

# NETFLIX

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## ALL THE EMPTY ROOMS

Directed by Joshua Seftel



**ON NETFLIX GLOBALLY THIS FALL**  
**English | 33 mins | United States**

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**Logline:**

Reporter Steve Hartman and photographer Lou Bopp embark on a cross country journey to memorialize the childhood bedrooms of those lost to school shootings, highlighting the urgent need for action against the rising epidemic of gun violence.

**Synopsis:**

ALL THE EMPTY ROOMS follows veteran CBS News correspondent Steve Hartman and photographer Lou Bopp as they embark on a seven-year-long project to document the empty bedrooms of children killed in school shootings. Hartman steps away from his heartwarming human interest stories and unbeknownst to his network's bosses, pursues a piece on absence, memory, and the unseen ripples of America's gun violence epidemic. As these senseless incidents claim more young lives than any other cause in America, these quiet bedrooms reveal truths more powerful than statistics ever could.

**Director's Statement:**

After Sandy Hook, Parkland, and so many other school shootings, I began to feel numb. As a parent of two little girls, it was hard to even let myself even think about the possibilities. Then, last year, my phone rang.

It was veteran CBS News Reporter Steve Hartman. In the late 90s, I was Steve's producer as he became nationally known for telling one-of-a-kind uplifting, good news stories. But it had been twenty-five years since we had spoken.

Steve told me his career was taking a turn. He had begun traveling around the country to create a news report about the empty bedrooms of children who had been killed in school shootings, and he asked if it might be worth exploring a documentary film about this journey. He also said he didn't think *he* should be in the film.

I had two immediate comments. The first was "yes, this should be a documentary." And the second was "Steve, you have to be in the film." He agreed to both, and within weeks we started production.

We traveled from Steve's home in upstate New York to Nashville to Uvalde to Santa Clarita and back to the CBS News studios to document Steve's final news report. And we get to know the children through the rooms they left behind. They came to life for us and the weight of their absence was crushing.

We were filled with sadness and sorrow as we observed these rooms through a cinema verite approach - allowing space for the viewer to be transported to the room.

After returning home, I came away with a new perspective on family and life in America. It's impossible not to feel a greater sense of gratitude toward my children and a burning desire to change the course of this crisis.

Through this film I hope we've opened a door for all of us to step out of the numbness and rekindle an urgency to do something.

-Joshua Seftel, *Director*

### **About Joshua Seftel:**

Joshua Seftel is an Oscar-nominated filmmaker behind *Stranger at the Gate*, a project combating Islamophobia that he produced with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai. In addition to his many award-winning documentaries for HBO, PBS, POV, National Geographic, and Showtime, Seftel is known for directing the landmark Emmy-winning *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, contributing to Peabody-winning *This American Life* and *The New York Times*, and for his frequent appearances on CBS Sunday Morning where he interviews his 88-year-old mother, Pat.

### **About Steven Hartman:**

Steve Hartman has been a CBS News correspondent since 1996. Hartman shares moving stories about the extraordinary people he meets in his weekly feature segment "On the Road" -- which airs Fridays on the CBS Evening News and repeats on CBS Sunday Morning. "On the Road" is modeled after the long-running series of the same name originally reported by America's greatest TV storyteller, the late Charles Kuralt.

Hartman's stories are also used in tens of thousands of classrooms around the world to teach kindness and character. In addition, with the help of his own children (Meryl and Emmett), Hartman hosts "Kindness 101." These segments air on CBS Mornings.

In 2020, Hartman cofounded "Taps Across America" – which has become a Memorial Day tradition. Every year at 3PM, thousands of buglers and trumpet players stand on their porches and patios to play taps in commemoration of the holiday.

Hartman has won dozens of prestigious broadcast journalism awards for his work. He has received an Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Award, 5 national Emmy awards, and 14 RTNDA/Edward R. Murrow awards, including a record 12 citations for best writing.

Previously Hartman was a columnist for 60 Minutes Wednesday and correspondent for two primetime CBS News magazines, *Public Eye* with Bryant Gumbel (1997-98) and *Coast to Coast* (1996-97). Before that he was a feature reporter at KCBS-TV, the CBS owned station in Los Angeles (1994-98), WABC-TV in New York (1991-94) and KSTP-TV in Minneapolis (1987-91). He began his career in broadcast journalism at WTOL-TV in Toledo, Ohio as a news intern and general assignment reporter (1984-87).

Hartman was graduated from Bowling Green State University in 1985 with a degree in broadcast journalism. He is married with three children and lives in Catskill, New York.

### **About Lou Bopp**

Lou Bopp is an on-location commercial photographer specializing in people and pets lifestyle, with an aesthetic approach that blends honesty, texture, and connection to create compelling

moments for some of the world's biggest brands. Lou has multiple Communication Arts Advertising Awards.

Lou's work centers around crafting authentic, lifestyle-driven imagery for pet brands, pharma, corporate, industrial. With years of experience, he has built extensive global image libraries, led advertising campaigns, and produced editorial and short-form motion assets for web and broadcast. He's also worked on full-length documentaries.

He's had the privilege of collaborating with a wide range of top-tier clients, including: eBay, Nestlé Purina, Marley Coffee, Microsoft, Morgan Stanley, Deutsche LA, AMD, Goldman Sachs, Intel, Nike, AMEX, Pet Smart, American Airlines, Disney World, Time Warner, J. Walter Thomas, Mississippi Tourism, AG Edwards, CDW, Y & R, McCann-Erickson, FutureBrand, and more.

One of Lou's images was selected for a USPS First-Class Forever stamp, and he has two published books: Hidden History of Mississippi Blues (History Press) and Mississippi Juke Joint Confidential: House Parties, Hustlers & the Blues Life (Arcadia Publishing).

### **Credits**

Directed by  
Joshua Seftel

Producers  
Joshua Seftel  
Conall Jones  
James Costa  
Trevor Burgess

Executive Producer  
Adam McKay  
Kevin Messick  
Steve Kerr  
Rev. Dr. Conrad Fischer, MD  
Roy and Mary Judelson  
Phil and Cheryl Milstein  
Geraldyn Dreyfous  
Regina K. Scully  
Melony and Adam Lewis  
Claire Aguilar  
Lisa Cortés  
Sigrid Dyekjær  
Anna Bick Rowe  
Jon Levin  
Kim Magnusson  
Eric Nichols

Editors  
Erin Casper  
Stephen Maing  
Jeremy Medoff

Director of Photography  
Matt Porwoll

Co-Producer  
Avi Bond  
Michael J. Gray  
Sarah McCarthy  
Matt Porwoll

Original Music  
Alex Somers

Consulting Editor  
Francisco Bello  
Eric Metzgar

Consulting Producers  
Dr. Chethan Sathya  
Fred Guttenberg  
Jody Snider  
Ilene Gutman  
Erika Frankel

Co-Executive Producer  
Chelsea Noll-McClintock

Story Producer  
Stephen Maing  
Jeremy Medoff

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