



Presents

# TAKE EVERY WAVE: The Life Of Laird Hamilton

A film by Rory Kennedy  
(118 min., USA, 2017)  
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## **LOGLINE**

This is the remarkable story of an American icon who changed the sport of big wave surfing forever. Transcending the surf genre, this in-depth portrait of a hard-charging athlete explores the fear, courage and ambition that push a man to greatness—and the cost that comes with it.

## **SYNOPSIS**

**TAKE EVERY WAVE:** The Life of Laird Hamilton tracks the remarkable life and legendary career of big wave surfer Laird Hamilton. Much admired by the public, though often disdained or ignored by the surf industry itself, Laird is a unique sports icon—an athlete who has refused to compete professionally yet has dominated big wave surfing as no other figure in history has ever done.

Laird's biographical story is told against the backdrop of a winter surf season on Kauai, where El Niño storm systems threaten to bring the biggest surf in decades. Mixing never-before-seen archival footage, with contemporary verité scenes shot in Southern California, Bermuda and Kauai, *Take Every Wave* weaves the past and present into an intimate and compelling portrait of a superstar athlete at the top of his game. Threaded throughout is a revealing, deeply personal interview with Laird as well conversations with the family members, friends, collaborators and detractors who know him best.

Laird's movie-star looks and the celebrity gloss of his current life in Malibu mask a much deeper, more compelling story of struggle, failure, and, ultimately, triumph. A troubled youth, Laird was raised in an abusive home on a racially divided island. From a very early age, he was drawn to the sea—and, more specifically, the North Shore's famously dangerous Pipeline break. An extraordinary physicality combined with an uncanny natural ability and unstoppable drive propelled him on a life journey that has kept him at the center of his sport for more than thirty years. During this time, Laird has become known as much for his innovations as his accomplishments—from breaking windsurfing speed records to innovating tow-in surfing; from prone-paddling across the English Channel to surfing the “unrideable,”—including Maui's notorious Peahi break and Tahiti's iconic Millennium Wave.

From the freewheeling 1960s of his childhood through the industry's growth and commercialization, Laird's adherence to a waterman way of life has consistently redefined the possibilities of big wave surfing. Now, at age fifty-two, with decades of wear and tear on his body and a deteriorating hip, Laird still charges into new frontiers. His current passion is foil boarding—a sport likened to riding a unicycle through a hurricane—which only a handful of athletes around the world have been able to master.

*Take Every Wave* provides an intimate, uncompromising look at a lifetime devoted to riding giant surf—and the price an athlete pays for greatness.

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

**Rory Kennedy**

I have always been interested in the power of the individual, the notion that anybody—any man or woman with enough determination, talent, and courage—can strike out and, by his or her own doing, change things, make an impact.

This can happen in politics. It can happen in the arts—in music and painting and film. And it can happen in sports, in the physical world. An individual can decide that he or she is going to push beyond established boundaries—do it better, do it differently, try something no one else has ever tried before.

In my family, there was a huge value placed on athleticism—the willingness to compete. Fear, courage, focus—these were things to be confronted, explored, and harnessed. My mother insisted, even when we were very young, that my ten siblings and I learn to ski, sail, and play football. And it wasn't just competency she was after—we were encouraged to push ourselves to the edge of our abilities and beyond. We were meant to fall hard and learn to get back up again. We were taught not just how to win but also how to earn each win.

These values and the rewards that come from that mind-set were also present in the real-life heroes whom I, as a child, was lucky enough to spend time with—family friends such as mountaineer Jim Whittaker, tennis champion Billie Jean King, and decathlete Rafer Johnson. These are athletes who broke records, erased boundaries, and shattered limits. They are individuals who carved out their own roads and forever changed the landscape of their respective sports. On the world stage, they were larger-than-life superheroes—cereal-box legends. And yet as they sat around our breakfast table, they seemed like ordinary individuals. They were courageous, to be sure, and focused. They had the talent and drive that can propel athletes to greatness. But they were also just people.

