



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

ENTERTAINMENT

*National Geographic Entertainment presents an Altitude Films Production  
with Atlantic Productions*

# THE WILDEST DREAM

## Conquest of Everest

*A film by Anthony Geffen*

**Press Contacts:**

James Lewis  
[jlewispr@gmail.com](mailto:jlewispr@gmail.com)  
323 828 2424

Laura Kim  
[laurackim@sbcglobal.net](mailto:laurackim@sbcglobal.net)  
323 957 9868

**Photography available at:** [www.box.net/thewildestdream](http://www.box.net/thewildestdream)

**EPK / Broadcast materials available at:** [www.epk.tv](http://www.epk.tv)

Logon: [jlewispr@gmail.com](mailto:jlewispr@gmail.com)

Password: natgeo09

Release Date:	August 6, 2010
Running Time:	93 minutes
Rating:	PG-13
Aspect Ratio:	1:85
Sound Format:	Dolby SR and Dolby SRD

As of: April 20, 2010

## Credits

Directed by  
Anthony Geffen

Featuring (in order of appearance)

Conrad Anker  
Susan Robertson  
Robert Macfarlane  
Peter Gillman  
Jennifer Lowe-Anker  
Julie Summers  
Leo Houlding

Narrated by  
Liam Neeson

Voice of George Mallory  
Ralph Fiennes

Voice of Ruth Mallory  
Natasha Richardson

Voice of Sandy Irvine  
Hugh Dancy

Voice of Noel Odell  
Alan Rickman

Produced by  
Anthony Geffen  
Claudia Perkins

Executive Producer  
Mike Medavoy

Edited by  
Peter Miller

Directors of Photography  
Ken Sauls  
Chris Openshaw

Edit Producer and Writer  
Mark Halliley

Music by  
Joel Douek

Art Director  
Humphrey Bangham

Costume Designer  
Jane Wrigley

-- extended cast & crew list available upon request

# THE WILDEST DREAM

## Conquest of Everest

In 1999, renowned American mountaineer Conrad Anker made a discovery that reverberated around the globe. High in Mount Everest's "death zone," he found the body of George Mallory—75 years after the British explorer mysteriously vanished during his attempt to become the first man to summit the world's tallest peak.

Mallory had risked everything as he set out, dressed in gabardine and hobnailed boots, in pursuit of his dream of reaching the top of Everest - which in 1924 was the last great adventure left to man. He was last spotted alive just 800 feet below the summit. Then the clouds rolled in and Mallory vanished into legend.

After discovering Mallory's body, Conrad Anker's life became intertwined with Mallory's story. Remarkably, Mallory's body was found with all his belongings intact. The only thing missing was a photograph of Ruth, which Mallory had promised to place on the summit. Haunted by Mallory's story, Conrad longed to return to Everest to lay Mallory's ghost to rest.

Directed by Emmy® award winning filmmaker Anthony Geffen (*Jerusalem: City of Heaven*, *The Promised Land*, *The Greeks: Crucible of Civilisation*) and featuring the vocal talents of Academy Award® nominees Liam Neeson and Ralph Fiennes, as well as Hugh Dancy, Alan Rickman and the late Natasha Richardson, ***The Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest*** is a breathtaking mountaineering adventure that seeks to provide answers to the enduring mysteries surrounding the death of George Mallory on Mount Everest. Foremost among them: Could Mallory have succeeded in reaching the summit before he and fellow climber Andrew "Sandy" Irvine disappeared in 1924?

In the quest for answers, Anker finally returns to Everest in 2007 with British climbing prodigy Leo Houlding, replicating as closely as possible Mallory's ill-fated expedition. The men retrace the North East Ridge Route, even removing the ladder from the infamous Second Step to "free climb" this dangerous 90-foot sheer rock wall just as Mallory and Irvine would have had to do 83 years earlier.

Far more than a film about mountain climbing, ***The Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest*** tells the remarkable story of George Mallory, whose famous reply to a reporter's question about his reason for wanting to climb Everest ("Because it's there") has inspired generations of adventurers. Mallory was a passionate and complex man, torn between two overwhelming and competing loves: his wife and the mountain that ultimately took his life.

Told through the poignant and evocative letters between Mallory and his beloved Ruth, the film combines previously unseen archival photos, specially restored film footage and dramatization with the present-day story of Anker's expedition to tell the tale of the quest to conquer Everest and the compelling longing for home. In this, Anker's story parallels Mallory's in a tale of obsession as relevant today as it was in 1924.

