

MOVIE REVIEW | JULY 29, 2015

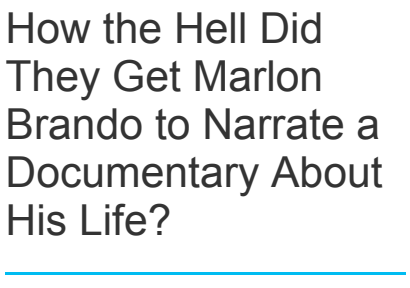
Listen to Me Marlon Is a Searching Documentary in Brando's Own Words

By David Edelstein



Listen to Me Marlon. Photo: Courtesy of Listen to Me Marlon

Related Stories



How the Hell Did They Get Marlon Brando to Narrate a Documentary About His Life?

Stevan Riley's *Listen to Me Marlon* is the greatest, most searching documentary of an actor ever put on film, and it's no coincidence that it's about film's greatest and most searching actor. The words are Brando's — taken from hundreds of hours of audiotapes he made over the decades as well as home movies and interview footage — accompanied by photos, thrilling film clips, a fluid procession of resonant objects from his life, and a sort of cyberlife mask of the actor speaking. What he says confirms that however crazy he became, Brando was wise to the source of his art. No one could think so believably on-camera or find more poetic and surprising ways to show the progress of those thoughts on his face. But being "in the moment" cost him. He was a damaged child, abandoned by his mother (the town drunk) and physically abused by his father. His success gave him the power to escape — into sex and food, to his property in Tahiti — but the compulsion to escape can be its own kind of prison. In the end, he understood the tragedy of his life, and Riley's film is the worthiest epitaph imaginable.

One Great Story

The one story you shouldn't miss, selected by New York editors

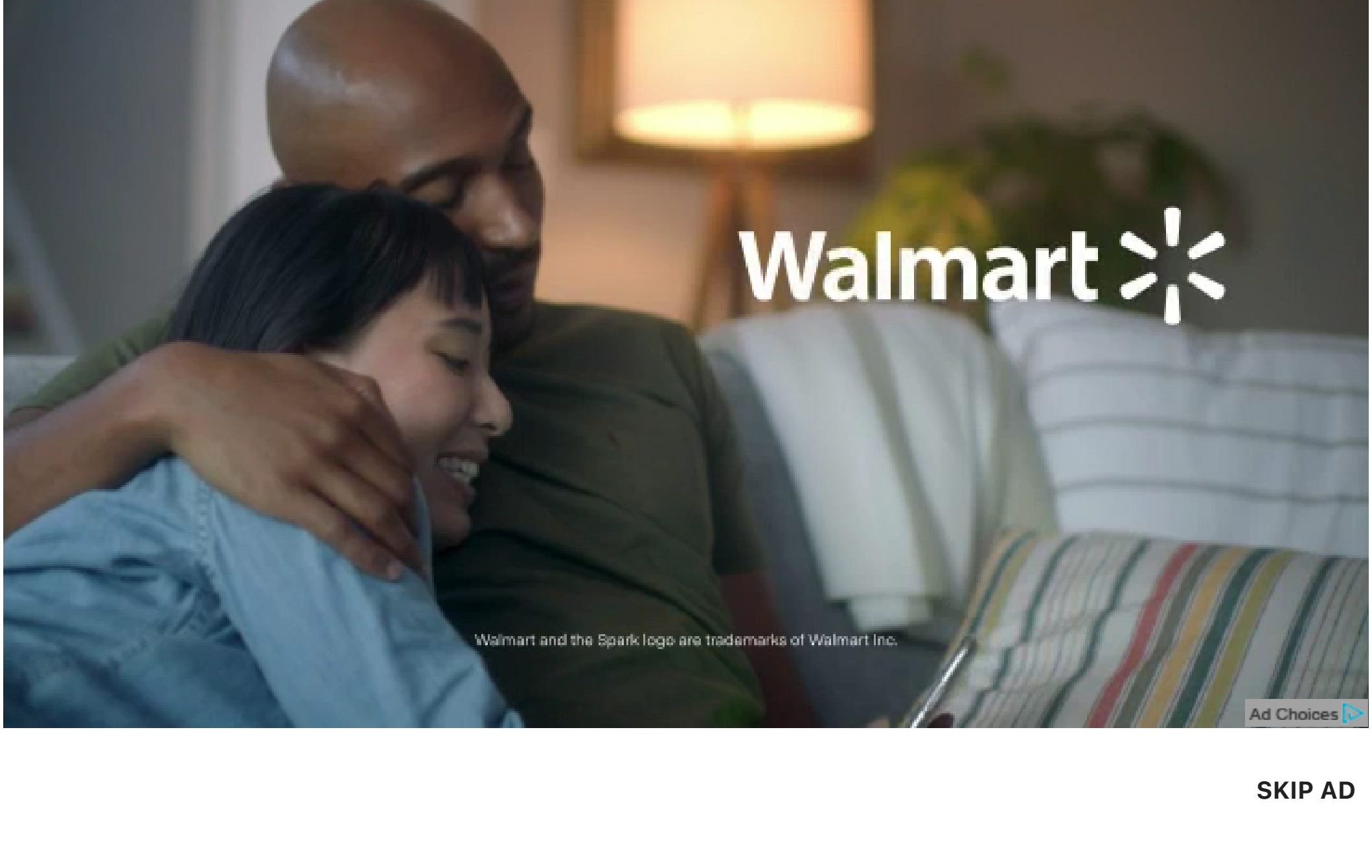
SIGN UP

*This article appears in the July 27, 2015 issue of New York Magazine.



