



**ONCE YOU CHOOSE HOPE,
ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE**

ALEXANDER HERO FILMS PRESENTS **pāh** A DOCUMENTARY BY COLEMAN WATSON, STROKE AND APHASIA SURVIVOR

DIRECTOR, PRODUCED, EDITED AND SOUNDTRACK BY COLEMAN WATSON

WWW.PAHDOCUMENTARY.COM

FACT SHEET

Genre:	Performative Documentary
Running Time:	2 hours 4 minutes 44 seconds
Completion Date:	September 15, 2023
Budget:	\$8,000 (USD)
Country of Origin:	United States
Country of Filming:	United States
Original Language:	English
Shooting Format:	Digital
Aspect Ratio:	16:9
Film Color:	Black & White and Color
Software:	Adobe Premiere
Camera:	Blackmagic Cinema Camera 6K; iPhone 11
Export Format:	h.264 1080x1920 23.976 AAC Stereo
Directed By:	Coleman Watson
Produced By:	Coleman Watson
Written By:	Coleman Watson
Edited By:	Coleman Watson

LOGLINE

A young attorney's life is disrupted by a massive stroke with lingering effects of two speech disorders as he struggles to overcome permanent disabilities, forcing him to reinvent himself with phonomotor treatments.

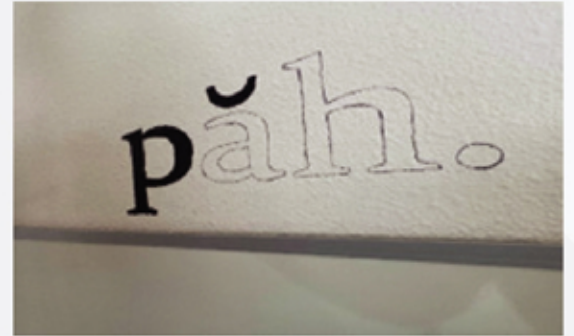
SYNOPSIS

"If all of my possessions were taken from me, with one exception, I would choose to keep the power of speech, for by it, I would soon regain all the rest," says a prominent statesman. Significant communication is not only to our livelihood but to our survival as a whole. It requires a vast repertoire of skills in intra-personal & inter-personal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating.

But how do you reinvent yourself when your brain won't communicate to create the language needed in everyday expression? Although there is no magic pill for the brain, Coleman Watson sets out on a quest to learn from other aphasia and apraxia survivors and discovers the "ingredients" he needs for his placebo. Hopeful, & forward-facing, the story ends by posing the question many people with disabilities grapple with: when is healing enough, & what can you live with?

ABOUT THE FILM

păh started with what felt like an insurmountable challenge when Coleman Watson started speech therapy, due to his diagnosis of aphasia and apraxia. The challenge was to speak again, which ultimately turned into a documentary by using "project-based" speech therapy, & the art of film. păh is centered on the science of speech, neuroplasticity, & brain healing.



păh is the first documentary about people with aphasia and apraxia, although there are millions of people worldwide who have these speech disorders. In addition, păh is also the first documentary made by a director who has aphasia and apraxia, which gives viewers an unique perspective on these acquired disabilities.

In grade school, many teachers believe letters should be introduced in alphabetical order, A first, B second, C third and so forth. But alphabetical order does not work well when a person has a sudden change of language, such as aphasia, that disrupts normal brain activities. Instead of alphabetical order, speech pathologists use "Phonomotor Treatment" (PMT), which is an intensive treatment program designed to improve phonologic processes of a person with aphasia by training speech sounds in isolation before progressing to sound combinations and single words. It is nearly impossible for a person with aphasia to recite the alphabet in order because some letters (especially vowels) are much harder to pronounce. By using PMT, clients learn to speak again in a different way, P/B first, F/V second, T/D third and so forth, based on letters from easy to hard to pronounce.



ABOUT THE FILM

What inspired the film was project-based speech therapy, in an attempt for a person to live again – after a stroke, aphasia, and apraxia. pǎh was the project that Coleman Watson picked, which was also his first “word” after his stroke, pǎh. His specific and objective personal goal was to make a raw documentary about aphasia and apraxia, including its aftermath – speechism, the burden on caregivers, divorce, effects on children of stroke survivors, suicide, insurance troubles, neuroplasticity, & the idea that a person can make their own placebo for their own brain healing.

TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/868405760>

BIO



Coleman Watson never thought he would be a filmmaker or artist; sometimes life calls you on a bigger mission, though. Before film, he was an intellectual property attorney who litigated more than 200 patent, trademark, and copyright cases over 12 years in the United States, including a petition for a writ of certiorari in the Supreme Court. Coleman is an engineer by training, & after receiving his undergraduate degree from Georgia Tech, he attended New York Law School. Prior to launching his own law

firm, Coleman worked for a major U.S. national law firm ranked on the Am100. He was on track, eventually, to be a federal judge.

In spite of this, at 41, he had a sudden stroke with no warning signs. He was then diagnosed with aphasia and apraxia, two speech disorders. He literally went from arguing high-stake cases in federal court one day, to being unable to understand speech, reading, and writing the next day. Following his diagnosis, he started project-based speech therapy that culminated in his own self-made documentary, *păh*, on speechism and the acquired disability experience. Coleman aims to make more films on the underrepresented that capture the unwavering human spirit.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



I directed this film, *päh*, after I had a massive stroke in 2020 that left me with aphasia and apraxia, two speech disorders. My stroke stripped my language, and was unable to talk, read, and write for several years. When I started speech therapy, the first "word" that I could pronounce with my mouth was *päh*. Since I could not read at the time, I wanted to watch a documentary on these speech disorders, however, there were none.

Aphasia and apraxia make you feel like you are a prisoner, but the cell is your body, and you feel totally alone. This was my motivation for *päh* because no one can help you when you have aphasia and apraxia. You are alone and have to find a way to communicate again. I learned filmmaking so I could direct, produce, and when you have aphasia and apraxia. You are alone and have to find another edit *päh* to tell the story. That was my new communication tool.

I was a crew of one: me. I used black and white footage about every 15 minutes in the film, to take the viewer back to my life when I was "dying" because the old me died from my stroke, while the color footage is my metamorphosis. The film is set on a cross-country trek in the United States from Maine to Florida, where I interview people who have been affected from aphasia and apraxia too. Through stops, I discover that even though there is no "cure" for aphasia and apraxia, I can (and do) make my own placebo for my brain healing with 8 "ingredients."

MAIN CAST

Kayla Fouraker is a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) who has been working within the Brooks Rehabilitation system since 2016. Kayla graduated from Jacksonville University with her Masters in Speech Language Pathology in 2016 and worked

within the Brooks outpatient system with adults and pediatrics before transferring to the Aphasia Center in 2017. Kayla works as an SLP within both the Intensive Comprehensive Aphasia Program (ICAP) and the community group programming at the Aphasia Center.



Dr. Arno Sungarian is a neurosurgeon in Worcester, Massachusetts and is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area, including UMass Memorial Medical Center and St. Vincent Hospital-Worcester. He received his medical degree from The

Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and has been in practice for more than 20 years. He treats disorders of the brain and nervous system, skull, pituitary gland, spinal cord, meninges and vertebral column, and cranial and spinal nerves.

Jodi Morgan currently serves as a Speech Language Pathologist, Manager and Co-founder of the Brooks Rehabilitation Aphasia Center and Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences at



Jacksonville University. She teaches courses in adult language disorders and cognitive disorders and rehabilitation.



Jerome Kaplan received his B.A. from the State University of New York at Albany and his M.A. from New York University. Now in his fiftieth year as a practicing Speech Language Pathologist, Jerry has worked in academic, medical, rehabilitation, and research

settings as well as in private practice. He founded the Aphasia Community Group of Boston, now in its 30th year. Jerry has advocated for aphasia awareness and education through diverse and innovative programs, collaborating with noted actors, artists, filmmakers, and musicians.



Mark Harder is an awareness and recovery advocate, founder of Poems In Speech, and the Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference.



Bob Williams co-founded CommunicationFIRST in 2019, after retiring from a distinguished four-decade career in federal and state government and the



Megan Coke is a Speech Language Pathologist who evaluates, diagnoses and treats patients with communication and swallowing troubles. These conditions may be due to developmental delay, brain injury, hearing loss, autism, stroke or other diseases and injuries. She helps patients make sounds and improve their voices through various methods.

nonprofit sector, most recently as Director of the US Independent Living Administration at the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). He is a nationally recognized leader on policy issues relating to supporting people with the most significant disabilities to live, work, and thrive in their own homes and communities.



Dr. Donald ("Doc") Cunnigen is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University Rhode Island, where he was the first Black full professor of sociology with tenure since the founding of the University in 1892. He was a member of the steering

committee that started the Black Americans with Aphasia Conversation group and continues to be an active member of the group.

Greg Graham is a stroke survivor who had an arteriovenous malformation (AVM) stroke. After his stroke, he became an advocate on stroke awareness and founded his own show, Death Taught Us How To Live.



