

A MAN NAMED PEARL

A Documentary Film by Scott Galloway and Brent Pierson

A Shadow Distribution Release

78 Minutes

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A MAN NAMED PEARL

A bigoted remark dissuades Pearl Fryar from moving into a white neighborhood. Told “Black people don’t keep up their yards,” Pearl creates an extraordinary topiary garden that conveys his philosophy of Love, Peace and Goodwill.

Release Date: July 18, 2008
Running Time: 78 Minutes
Aspect Ratio: 1:85
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Awards: Heartland Film Festival Crystal Heart Award
Heartland Film Festival Audience Choice Award
Salem Film Festival Audience Award
Press Kit & Stills: www.shadowdistribution.com
Official Website: www.amannamedpearl.com

RELEASED BY SHADOW DISTRIBUTION:

Shadow Distribution is a small film distribution company located in Waterville, Maine, dedicated to releasing unusual, specialized films. Founded in 1988, the company has distributed some of the best independent films of the last two decades including THE WILD PARROTS OF TELEGRAPH HILL, LATCHO DROM, Oscar nominee THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND, HEADING SOUTH, Oscar nominee UNDER THE SUN and most recently, GIRLS ROCK!

PRODUCED BY TENTMAKERS ENTERTAINMENT:

Founded in 1999, Tentmakers Entertainment has executive produced and/or produced more than 1,250 television shows for the following networks: A&E, Court TV, DIY Network, ESPN, Food Network, HGTV, History Channel, TNN, Travel Channel and Turner South. They have won an Emmy, the Cable Ace, Communicator, and Telly awards.

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SYNOPSIS:

A MAN NAMED PEARL tells the inspiring story of self-taught topiary artist Pearl Fryar, whose unlikely journey to national prominence began with a bigoted remark.

In 1976, Pearl took a job in a can factory in Bishopville, South Carolina. New to this rural southern town, he and his wife Metra looked at a house for sale in an all-white neighborhood. The Fryars' real estate agent was notified by neighbors in the prospective neighborhood that a black family was not welcome. A homeowner voiced the collective concern: "Black people don't keep up their yards."

Pearl was stung by the racial stereotype. But rather than become angry and embittered, it motivated him to prove that misguided man wrong. Pearl bought a house in a "black" neighborhood and began fashioning a garden that would attract positive attention. His goal was modest, but clear: to become the first African-American to win Bishopville's "Yard of the Month" award.

Realizing he would have to do something spectacular to impress the Bishopville garden club, Pearl began cutting every bush and tree in his yard into unusual, abstract shapes. He didn't know it then, but he was creating a magical wonderland that would, in time, not only garner local recognition, but also draw thousands of visitors from across the United States and around the world.

Now 68, Pearl has been featured in dozens of magazines and newspapers, including *The New York Times*, as well as several television programs such as *CBS Sunday Morning*. The media interest that Pearl and his topiary garden generates helps steer much-needed tourist dollars into the declining town of Bishopville and Lee County, the poorest county in the state of South Carolina.

But the impact that Pearl and his art have had on his community is not just economic. He's also had a profound spiritual influence. As Pearl's minister, Rev. Jerome McCray, says of the garden: "It's the one place in all of South Carolina that people can go, both black and white, and *feel* love."

Visitors who wander Pearl's three-and-a-half-acre property quickly recognize that *love* is the garden's central theme. Meticulously etched into the ground in huge, flower-filled letters are three words: LOVE, PEACE & GOODWILL. These are the guiding principles by which Pearl lives his life and how he's been "keeping up his yard" for nearly thirty years.

A MAN NAMED PEARL is a subtle and intriguing film that opens both hearts and minds. It offers an upbeat message that speaks to respect for both self and others, and shows what one person can achieve when he allows himself to share the full expression of his humanity.

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BIOGRAPHIES:

PEARL FRYAR

Topiary Artist

Pearl Fryar is a sculptor. He uses live plant material to create original, elegantly abstract forms of topiary. He is self-taught and as such he has taken risks and developed techniques, which are outside the normal bounds of horticulture. He is not afraid to try new things and has been said to “tame trees” by his unique techniques.

Much of the plant materials in his garden were cast-offs, nurtured by Pearl into incredibly expressive topiary sculpture. It is in his nature to look for the potential in each plant, to encourage the growth and creativity within. This is the message of his garden and those who visit or come in contact with Pearl soon understand he has the same desire to inspire people, particularly youth, to find their own potential.