National Geographic Entertainment will release ***The Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest*** in August 2010. ***The Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest*** is produced by Anthony Geffen and Claudia Perkins and is executive produced by Mike Medavoy. The music is composed by Joel Douek, recorded with the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, and features vocals by Lisbeth Scott.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

*"I saw a patch of white that was whiter than the snow...I realized that this wasn't a body from recent times; it was something that had been there for quite a while."*

— Conrad Anker, 1999

The seeds for ***The Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest*** were planted long before director Anthony Geffen began filming Conrad Anker's treacherous, history-making ascent of the world's tallest mountain. Geffen says British explorer George Mallory loomed large in his boyhood imagination and his fascination with the adventurer was rekindled after Geffen moved to Los Angeles as a young man and worked under legendary movie mogul and accomplished mountaineer Frank Wells. A top executive at both Warner Bros. and Disney, Wells came close to achieving his goal of climbing the "Seven Summits"—the highest mountain of each of the seven continents. Wells reached six of the seven peaks, and although bad weather forced his climbing party back before they could summit the 29,029-foot Mount Everest, he retained a fascination with the mountain, which was contagious.

"He sparked my interest in Mallory and Everest again," Geffen recalls. "One day, after we'd been talking about climbing, he called me into his office and said that I had to make a film about Everest. I knew I didn't want to make an ordinary climbing film, or a straight drama or documentary about Mallory. It would have to be something different."

Decades later, in 2004, Geffen came across the book [The Lost Explorer](#) while stuck at the airport in Washington, D.C. Co-written by acclaimed mountaineer Conrad Anker, the book tells the story of how in 1999 Anker found Mallory's remarkably preserved body high in the "death zone" on Everest. Geffen was hooked by the first few pages and read the entire book right there in the airport.

"I knew this was my film," Geffen says. "I wanted it to be a personal story, and I wanted Conrad to go back in Mallory's footsteps, to bring alive his journey for a modern audience. In some ways Mallory's story is a very modern one. We all have aspirations and wildest dreams. I knew the film was in many ways a love story and a story about people pursuing their dreams. Before the flight back to London had taken off, I'd got Conrad's number from a contact in New York and made the call."

Anker, who has been described by [Outside](#) magazine as the world's greatest adventurer, says he's been approached by several people to work on this film in the past. But he was deeply impressed by Geffen's work as a filmmaker and recalls that, as the two of them talked about the project in 2004 and 2005, a shared vision emerged for what they wanted to

accomplish. “To do a film of the highest possible quality that would really honor Mallory. That was our basic goal,” Anker says.

For both men, the inspiration for the project was largely George Mallory himself.

“I like the fact that he wasn’t just a climber,” Anker says. “He was this person of depth and character and he reflected the times in which he lived. Perhaps naïvely, I see myself that way.”

“This isn’t just a film about conquering a mountain,” Geffen adds. “Mallory himself is fascinating. He’s a fearless explorer, but also a writer, and very much in love with his wife, Ruth. I was fascinated by their relationship. ... I wasn’t just interested in answering the question, ‘Did he or didn’t he make it to the top?’”

The context of Mallory’s era was also a compelling factor for Geffen. “I wanted to look at what it meant to be doing this at that exact moment in history,” he says. “It’s the end of the Empire, the time of the Paris Olympics, which gave us *Chariots of Fire*, when Everest is unexplored territory.”

Geffen says he was especially intrigued by the “parallel story” between Mallory and Anker. “Both were risking everything, both had wives and children at home, and their lives intersected on the mountain,” Geffen says. “The mountain is the backdrop that draws these two men, and it’s an amazing backdrop, but the real story is about a human journey and its consequences.”

Mallory and his wife, Ruth, had three children. Anker lives with his wife, Jenni, and their three sons. Adding poignancy and resonance to the story is the fact that Jenni had suffered a tragedy similar to Ruth’s before production began on ***The Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest***. Her first husband, mountaineering legend Alex Lowe, was killed in an avalanche in Tibet in 1999—the same year Anker found Mallory’s body in an earlier expedition. Anker, who was Lowe’s best friend and climbing partner, survived the avalanche, but not without injuries, both physical and in the form of survivor’s guilt. Geffen says he was fascinated by what it is that makes some men put themselves in such danger, even knowing the risks. “Everest has this weird way of attracting people despite what it can do to them,” he observes.