Jeri Ward is an active volunteer, advocate, social worker, & counselor. Jeri currently serves as the Hospital Donation Specialist in the hospital that saved her life. Most recently Jeri created the first self-care committee in the State of Ohio, and she founded her company, Stroke of Luck.



Denise Lowell is a stroke and aphasia survivor. Before her stroke, she earned her MA in Mental Health Counseling and became a clinician in Providence, Rhode Island. Today she runs the day-to-day operations of Just A.S.K., helping to end the isolation and raise

awareness about stroke and aphasia.

Dr. Tom Broussard was the associate dean for Admissions & Career Services at the Heller School for Social Policy & Management at Brandeis University. The focus of his doctoral studies was workforce development and the employment of people with disabilities, and he founded his company, Aphasia Nation.



FILM FESTIVAL SUBMISSIONS

Jan. 19, 2024	Slamdance Film Festival	Los Angeles, CA
Jan. 18, 2024	Sundance Film Festival	Park City, UT
Jan. 25, 2024	Rotterdam Film Festival	Rotterdam, Netherlands
Jan. 26, 2024	Göteborg Film Festival	Gothenburg, Sweden
Feb. 6, 2024	Pan African Film Festival	Los Angeles, CA
Feb. 15, 2024	Berlinale	Berlin, Germany
Feb. 16, 2024	Big Sky Documentary Film Festival	Missoula, Montana
Feb. 29, 2024	True/False	Columbia, MO
March 5, 2024	Cinequest Film & VR Festival	San Jose, CA
March 7, 2024	Thessaloniki Documentary Festival	Thessaloniki, Greece
Mar. 8, 2024	SXSW	Austin, TX
Mar. 13, 2024	CPH:DOX	Copenhagen, Denmark
March 20, 2024	DOCVILLE	Leuven, Belgium
March 28, 2024	Hong Kong Film Festival	Kowloon, Hong Kong
April 4, 2024	It's All True Documentary Festival	Sao Paulo, Brazil
April 5, 2024	Miami Film Festival	Miami, FL
April 10, 2024	Beverly Hills Film Festival	Beverly Hills, CA
April 11, 2024	Boston International Film Festival	Boston, MA

FILM FESTIVAL SUBMISSIONS

April 12, 2024	Visions du Réel	Nyon, Switzerland
April 12, 2024	Florida Film Festival	Orlando, FL
April 16, 2024	Cartagena Film Festival	Cartagena, Colombia
April 25, 2024	Atlanta Film Festival	Atlanta, GA
April 25, 2024	San Francisco Film Festival	San Francisco, CA
April 26, 2024	HotDocs	Toronto, Ontario
May 3, 2024	L.A. IFS Film Fest	Los Angeles, CA
May 9, 2024	Seattle International Film Festival	Seattle, WA
May 22, 2024	Mammoth Lakes Film Festival	Mammoth Lakes, CA
May 22, 2024	Doc Edge Festival	Auckland, New Zealand
May 22, 2024	IndieLisboa Film Festival	Lisbon, Portugal
June 5, 2024	Tribeca Festival	New York, NY
June 5, 2024	Sydney Film Festival	Sydney, Australia
June 7, 2024	Guadalajara Film Festival	Guadalajara, Mexico
June 19, 2024	Raindance Film Festival	London, England
July 9, 2024	Galway Film Fleadh	Galway, Ireland
July 18, 2024	Durban International Film Festival	Durban, South Africa
August 6, 2024	Flickers' International Film Festival	Providence, RI

LINKS

www.pahdocumentary.com

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is aphasia?

Aphasia is a disorder that results from damage to portions of the brain that are responsible for language. For most people, these areas are on the left side of the brain. Aphasia usually occurs suddenly, often following a stroke or head injury, but it may also develop slowly, as the result of a brain tumor or a progressive neurological disease. The disorder impairs the expression and understanding of language as well as reading and writing. Aphasia may co-occur with speech disorders, such as dysarthria or apraxia of speech, which also result from brain damage.

What is apraxia?

Apraxia is the loss of ability to execute or carry out skilled movement and gestures, despite having the physical ability and desire to perform them. Apraxia results from dysfunction of the cerebral hemispheres of your brain, especially the parietal lobe (which is involved with movement coordination and processing sensations such as taste, hearing, and touch), and can arise from many diseases or damage to the brain. There are several types of apraxia, which may cause you to have problems with:

- Starting or carrying out facial movements or commands such as licking your lips, coughing, or winking;
- Making fine, precise movements with an arm or leg;
- Responding to a verbal command;
- Coordinating activities with multiple related movements, such as dressing, eating, or bathing;
- Coordinating mouth or speech movements;
- Moving your eyes

Treatment may include a team of medical specialists for physical, speech, and other therapy to help you carry out everyday activities. Some people with apraxia improve significantly with treatment while others show very little improvement.

