

PRESS KIT

# THE PAINFUL TRUTH



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## **TECHNICAL INFO**

TRT: 56:46

EXHIBITION FORMAT: HD VIDEOTAPE, .MOV, .MP4

ASPECT RATIO: 16:9

SHOOTING FORMAT: HD

COLOR, ENGLISH

CLOSED CAPTIONED

V-Chip: TV-PG-LV

## **BROADCAST INFO**

Distributed by the National Education Telecommunications Association (NETA) for U.S. public television. Broadcast, off-air record educational, and VOD rights extended to NETA Member Stations.

## **DIGITAL SALES, WHOLESALE DVD SALES & U.S./INTERNATIONAL BROADCAST INQUIRIES:**

Please contact Webster Media for all inquiries regarding digital sales, and U.S./International broadcast rights. <http://thepainfultruthdocumentary.com/>

**DVD is available on [www.shop.montanapbs.org](http://www.shop.montanapbs.org) or call (800) 406-6383**

## **PUBLIC TELEVISION INQUIRIES:**

*The Painful Truth* is a television version is available on public television stations through NETA [www.netaonline.org](http://www.netaonline.org)

If you are interested in having *The Painful Truth* broadcast on your local public station, please contact your local public television station.

## **PRACTITIONER'S EDITION: INQUIRIES:**

Please contact Webster Media for all inquiries regarding *The Painful Truth: Practitioners' Edition*. <http://thepainfultruthdocumentary.com/>. There are two versions: a 25-minute and a 40-minute show that was edited for medical practitioners. This version of the documentary is intended for practitioner audiences.

## **EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SCREENING INQUIRES:**

Please contact Webster Media for all inquiries regarding educational and community screenings of *The Painful Truth*. <http://thepainfultruthdocumentary.com/>.

Over the past fifty years, our society has experienced huge swings in the way people in pain have been treated.

Prior to 1980, there was almost no recognition that pain was more than a symptom, and it was often viewed as weakness if an individual complained of pain. People were expected to overcome pain if they would just put their mind to it.

In the 1990s, pain was beginning to be recognized as a problem that the medical profession should take seriously and treat. Unfortunately, there were few medical options other than opioids. Opioids were a default therapy which has contributed to a national opioid crisis.

Many people blame the opioid crisis on the medical profession's attempt to provide pain relief to the most hurting among us.

Now, in an attempt to curb the opioid crisis, people in pain are being ignored or told that nothing can be done for them. Solving the opioid crisis is deemed more important than addressing the needs of people in pain. But untreated, or undertreated, pain is also a national crisis.

"Watching patients beg for help with no one hearing their cries made me realize I could not stand by without advocating for them," says Lynn R. Webster, M.D., co-producer of *The Painful Truth*.

"I felt compelled to try to give people with pain a voice. My hope is that, if the public hears their stories, there will be more compassion for people with pain. Pain is an unbidden guest, humanity's shadow companion down through the ages. It is an interloper, a despoiler of dreams, a thief," he continues.

Dr. Webster believes there is no problem, medical or nonmedical, that is more intimate, that is more personal, and that has more of an impact on more lives than pain. "Many of my patients had been told that their pain was 'all in their head,' Dr. Webster recounts. "The comment is dismissive, as though what the pain sufferer is going through isn't real or important."

He concludes, "This documentary is my crusade against the human race's primal enemy: pain. I hope that it will touch the hearts of many viewers. Without a change in society's consciousness, policymakers and the health care system will not change, and people with pain will suffer needlessly."

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## SYNOPSIS SHORT

What happens when lives are dramatically torn apart by chronic pain? *The Painful Truth* takes us behind the headlines of addiction and beyond the controversies of the war on opioids — and provides an intimate view of patients' frustrations, setbacks, and goals as they deal with chronic pain. We hear patients tell us their stories...and we understand the social barriers and prejudices they face every day.

## SYNOPSIS LONG

*The Painful Truth* takes us behind the headlines of addiction and beyond the controversies of the war on opioids — and allows us to witness how people's lives have been changed forever by chronic pain. We hear from patients who tell us their stories, and describe their daily challenges, in their own words.

Focusing on these individuals, *The Painful Truth* gives us an intimate view of lives suddenly and dramatically torn apart by chronic pain. Pain, we learn, is an insidious, uninvited interloper that prevents the simplest of joys. We hear patients' voices, and we learn about their frustrations, setbacks, and goals. These personal stories are raw and truthful, revealing the humanity of this often-overlooked part of our society.

The film shows societal barriers and prejudices that prevent people with pain from receiving the care they deserve. It does not flinch from describing the politics that have made people in pain needlessly suffer.

