

# the botany of desire

## Biographies

### **Michael Pollan**

For the past twenty years, Michael Pollan has been writing books and articles about the places where the human and natural worlds intersect: food, agriculture, gardens, drugs, and architecture. Pollan is the author, most recently, of *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. His previous book, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*, was named one of the ten best books of 2006 by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. It also won the California Book Award, the Northern California Book Award, the James Beard Award for best food writing, and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. A Young Readers Edition of *The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat* will be published in October by Penguin. Pollan's previous book, *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World*, was also a *New York Times* bestseller, received the Borders Original Voices Award for the best non-fiction work of 2001, and was recognized as a best book of the year by the American Booksellers Association and Amazon.com. He is also the author of *A Place of My Own* (1997) and *Second Nature* (1991).

A contributing writer to the *New York Times Magazine* since 1987, Pollan was recently honored with the President's Award from the American Institute of Biological Sciences and The Truth in Agricultural Journalism Award from the American Corn Grower's Association. His writing has received three James Beard Awards; the John Burroughs prize (for the best natural history essay in 1997); the QPB New Vision Award (for his first book, *Second Nature*); the 2000 Reuters-I.U.C.N. Global Award for Environmental Journalism for his reporting on genetically modified crops; and the 2003 Humane Society of the United States' Genesis Award for his writing on animal agriculture. His essays have appeared in many anthologies, including *Best American Essays* (the 1990 and 2003 editions), *Best American Science Writing* (2004), and the *Norton Book of Nature Writing*. In addition to publishing regularly in the *New York Times Magazine*, his articles have appeared in *Harper's* (where he served for many years as executive editor), *Mother Jones*, *Gourmet*, *Vogue*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Gardens Illustrated*, and *The Nation*.

In 2003, Pollan was appointed the John S. and James L. Knight Professor of Journalism at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism, and the director of the Knight Program in Science and Environmental Journalism. In addition to teaching, he lectures widely on food, agriculture, and gardening. Pollan, who was born in 1955, grew up on Long Island, and was educated at Bennington College, Oxford University, and Columbia University, from which he received a

Master's in English. He lives in the Bay Area with his wife, the painter Judith Belzer, and their son, Isaac. His website is [www.michaelpollan.com](http://www.michaelpollan.com)

### **Michael Schwarz, Producer and Director**

Michael Schwarz founded Kikim Media in 1996 after working 20 years in public television. Schwarz's work has been honored with three national Emmy Awards, two George Foster Peabody Awards, the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Journalism Award for Investigative Journalism, the Investigative Reporters and Editors Award, Red and Blue Ribbons from the American Film Festival, several Ciné Golden Eagles, and the Grand Prize in the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Awards for Coverage of the Disadvantaged.

Schwarz' most recent nationally broadcast prime-time PBS programs were *My Father, My Brother and Me*, a chronicle of Parkinson's disease, for FRONTLINE (2009), and *Hunting the Hidden Dimension*, the story of fractal geometry, for NOVA (2008). He also produced and directed *Ending AIDS: The Search for a Vaccine* (2005), widely praised as a compelling chronicle of one of the world's greatest biomedical research challenges, as well as the groundbreaking *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet* (2002), honored with a Special Jury Award from Ciné Golden Eagle and a Bronze World Medal from the International Film and Video Festival of New York.

After starting his career as a writer and editor of print publications (together with another young writer/editor named Michael Pollan), Schwarz joined England's Granada Television, where he was assigned to World in Action, the top-rated public affairs series that inspired the creation of *60 Minutes*. His work for Granada included several co-productions with PBS and took him all over Europe; a documentary he researched won the coveted George Foster Peabody Award for Broadcast Journalism.

Schwarz returned to America to co-produce and write *Abortion Clinic*, a landmark documentary shown as part of FRONTLINE's inaugural season, which earned the series its first Emmy award. The following year Schwarz co-produced *Living Below the Line* for FRONTLINE, which was honored with two more Emmy Awards as well as the Grand Prize in the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Awards.

After spending two years on a Fulbright Fellowship teaching broadcast journalism in Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, Schwarz joined PBS station KQED in 1988. While at KQED, Schwarz brought to the station (and to national broadcast on AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE) Channel Four's *Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City*, for which he served as KQED's executive producer and which won another George Foster Peabody Award. Schwarz lives in the Bay Area with his wife Kiki Kapany, a family lawyer who acts as Vice President of Kikim Media, running its day-to-day operations. They have two daughters, Ariana and Marisa.