Providing further parallels to the 1924 expedition, Anker chose young British climbing prodigy Leo Houlding as his partner, and not just because of his world-class rock-climbing skills. “The main thing was the parallel between us and Mallory and Andrew Irvine,” Anker says. “There was the same age spread, the same difference in experience levels. Like Irvine, Leo had never been to Everest before. I had summited Everest in 1999. Mallory, although he had never successfully climbed it, had been on two previous Everest expeditions.”

It took three years to bring the project together but in 2007 Geffen was finally able to achieve his dream of shooting a film on Everest. That was when Anker returned to Everest with

Holding with the objective of replicating as closely as possible Mallory's ill-fated 1924 expedition. The men retraced the North East Ridge Route taken by Mallory and risked frostbite by testing replica 1920s-era clothing and equipment for portions of the climb. Perhaps most remarkably, they removed a ladder from the infamous Second Step near the summit, restoring the mountain to its pristine state and "free climbing" this terrifying 90-foot section of mountain as Mallory and Irvine would have had to do 83 years earlier.

Geffen himself is no stranger to danger. When he worked for the BBC, he made films in war-torn Lebanon; shadowed former Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasser Arafat during a year when he was considered a terrorist and had survived several assassination attempts; and was in Tiananmen Square when Chinese troops rolled in.

"I've been on filming expeditions in the world's remotest jungles," the director says. "I know what it's like to push yourself to the edge. But this did feel riskier, in a way, because mountaineering is a field in which I'm not a professional. In a war zone you might be able to find shelter behind a wall when the bullets start flying, but on Everest there's nowhere to hide. You realize how fragile you are. You can fall down a crevasse, or be hit by a storm at any moment. You feel constantly close to catastrophe."

In directing the film, Geffen did a lot of climbing, in the end getting as high as 26,000 feet—just 3,000 feet from the summit—a feat Anker calls "quite respectable." "He wanted to get up there to see what it was like," the climber says of Geffen. "I think he dreamed of making it to the summit, but there was a point at which we said we're either going to put our efforts into guiding you up the mountain or we're going to make this film. He did the right thing, and we made the film."

Geffen, who had very little formal climbing experience prior to the shoot, says the potential dangers of the expedition only really hit him days before it began. "I had piles of gear in my office, huge summit suits and other gear, and it suddenly dawned on me what I was doing," he recalls. "I was definitely worried. You start to think about wills and saying goodbye to people you love. I heard that there was a one in six chance of dying just on the way down. I'm fit, and I did some training, though I wished I'd done more. But above all, I was just very lucky. You either adapt to the lack of oxygen on Everest, or you don't. Luckily, I adapted."

The production team itself was a lean one, consisting of 10 Westerners and a support staff of 10 climbing Sherpas and 10 camp Sherpas. But, as is often the case on Everest, things didn't go according to plan, and it looked at times as if the ascent was a lost cause. Geffen recalls that around five of the film crew members didn't make it up the mountain, and the six climbers that made up the summit team were not those originally intended to complete the ascent. One of the main cameramen, Peter Allibone, developed serious altitude sickness. The

line producer, who had hoped to get to 22,000 feet, didn't get beyond Base Camp. "With altitude sickness, if you hit the wall, you've hit it. There's nothing you can do," Geffen says.

Days before the final push to the summit, two of the six summit team members also dropped out. High-altitude second cameraman Jimmy Chin had to leave to be with his terminally ill mother; then the main high-altitude cameraman, Ken Sauls, caught bronchitis, which can be fatal on Everest. "Both men were experienced climbers, absolutely key to the final stage of the shoot," Geffen says. "They were also close friends of Conrad. It was a huge blow to him—he'd basically lost his emotional support team.

"Trying to make a top-level film at the top of a mountain is a massive challenge in itself," Geffen says. "But making it without our most experienced crew members—I thought we just couldn't do it. If we couldn't capture the images of the summit climb, we didn't have a film. I was within hours of calling the whole thing off."

But all was not lost. The director of the local guiding company in charge of the expedition, Russell Brice of Himalayan Experience, suggested that two of his mountain guides step in to help. Although neither of the guides had any experience operating professional cameras and had just returned from guiding a team to the summit, they offered to try and capture Anker and Houlding's groundbreaking free climb of the Second Step on camera. Geffen ran with it. "We'd come this far; I couldn't face giving up now," he says. "One of the sick cameramen was able to lie in his sleeping bag at camp and give Mark Woodward and Dean Staples five days of basic training in how to use the camera equipment. Against all odds we did it."