When I was a child, this apparent contradiction always intrigued me. What made these athletes want to accomplish the extraordinary feats they were known for? What made them think they could? What drove them, and what nourished them on that long, hard drive? Why did they succeed where so many others had failed, and how did they feel about that success? Was it worth the price they paid?

Laird Hamilton is one of the greatest big-wave surfers of all time. As an innovator, he has changed the sport more than any other figure in at least the last half century. Making a film about Laird gave me a chance to explore all these questions.

To me, *Take Every Wave* isn't a sports documentary. It is a universal story about human potential—about striving, about the power of the individual to overcome limits, and about the power we all have to create our own destiny.

## **CREW BIOGRAPHIES**

**Rory Kennedy** (Director/Producer) is one of America's most prolific documentary filmmakers. An Academy Award nominated, Primetime Emmy Award winning Director/Producer, Kennedy's work deals with some of the world's most pressing issues—poverty, political corruption, domestic abuse, drug addiction, human rights, and mental illness. Kennedy has made more than 30 highly acclaimed documentaries. Her films have appeared on HBO, PBS, Lifetime Television, A&E, Court TV, The Oxygen Network and TLC.

Most recently, Kennedy completed *Take Every Wave*, a feature documentary about the life of legendary big wave surfer Laird Hamilton. The film will have its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in 2017.

In 2014, Kennedy made the Academy Award nominated *Last Days in Vietnam*, which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival and went into wide theatrical release in the fall of that year. At the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, she premiered *Ethel*, a feature length documentary chronicling the extraordinary life of her mother Ethel Kennedy, wife of Robert F. Kennedy. The film was nominated for 5 Primetime Emmy Awards.

In 2011, Kennedy produced *Killing in the Name*, which earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary Short. In 2009, she executive produced *Street Fight*, which earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary Feature. In 2007, her film *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib* premiered at Sundance and went on to win a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Nonfiction Special.

Her other projects include *Bobby Fisher Against the World* (2011), *Shouting Fire: Stories from the Edge of Free Speech* (2009) and *The Fence* (2010). Her work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times*, and she's appeared on *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart, *The Today Show*, CNN and NPR.

Kennedy is a Governor of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. A graduate of Brown University, she majored in Women's Studies. Along with acclaimed documentary filmmaker Liz Garbus, she is co-founder of Moxie Firecracker Film in New York and Los Angeles.

A committed activist, Kennedy continues to fight for social justice and human rights. She maintains an active speaking schedule and recently has been the keynote speaker for various lecture series, university events, and community organization functions. Kennedy lives in Los Angeles with her husband and three children.

**Mark Bailey** (Writer/Producer) is a four-time Emmy nominated writer and producer who has worked on a variety of award-winning documentaries. Bailey's films have been broadcast on HBO, PBS, Lifetime Television, A & E, Court TV and TLC.

In 2015, Bailey's documentary, *Last Days in Vietnam*, was nominated for an Academy Award and Bailey himself was nominated for a Primetime Emmy for Best Nonfiction Writing and a WGA Award for Best Documentary Screenplay. That same year he was nominated for a News & Documentary Emmy in Outstanding Historical Programming for his producing work on the PBS series *Makers: Women Who Make America*.

In 2012, Bailey was nominated for a Primetime Emmy for Best Nonfiction Writing for the documentary *Ethel* and won the Humanitas Prize for Documentary Writing for the same film.

Some of Bailey's other films include the Emmy Award-winning *Ghosts Of Abu Ghraib*, the five-part series *Pandemic: Facing AIDS*, for which Bailey was also nominated for a Primetime Emmy, and *American Hollow*, nominated for an Emmy Award and an Independent Spirit Award.

In addition to documentary work, Bailey has authored four books: a social history of Hollywood, *Of All The Gin Joints* (Algonquin Books, 2014), a children's book, *Tiny Pie* (Running Press, 2012), a cocktail guide, *Hemingway & Bailey's Bartending Guide to Great American Writers* (Algonquin Books, 2006), and a journalistic account of an impoverished Appalachian family, *American Hollow* (Little, Brown & Co., 1999).