Born in 1939 in rural North Carolina, the son of a sharecropper, Pearl Fryar has overcome obstacles in his personal and professional life largely as a result of his positive attitude. He came of age in the racially segregated South, attended college, served in the military and worked 36 years as a production-line engineer for a soda can factory, but it is his garden which has brought him the most satisfaction.

In 1984, in the first yard he and his wife Metra had ever owned, Pearl put his high energy and creativity to good use. After working a 12-hour shift he would come home and cut plants under the illumination of a street lamp. He initially sought the local garden club’s Yard of the Month honor. More than 20 years after he was so honored, Pearl and his garden have now been featured in dozens of magazines and newspapers as well as national television programs.

Pearl Fryar’s Topiary Garden is recognized by art and botanical enthusiasts from around the world. It offers a range of topiary styles, from tightly manicured geometric compositions, figurative shapes, and monumental abstractions to “junk art” sculpture. As a cultural and educational asset for the state of South Carolina, the garden transcends racial, ethnic, social, and economic barriers. It is a Preservation Project of the Garden Conservancy, a national nonprofit organization that preserves exceptional American gardens.

Pearl is committed to reinforcing and sharing his personal learning journey; he has visited numerous public schools and colleges, and as an artist-in-residence, has collaborated with art students at nearby Coker College to create a topiary garden so students see their designs take shape in topiary and mosaics. His garden receives approximately 5,000 visitors per year. These visitors include elementary, middle, and high school classes, college students, church groups, garden clubs, artist groups, and senior citizens. Others view the garden as a destination for weddings, family reunions, club meetings, and bus tours, while others examine the visual elements for their own photography and other artistic pursuits.

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SCOTT GALLOWAY

Co-Director/Co-Producer

Scott Galloway has produced or executive produced more than 650 television programs for networks including ABC, A&E, Court TV, ESPN, Food Network, HGTV, History Channel and the Travel Channel. He has won an Emmy, a New York Film and Television award and more than twenty Telly awards.

In 1999, Galloway co-founded Tentmakers Entertainment a television and film production company based in Charlotte, NC. Tentmakers Entertainment has produced more than 500 television programs for six different networks. In 2007, Galloway created Susie Films to specialize in high-end documentary film production. In addition to producing and directing A MAN NAMED PEARL, Galloway recently produced and directed a second documentary feature CHILDREN OF ALL AGES. The film tells the amazing story of the great American circus under the big top. He is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and lives with his wife and three children in Davidson, NC.

Selected Achievements:

FILM	CHILDREN OF ALL AGES (2008) 80 minute documentary
FILM	A MAN NAMED PEARL (2006) 78 minute documentary
ABC	COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL (2006 – 2007) 1 two-hour special
TURNER SOUTH NETWORK	THREE-DAY WEEKEND (2003 – 2006) 61 half-hour episodes
FOOD NETWORK	FOOD FINDS (2000 – 2004) 156 half-hour episodes
HOME & GARDEN TELEVISION	RESTORE AMERICA (1999 – 2000) 52 half-hour episodes
COURT TV	GREATEST TRIALS OF ALL TIME (1998) 13 one-hour episodes
ESPN	PEYTON MANNING: ALL ACCESS (1997) 1 one-hour special
A&E NEWTORK	AMERICA'S CASTLES (1995 – 1998) 65 one-hour episodes

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BRENT PIERSON

Co-Director/Co-Producer

Brent Pierson is a graduate of UCLA and resides in Los Angeles, CA. He has produced and written documentary features and television programs for A&E, Discovery Channel, Food Network, HGTV, History Channel, NBC, Oxygen Network, PBS, Universal-MCA, and others. In addition to A MAN NAMED PEARL, Pierson is Co-Producer/Writer on Tentmakers Entertainment's upcoming documentary, CHILDREN OF ALL AGES, that explores "The Greatest Show on Earth" at its zenith. Some of his many achievements include:

ImaginArt / Documentary Feature *Producer/Writer*

Produced and wrote *James Gill: Full Circle*, a documentary profiling the life and art of painter James Gill who burst on the contemporary art scene in the 1960s and then abruptly turned his back on his rising fame and fortune to live a simpler, commune-like life in northern California. Narrated by Forrest Sawyer.

Homerun Entertainment / DIY Network, *Producer/Writer*

Produced and wrote *Your Best Built Home*, a one-hour special focusing on the latest homebuilding science and technology and how these innovations are being utilized throughout the United States to construct the most energy-efficient or "green" houses possible.