Pulling off the film production on top of climbing the tallest mountain in the world made for an immense logistical challenge. In addition to scheduling Sherpas and making sure there was food, fuel and oxygen for higher up the mountain, the team also had to ensure it had cameras and sound equipment in position, and batteries to make it all work. "If one part of that equation is not in place you could miss the boat," Anker says. "Every evening we would sit down and figure out what we were shooting the next day, and get the batteries lined out."

Cameras and other film equipment had to contend with the icy temperatures and the omnipresent, wind-blown dust that finds its way into everything on the mountain. ***The Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest*** was shot on high-definition cameras equipped with special cladding for insulation, and with a special kind of grease coating for protection against the cold. To Geffen's relief, the protection worked flawlessly. "Not a single camera broke, even in temperatures of minus 40 degrees," he says. "Sometimes your hands are so cold you can't bend them to hold the camera, but it still keeps working."

Of course, the sparse atmosphere on upper slopes of the world's tallest mountain also presented a challenge to the filmmakers. "At high altitude we all had to wear oxygen masks too.

The crew looked like a bunch of scuba divers. They'd have to take their masks on and off in order to actually film."

Production challenges aside, climbing the mountain was potentially lethal in and of itself. Geffen recalls a particularly terrifying episode during the ascent of Everest's North Col. "It's a horrendous climb, and we had to get off the ropes so that we could film Conrad and Leo from different angles," he says. "This meant crossing what is basically a field of crevasses. The Sherpas could mostly tell where they were, but even so, I knew I could disappear into one at any moment and that would probably be it."

On another occasion, Geffen was exhausted after climbing and filming all day when he and a Sherpa were caught in a sudden storm, with winds of roughly 60 mph, temperatures around minus 35 degrees and darkness approaching. The director recalls: "My hands were frozen and I could hardly move, so I said to the Sherpa, Mingma, 'Why don't we just sit down here and wait?' He said, 'If you sit, we'll die.' We had to go on. We played number games just to keep ourselves going. Usually there's still some juice in the tank, but at that point, there was no more juice. I was a zombie. I knew that we could walk off the edge of the mountain at any moment. Everything races through your mind: You think about home and loved ones, and you ask yourself why you're doing this. That was probably the closest I got to the edge."

Reminders of the high level of risk are especially apparent in the so-called "death zone"—the region above about 23,000 feet where the amount of oxygen is insufficient to sustain human life. At one point the crew heard about the deaths of a group of climbers ahead of them on the mountain. "Morale just shoots through the floor," Geffen says. "You ask yourself, 'Is it worth it?' Hearing about those deaths was hard for us all to take."

And then there are the corpses of mountaineers past that litter the slopes and are left in place by tradition. "At first, when you see a body up there, it freaks you out," Geffen says. "They're just like you, only they didn't make it. But worse than this, you almost become used to it. You're so out of it up there that it almost becomes natural to see dead people. I remember someone said to me, 'Turn left at green boots.' It was only when we saw the boots that I realized what they meant."

Geffen says he lived in constant fear of making a decision that might lead to the injury or even death of other members of the team. "I questioned myself all the time," he says. "Up there, you feel totally cut off from the world. Talking to people at home on the satellite phone is like talking to a different planet. You've lost your appetite, you've almost stopped eating. You hardly sleep. It's extremely hard just to think straight. I'd sit for hours trying to think through my decisions. I knew I could be sending us all to our deaths if I made the wrong call, or pushed for something I wanted."



The decision to have Anker and Houlding don replica 1920s-era clothing for parts of the climb was a source of severe concern for Geffen. “We had to shoot some key drama scenes on the mountain, which meant struggling into freezing costumes,” the director says. “Mallory’s clothes were the best gear available at the time, but they showed just how vulnerable he and Irvine were up there. When Leo and Conrad were in period clothing, I was constantly monitoring them. I wasn’t prepared to risk people’s health to prove a point. And I wasn’t going to force them all the way up a mountain in these outfits. At one stage, after wearing the hobnail boots at 26,000 feet, Leo was worried his toes were almost frozen. It took about an hour to get the circulation going, and that was awful. He knew his career would be over if he lost a toe.”

The fact that Mallory and Irvine got as high as they did wearing the clothing they did is the most remarkable aspect of their achievement, Anker says. Add to that the advances in training techniques that have occurred since 1924, such as the way modern-day climbers hyperhydrate, and the psychological advantage modern climbers have of knowing that people have climbed the mountain before.