Yet *The Painful Truth* is about searching for answers rather than placing blame.

## OUTREACH

### Medical Society, Medical School, and Community Outreach and Engagement

Since 2015, medical societies and medical schools across the United States have hosted private screenings of *The Painful Truth*. We have brought the film to hundreds of healthcare professionals as well as the general public nationwide, and we will continue to make the film available to schools, and community and professional organizations.

## DIRECTOR/PRODUCER CRAIG WIRTH'S STATEMENT

There are millions of them. They live in the shadows. They are those who live with chronic pain, often excruciating pain. They are veterans, accident victims, survivors of botched medical procedures, an NFL football player who took one for the team, victims of gunshots, and neighbors down the street. They have few advocates and little medical research to offer hope. There are untrained doctors who don't know what to do with them. Insurance fights them. They are shunned, as many of them only have opioids to mask their pain. They exist in a medical system that fails them and a political system that treats them as druggies with medicine from doctors viewed as pushers. This virtually unknown group of victims struggles for respect and dignity and, at the very least, disability benefits.

The documentary tells their stories as they discuss their ordeals with friends, pharmacists, and doctors while fighting *The System* and how they sometimes just give up with suicide being the easiest solution. The documentary also captures leading pain specialists who candidly speak out about our American medical system that has some of the worst outcomes in the world in pain management due to insurance, politics, and medical education. *The Painful Truth* caps a two-year, coast-to-coast journey listening to stories of pain and pain management.

## CO-PRODUCER LYNN R. WEBSTER, MD'S STATEMENT

Throughout my career, I've faced the challenging task of trying to help those who suffer from chronic pain. When I started this journey over 30 years ago in Salt Lake City, I could never have imagined the experiences that I would have, the people whom I would be able to help, and the people whom I so badly wanted to help but could not.

I've spent time with patients who can do no more than lie in the fetal position on the floor because of their pain. I've had patients who begged me for alternatives to opioids when their insurance wouldn't cover anything else that would give them relief. I've had patients who could not find a respite from their pain and chose to end their suffering by taking their own life. I've cried with, and comforted, the caregivers of my patients, people who are on the front lines every single day doing everything they can to help their loved ones regain the life they once knew.

Along with the many challenges that I've faced with my patients, there has also been hope. I've worked with people whose pain was so severe that they were suicidal, but through our hard work together, we found a solution to help them manage their pain. I've had patients come to me feigning chronic pain with the hopes of obtaining an opioid prescription, whom I instead treated for

their disease of addiction. I've worked with people who, at one time, believed they would live in chronic pain forever, but who now work and play with their kids and grandkids in a way they could have never imagined.

For all of the patients I've treated, and thousands upon thousands of others, pain is an insidious, uninvited interloper that prevents the simplest of joys. The people and stories in *The Painful Truth* are representative of those I've seen throughout my career as a pain specialist. I created this film because I wanted to bring the plight of people in pain to the attention of those who can make a difference, and to provide hope for patients and their loved ones. There are enormous challenges facing those who suffer from - and providers who treat - chronic pain, and I hope that this film will help educate our legislators and the public about the reality of the 100 million Americans who suffer every single day.

## **EDITOR TIM PHILLIPS**

I'm a video editor from Salt Lake City, Utah with over 30 years of editing experience, and have been fortunate enough to win an Emmy and several Telly Awards. While I deeply appreciate my awards, nothing compares to the honor of being a part of bringing the stories of these pain patients to life. Seldom have I watched such a compelling story develop in front of my eyes. Not only has it been fascinating to be part of this project, I now know why I went into editing those many years ago.

### **LYNN R. WEBSTER, M.D., F.A.C.P.M., F.A.S.A.M.**

Lynn R. Webster, M.D. is an internationally recognized expert in pain and addiction medicine. Dr. Webster has long been an advocate for patients suffering from chronic pain and addiction. He has fought for better education and safer therapies to address the twin crises of chronic pain and addiction in America. For 25 years, he treated patients with chronic pain, many of whom were at high risk for substance abuse. For 15 of those years, he also treated individuals with opioid addiction. He has seen how lives can be destroyed with chronic pain or addiction. This experience has given him a unique insight into the medical and political challenges of fighting both diseases.

Dr. Webster earned his doctorate of medicine from the University of Nebraska and completed his residency in the University of Utah's Department of Anesthesiology. He is board certified in anesthesiology, pain medicine, and addiction medicine. He lectures extensively, and has authored more than 300 scientific publications and books including, *The Painful Truth: What Chronic Pain Is Really Like and Why It Matters to Each of Us* (Oxford University Press). Dr. Webster is a senior editor for *Pain Medicine*, and he has contributed editorials and interviews that have appeared in such publications as the [Wall Street Journal](#), [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#), [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#), [Salt Lake City Tribune](#), [Huffington Post](#), and [The Hill](#).

