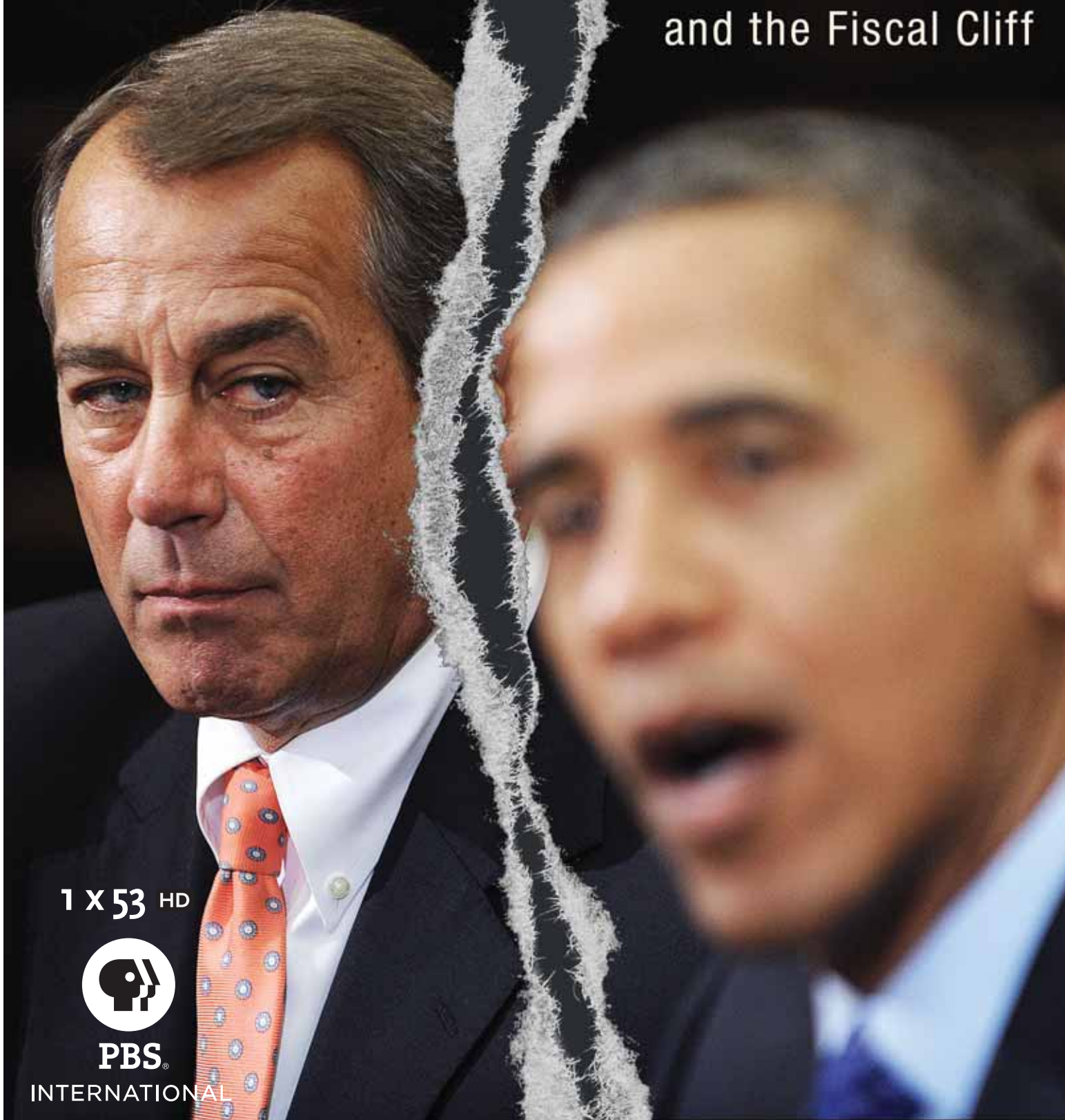


# CLIFFHANGER

Politics,  
Personalities  
and the Fiscal Cliff



1 X 53 HD



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FRONTLINE takes an in-depth look at the fiscal crisis that divides Washington and continues to threaten to take the nation to the brink of financial collapse. Based on interviews with key players including Speaker of the House John Boehner, White House adviser Gene Sperling, and Obama's former Chief of Staff William Daley, *Cliffhanger* investigates how a clash of politics and personalities has led to one of the most bitter high-stakes stand-offs in modern American history—a duel at the edge of the “fiscal cliff.”

*Cliffhanger* provides a riveting account of divisions within the Republican Party, including new insights into the struggle between Speaker Boehner and Majority Leader Eric Cantor as they took on President Obama and the Democrats over how to solve the country's debt and deficit problems.

On one side of this epic battle for control of the GOP is Boehner, an old-school lawmaker with more than two decades of experience cutting D.C. deals. On the other side, a class of 87 freshmen lawmakers who came to Washington after the 2010 midterm election and on the wave of the Tea Party revolution. Many of the freshmen believed Washington needed dramatic change, not bipartisan compromise.

As Boehner repeatedly tried to reach a Grand Bargain with the president to deal with the fiscal crisis, many in his own caucus were against him. The opposition inside the GOP was even stronger than Boehner had thought. At one point Boehner's friend, Rep. Steve LaTourette (R-OH), even warned him that negotiations with the president could cost him his speakership. Added to the ideological conflict inside the party were personal tensions between Speaker Boehner and the ambitious Majority Leader Eric Cantor.

The film also chronicles the hard bargaining and miscalculations within the White House as Obama proved unable to hold together a deal. As the country lurched towards default in December, 2012, critics accused Obama of claiming an electoral mandate for his positions belied by the realities of Washington.

In the end there would be no Grand Bargain. Instead, the country now faces a growing federal deficit, automatic spending cuts, a battle to keep the federal government operating, and yet another deadline for raising the debt ceiling. And many in Washington say the most important debate to determine the future may be taking place within Boehner's own caucus.

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## CREDITS

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