Actuality Productions / History Channel, *Field Producer/Writer*

Produced and wrote segments for *The States*, a fast-paced 10-part series highlighting key historical events and regional characteristics of America's 50 states. Shot in Arizona, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan and Oklahoma with intensive expert and man-on-the-street interviews.

LMNO Productions / Documentary Feature, *Co-Producer/Writer*

Co-produced and wrote *The Once & Future Griffith Observatory*, a NASA-funded documentary narrated by Leonard Nimoy that tells the story of Griffith Observatory, a Los Angeles institution dedicated to public astronomy.

Pacific Rock Productions / Fine Living, *Producer/Writer/Director*

Produced episodes of *Your Private Island*, a travel series featuring exotic and adventurous private island vacations throughout the world. Directed and wrote the two Australian episodes: Bedarra Island on the Great Barrier Reef and Swan Island off the coast of Tasmania.

Arnold Shapiro Productions / A&E, *Series Producer/Writer*

Created, produced and wrote *Parole Board*, an award-winning 21-part series focusing on America's parole process through profiles of prison inmates going through various state systems. Series included interviews with prosecutors, police and the inmates' victims. Hosted by Bill Kurtis.

Morningstar Entertainment / British Pathe, *Segment Producer*

Wrote and produced five one-hour episodes of *A Year to Remember*, a syndicated documentary series utilizing archival British Pathe newsreel footage.

Four Point Entertainment / Group W Productions, *Segment Producer*

Wrote, produced and directed segments for *Missing Reward*, a syndicated half-hour reality crime series hosted by Stacy Keach.

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J. STEVEN ANDERSON

Director of Photography

J. Steven Anderson has shot films and television shows all over the world. His television career credits include award-winning shows on A&E, ESPN, Fox, HGTV, and the History Channel. He is perhaps best known for his work on the A&E series *America's Castles*. *USA Today* called his cinematography "sumptuous." Steve's Director of Photography film credits include A MAN NAMED PEARL, CHILDREN OF ALL AGES, THE GREATEST ADVENTURE OF MY LIFE and AMMA: THE AMY CARMICHAEL STORY. He lives with his wife and son in Knoxville, TN.

GREG GRZESZCZAK

Editor

Greg Grzeszczak lives in Marshville, NC and has received an Emmy, the Arts in Motion Award, Genesis Award, and the U.S. International Film & Television Award for his outstanding editing of documentaries, television programs and commercials. Documentaries include CHILDREN OF ALL AGES, A MAN NAMED PEARL, MONUMENTAL MYTHS, BRIAN WILSON & THE BEACH BOYS, and NOTES FROM THE FIELD. He has edited for the Biography Channel, Conde Naste Traveler Series, DIY Network, Food Network, Harpo Productions, Home & Garden Television, and VH-1. His commercial clients include BMW, Cadillac, Chicago Public Schools, GMC, Hyundai, Lowe's Canada, SCPTV-MTA, Texas Agriculture, and Wachovia.

FRED STORY

Composer

Fred Story studied composition with Ziggy Hurwitz, famous for his work with artists as diverse as Woody Herman and the London Symphony Orchestra. He is President and Creative Director of Concentrix Music and Sound Design in Charlotte, NC. His composer credits for film include, CHILDREN OF ALL AGES, A MAN NAMED PEARL, THE SPIRIT OF SACAJEWEA, AMONG BROTHERS, FUDGIE AND JANE, THE GREATEST ADVENTURE OF MY LIFE. Among his many awards are 2 Emmy Awards, 3 Telly Awards, 9 Addy Awards, 17 Silver Microphone Awards, a New York Festivals Gold Award, and the 2007 Charlotte Chamber of Commerce Entrepreneur Award. He was recently nominated for 2 additional Emmys for his work on separate Public Television documentaries. He is lead composer and a songwriter for the children's television show *Raggs*, currently airing on American Public Television stations and internationally.