What is a stroke?

A stroke can occur when blood flow to the brain is blocked or there is sudden bleeding in the brain. There are two types of strokes. A stroke that occurs because blood flow to the brain is blocked is called an ischemic stroke. The brain cannot get oxygen and nutrients from the blood. Without oxygen and nutrients, brain cells begin to die within minutes. A stroke that occurs because of sudden bleeding in the brain is called a hemorrhagic stroke. The leaked blood results in pressure on brain cells, damaging them.

Just under 90% of strokes involve blocked blood vessels (ischemic), and the rest involve internal bleeding (hemorrhagic). Strokes are further classified based on where in the brain the blockage or bleeding occurs.

A stroke is a medical emergency. A stroke can cause lasting brain damage, long-term disability, or even death. Signs of a stroke can range from mild weakness to paralysis or numbness on one side of the face or body. Other signs may include a sudden and severe headache, sudden weakness, trouble seeing, and trouble speaking or understanding speech.

How common is a stroke?

Anyone can have a stroke, at any age. Each year in the United States, approximately 795,000 people have a new or recurrent stroke. In the United States, every 40 seconds someone suffers a stroke, and every 4 minutes, someone dies of a stroke.

Stroke is ranked as the second leading cause of death worldwide with an annual mortality rate of about 5.5 million. Not only does the burden of stroke lie in the high mortality but the high morbidity also results in up to 50% of survivors being chronically disabled. According to the current global burden of disease data on stroke, there are almost 25.7 million stroke survivors, 6.5 million deaths,

113 million Disability Adjusted Life Years due to stroke, and 10.3 million new strokes. Thus, stroke is a disease of immense public health importance with serious economic and social consequences.

What is phonomotor therapy?

The phonomotor treatment program for treating word-retrieval deficits among people with aphasia is inspired by a parallel distributed processing model of lexical processing and is focused at the level of individual phonemes and phoneme sequences. Because verbal production of words involves the translation of a lexical-semantic representation into phonological representations, training the repertoire of phonological sequences should enable individuals with anomia to regain the ability to learn words and sequences, generalize to linguistic items not trained, and continue growth following treatment termination.

What is project-based therapy?

Project-based treatment is an alternative treatment that offers the opportunity to address the range of cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and communication impairments that occur following an acquired brain injury. In project-based speech therapy, a person defines a project as a personally meaningful activity that results in the accomplishment of a specific and objective personal goal. The project is intended to help fill a person's time with activities and tasks that are meaningful, motivating, and engaging for the person with an acquired brain injury.

Does insurance cover speech therapy?

Speech therapy is often considered a form of rehabilitative therapy and may be covered under medical insurance plans. However, the extent of coverage can vary widely. Some plans may cover only a limited number of visits, while others may cover a greater number of visits or a broader range of speech therapy services. Even if insurance covers initial speech therapy, it will take thousands and thousands of hours to regain speech, so 99% of that work does not cover insurance. With aphasia, the best speech therapy is through an Intensive Comprehensive Aphasia Program (ICAP), however, ICAP does not cover insurance. The range for ICAP for one round is \$7,000 to \$25,000 (4-6 weeks), and the program is more beneficial if repeated many times.

How long did it take to make the film?

păh started in September 2020, solely with an iPhone and Osmo Gimbal. Then the project was funded with 160+ GoFundMe donations to buy camera equipment. Part of the project-based therapy was trying to figure out how to film, direct, and edit the film from Coleman Watson. He was a crew of one.

What are the statistics on the road trip?

- 4,584 miles
- 286 gallons
- 4.7 terabytes of footage/audio
- 26 interviews
- 21 states
- 18 cities

What was the final budget for the film?

\$8,000 (USD).