Bailey lives in Los Angeles with his wife and three children.

**Jack Youngelson** (Writer/Producer) is an Emmy Award-winning documentary film director, producer, and writer. His projects have been shown by numerous broadcasters, including PBS, HBO, A&E, BBC, and Channel Four. Recently, he directed the premiere episode of the landmark six-hour series, *The Story of Cancer: The Emperor of All Maladies*, executive produced by Ken Burns, which debuted on PBS in the spring of 2015. The series was nominated for a Primetime Emmy and also received the prestigious DuPont-Columbia award.

Other credits include the Emmy nominated film, *Mission Blue*, about legendary oceanographer Sylvia Earle for Netflix (Writer/Producer), and two projects with Rory Kennedy for HBO: *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib* (Writer/Producer), for which he won an Emmy for Outstanding Non-fiction Special, and the Emmy nominated *Ethel* (Producer). Both films premiered at the Sundance Film Festival.

Jack also directed the acclaimed independent documentary *Tierney Gearon: The Mother Project*, about the life and work of the controversial art photographer. *The San Francisco Chronicle* called the film "One of the most remarkable and layered explorations of family relationships, insanity and the motivations of memoiristic artists ever to have been made." The documentary premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and was screened at film festivals throughout the world before its US television premiere on Sundance Channel. Television credits

include *Electric Nation* for the four-part PBS series, *America Revealed* (Writer/Producer), *Rethinking Happiness* for the three-part NOVA series, *This Emotional Life* (Writer/Director), and the Emmy nominated *McConkey* for Showtime and Starz (Story Consultant).

In addition to *Take Every Wave*, Jack is also the writer of the feature documentary *Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman*, directed by Susan Froemke and John Hoffman, which appears in the Doc Premieres section at this year's Sundance Film Festival.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

**Laird Hamilton** is an American athlete, surfer, author, inventor, stunt man, model, producer, TV host, fitness and nutrition expert, husband, father and adrenaline junkie. He is regarded as one of today's best known big wave surfers. But at 6'3", 215 pounds, with an uncommon combination of balance, flexibility, and strength, Laird Hamilton is unique. In addition to riding many of the biggest waves on the planet, Laird is known as the world-renowned innovator and guiding genius of crossover board sports including tow-in surfing, stand-up paddle boarding, and hydrofoil boarding. In short, Laird Hamilton is the essential Water Man.

Over the last decade Laird has transcended surfing to become an international fitness icon and nutrition expert. Many of today's top professional athletes and celebrities look to Laird for training guidance, including instruction in his unique underwater resistance workouts. Partnering with his wife, pro-volleyball player and TV personality Gabby Reece, along with Crossfit Endurance founder and author Brian Mackenzie, Laird created XPT--a unique and powerful fitness training and lifestyle program featuring these unique water workouts, performance breathing, recovery methods, and high-intensity fitness and endurance training for both elite athletes and those seeking every day fitness. Laird's first book, *Force of Nature: Mind, Body, Soul, and, Of Course, Surfing* (Rodale Books, 2008), has become the go-to manual for people seeking inspiration for a healthy lifestyle and hit the New York Times Bestseller list within two weeks of publication. He is also a contributing editor for *Men's Journal*, where he writes about his own fitness, health and nutrition philosophies.

Laird has also appeared in a number of feature films and surfing documentaries including *Radical Attitude* (1992), *Wake Up Call* (1996), *Step into Liquid*, (2003), *Riding Giants* (2004) where he also served as executive producer, and as a stunt man or surfer in *The Descendants* (2014), *Water World* (1995), *Die Another Day* (2002) and *Point Break* (2015). In addition to his film work, Laird has appeared on numerous television shows such as Oprah's Master Class, Charlie Rose, 60 Minutes, Chelsea Handler, Conan O'Brien, Stephen Colbert, and The Ellen DeGeneres Show.

Laird has a passion for helping others live happy, healthy lives, as exhibited through his work with charities such as the Surfrider Foundation, Race Across America, Pipeline for a Cure for Cystic Fibrosis, Rain Catcher, Muscular Dystrophy and City Of Hope.

