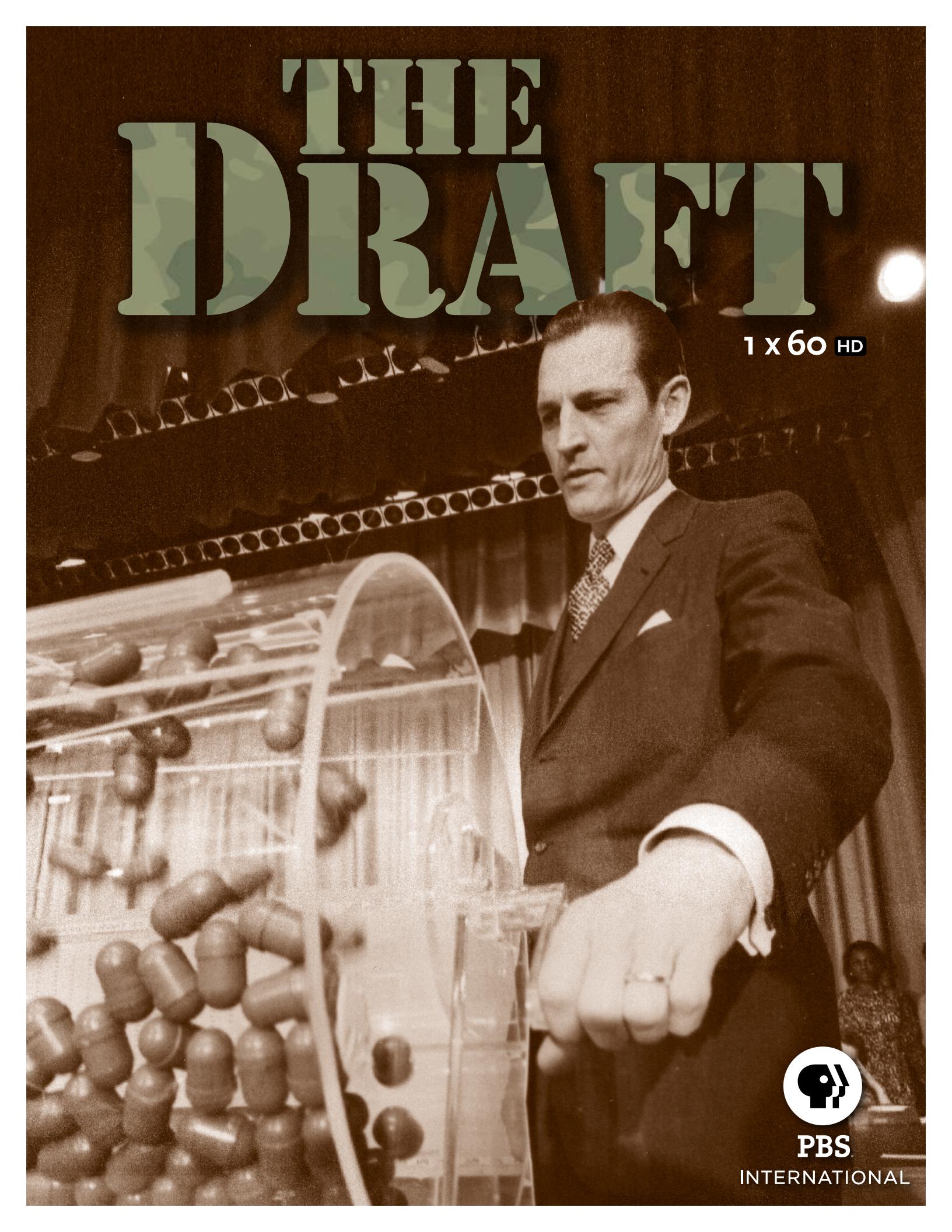


# THE DRAFT

A black and white photograph of a man in a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is holding a newspaper with the front page visible, showing a large, bold headline "THE DRAFT". The background is filled with rows of military uniforms, suggesting a recruitment center or draft board office.

1 X 60 HD



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# THE DRAFT

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## CONTACT

Tom Koch, Vice President  
PBS International  
10 Guest Street  
Boston, MA 02135 USA

TEL: 617-300-3893  
FAX: 617-779-7900

jtkoch@pbs.org  
pbsinternational.org

Since the first shots were fired in the American Revolution, the United States has been a nation at war. Only 21 calendar years have elapsed in which the U.S. did not wage any wars, making armed conflict the trend that has shaped the ideas, institutions, and people of the country.

Throughout history, when the president waged war and needed a large army he turned to the military draft. But the draft has always stirred controversy, exposing fault lines of race, class, and culture in society. Tracking this turbulent history up to the present, *The Draft* explores the unintended consequences—for soldiers and citizens—of eliminating mandatory service.

The contentious story of the draft began with the birth of the nation. One year into the Revolutionary War, George Washington was on the brink of defeat. The fight against the world's mightiest empire required manpower, but, unfortunately for Washington, the best way to raise an army was controversial. Washington wanted the draft, and the resistance he met spotlighted a debate that would rage throughout centuries: does a military draft embody or violate American citizenship?

America has grappled with the tension between liberty and obligation throughout all of its major wars. *The Draft* takes viewers inside this story, bringing to life the violent battles and vital discussions over mandatory military service. Live-action scenes with today's military, intimate interviews with significant figures from the draft era (including Donald Rumsfeld, Dan Rather, and Tom Hayden), and rarely seen archival footage punctuate a lively approach to examining the draft—from the Civil War Draft Riots, to the radical draft reforms of World War I, to the mass mobilization of World War II. *The Draft* culminates in the actions of the Vietnam War when a wide swath of Americans—civil rights leaders, middle class students, right-wing politicians, and even soldiers themselves—came together to end an American institution.

Though the draft ended with the Vietnam War, its legacy casts a long shadow across the contemporary American experience. While at the time it seemed like a fair solution, eliminating the military draft has produced serious unintended consequences. In the current all-volunteer force fewer people fight in wars, and citizens have become completely disconnected from the soldiers who bear the entire burden of war.

*The Draft* tackles this untold story, presenting a vivid look at a controversial American institution and raising the questions: Who fights our wars today? Why is the public disengaged from the protracted wars currently being waged? From start to finish, *The Draft* tells the story of how a single issue continues to redefine a nation.

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## CREDITS

*Director, Producer, Writer:* Aaron Matthews  
*Executive Producer:* Peter Schnall

*Photo:* Library of Congress



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