

# News release

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For immediate release

**As Andrzej Wajda, Poland's most prominent filmmaker, celebrates his birthday on Tuesday 6 March, learn more about his background and enthralling, award-winning work by watching him recount events from his fascinating life**

Born in 1926, Andrzej Wajda is an Academy Award-winning director, best known for his films *The Promised Land* (1975), *Man of Iron* (1981) and *Katyn* (2007). His films showed the horror of the German occupation of Poland, establishing Wajda's reputation as a story-teller and commentator on Poland's turbulent history. In addition to his impressive career in TV and film, he was elected as Senator of the Republic of Poland from 1989 to 1991.

In this series of truly captivating clips, Wajda shares his vivid memories of the Second World War and the effect it had on him and his family: *'I felt my life beginning in the face of a reality that appeared so suddenly and so violently. My father had gone away a few weeks earlier to fight in the war and I never saw him again.'*

Despite making films about life in Poland during the Second World War, he was initially wary of becoming too political himself. *'If you're making a political film, you need to keep your distance from politics and especially from politicians. Because if, while I'd been making films like *Kanal* or *Ashes and Diamonds*, I'd tried to establish some kind of political background... I would not have survived as a film director.'*

He also tells of the difficult decision to make *Katyn* in 2007: *'The difficulty lies in the fact that it's an event which exists on many levels and there are so many threads to the story all intertwined with each other that it's very difficult to write a screenplay which would embrace the whole spectrum of these events... It's interesting that Polish literature, which has represented every significant historical event, has not dealt with this one. There isn't a single story or narrative that could be made into a film. *Katyn* simply doesn't exist'*

All of Wajda's compelling recordings can be watched as a number of short clips ranging in length between just seconds and several minutes with a fully searchable transcript. All Web of Stories videos are easy to share with friends and colleagues, and may be embedded into personal blogs and websites.

Find out more: <http://www.webofstories.com/people/andrzej.wajda/1>

## **Notes for Editors**

### About Web of Stories

*Everyone has a story to tell.* Over time many stories become forgotten, but now Web of Stories offers members of the public the chance to tell their stories for future generations to enjoy.

Web of Stories began as an archive of life stories told by some of the great scientists of our time. As the number of stories grew, it became obvious that some were on related topics and a web was slowly being created of connected stories. After a while we also invited famous people outside the field of science to tell their life stories. Web of Stories is also open to the public to record their stories for the world to view and share. The project is built on the belief that we all have wonderful stories to share, and have family and friends whose tales we would like to hear. The great thing about Web of Stories is that anyone can come and talk about virtually anything they like. Just like our famous speakers, it is an account of their experiences as they remember them.

We hope to provide lasting, first-hand accounts of people's experiences. Imagine that in a hundred years' time your grandchildren or great grandchildren will be able to watch you telling stories about your life today!

### **Contact:**

For more information on Web of Stories or any other video interview with Web of Stories please contact the Press Desk on +44(0)20 7323 0323 or email [press@webofstories.com](mailto:press@webofstories.com)

Science Navigation Group, Web of Stories, Middlesex House, 34-42 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4LB

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