

STORYTELLERS

A family's truth has several versions in Sarah Polley's latest film

STORIES WE TELL: Written and directed by Sarah Polley. Cinematography, Iris Ng. Music, Jonathan Goldsmith. Editor, Mike Munn. With Michael Polley, Joanna Polley, Mark Polley, Susy Buchanan, John Buchana, Harry Gulkan, Rebecca Jenkins and Alex Hatz. Roadside Attractions, 2013. PG-13. 108 minutes. ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

Rarely has a film begun with a more perfect quote than the one that opens *Stories We Tell*. Borrowing a line from Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*, Michael Polley says, "When you are in the middle of a story it isn't a story at all, but only a confusion ... It's only afterwards that it becomes anything like a story at all."

Michael is the father of actress, writer and filmmaker Sarah Polley, who I still think of as the striking, unforgettable girl in Atom Egoyan's *The Sweet Hereafter* (1997). Since 2006, she's also been an acclaimed director of feature films; her film *Away From Her* led to Oscar nominations for Polley (for writing) and her star, Julie Christie.

Stories We Tell is something else entirely: a five-year journey in the shape of a deceptively unassuming documentary. It begins simply enough, as Polley asks her father and siblings to tell the story of her mother, who died when Polley was 11. The picture that forms is nuanced, loving and complex: Diane Polley was a buoyant spirit, full of life and energy; she was guileless but had secrets; she loved her family but resented her husband for not being more affectionate or driven. Given the chance to leave town and star in a play for a few months, she went — a single choice that becomes increasingly important as this multi-strand narrative unfolds.



Stories We Tell takes a roundabout path toward the idea of truth, weaving together interviews, voice-over narration, news stories, photographs and Super 8 footage. It seems like there's always been a camera present in Polley's life, which is enough to start making you question how much is real, how much is recreated, and what each possibility says about what's happening onscreen and in the lives we're watching — which is the point of this intensely personal, immensely thoughtful film. The making of the film is the director processing her changed history; the stories told by her interviewees are the stories they've told themselves, the way the truth refracts through their experiences.

It's everyone's story, but some of those telling it feel more ownership than others. One key player dislikes that Polley is

making the film, believing that the story is his alone. The director's siblings swing from melancholy to laughter, honing in on the parts of their mother's life that resonate for each of them. Michael Polley, Diane's husband, picks up a pen to tell his own version, after years of not writing. All of these combine to form Polley's film, which frequently reminds us that it is a film, reversing narrative direction or pulling back to show a second set of cameras, a meta-narrative about the narrative being constructed. Fiercely unsentimental, never nostalgic, Polley's version of the story is simultaneously always trying to get that much closer to the truth — and always aware that the truth can't be simple, can't be pinned down, and can't belong to one person. We're part of it now, too, in the stories we tell each other about the film. ■

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DESPICABLE ME 2 (DIG) PG

10:45, 1:15, 3:45, 4:10, 6:15, 8:45, 9:10

DESPICABLE ME 2 (3D) PG

SPECIAL EVENT PRICING: \$3.00

UPCHARGE ALL TICKETS

12:00, 1:40, 2:30, 5:00, 6:40, 7:30, 10:00

HEAT, THE (DIG) R

10:35, 11:35, 1:35, 2:35, 4:35, 5:35, 7:35, 8:35, 10:35

ICE AGE: CONTINENTAL DRIFT (2013) (DIG) PG

10:00, 10:00AM

THE LONE RANGER (DIG) PG-13

9:50, 11:00, 12:10, 1:20, 2:30, 3:40, 4:50, 6:05, 7:10, 8:20, 9:30, 10:40

MAN OF STEEL (DIG) PG-13

12:35, 3:50, 7:05, 10:20

MONSTERS UNIVERSITY (3D) G

SPECIAL EVENT PRICING: \$3.00

UPCHARGE ALL TICKETS

10:50, 1:35, 4:20

MONSTERS UNIVERSITY (DIG) G

11:45, 2:25, 5:15, 8:00, 10:45

NOW YOU SEE ME (DIG) PG-13

11:25, 2:15, 4:55, 7:40, 10:25

STAR TREK INTO DARKNESS (DIG) PG-13

10:45, 1:45, 4:40, 7:45, 10:45

THIS IS THE END (DIG) R

11:30, 2:10, 4:50, 7:30, 10:10

WHITE HOUSE DOWN (DIG) PG-13

11:20, 12:55, 2:25, 4:05, 5:40, 7:15, 8:50, 10:25

WORLD WAR Z (3D) PG-13

SPECIAL EVENT PRICING: \$3.00

UPCHARGE ALL TICKETS

7:10, 10:10

WORLD WAR Z (DIG) PG-13

11:10, 2:10, 5:10, 8:10

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42 PG-13

12:05, 3:30, 7:05, 9:55

AFTER EARTH PG-13

11:25, 1:55, 4:15, 7:50, 10:25

THE CROODS PG

11:10, 1:25, 3:45, 6:10, 8:25

THE CROODS (3D) PG

SPECIAL EVENT PRICING: \$2.00

UPCHARGE ALL TICKETS

12:10, 7:25

DISCONNECT R

11:50, 2:20, 4:55, 7:35, 10:05

EPIC PG

11:15, 1:35, 3:55, 6:15, 8:35

EPIC (3D) PG

11:45, 2:15, 4:45, 7:20, 9:45

THE HANGOVER PART III R

11:30, 2:10, 4:50, 7:45, 10:30

IDENTITY THIEF R

3:40, 10:20

INTERNSHIP, THE PG-13

11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:40, 10:15

JURASSIC PARK (2013) (3D) PG-13

SPECIAL EVENT PRICING: \$2.00

UPCHARGE ALL TICKETS

3:40, 10:00

OBSESSION PG-13

11:05, 1:45, 4:30, 7:30, 10:10

OZ: THE GREAT AND POWERFUL PG

12:15, 7:00

PAIN AND GAIN R

11:35, 2:35, 6:55, 9:40

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STORIES WE TELL (PG-13)

FRIDAY—SUNDAY

2:10, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30

MONDAY—THURSDAY

4:50, 7:10, 9:30

GINGER & ROSA (PG-13)

4:15, 6:25

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING (PG-13)

FRIDAY & SUNDAY 1:45 (no SAT Matinee)

8:30

MONDAY—THURSDAY

8:30

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BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO (NR)

7:45, 10:00

(no 7:45 showing on Thurs, 7/11)

DIRTY WARS (NR)

12:40, 2:50, 5:30, 8:30

THE EAST (PG-13)

5:20, 10:30

BEFORE MIDNIGHT (R)

12:30, 3:00, 7:40

FRANCES HA (R)

12:05, 4:10, 10:30

OREGON BACH FESTIVAL presents

WAGNER'S DREAM (\$10/no passes)

5:00

THE GREAT GATSBY (PG-13)

2:25

THE ANGELS' SHARE (NR)

6:15

MUD (PG-13)

7:50, 10:10

FROM UP ON POPPY HILL (PG)

2:05

RENOIR (R)

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