

TELLURIDE  
**MOUNTAINFILM**

*SuperMom*



*Directed by Mike Douglas*

With a graceful style and aggressive lines, Wendy Fisher ruled the women's big mountain freeskiing scene from 1996 to 2004. She skied Alaskan spines, hucked cliffs, starred in movie segments, won many championships, kept up with male cohorts and inspired a new generation of female badasses. Then she had kids and traded in the life of a professional skier for being a mom to two red-headed boys. This Salomon film checks in with Fisher, who gets the opportunity to see if she's still got it on the steeps of B.C. and Chile.

**Discussing the Film:**

*The following questions are intended to spark discussion and activities related to both the content and storytelling elements of this particular film.*

1. What were some of the most interesting images from *SuperMom*? What sights and sounds do you remember the most about the film?

*For more information on the filmmakers or to see other tour destinations and films, visit [mountainfilm.org](http://mountainfilm.org).*

2. What do you think makes Wendy Fisher an interesting central subject for the film? Give examples from the film.
3. What do you think of the director's decision to include the scene where Wendy crashes?
4. What is one sacrifice that your parents have made for you in their life, large or small? Make sure to go home tonight and thank them!
5. Do you do extracurricular activities or sports? What is the value of those in your life? What do you gain/learn from them?
6. Do you think men's sports and women's sports receive equal attention and funding at your school? Give examples to support your opinion.
7. What makes someone a hero? Do you think professional athletes are automatically heroes or role models? Do you think that's fair?

### Extensions:

1. **WATCH:** Visit Mike Douglas's production company, Switchback Entertainment, to view additional short films, including the trailer to his upcoming full-length documentary, *The Snowman*: <http://www.switchbackentertainment.com/>.
2. **WATCH:** Check out Wendy Fisher's website where you can find out more about her skiing competitions, watch videos or even contact Wendy with questions: <http://www.fishski.com/>.
3. **READ:** More about other amazing women athletes in our society, from mountain bikers to skateboarders, who have become trailblazers in sports largely dominated by men. <http://www.womensadventuremagazine.com/issues/the-trailblazers/>.
4. **DO:** Do you have a super mom? Nominate your mom for Walmart's "Mom of the Year Award" (Canada): <http://www.momoftheyear.ca>, or Today's "Mom is a Hero" contest (USA): [http://www.today.com/id/47142083/ns/today-mothers\\_day\\_guide/t/enter-mom-hero-contest/#.VD91bL5E\\_XY](http://www.today.com/id/47142083/ns/today-mothers_day_guide/t/enter-mom-hero-contest/#.VD91bL5E_XY). You can also read about previous "Mom of the Year" award winners. Don't wait till Mother's Day. Make your mom a special award and surprise her with it today. Face it...she deserves it.

## **Filmmaker Conversation:**

**Mike Douglas, director of *SuperMom***

### **What was the filming process like? How did you find the story?**

**Mike:** Wendy and I have been friends for a long time. Every year we do a ski trip in Chile. We had to find a way to get her on film and get her back in the limelight. After a couple years we had the opportunity through the Salomon Freeski TV series. I went down to Crested Butte and captured Wendy's typical mom life. I basically followed her around through her normal routine. Then we brought her up to Whistler for the spring. Perhaps we started a little too tough. That line she fell on was pretty normal for her. Luckily, she was okay, and she got up and really blew us away with her ability the rest of the day.

### **In general, how important is finding a character like Wendy Fisher to making a good documentary?**

**Mike:** Luckily, in my circumstance, I have known Wendy for a long time. I know what kind of person she is. I knew she would translate onto film really well and people would appreciate her. She's this incredible skier and great personality. We often tease her because she's such a mom sometimes. She makes lists, she's constantly cleaning and organizing and is always running off to do things for her kids. It's something a lot of female skiers who are also moms can really appreciate. Wendy didn't put anything on. We've taken some comments about her being a stereotypical female, but we didn't stage anything. I just told Wendy, "do what you do." That just happens to be her life. She really is a great mom and a great skier.

### **Style and attitude seem to be themes of the film. Can you talk a little about this?**

**Mike:** Well the cool thing about Wendy, and what makes her a great person, is that she is the kind of person who doesn't get hung up on what people think. In a way, she's in her own world. She never thinks, "I'm a mom and I can't do this." If there's a lesson to be learned from Wendy Fisher, it's that she has always pursued things in her own way. She hasn't gotten caught up in trying to impress other people. She enjoys life. In her parenting style, Wendy often refers back to the way she was brought up as a kid. She doesn't get caught up in having to follow a specific path. She broke away from the traditional path as a kid when she made the US Ski Team. She broke away from that when she became a freeskiier. No other racer had done that. She's been a trailblazer. I can't think of any other female athlete who has forged the path before her in skiing.

### **For the film, how important do you think the scene is where Wendy falls down the mountain?**

**Mike:** I think it adds a good dose of drama. As I stood up there and watched Wendy fall, all I saw was a puff of snow, and repeatedly thought, "I hope she's okay. I hope she's okay." Once I found out she was

okay, I was immediately psyched that would make an amazing moment for the film. I even told her. The other thing we take heat on for the film is asking her the question about her kids at the top, before she drops in. The odd thing, in terms of *Supermom*, is that Wendy and I are such good friends. It's not the typical filmmaker/subject relationship. It's a friendship and I know that I can say something like that and it's not going to mess with her too much. We laugh about that scene a lot now.

**Do you think the film has had an impact? Do you feel it is successful?**

**Mike:** I think it is successful in terms of how it came together. It showcased Wendy as she is to me. She's really a great mom. I don't think it's common for people to think that a "mom" who bakes and is a soccer coach can ski like that. I think people really get caught up in being one or the other. Maybe it does help to show that being a mom doesn't mean that everything else has to stop in your life. I know there are some female athlete friends of mine in their mid-30s who want to have kids and are feeling pressure. Their sponsors tell them that their careers are over if they have kids. That's really unfair. If a male athlete has a family, his contract doesn't stop. It's a tricky situation. It's not an equal playing field for women athletes. I think the film might help to shed some light on that struggle.

**What piece of advice would you give to a student who wants to get into filmmaking?**

**Mike:** I would say work hard and put your heart and soul into what you make. Filmmaking is not a normal thing. To be good at it, you have to really get into it. When I get into a film, I really become consumed by it. I'll walk out of the studio at the end of the day and I'll still be thinking about certain shots or how we're going to tell part of the story. But that's what I'm prepared to sacrifice to make it happen. Everybody I know who is successful puts a lot into it.

**What's your next project?**

**Mike:** Right now, we are submitting our first feature length documentary for Sundance. It's called *Snowman* and it's about my best friend from school who became an avalanche patroller. Shortly after he made it, he was in a terrifying helicopter crash that should've killed him three times over. He actually made it out with some bumps and bruises but the mental toll really affected his life. Today is the first time that the film can be watched in a finished form since we began filming three years ago. When we started working on the film it became a kind of a form of therapy for my friend and his family.