Laird lives with wife Gabrielle Reece and their daughters on the Hawaiian island of Kauai six months out of the year during surfs' swell season and during the offseason, in Malibu, California.

Follow Laird's official social media pages as follows:

Facebook: @LairdLife

Twitter: @LairdLife



Instagram: @LairdHamiltonSurf

**Gabrielle Reece** is a world-renowned athlete, TV personality, New York Times bestselling author, model, wife and mother. At 6' 3" the former professional beach volleyball player, and Nike's first female spokeswoman, Gabrielle Reece is the definition of both athleticism and feminine beauty. Gabby's commanding presence, passion for healthy living, and fitness expertise makes her a popular leader in the world of health and wellness.

Born in California, Gabby is a mix of her mother from Long Island (where her height comes from), and her father from Trinidad (who died when she was five). Her trademark piece of jewelry, copied on a tattoo inside her right ankle, is a stylized sterling silver cross, worn by her father. Raised on St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands, Gabby didn't take up volleyball until in the 11th grade when she and her mother moved to St. Petersburg, Florida. Gabby received an athletic scholarship to Florida State University where she majored in Communications and played two seasons of volleyball before accepting offers from the modeling world in New York. She was only a sophomore at Florida State University when *Elle* named her "One of The Five Most Beautiful Women in The World". Despite the allure of high paying modeling jobs, Gabby returned to the FSU campus and set two school volleyball records in solo blocks (240) and total blocks (747). Both records still stand today. In 1997, Florida State University inducted Gabby into the college's Athletic Hall of Fame.

A Florida State star turned pro, Gabby trained hard to hone her skills in 2-person beach volleyball and competed domestically in the 1999-2000 Olympic 4 on 4 Challenge Series, and the 1999-2000 FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour. In 1997, competing with the best global beach volleyball players ever assembled, Gabby's 4-person team took first place at the first-ever Beach Volleyball World Championships. 1997 was Gabby's fifth season as a team captain in the 4-person Women's Beach Volleyball League (WBVL), and her fourth captaining Team Nike. Named the Offensive Player of the Year in 1994-95 and WBVL blocks leader, Gabby led the WBVL in kills four straight years in a row from 1993-1996.

In 1994 Gabby became Nike's first female athlete to design a shoe, and Nike's first-ever female cross-training spokesperson. Working with Tinker Hatfield, designer of the Air Jordan, Nike first launched Gabby's shoe the Air Trainer, then the Air Patrol in 1995, the Air GR in 1997 and the Air GR II in 1998, and her shoe eventually became the first women's shoe to outsell the Air Jordan.

A charismatic speaker, in spring of 2012, Gabby was invited to Washington, DC to speak at the annual TEDMED conference on innovations in health and medicine. Gabby also has an ongoing relationship with the American Heart Association Teaching Gardens, an initiative benefitting needy schools through the planting of organic gardens, by which she speaks to children about the importance of eating healthy and regular exercise ([www.takepart/teachinggarden](http://www.takepart/teachinggarden)).

As a result of years of personal experience and experimentation for her relentless pursuit to elevate her own fitness led her to create the HIGHX program. In December of 2014, Gabby

joined forces with Lifeline® to launch HIGHX Training and the HIGHX™ high intensity group fitness program emerged.

Together with her husband, surfing legend, Laird Hamilton, Gabby is an avid proponent of empowering people to take responsibility for their own health, plus a truly authentic example of healthy living. Together with their friend Crossfit Endurance founder and author Brian Mackenzie, Gabby and Laird launched a new all-encompassing fitness program called XPT in early 2016, offering training for both the elite athletes looking to increase endurance and fitness skills (<http://www.xptlife.com>).

