of the Week" for Viacom Productions and Aaron Spelling Productions. She also began working on documentaries, including "**The Seeds of Liberty**" and "**El Salvador: Another Vietnam**" as Associate Producer and Writer.

In 1982 she was Co-Producer of "**Atomic Artist**", a 30 minute documentary about sculptor Tony Price and his "Atomic Art for the Arts and Entertainment Channel. "**Atomic Artist**" won a Bronze Award and First Place award at the San Francisco International Film Festival and the Peter Stuyvesant Humanitarian Award at the Melbourne, Australia International Film Festival in 1983. In 1985 she co-produced and directed "**Troupers**", an independent feature documentary about the San Francisco Mime Troupe that won a Bronze Hugo at the Chicago International Film Festival.

As a communications consultant, Ms. Vianello has produced over 35 corporate and organizational videos, including 4 Telly awards and 4 awards from the International Television and Video Association and managed an award-winning team of designers, writers, video directors, and production people. She partnered with clients in marketing, public affairs, and communications to design and implement multi-media campaigns to support strategic initiatives. "**One Prudential Exchange**" was a series of corporate videos and promos designed to educate employees regarding new organizational strategies and initiatives that was distributed to 60,000 employees. The series won both Silver and Bronze Telly Awards.

In 1998 she developed and co-produced an independent dramatic feature film entitled "**Row Your Boat**" starring Jon Bon Jovi, Bai Ling, and Jill Hennessy that was the winner of the Audience Choice Award at the Stoneybrook Film Festival.

Since 2004 she has concentrated on communications consulting and documentary production. In 2007 she co-produced "**Leave No Soldier**", a feature documentary about how two generations of Vietnam and Iraq war veterans transform the trauma of war into social action.

## **Labor Day Credits**

**Directed by:**

Glenn Silber

**Produced by:**Glenn Silber  
Claudia Vianello**Editor:**

Phil Raymond

**Consulting Editor:**

Vanessa Cochran

**Original Music by:**

Doug Hall, Propeller Music

**Graphic Designer**

Adele Morgan

**Video Crews:****Democratic Convention, Bus Tour &  
Labor Day Concert**John Sharaf – Camera  
Patty Sharaf – Sound**Additional Labor Day Concert**Max Miller – Camera  
Keith Sikora - Camera  
Darren Stucker – Camera  
Tyler Lang – Sound  
Susanna Styron – Field Producer**Chicago**Max Miller - Camera  
Tyler Lang    Sound**Indiana & Election Night in Chicago**Jon Ellison – Camera  
Jamin Townsley - Sound  
Tom Bailey – 2<sup>nd</sup> Camera, Election Night**Washington DC**Danny O’Shea – Camera  
Ted Roth – Sound  
John Blackman – Sound  
Jennifer Wynter – 2<sup>nd</sup> Camera  
Trimica Gartrell – 2<sup>nd</sup> Camera**St. Petersburg, Florida**David Brown – Camera  
Stan Wilkins - Sound**Ohio**Scott Winters – Camera  
Jim Rebraca – Sound  
Bryan Frania – 2<sup>nd</sup> Camera**Minneapolis**Kyle Gallagher - Camera  
Jay Enyart - Sound**Pittsburgh**Dave Forstate - Camera  
Walter Francis - Sound**Las Vegas**Sarah Feinbloom – Field Producer  
Jeff Dolen - Camera**Audio Post Facility:**

Dig It Audio Inc.

**Re-recording Mixer:**

Tom Efinger

**Digital Intermediate Services**

Final Frame

**Colorist**

Stewart Griffin

**On-Line Editor**

Joseph Lee

**Archive Video Sources**ABC News Video Source; SEIU Video;  
Talking Eyes Media,  
Poliwood, LLC, I-stock.com; theuptake.org

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