

A HERO ON ONE SIDE OF THE WORLD.
A NOBODY ON THE OTHER.



THE
BLACK SWALLOW

THE TRUE STORY OF THE WORLD'S FIRST BLACK FIGHTER PILOT.

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THE BLACK SWALLOW

SYNOPSIS

New York, December 1959. Host of "The Today Show" **DAVID GARROWAY** rushes into an elevator on his way to the live broadcast. The elevator jams. David demands the elevator operator get them moving again and the taciturn old African American tries but nothing works. The two men are stuck. Boredom sets in. David asks about the line of medals on the colored man's uniform. The man explains they are for fighting in both world wars. He introduces himself as **EUGENE** and claims to not only be France's most decorated war hero but also the world's first ever black fighter pilot. David laughs but Eugene is serious. He tells David his story:

Eugene's father was a Haitian immigrant who dreamed of escaping America's legalized racism for France, where all people were treated as equals. When ten year old Eugene saw the Klan lynch his father he escaped and reached a harbor where he stowed away on a ship to Europe. Months later Eugene arrived in London where he wandered the streets until, filthy and starving, he entered a boxing gym run by an ex-fighter. The gnarly old boxer took Eugene in and taught him to box. Eugene began fighting for money. As a teenager he was selected for a tournament in Paris and was amazed that everything his father had said was true. After the fight he decided to stay. Then war came.

Eugene joined the French Foreign Legion. He fought at Verdun and Champagne and was so fearless and skilled, he was selected for "**THE SWALLOWS OF DEATH**", France's elite fighting corp. Eugene narrowly escaped death so many times he was given the moniker "**THE BLACK SWALLOW**" and the myth around him slowly grew. He was badly wounded at Verdun but rather than sit out the rest of the war he became a pilot and racked up enough enemy kills to become an Ace. America entered the war and Eugene assumed his own country's air force would welcome him. He was told Blacks couldn't fly and was made to work the kitchens.

After the war Eugene married French aristocrat **MARCELLE STRAUMANN** and opened a cabaret club. He counted **JOSEPHINE BAKER** and **EARNEST HEMINGWAY** as his friends. When World War II broke out the French government asked Eugene, who spoke German, to spy on the Nazi top brass who drank in his club. At the same time he gave safe harbor to Jews in his basement. A German soldier discovered Eugene's operation and Eugene had to flee. With his two young daughters he navigated war torn Europe and made his way back to the U.S.

When Eugene finishes his tale, David is amazed. The men are freed from the elevator and David has his assistant check Eugene's story. It's true. David reproaches himself; for years he had brushed past a real life hero. He invites Eugene onto his show to tell the world his story.

THE BLACK SWALLOW

EUGENE BULLARD, a hero, a husband, a father.

For Eugene, fighting came easy. Being a hero however came at a price. By his own admission, Eugene wasn't an attentive husband to Marcelle.

When he became a nightclub owner between the wars, he enjoyed his celebrity status to the full, schmoozing with famous friends and leaving the parenting to his wife. Though Eugene loved Marcelle passionately, he loved the nightlife more. Eventually they separated.

After France fell to Germany in World War Two, Eugene saved his infant daughters from nazi death squads and took them back to America. Life in the country of his birth proved far more challenging for Eugene than the battlefield ever had. Suddenly he was just another African American on the breadline.

His relationship with his two daughters became fractious as they grew up. Our film will of course depict Eugene's historic achievements but also show his struggles as a husband and father.

At the end of his life, Eugene's journey came full circle when he finally renounced violence and joined his daughter Jackie in her support of Martin Luther King's non violent Civil Rights movement.