But the most heart-pounding incident on the mountain is the one that supplies the climax of the movie itself, where Anker and Houlding free climb the infamous Second Step, after removal of the ladder affixed to that portion of the mountain in modern times. With the summit not far above and a 6,000-foot drop awaiting the slightest misstep, there was a moment when Anker slipped.

“There was a yelp, and Conrad just disappeared,” recalls Geffen, who was directing this portion of the climb from below with binoculars and a two-way radio. “Then silence. Nobody knew what had happened. I didn’t want to use the single radio channel in case Conrad needed it. We all just stood there, waiting for his voice. After what seemed like an eternity, there was a second yelp, and this time it was elated. He’d made it. He was over the Second Step. It turned out that he’d fallen behind a rock, but had managed to get himself up and keep climbing to the top.”

Just as challenging as the Second Step, says Anker, was the psychological stress of climbing so late in the season, with the impending monsoon threatening to engulf the mountain in deadly snowstorms. “We didn’t summit until June 14,” Anker says. “Only one or two expeditions had ever climbed it in June. May 10–29 is more typical. Mallory and Irvine disappeared on June 8.”

But the late ascent was all part of the plan. “We wanted the expedition to go at the exact time of year that Mallory went, and we needed to clear the mountain to attempt the free-climb of the Second Step, both of which meant going at the end of the season—hopefully before the monsoon arrived,” Geffen says. “There was a huge time pressure. In the end, if we hadn’t got

off the mountain exactly when we did, literally a matter of hours, we wouldn't have made it off at all."

As grueling and stressful as the expedition was, it also had its moments of unparalleled sweetness. For Geffen, the point at which Anker and Leo made it over the Second Step and went on to the summit was one of the most moving moments of all. "It showed that Mallory and Irvine could have made it," he says. "This was a moment we'd talked about for years."

At other times Geffen found it tremendously uplifting to literally walk in Mallory's footsteps. "It was amazing, having read so much about someone, to be exactly where they were on Everest," he says. "Sitting in the very place where Mallory sat, reading his letters and looking out at what he saw was an incredible feeling."

And then there was the experience of being just 3,000 feet from the top of the world. "You can almost see the curvature of the earth, and that's mind blowing," Geffen says. "It's overwhelming and awe-inspiring. Everest is bigger than anything you've ever imagined. I came back a different person. It puts things into perspective. I don't worry about many of the smaller things that used to bother me."

Geffen has the highest praise for the Sherpas, who kept the team safe and without whom the film could never have happened. And then, after reaching the summit, there was the incredible elation of getting everyone safely down off the mountain. "There's a tradition that when you see people coming down the mountain you bang pots," Geffen explains. "We knew the monsoon was coming and we were waiting for Conrad, Leo and the crew to get back. We were all very frightened that they weren't going to make it in time. I kept thinking that one in six people who summit Everest don't make it down. We had six climbers up there and our Sherpa support team. Then they began to emerge from the darkness. We started banging pots and making a clamor, and people broke down. These are big strong men, but there's this huge release of tension. It was very, very emotional. The monsoon hit in strength just hours afterwards."

Much of the production of ***The Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest*** took place continents away from the icy vastness of the Himalayas. In addition to being a breathtaking mountaineering film, it is also a dramatic love story told through letters between Mallory and his wife, Ruth. Interwoven throughout is a treasure trove of previously unseen photos and film archives of Mallory, his family and others.

To pull together these more personal aspects of the film, Geffen says he turned to researchers, to mountaineering writer Peter Gillman, and to Mallory's family. "They were quite wary of anyone trying to make a film, as people approach them all the time," Geffen says. "But once we had their agreement, we discovered amazing things in the archive. There were cans of film that nobody had ever opened as well as old photographs and letters."

Gillman, who co-wrote what Geffen believes to be the best biography of Mallory, was the film's consultant and was extremely helpful in finding incredible moments for the film, about 20 percent of which consist of dramatic reenactments of Mallory's 1920s expeditions and his life.

Adding to the quality of the production is the film's voice-over cast, which includes narration by Academy Award® nominee Liam Neeson (*Taken*, *Batman Begins*); Academy Award nominee Ralph Fiennes (*The Reader*, *The Hurt Locker*) as Mallory; Neeson's late wife, Natasha Richardson (*Wild Child*, *The White Countess*), as Ruth; Hugh Dancy (*Confessions of a Shopaholic*, *Adam*) as Irvine; and Alan Rickman (*Harry Potter*, *Bottle Shock*) as Noel Odell, the English geologist and mountaineer who was the last person to see Mallory and Irvine alive, just 800 feet from the summit before the clouds closed in and they disappeared into legend.