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JONATHAN GAYNOR

Sound Supervisor

Jonathan Gaynor lives in Charleston, SC and has done extensive sound work in features, documentaries, shorts, television movies, episodic, and news. Feature credits include THE NOTEBOOK for New Line Cinema, THE PATRIOT for Columbia Pictures (Oscar nominee), FORREST GUMP for Paramount Pictures (Oscar nominee). Documentary credits include A MAN NAMED PEARL for Tentmakers Entertainment, THE APE TRAIL for BBC TV, THUNDER GODS for National Geographic Explorer, RACISM for Harpo Productions. Television credits include *Semper Fi* (Dreamworks SKG TV, LLC., NBC), *The Ruby Bridges Story* (Walt Disney Pictures & Television), *Lovestruck* (MTM Enterprises, Family Channel), *The Tempest* (Northern Entertainment Productions, NBC Studios), *Family Reunion* (Hickox/Bowman Productions, ABC), *Army Wives* (Touchstone TV, Lifetime TV), *Americas Most Wanted* (STF Productions, Fox TV), *60 Minutes*, *48 Hours*, *CBS Evening News*, *ABC World News Tonight*.

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CREDIT LIST:

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Pearl Fryar

Tom Drayton, Owner - City Nursery

Andy Rollins, Plant Pathologist - Clemson University

Ennis Bryant, Childhood friend

Deborah Bright-Austin, Neighbor

Ronnie Williams, Director - Chamber of Commerce

Gee Atkinson, Editor - Lee County Observer

Thomas Alexander, Mayor - Bishopville

Patrick Fryar, Son

Metra Fryar, Wife

Betty Scott, Neighbor

Raymond Bradley, Neighbor

Reverend Jerome McCray - New Bethel AME Church

Polly Laffitte, Former Curator - South Carolina State Museum

Tom Stanley, Art Historian

Charles Holmes, Arborist

Ada Fryar Randolph, Sister

Norwood Fryar, Brother

JoAnne McCaskill, Friend

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Christy Stocker, Manager - Waffle House

Jean Grosser, Chair - Art Department Coker College

Sammie Sherod, Neighbor

Robert Benjamin, Neighbor

Ashlynn Charles (young poet)

CREW

Producers/Directors - Scott Galloway & Brent Pierson

Director of Photography - J. Steven Anderson

Editor - Greg Grzeszczak

Composer - Fred Story

Coordinating Producer - Angela Dodd

Associate Producer - Trish DeHond

Sound Supervisor - Jonathan Gaynor

Sound Recordist - Patrick Sheehan

Gaffer - Bill Allanson

Dolly Grip - Lee Donaldson

On-line Editor - Ron Heidt

Colorist - D.C. Cardinali

Post Audio Mixer - Ross Wissbaum

Executive for Tentmakers Entertainment - Cecil Stokes

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MUSICIANS

Fred Story – Piano

Al Sergel – Drums

Phil Thompson – Saxophone

Jon Thornton – Trumpet

Music Soundtrack Recorded and Mixed at
Concentrix Music and Sound Design
Charlotte, NC

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Reprinted from The New York Times, March 10, 2005

Towering Ambition Gets Loose in the Yard

By WILLIAM L. HAMILTON

IT'S not hard to find Pearl Fryar's house. You drive down a road on the outskirts of Bishopville, S.C., with brick suburban houses on either side. Mr. Fryar's house, where he lives with his wife, Metra, and son, Patrick, is the one on the left sitting at the center of the intergalactic chess set of carved bushes, 5, 15 and 30 feet tall. The house number, 145, is carved bushes too, set at the edge of the front lawn.

"I've done things that I look at, and it's like, oh, I tell you, man, this thing come from somewhere else," Mr. Fryar said two weeks ago at his dining room table with Mrs. Fryar.

Mr. Fryar, 65, is a retired maintenance engineer and a self-taught topiary artist. He works with a gas-powered hedge trimmer that has double moving blades. He began the three acres of abstract yews, hollies, firs, oaks and pines that is the Fryars' yard roughly 25 years ago in an act of frustration.

"I realized I was not going to accomplish what I really wanted to do in my job," Mr. Fryar said of his work for the Rexam Beverage Can Americas company in the late 1970's. "I wanted to be a plant manager. The reason I didn't think it was going to happen was because of the situation that the South was in at that time. It had not changed that much."

Asked if he felt he was not considered for the position because he was black, Mr. Fryar hesitated. Mrs. Fryar, also 65, answered for him. "Yes," she said.

Greg Brooke, a spokesman for Rexam, said yesterday that decisions about promotion were based on performance only. "Our people are given equal opportunity to develop," Mr. Brooke said.

On a drive to Coker College in Hartsville where Mr. Fryar is working with the students in the art department to create small sculpture gardens with topiary, Mr. Fryar said that as a child living in Clinton, N.C., in the 1940's he had witnessed lynchings. His parents, sharecroppers, would routinely instruct him how to stay out of trouble by being inconspicuous.