Her most recent book, *My Foot Is Too Big for the Glass Slipper* (May 2013), quickly became a *New York Times* Bestseller. Gabby boldly shared her personal story of real life ups and downs of, motherhood and career in order to encourage women worldwide to challenge traditional norms and find personal happiness. Gabby's challenge to feminist definitions of the modern women sparked huge media interest, resulting in appearances on *The Today Show*, *Rock Center with Brian Williams*, *Live from the Couch*, *Dr. Oz*, *Katie Couric*, *E! Chelsea Lately*, *The Jeff Probst Show* and *The Better Show*, to name a few, she was also co-host of *The View*, and appeared on *Access Hollywood*. Gabby's book continues to capture the attention of women everywhere looking for authentic, practical, and real-world advice on marriage, motherhood and healthy living.

Gabby's health and fitness tips have appeared in *Shape*, *Men's Fitness*, and *Elle* magazines. She is a contributing editor for *Yahoo Health*, and has written for *The Huffington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*.

Named in *People Magazine's* "Best Bodies 2016" issue (June 2016), Gabby has been a consistent inspiration to women to stay in shape at any age, even during pregnancy. Competing at the highest levels of woman's volleyball throughout most of her life, including when she competed professionally at five months pregnant in the summer of 2007. After a brief hiatus to start her family, Gabby returned to competitive pro beach volleyball's AVP Tour in the summer of 2010, including an invitation to be the captain of Team Nike for a 4-on-4 exhibition tournament, and in May 2010 she was a feature trainer on NBC's *The Biggest Loser*.

Gabby has graced the cover of *Sports Illustrated for Women*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Golf*, *Women's Sports & Fitness*, *Outside*, *Elle*, *Shape*, *Self*, *Harpers' Bazaar*, *Volleyball*, *Fitness*, *Life*, *Vogue*, *Experience Life* and *People*, and has regularly appeared on *Good Morning America*, *The Today Show*, *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* and *Chelsea Lately*, as well as other top tier entertainment shows. And she has appeared in several feature films, where she played a pro beach volleyball player in *Cloud Nine* with Bert Reynolds (2004), a guest star in *North Shore* (2004) and as a physical trainer in the film *Gattica* (1997).

A pro in front of the camera as a TV host. Early in her television program hosting career, she won a huge following by taking risks road-lugging, white water kayaking, drag racing, surfing, and sky diving on *MTV Sports* and *The Extremists with Gabrielle Reece*, and later she was a commentator at the 1998 Goodwill Games. She has hosted *Insider Training* on the Fit

TV/Discovery channel, where she provided a behind-the-scenes look at professional athletes' exercise and nutrition regimens ([www.fittv.discovery.com/fansites/insidertraining](http://www.fittv.discovery.com/fansites/insidertraining)). And she was a featured host of ESPN and NBC's "Gravity Games".

In the spring of 2016, Gabby became the host of NBC's new hit fitness competition series *STRONG*, once again bringing together her TV hosting experience and her fitness expertise. From executive producer Dave Broome (*The Biggest Loser*) and Oscar-nominated iconic film star Sylvester Stallone, the series matches 10 everyday women with the world's most elite trainers to help realize their natural greatness and conquer obstacles that were once unfathomable.

When *Women's Sports & Fitness* named Gabby one of the '20 Most Influential Women in Sports' (August 1997) someone asked why they picked Gabby for the issue's cover, and the magazine's editor wrote, "Because I believe she represents, finally, the answer to all the image-questing pendulum swinging of the decades gone by. Who is the female athlete? She is everything once thought to be an inherent contradiction. She is strong and beautiful, sweaty and feminine, tough and ladylike."

Follow Gabby on her official social pages:

Facebook @OfficialGabbyReece

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IN MEMORY OF SONNY MILLER

“Underground Fire”

Written by Bob Bogle, Jerry McGee, Melvin Taylor, Christian Wilde

Performed by The Ventures

Published by EMI Unart Catalog Inc. (BMI)

Courtesy of Capitol Records under license from Universal Music Enterprises

“Lou Reed”

Written by Dylan Sizemore, Joshua Menashe, Glenn Brigman, Alex Bulli

Performed by Frankie and The Witch Fingers

Published by Dylan Sizemore, Joshua Menashe, Glenn Brigman, Alex Bulli

Courtesy of Permanent Records and The Greater Goods Co.