Geffen, who had worked with Neeson several times in the past, had floated the idea of having him narrate the film long before it went into production. When the film came together, Geffen says, Neeson liked it so much that he suggested his wife for the voice of Ruth. The couple's enthusiasm for the project also persuaded Fiennes, their mutual friend, to come aboard. Dancy joined the project after Richardson recommended him for the voice of Irvine. Geffen had previously worked with Rickman, who had always been intrigued by the story of Mallory. "In the end, it turned out that all the actors knew each other," Geffen recalls. "And all of them have amazing voices."

***The Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest*** was one of the last projects Richardson worked on before her unexpected death in March 2009. "I was with Natasha at the final recording session, last January," Geffen recalls. "She was passionate about Ruth. She really related to her. At the last session, she had to read the telegram that came to Ruth, announcing Mallory's death. Halfway through reading it, she broke down in tears. I rushed in to see why she was so upset, and she said, 'If it was news about Liam, or about me, I couldn't bear what it'd mean for my children.' We had a coffee and chatted, and then she did the reading again. Soon afterwards she emailed me to say how excited she was about the film. Her death, obviously, was a huge shock."

Once Geffen had finished shooting on Everest and had assembled an early cut of the film, he showed it to veteran Hollywood producer and former studio chief Mike Medavoy (*Zodiac*, *All the King's Men*) in hopes of getting input from someone with extensive experience in cinematic storytelling. The two men had known each other for a few years and had talked about collaborating on a project. Excited by the film's potential, Medavoy came aboard as executive producer.

"I became involved with this film because I was fascinated by the story and by Anthony's approach to it," Medavoy says. "It isn't just a film about mountaineering; its resonance reaches much further than that. It's a passionate love story between George and Ruth Mallory, and an

extraordinary tale of man's curiosity and courage. I also liked how the film weaves together Mallory's expedition and Conrad Anker's journey, with extraordinary parallels eight decades apart."

For Geffen, there was poetic justice in Medavoy's involvement. "In a funny way it feels to me almost like the project has come full circle," the director says. "Mike was a close friend of Frank Wells [who died in 1994], who started me on this road 25 years ago. ... I'll always be grateful to Frank for sowing the seeds of the idea. I just wish he could have seen the film."

## ABOUT THE CLIMBERS

**CONRAD ANKER** ranks as one of today's leading mountaineers and explorers. He has taken part in many films and co-wrote the best-selling The Lost Explorer. Described as "the world's greatest adventurer" by Outside magazine, Anker has climbed such technically challenging terrain as the Karakoram Himalayas, the Khumbu Himalayas, Baffin Island, Alaska, Antarctica and Patagonia. On several occasions he was the first climber to reach the summit of treacherous peaks that defied dozens of attempts. In 1999, Anker was part of an expedition that set out with the specific aim of finding the body of famed British explorer George Mallory, who had vanished on Mount Everest in 1924. Many had tried before, without success, but on the morning of May 1, Anker discovered Mallory's frozen remains, a find that caused a sensation and world headlines. For Anker, it only deepened a long-held obsession with Mallory's mysterious disappearance.

**LEO HOULDING** is a young British climber from the north of England who has set a blazing trail through the climbing world with bold ascents, audacious stunts and ambitious firsts around the world. Described by British broadcaster and journalist Jeremy Clarkson as "one of the 20 best climbers ever to have lived," Houlding specializes in speed climbing up to the summit and base-jumping back down. As well as appearing on Clarkson's popular BBC TV show "Top Gear," on which he raced Clarkson up the face of the Verdon Gorge in southeastern France while Clarkson drove, Houlding has free climbed the El Niño route in Yosemite and, in 2005, he completed the first free ascent of the Casserato pillar on Fitzroy in Patagonia in a 56-hour alpine-style push.