CREDITS

Director: Coleman Watson

Editor: Coleman Watson

Producer: Coleman Watson

Music: Coleman Watson

INTERVIEWEES (in order)

- Coleman Watson
- Ricky Dyer
- Joan Burrows-Hudgins
- Dennis Burrows
- Oscar Watson
- Rick Watson
- Cassaundra Watson
- Jessica Zambrano
- Jodi Morgan
- Michael Holbart
- Jerry Kaplan
- Dr. Arno Sungarian
- Kayla Fouraker
- Donna Harder
- Mark Harder
- Wendy Robbins
- Christopher Robbins
- Megan Coke
- Paula Gallagher
- Bob Williams
- Dr. Donald Cunnigen
- Greg Graham
- Violet Watson
- Jeri Ward
- Denise Lowell
- Dr. Tom Broussard

VERY SPECIAL THANKS

- JoEllen Gilbert
- Marica Moran
- Nicole O'Malley
- Adam Eidinge
- Swathi Kiran
- Cynthia Gayton
- Laura Broussard
- Leah Gorman
- Marie Charles
- Stephanie Cumming
- Stacey Wilson

GOFUNDME FUNDING BY

- Dennis & Joan Burrows
- Robert Webb
- Trevor Martin
- Jhamal Robinson
- Manny Acosta
- Brian Cullen
- David Dieterle
- Lynette Taylor
- Paula Pell
- Brenda Pritts
- Kelli Murray
- Marc Evans
- Chris Bennett
- Eric Searls
- Jeremy Reynolds
- Paul Roeder
- Regina Hudgins
- Ryan Hintz
- Steven White
- Wil Kelly
- Christy Matthes
- Daniel Reeves
- Joseph Glasofer
- Kayla Fouraker
- Matthew Crank
- Sharon Meglathery
- Mark Lippert
- Corona Wang
- Julie Hughes
- Malik Gillani
- Tessy Melendez
- Tiffany Payne Geyer
- JoEllen Gilbert
- Krista Sivick
- Damien Prosser
- Ryan Hudgins
- Amanda Mayo
- Ame Nunamaker
- Andrea Chambers
- Anna Eskamani
- Benjamin Webster
- Brad Thornton
- Chelsea Manning
- Cynthia Gayton
- David Billingsley
- David Hansmann
- Guy Toles
- Hie Soo Kim
- J Scott Rae Buono
- Jeff Waters
- Jennifer Douglass
- Jennifer Villasenor-Park
- Jodi Morgan
- John Hintz
- John Sindell
- Jurgita Benetyte
- Karen Salaoudji
- Kim Bauman
- Kimberly Barnes
- Lance Hollner
- Dana Thornbury
- Elizabeth Madden
- George Mateo Roque
- Jeana Herriges
- Jennifer Kelly
- Jesse Jordan
- Jessica Novick
- Jorge Castillo
- Katy Meszaros
- Kelley Perrupato
- Kim McMahon
- Kody Chaet
- Kristine Singleton
- Leia & Scott Leitner
- Linda Espy
- Lucia Watson
- Luis A Mendoza
- Mamie Hudgins-Carroll
- Michael Hobart
- Michael Vitale
- Natasha Robinson
- Sarah Hanafin
- Susan Schwabacher
- Tara Abendschein
- Tracy Paulsen
- Valarie Glass
- Venus Van Horn
- Brent Grunig
- Regina Kalinowski
- Rija Akbar

- Linda Dowdy
- Lisa Rhoades
- Megan Goudy
- Melanie Weese-Bennett
- Pete Fierro
- Robert Feltus
- Rose Caraet
- Salomon Laguerre
- Sarah Tramuta
- Tauna Szymanski
- William Abendschein
- Brian Phillips
- Chason Hecht
- Kelly Scruggs
- Matthew Crist
- Matthew Daly
- Mike Rogstad
- Ryan McComber
- Seth Ressler
- Steve Pellito
- Will Sigman
- Noraixa Rivera
- Aggie Otrebska
- Allison Imber
- Andrew Ballentine
- Andrew Layden
- Angela Baranco-Mason
- Avery Dawkins
- Beatrice Huggins
- Lee & Stephen Butler
- Brenda Scofield
- Deanna Pell
- Justin Rilogio
- Kadie Hayward
- Kristin Linsley
- Maggie Whittum
- Marco Garcia
- Michael Barnes
- Sarah Crawford
- Sydjia Robinson
- Carly Brower
- Cindy Escalante
- James Davis
- Johnna Trease
- Lee Saunders
- Lisa Chin
- Lucy Rosario
- Mary Kelley
- Mindy Juralewicz
- Peter Lord
- Sean Brown
- Susan Geurin
- Wilma Kirkland
- Michele Poynton-Marsh
- Carlos M Guzman
- Joyce Pence
- Justin Chlowitz
- Natalie Nardello

SOUNDTRACK

Epidemic Sound Licenses

FOR FUTURE QUESTIONS OR INTERVIEWS

Attn: Coleman Watson | colemanwatson@live.com | (917) 796-6055

PRODUCTION STILLS