“Penetration”

Written by Steven Leonard

Performed by The Pyramids

Published by Scion Four Music LLC (ASCAP) obo Princess Lola Music LLC

Courtesy of Princess Lola Music LLC

“Interlude: So Many Years Ago”

Written by Tommy Guerrero

Performed by Tommy Guerrero

Published by Fo Traques Ana Munkey Music (BMI)

Courtesy of Tommy Guerrero

“Good Greeves”

Written by John Blakeley, Gaston Georis

Performed by The Sandals

Published by EMI Unart Catalog Inc. (BMI)

Courtesy of Capitol Records under license from Universal Music Enterprises

“Water”

Written by Rostam Batamanglij and Wesley Miles  
Performed by Ra Ra Riot  
Published by Rough Trade Publishing, Rostam Batamanglij Music (ASCAP)  
Courtesy of Barsuk Records  
By Arrangement with Bank Robber Music

“The Gunslinger”

Written by Tommy Guerrero  
Performed by Tommy Guerrero  
Published by Fo Traques Ana Munkey Music (BMI)  
Courtesy of Tommy Guerrero

“Solar Race”

Written by Bob Bogle, Nole Edwards, Don Wilson  
Performed by The Ventures  
Published by EMI Unart Catalog Inc. (BMI)  
Courtesy of Capitol Records under license from Universal Music Enterprises

“Gold and Stone”

Written by Nicole Hirschmann and Daniel Wesley Cundiff  
Performed by Eternal Summers  
Published by Darksonic and Duo Duo  
Courtesy of Kanine Records and Terrorbird Media

“NRR”

Written by Jack Sharp, Joe Hollick, Daniel Davies, Tom Watt  
Performed by Wolf People  
Published by Secretly Canadian Publishing  
Courtesy of Jagjaguwar

“Los Dias Del Oro”

Written by Tommy Guerrero  
Performed by Tommy Guerrero  
Published by Fo Traques Ana Munkey Music (BMI)  
Courtesy of Tommy Guerrero

“Come Alive”

Written by Nicole Hirschmann and Daniel Wesley Cundiff  
Performed by Eternal Summers  
Published by Darksonic and Duo Duo  
Courtesy of Kanine Records and Terrorbird Media

“Duel In The Dust”

Written by Tommy Guerrero

Performed by Tommy Guerrero

Published by Fo Traques Ana Munkey Music (BMI)

Courtesy of Tommy Guerrero

“Debaser”

Written by Charles Thompson

Performed by Pixies

Published by Songs of Universal, Inc. on behalf of Rice and Beans Music

Courtesy of 4AD

“Salad Days”

Written by James Baker, Jeffrey Nelson, Lyle Preslar and Ian Mackaye

Performed by Minor Threat

Published by Rough Trade Songs and Minor Threat Music

Courtesy of Minor Threat/Dischord Records

“Will The Thrill”

Written by Zachary Yudin

Performed by Cayucas

Published by Cayuca Cayuca Cayucas Publishing c/o The Royalty Network, Inc.

Courtesy of Secretly Canadian

“Djed”

Written by Daniel Bitney, John Herndon, Douglas McCombs, John McEntire, David Pajo

Performed by Tortoise

Published by Rough Trade Publishing

Courtesy of Thrill Jockey Records

By Arrangement with Bank Robber Music

“A Walk”

Written by Scott Hansen

Performed by Tycho

Published by Ghostly Songs, LLC

Courtesy of Ghostly International

“Hinnom, TX (live)”

Written By Justin Vernon

Published by Chris In The Morning Music LLC

Administered by Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc.



Courtesy of Jagjaguwar

“Mild Confusion”

Written by Tamaryn Brown, Rex Shelverton

Performed by Tamaryn

Published by Rex Shelverton

Courtesy of Mexican Summer

By Arrangement with Bank Robber Music

“The Lonely Surfer”

Written by Jack Nitzsche, Marty Cooper

Performed by Jack Nitzsche

Published by Little Darlin’ Music

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