## ABOUT THE VOICE CAST

**LIAM NEESON (Narrator)** is an Irish-born actor best known for his roles as Oskar Schindler in *Schindler's List*, for which he was nominated for both an Oscar® for Best Actor and a BAFTA Film Award for Best Actor, in 1993; Michael Collins in *Michael Collins*; Qui-Gon Jinn in

*Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace*; and Alfred Kinsey in *Kinsey*. He also lent his voice to the role of Aslan, the lion, in *The Chronicles of Narnia* film series. Neeson, who was married to the late actress Natasha Richardson, has also starred in several other Hollywood blockbusters, including *Rob Roy*, *Kingdom of Heaven*, *Batman Begins* and, more recently, *Taken*. Neeson's upcoming projects include *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* - the third installment in the *Narnia* series, in which he will reprise his role as the voice of Aslan; and the forthcoming film version of *The A Team*, filmed in Vancouver in fall 2009, in which Neeson plays Col. John 'Hannibal' Smith.

**RALPH FIENNES (George Mallory)** is an English actor whose big-screen credits include *Schindler's List*, for which he was nominated for an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor in 1993, and *The English Patient*, for which he was nominated for an Oscar for Best Actor three years later. His other credits include *The Constant Gardener*, *Maid in Manhattan* and the Harry Potter series of films, in which he plays Lord Voldemort. In 2008, Fiennes appeared in the dark comedy *In Bruges* with Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson, and more recently in *The Hurt Locker* and *The Reader*, opposite Kate Winslet. In addition to two more installments in the Harry Potter series, Fiennes' upcoming projects include *Coriolanus* and *Clash of the Titans*, in which he is slated to appear with his friend and *Schindler's List* co-star Liam Neeson. In 2001, Fiennes received the William Shakespeare Award from the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C.

**NATASHA RICHARDSON (Ruth Mallory)** was an English stage and screen actress, and the daughter of actress Vanessa Redgrave and director and producer Tony Richardson. She made her feature film debut as Mary Shelley in Ken Russell's *Gothic*—a performance that caught the attention of director Paul Schrader, who then cast her in the title role in *Patty Hearst* (1988). She also received critical acclaim and a Theatre World Award for her Broadway debut in the 1993 revival of *Anna Christie*. Her other notable film credits include *The Handmaid's Tale* (1990), *Nell* (1994), *The Parent Trap* (1998), *Maid in Manhattan* (2002), *The White Countess* (2005) and *Wild Child* (2008). Richardson, who was married to actor Liam Neeson, died in March 2009 in Quebec after a skiing accident.

**HUGH DANCY (Andrew Irvine)** is a rising British star whose big-screen credits include the Ridley Scott-directed war drama *Black Hawk Down*, in which he played medic Kurt Schmid; the 2009 indie *Adam*, in which he played a man with Asperger syndrome; and, most recently, the comedy *Confessions of a Shopaholic*. A model for Burberry who has appeared alongside Kate Moss, Dancy's small-screen credits include *Trial & Retribution II*, *Dangerfield*, *The New Adventures of Robin Hood* and *Kavanagh QC*. In 2006, he was nominated for a Best Supporting

Actor in a Miniseries Emmy® for his role in *Elizabeth I*. He also played the lead in the BBC's *Daniel Deronda* (2002), an adaptation of George Eliot's novel; Hallmark's *David Copperfield* (2000); and Danny in two episodes of BBC's *Cold Feet* (1999).

**ALAN RICKMAN (Noel Odell)** is a London-born English actor best known for such big-screen performances as the villainous Hans Gruber opposite Bruce Willis in *Die Hard*, and the Sheriff of Nottingham in the 1991 Kevin Costner blockbuster, *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*. In 2001, Rickman endeared himself to a whole new generation of moviegoers with his portrayal of Severus Snape in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*—a role he has reprised in the five ensuing installments of the series and is set to take up again in the upcoming two-part *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Rickman has played a wide variety of non-villainous roles, such as the romantic Jamie in Anthony Minghella's *Truly, Madly, Deeply*; the honorable Colonel Brandon in the Oscar-winning 1995 *Sense and Sensibility*; and humorous turns in *Dogma*, *Galaxy Quest* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. In Tim Burton's *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, he took on a singing part with the role of Judge Turpin. His other film credits include *Bottle Shock*, *Michael Collins* and *Love Actually*.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

