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**NOVA “AUGMENTED”**

**WINTER 2022 TCA PRESS TOUR PANELIST BIOS**

**(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER):**

**
JIM EWING**

Jim Ewing has been an avid rock climber for more than 40 years. He has climbed all over the world and has completed many first ascents. In December 2014, he fell while climbing in the Cayman Islands, suffering severe damage to his left ankle. A product development engineer at a major U.S. climbing rope company for more than 20 years, Jim was not satisfied with the traditional options for treating his ankle. In January 2016, he sought advice from an old friend, Hugh Herr, the head of the Biomechatronics Group at the MIT Media Lab. From there, Jim’s life took a dramatic turn in the direction of a medical and scientific discovery. He became the first person to undergo a revolutionary amputation procedure, now known as the Ewing amputation. Jim has returned to a highly active life despite losing his left leg below the knee. He continues to rock climb whenever possible and skis, runs, scuba dives, hikes, and surfs. Jim lives in Maine with his wife of 28 years, Cathy King, and his daughter, Maxine.

**HUGH HERR**

Hugh Herr is creating bionic limbs that emulate the function of natural limbs. *TIME* coined Dr. Herr the “Leader of the Bionic Age” because of his revolutionary work in the emerging field of biomechatronics—technology that marries human physiology with electromechanics. A double amputee himself, he is responsible for breakthrough advances in bionic limbs that provide greater mobility and new hope to those with physical disabilities. He is currently a professor of media arts and sciences at the MIT Media Lab and co-leads the K. Lisa Yang Center for Bionics at MIT. Herr is the author and co-author of more than 200 peer-reviewed manuscripts and patents, chronicling the science and technology behind his many innovations. These innovations include active leg exoskeletons, powered ankle-foot prostheses and neural interfacing technologies. A powered ankle-foot prosthesis called EmPower, which emulates the action of a biological leg and, for the first time, provides amputees with a natural gait, was named to the list of Top Ten Inventions in the health category by *TIME* in 2007. Today, the EmPower Ankle-Foot Prosthesis has been clinically shown to be the first leg prosthesis in history to reach human normalization, allowing amputees to walk with normal levels of speed and metabolism as if their legs were biological once again. In 2015, Herr’s MIT research group invented the Agonist-Antagonist Myoneural Interface, a novel surgical procedure for limb amputation and neural interfacing that allows persons with limb loss to control their synthetic limbs through thought and experience natural proprioceptive sensations from the synthetic limb.

**MATTHEW ORR, Director and Producer**

Matthew Orr, the director of “Augmented,” is now an assistant professor at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. Before joining Medill, Orr was director of multimedia and creative at STAT, a Boston-based media company focused on finding and telling compelling stories about health, medicine, and scientific discovery. While at STAT, he led a multimedia team that won numerous awards, including three Online Journalism Awards, three Webby Awards, a National Headliner Award, and a George Polk Award. Prior to STAT, Matthew was the first full-time staff video journalist at *The New York Times* and spent 13 years as a senior video producer and reporter. He wrote, produced, filmed and edited breaking news, live video, social videos, feature stories, online series and both short- and long-form documentaries. His international reporting experience includes work from China, Japan, Myanmar, Ukraine, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Dominican Republic.

**CHRIS SCHMIDT, Co-Executive Producer, NOVA**

Chris is an award-winning producer and director of documentaries and factual television series. Along with Co-EP Julia Cort, Chris oversees NOVA’s development team in creating new multi-hour projects in collaboration with U.S. filmmakers and international co-producers.  Since joining NOVA in 2012, he has developed and guided more than 100 ground-breaking films and series, including *The Planets, Black Hole Apocalypse, Great Math Mystery, Einstein’s Quantum Riddle Eclipse Over America, Making North America, Hunting The Elements, Making Stuff* and*Cyberwar Threat.*Before working full-time at NOVA, Chris was an independent filmmaker and executive producer making programs for factual networks, including Discovery, National Geographic, History, Animal Planet and PBS.  In love with stories of human ingenuity and discovery, Chris’s curiosity and persistence have led him up Chinese construction cranes, into the Sahara Desert in search of whale skeletons, catapulted him off an aircraft carrier and made it possible to hang out with some of the world’s most dedicated scientists, mathematicians and engineers.  His work has received the prestigious Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award, the AAAS Gold Kavli Science Journalism Award, the Cine Golden Eagle and many nominations for the News and Documentary Emmy Award. Chris is a graduate of Northwestern University and the University of Chicago. He currently resides in Concord, Massachusetts.

**SHRIYA SRINIVASAN**

Dr. Shriya Srinivasan is a Schmidt Science Fellow and Junior Fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows. She graduated from Case Western Reserve University with a B.S. in biomedical engineering, with a concentration in biomaterials. Shriya received her doctoral degree in medical engineering and medical physics through the Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology program in January 2020. Her doctoral research focused on developing novel neural interfaces utilizing tissue engineering to better interface human limbs with prostheses in the context of amputation and paralysis. She developed the Regenerative Agonist-antagonist Myoneural Interface (AMI) that will ultimately enable patients to control their prostheses with native neural signals. She also explored optogenetic techniques to create novel strategies to accelerate and improve neural control. Shriya has been awarded the Delsys Prize and the Lemelson-MIT Student Prize for her innovative work and was recognized by Forbes and the MIT Technology Review as one of 30 innovators under 30. Shriya was a former director of MIT Hacking Medicine and works passionately on global health projects. Shriya is currently designing devices for gastrointestinal neuromodulation in the MIT Langer Lab in collaboration with Dr. Giovanni Traverso. She runs Project Prana, a nonprofit devoted to affordable medical technology innovation.

**SESSION OPENING REMARKS MADE BY:**

**JULIA CORT**, **Co-executive Producer, NOVA**

(she/her)

****Together with co-EP Chris Schmidt, Julia Cort oversees the long-running PBS science series NOVA and is committed to making inclusive science documentaries that are accessible to all.   Julia has contributed to more than 100 films and miniseries during her time at NOVA, covering everything from quantum mechanics to genetic engineering to climate change. She has developed and overseen some of NOVA’s most acclaimed episodes, mini-series and digital content, including*The Cannabis Question, Looking for Life on Mars, Decoding COVID-19, Polar Extremes, NOVA Wonders, Poisoned Water*and *Antarctic Extremes.* In her quest to make complex science engaging for all, Julia has traveled deep underground to investigate the hunt for dark matter, waded into leech-infested swamps and has attempted to re-create the technological feats of ancient engineers. Her work has been honored with the George Foster Peabody Award, the National Academies Keck Communication Award, the AAAS Science Journalism Award, the American Institute of Physics Science Writing Award, the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award and multiple Emmy awards.

**ALSO AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS:**

**GIDEON GIL, Producer**

Gideon Gil is a managing editor at STAT, overseeing its investigative journalism, special projects, and science coverage. He joined STAT, a Boston-based media company focused on finding and telling compelling stories about health, medicine and scientific discovery, at its founding in 2015. He previously was the *Boston Globe's* health and science editor for a decade and has worked as a reporter or editor on stories awarded three Pulitzer Prizes and numerous other awards. He was a 2014-15 Knight Science Journalism Fellow at MIT.

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