THIRTEEN’s American Masters Series Presents
Exclusive, Never-Before-Seen Director’s Cut of Shane Salerno’s Salinger Documentary as 200th Episode

Season 28 premieres nationally with Salinger Tuesday, January 21 at 9 p.m. on PBS (check local listings)

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“Extraordinary” — Ken Burns

“Mesmerizing...it’s impossible not to be drawn into the drama of the story”
— Kenneth Turan, Los Angeles Times

“Salinger is a valuable and engrossing biography of the author of arguably the most beloved American novel of the 20th century” — Richard Roeper, Chicago Sun Times

(New York, NY — Jan. 6, 2014) THIRTEEN’s American Masters launches its 28th season with the series’ 200th episode: the exclusive director’s cut of Shane Salerno’s documentary, Salinger, premiering nationally Tuesday, January 21, 9-11:30 p.m. on PBS (check local listings) with 15 minutes of new material not seen in theaters. Featuring never-before-seen photographs, personal stories and moments from J.D. Salinger’s (Jan. 1, 1919 – Jan. 27, 2010) life and harrowing service in World War II, Salerno’s new director’s cut expands his intimate portrait of the enigmatic author of The Catcher in the Rye. American Masters was the first to close a deal with Salerno for Salinger, securing the exclusive domestic television rights to the documentary in January 2013. An official selection of the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival and Telluride Film Festival, the film made front page news all over the world with its
revelations. Associated Press called the research yielded during Salerno’s 10-year investigation “unprecedented” and “thoroughly documented.”

“Adding J.D. Salinger to the American Masters library as the 200th episode is a perfect reflection of the series’ mission: to illuminate the lives and creative journeys of America’s most enduring artistic and cultural giants for the public — no matter how elusive,” said Stephen Segaller, vice president of programming for WNET. “The film is almost overpowering: highly cinematic, highly dramatic, and packed with research discoveries worthy of the best painstaking investigative journalism. We get to know Salinger, his life and his work to an unparalleled degree.”

Salerno’s 10-year journey culminates in the first work to get beyond the author's impenetrable wall of privacy and seclusion. While there have been over 100 academic books examining Salinger’s work in exhaustive detail, the story that no one had uncovered was that of Salinger’s remarkable life. Salerno overcame considerable obstacles to do this and present the material as a documentary film. Salinger never sat for a formal interview during his life, and there were no video or audio recordings of him and very few photographs. Additionally, legal restrictions specifically prevented Salerno from quoting virtually any of Salinger’s work on camera or from having anyone read or perform any of Salinger’s work. Regardless, American Masters: Salinger shows in vivid detail the connections between the author’s life and work, and the people and events that inspired his most celebrated fiction.

The film is structured not as a traditional cradle-to-grave biography, but instead as a mystery that takes viewers deep inside Salinger’s private world. It operates on two engines: the first is an investigative thriller and the second is a character study of a complex man who walked away from the world at the height of his fame.

Detailing pivotal experiences in Salinger’s life from the 1940s, Salerno illustrates how they influenced Salinger’s writing and personal relationships for the rest of his life: his dogged pursuit of publication in The New Yorker despite numerous rejections through to his first success with “Slight Rebellion Off Madison” (1946); his relationship with Eugene O’Neill’s daughter Oona, who at 18 married the 53-year-old Charlie Chaplin; his literary breakthrough with “A Perfect Day for Bananafish” (1948) in The New Yorker; and, most importantly, his service in World War II, which began with the Allied invasion of Normandy. During his army years, Salinger developed a friendship with Ernest Hemingway; suffered mental collapse after spending nearly a full year in combat; investigated Nazis and entered Dachau concentration camp as part of the Counterintelligence Corps; and in Germany met and married his first wife Sylvia Welter, whom he divorced shortly after their move to the U.S. when he suspected she was a Nazi spy. Through these tumultuous years of combat and horror, Salinger kept writing and worked on The Catcher in the Rye, a 10-year project published in 1951.
**American Masters: Salinger** delves into his many relationships with young women, featuring Jean Miller and Joyce Maynard; his literary success and total retreat from the limelight to Cornish, N.H.; his self-imposed isolation from his family and the world to write; his religious fanaticism; his rare and dramatic interactions with the press; and, above all, the literary secrets he left behind after his death. The documentary features interviews with some 150 subjects including Salinger’s friends, colleagues and members of his inner circle who speak on the record for the first time, as well as previously unseen film footage, photographs and other materials. Participants including E.L. Doctorow, Tom Wolfe, Gore Vidal, Pulitzer Prize-winners A. Scott Berg and Elizabeth Frank, actors Martin Sheen, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Edward Norton, John Cusack, Danny DeVito, playwright John Guare and Oscar-winning screenwriter Robert Towne all share Salinger’s influence on their lives, their work and the broader culture.

“From day one, I felt that J.D. Salinger belonged on **American Masters**, together with the extraordinary artists they’ve profiled. This is my definitive version of the film. I think audiences will enjoy seeing the full story of his life,” said Salerno, who also co-authored **Salinger** (Simon & Schuster), the official book of the documentary, with David Shields. The book was No. 1 on the *Los Angeles Times* bestseller list and debuted at No. 6 on *The New York Times* bestseller list, among many other honors.

Launched in 1986 by series creator Susan Lacy, **American Masters** has earned 26 Emmy Awards — including nine for Outstanding Non-Fiction Series since 1999 and five for Outstanding Non-Fiction Special — 12 Peabodys, an Oscar, three Grammys, two Producers Guild Awards, and many other honors. Now entering its 28th season on PBS, the series is a production of [THIRTEEN](http://www.thirteen.org), the parent company of THIRTEEN and WLIW21, New York’s public television stations, and operator of NJTV. For more than 50 years, THIRTEEN has been a partner with the tri-state community, using its rich resources to inform and inspire the passionate people of New York and the world to better understand and address the issues that challenge our diverse communities.

To take **American Masters** beyond the television broadcast and further explore the themes, stories and personalities of masters past and present, the companion website ([http://pbs.org/americanmasters](http://pbs.org/americanmasters)) offers streaming video of select films, interviews, photos, outtakes, essays, and other resources. **American Masters** is also seen on the WORLD channel, a 24/7, full-service multicast channel featuring public television’s signature nonfiction documentary, science and news programming, broadcast in nearly two-thirds of the United States.

**Salinger** is a production of The Story Factory, Inc., and presented by THIRTEEN’s **American Masters** in association with WNET. Shane Salerno is director and producer. Buddy Squires is producer and cinematographer. Deborah Randall and Craig Fanning are producers. Bruce Dunn is co-producer and Jeffrey Doe is co-producer and editor. Based on

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As New York’s flagship public media provider and the parent company of *THIRTEEN* and *WLIW21* and operator of *NJTV*, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than 5 million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as *Nature, Great Performances, American Masters, PBS NewsHour Weekend, Charlie Rose* and a range of documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings available on air and online. Pioneers in educational programming, WNET has created such groundbreaking series as *Get the Math, Oh Noah!* and *Cyberchase* and provides tools for educators that bring compelling content to life in the classroom and at home. WNET highlights the tri-state’s unique culture and diverse communities through *NYC-ARTS, Reel 13, NJTV News with Mike Schneider* and *MetroFocus*, the multi-platform news magazine focusing on the New York region. WNET is also a leader in connecting with viewers on emerging platforms, including the *THIRTEEN Explore iPad App* where users can stream PBS content for free.