**ANTHONY GEFLEN (Director, Producer)** has spent the last 25 years making documentary films around the globe. He spent 10 years at the BBC before founding Atlantic Productions in 1992, where he continues to direct and produce films. His films have won and been nominated for numerous major awards, including several Emmys, BAFTAs, and prizes at the New York and Chicago film festivals. His many credits include the Emmy-winning feature-length documentary *Jerusalem: City of Heaven*, narrated by Liam Neeson, and the acclaimed BBC/PBS drama documentary *Hirohito: Behind The Myth*. He also produced the landmark five-hour BBC/Discovery series *The Promised Land*, narrated by Morgan Freeman, which was based on the best-selling book by Nicholas Lemann about the Great Black Migration across America, and which was listed by Time Magazine among the top ten programmes of the year and won numerous awards. Geffen's BBC/PBS documentary *The Rise and Fall of the Ceausescus*, was also nominated for an Emmy for Best Documentary, and his Discovery/Channel 4 documentary *Munich: Mossad's Revenge*, was nominated for a BAFTA documentary award. Geffen's other credits include the observational documentary *The Faces of Arafat* (BBC/PBS), the feature-length drama documentary *Richard The Lionheart & Saladin: Holy Warriors* (BBC/PBS) and *The Link* (BBC/History/ZDF), a documentary special with Sir

David Attenborough; and the five-hour series *The American Dream* (BBC/Discovery) and *The Greeks: Crucible of Civilization* (BBC/PBS), an acclaimed and highly rated three-hour series narrated by Liam Neeson. *The Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest* is Geffen's first theatrical-release feature.

**Claudia Perkins (Producer)** has worked for seven years financing and developing independent film projects with Atlantic Productions. Previously she worked as an investment banker following a career in journalism. Perkins has been involved in a wide range of productions including *Columbus: Secrets From the Grave* for the Discovery Channel; *The Secret Life of Geisha* for A&E/ BBC; and *Khubilai Khan's Lost Fleet* and *Apollo 11: The Untold Story* for Discovery/Five. She also worked with producer Anthony Geffen on the BBC/PBS documentary *Holy Warriors*; the Emmy-nominated three-part series *The Greeks: Crucible of Civilization*, also for BBC/ PBS; and the Discovery/Channel 4 documentary *Munich: Mossad's Revenge*, which was nominated for a BAFTA documentary award.

**Mike Medavoy (Executive Producer)** has played a role in the success of many of the best American films over the past 35 years, and has received numerous awards including the 1992 Motion Picture Pioneer of the Year Award. In 2005 Medavoy was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of Fame and received a star on Hollywood Boulevard. In 2009, he was given the Honorary Doctorate at the Academy of Art in San Francisco and was named Chevalier of the French Government's Legion of Honor. He is a member of both the Council on Foreign Relations and serves on the board of Harvard's School of Public Diplomacy. In a career that has gone from agent to studio chief to producer, Medavoy has been involved with over 300 feature films, of which 16 have been nominated and seven have won Best Picture Oscars. While at United Artists, he was part of the team responsible for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Rocky* and *Annie Hall*, which won Best Picture Oscars in 1975, 1976 and 1977, respectively. Other notable films included *Apocalypse Now*, *Raging Bull*, *Network* and *Coming Home*. In 1978, Medavoy co-founded Orion Pictures where, during his tenure, *Platoon*, *Amadeus*, *Robocop*, *Hannah and Her Sisters*, *The Terminator*, *Dances with Wolves* and *Silence of the Lambs* were released. In 1990, Medavoy became chairman of TriStar Pictures, where he oversaw such critically acclaimed box office hits as *Philadelphia*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Cliffhanger*, *The Fisher King*, *Legends of the Fall* and Steven Spielberg's *Hook*. As chairman and co-founder of Phoenix Pictures, Medavoy has brought to the screen the Oscar-nominated films *The People vs. Larry Flynt* and *The Thin Red Line*, as well as *The Mirror Has Two Faces*, *U-Turn*, *Apt Pupil*, *The 6th Day*, *Basic*, *Holes*, *All the King's Men*, *Zodiac*, *Pathfinder* and *Miss Potter*, among others. More recently, Phoenix released *Shutter Island*, directed by

Martin Scorsese and starring Leonardo Di Caprio, Mark Ruffalo, Ben Kingsley and Max Von Sydow, and *Shanghai*, starring John Cusack and Gong Li. In 2002, Simon & Schuster published Medavoy's best-selling book, *You're Only As Good As Your Next One: 100 Great Films, 100 Good Films and 100 For Which I Should Be Shot*. His new book entitled, *American Idol After Iraq; Competing for Hearts and Minds in the Global Media Age* reflects on the impact of media on U.S. foreign policy with co-author Nathan Gardels, editor of the National Political Quarterly. These books will be published both in Spain and in China.

###