Dr. Webster is Vice President of Scientific Affairs for PRA, a leading clinical research organization that operates in more than 80 countries. Dr. Webster is a past president of the American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM).

### **CRAIG WIRTH**

Craig Wirth has been in broadcasting 46 years starting in high school in Great Falls, Montana. He started at KTVX Salt Lake City in 1970 for the first of several stretches as Utah's TV storyteller. He later worked as a network correspondent in Los Angeles and for TV stations in New York and Los Angeles. He received four Emmy Awards for his New York and LA work. Wirth returned to KTVX on a weekly TV visit in 1988 while also working in Los Angeles. He quickly specialized his reporting into telling the stories of the history of daily life in Utah for a 15 year run as a stable of Utah's Sunday night TV. He rejoined his old home of Utah's first TV station in November 2013 to again relive the delightful story of Utah's history in his trademark "Wirth Watching" reports on the Sunday night news.

In 2012, he was inducted into the Utah Broadcasting Association Hall of Fame. The Journalist is a graduate of the University of Utah and received his master's degree at the U of Wisconsin. Wirth also serves as the Communications Director of The Episcopal Diocese of Utah and is a long time instructor at the University of Utah Department of Communication. He also shoots, writes, and narrates documentaries. His other passion is volunteering with Best Friends as the group's MC for its Super Adoptions in Salt Lake City.

FROM THE FILM



#1

Pain advocate and pain sufferer Cindy Steinberg works from bed each day near Boston as the National Director of Policy and Advocacy at the U.S. Pain Foundation. She details the struggles of getting respect for those in pain for the cameras of *The Painful Truth*.



#2

Shopping Center shooting spree victim and now chronic pain sufferer Carolyn Tuft gives *The Painful Truth* cameras a personal view of what happens when the sharpest pain often hits sufferers in the night as they try to sleep.



#3

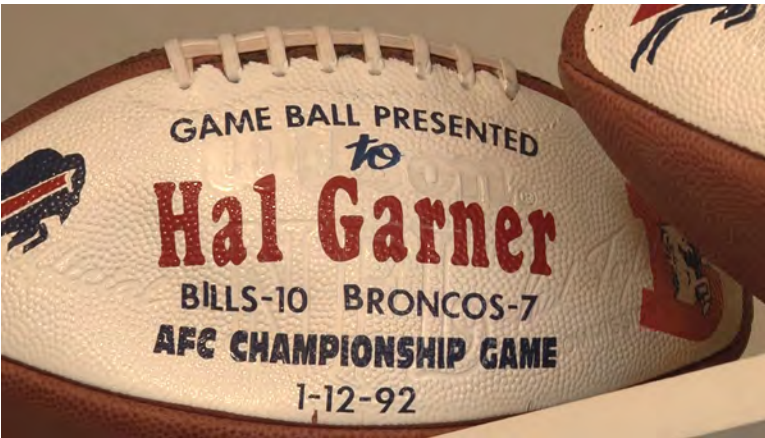
Shopping Center shooting spree victim Carolyn Tuft tries to walk through her yard while experiencing her daily pain. She tells *The Painful Truth* it has taken eight years to get disability despite losing muscles, bones, and carrying over 135 lead pellets in her body left from three direct shotgun blasts.





#4

Former NFL great and chronic pain patient Hal Garner candidly details his pain medication addiction spiral that landed him in prison and his recovery.



#5

The deflated game ball given to Hal Garner after an AFC Championship represents the grind and injuries that lead to an abundance of available pain medication and addiction that lead to a prison term.

## PRODUCTION STILLS



#6

Co-producers Lynn Webster, MD and Craig Wirth (who also handled principle videography) shot dozens of examinations of pain patients over a two-year period across the nation to gather a comprehensive view of people in pain.



#7

Co-producers Lynn Webster, MD and Craig Wirth traveled 70,000 miles gathering stories from pain victims and chronically their daily struggles. Much of their work was done in some of America's most prestigious pain clinics.



#8

Lynn Webster, MD is one of America's leading pain experts and researchers. The award-winning author is also a past president of the American Academy of Pain Medicine.



#9

*The Painful Truth* is the result of years of research, traveling 70,000 miles around America, and over three years of production. The producers met with hundreds of people, including patients, practitioners, and experts in addiction, pain control, advocacy, medications, legal and law enforcement, and medical technology.