THE BLACK SWALLOW

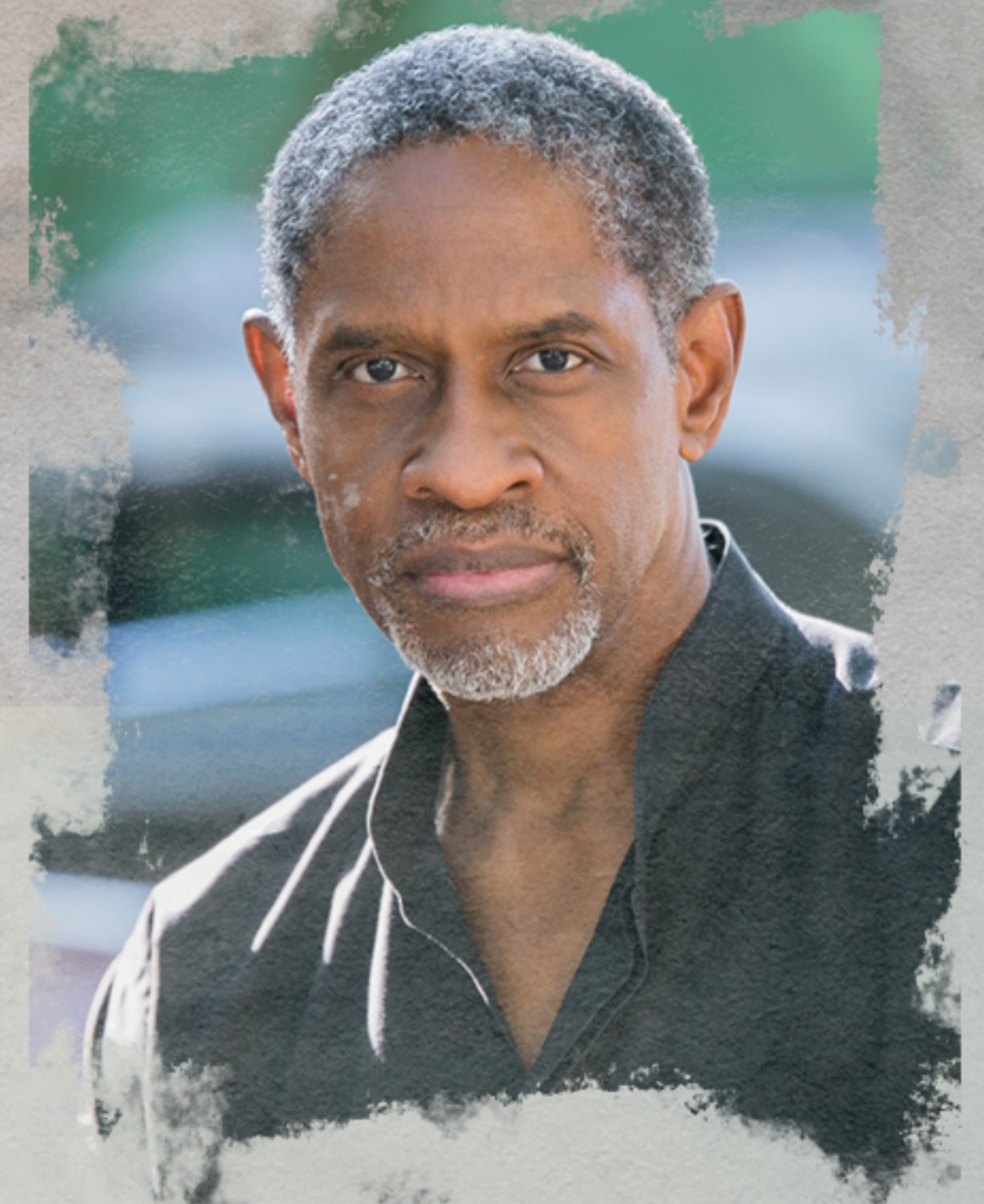
ABOUT US

TIM RUSS (Director)

Tim has more than 170 acting credits to his name. He is best known for his role as "Tuvok" in the television series "Star Trek: Voyager," and iconic features including "Spaceballs," "Star Trek Generations," and "Midnight Sky." Tim has directed features and series including "Star Trek: Voyager", "The FBI Files," and the award winning web series "Bloomers." Tim received an EMMY for his directing of several PSA commercials.

On "Black Swallow" Tim says: "When I first heard about Eugene Bullard I didn't believe it. I mean, he was a pilot, a soldier, a spy and Hemingway was his drinking buddy! I was like David in our story until I found out that Eugene's story is true. So I will move Heaven and Earth to make this film. We mustn't forget everything he did. There are real heroes and boy, do we need them in America, and the rest of the world, today."

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LORI DOVI (Executive Producer)

With over 30 years of television and film production behind her Lori is well versed in the intricacies of international film finance. In 2018 Lori launched The International Women Working In Film, a global networking platform in 55 countries with over 4800 members. Lori raised over 11 million Euros for a Canadian historical drama series and is currently executive producing the tv docu-series "Strays & The City".

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DEBORAH HARTWELL (Costume Designer)

Deborah has been designing and creating for over 20 years for theater, ballet, dance, the film industry and private clients worldwide. She does the tailoring for actors from Jon Hamm and Chris Hemmsworth to Kate Beckinsale and Kristin Chenowith to name but a few.

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CHRIS RUBINO (Writer)

Chris is an English script writer based in Germany. Chris has written numerous scripts for US and UK audiences in all formats (Television, Cinema, Online).

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Designed by Richard Blackburn - richardblackburn70@gmail.com



THE BLACK SWALLOW

THE CHARACTERS

EUGENE BULLARD – we will see Eugene as a boy, in his twenties and in his sixties.

DAVID GARROWAY (50). The TV host is always immaculately groomed, has a legendarily soothing voice and natural empathy.

MARCELLE STRAUMANN (28) is an elegant brunette who, though she comes from a privileged background has an innate kindness and sense of loyalty.

DIXIE KID (30's) is a Jamaican immigrant who mentors Eugene in the London boxing gym.

Eugene's daughter **JACKIE** (33) is a force to be reckoned with in her own right. She is steadfastly opposed to her father's belief that political change can only come through violence.

Ernest Hemingway, **LOUIS ARMSTRONG**, **JOSEPHINE BAKER** and **MARTIN LUTHER KING JUNIOR** are just some of the iconic figures who appear in Eugene's story.