Taught to be invisible growing up, Mr. Fryar decided one day in his adult life, at home in Bishopville, to be as visible as possible. He walked into his front yard and cut up a holly bush.

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"I thought he had lost it," Mrs. Fryar said at the dining table.

"According to the book I would have thrown it out, but I didn't know anything about the book," Mr. Fryar said of the bush. "I didn't even know what topiary was."

Two years later, content with how the experiment was developing, he cut up everything else in the yard. He also started to train his plants using pantyhose, coat hangers and PVC pipe to bind and direct them.

Believing his ambition blocked in one direction at his job, Mr. Fryar encouraged his personal pursuits in a different, unlikely direction, which assumed a wondrous shape, a decision that also describes the basic technique for creating topiary. After a 12-hour shift at the factory, Mr. Fryar, who retired three years ago, would work through the night and into the morning in his yard, under spotlights.

"You tell me I couldn't do one thing, I'm going to prove to you I can do another thing," he said, estimating that a third of the topiaries were created from weakly or misshapen shrubs that the local nursery put out for discard. "Love, Peace & Goodwill" were dug into the lawn in large, neat block letters as a closing statement to the garden, which Mr. Fryar said he has finished.

Now internationally known in the garden world as well as in the art world, Mr. Fryar said he starts with an idea in his mind's eye and begins to grow it, realizing most of his pieces, which are all abstract, in five to seven years. He doesn't put designs on paper. His favorite artist is Picasso. There are 150 topiaries on the Fryars' lot, comprising 400 plants and including several years of Christmas trees arranged in a kind of living timeline to one side of the house.

Asked how he determines when a topiary is finished, Mr. Fryar replied, "When I can't get to the top of it."

Mr. Fryar's first ambition, and first recognition, as a gardener was a local "Yard of the Month" award in the early 1980's. He has exhibited work at the South Carolina State Museum in Columbia, as part of a show on self-taught artists, and at Spoleto, the annual art festival in Charleston, as part of a special commission. Rosemary Verey, the queen of English gardeners, visited Mr. Fryar at home twice, but she died in 2001 before he could accept her invitation to walk the royal grounds with Prince Charles.

Tour buses and the odd wandering group are now a part of the Fryars' routine at home. At the suggestion of a friend they have put up a donation box by the driveway and printed brochures. Mr. Fryar said that on one occasion someone left \$5,000 in the box.

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"You don't know how many people come out here to see how bad it is," he said of his critics. Neighbors, who Mrs. Fryar said were not particularly pleased by the topiary garden when it began to appear, have now begun to emulate it. Stray forms have cropped up in yards down the road, as though the Fryars' bushes were escaping.

Mr. and Mrs. Fryar met in the seventh grade in Clinton. "She was a grade ahead of me," Mr. Fryar said, clarifying. "So that meant that I was really uptown, because I'm able to handle a lady that's probably a little smarter than I am."

Mrs. Fryar burst into mad giggles.

"I kind of felt that there was something special there," she said. After 10 years of dating, Mr. Fryar proposed.

"I had given him a week, without his knowledge," Mrs. Fryar recalled. "I was fixing to break it off. I figure he's never going to ask me to marry him, so we'll just forget this." Three days short of her deadline, he asked.

"That really messed up my plans," Mrs. Fryar said.

The Fryars lived in Elmhurst, Queens, and Atlanta before moving to South Carolina in 1976 to be closer to family. Their only child, Patrick, now 36, a computer operator at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, is not interested in the topiary garden, they said, which leaves its future in some question. Mr. Fryar has donated or sold a handful of pieces, for prices as high as \$35,000, to museums and collectors, though he said that he has also refused offers on topiaries that are focal to the vision of his garden.

Members of the Garden Conservancy, a national preservation group, have visited Bishopville. William Noble, director of preservation projects, said the conservancy is intrigued by Mr. Fryar and his creation and is looking at the situation and the feasibility of being of help.

Mr. Fryar said he would like to see the plot preserved as a work of art but was philosophic about the likelihood that it might not be. He compared it to "The Gates," the installation by Christo and Jeanne-Claude being dismantled in Central Park after several weeks on view. The Fryars saw it on a trip to New York in February.

"You accept the fact: it's not put there to be forever," Mr. Fryar said, as though speaking of his own place on earth. Asked how he came to call Pearl, he added: "Oh that's easy. I was named after my uncle."