TAGS: MOVIES MOVIE REVIEW LISTEN TO ME MARLON DOCUMENTARY MORE

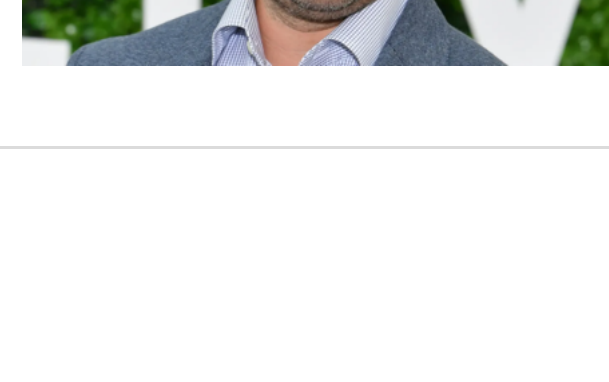
LEAVE A COMMENT



SKIP AD

THE LATEST

NOT GREAT BOB | 5 MINS AGO
Mad Men's Vincent Kartheiser Joins *Titans* Season 3 as Scarecrow Kartheiser is the latest in a long line of actors portraying Batman rogue/total creep Jonathan Crane.



OVERNIGHTS | 9:00 P.M.
Kung Fu Recap: Know Your Worth The Shen sisters steal the show in the most emotionally charged episode of the season so far.



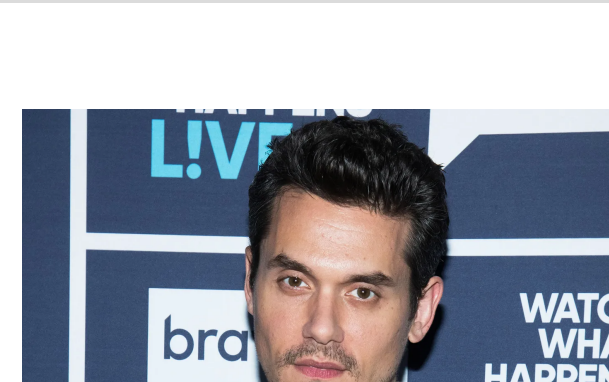
CRIME | 8:25 P.M.
Kodak Black Gets 18 Months Probation in Sexual Assault Trial The rapper will serve no jail time after pleading to a lesser charge.



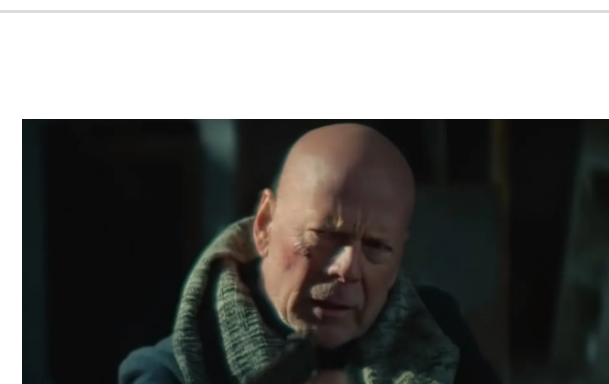
AND I GOOP! | 7:41 P.M.
Watch Gwyneth Paltrow Remember (?) Her Iconic Looks for *Vogue* "If I've learned one thing, it's how to not show your vagina on a red carpet."



THE INDUSTRY | 7:02 P.M.
John Mayer May Be Joining the Late Night Pantheon The Mort Sahl of guitar licks may be getting a show on Paramount Plus.



VULTURE LISTS | 5:00 P.M.
20 Straight-to-VOD Bruce Willis Movies, Ranked Let's take a closer look at the beloved star's lesser-known roles.



ANOTHER ONE | 4:25 P.M.
DJ Khaled's New Album, *Khaled Khaled*, Drops This Friday Featuring Megan Thee Stallion, Jay-Z, and ... Harmonies by the Hive?

BACHELOR NATION | 3:03 P.M.
Oh, Neat, Matt Jones and Rachael Kirkconnell Are Back Together "I'm not pursuing any relationships right now outside of that."

COMEDY | 3:02 P.M.
Bo Burnham Made a New Special Alone in His House It's called *Inside*, and it's coming to Netflix.

SUPERLATIVES | 2:37 P.M.
Ghostface Killah on the Most Memorable Moments of His Incomparable Career "I'd rather take the movie route or paint-the-picture route before I give you a bunch of street raps."
By Craig Jenkins

TRAILER MIX | 2:00 P.M.
Jean Smart Is the Queen of Sin City in the *Hacks* Trailer And wears some fabulous caftans.

AWOOG! | 1:16 P.M.
Josh Gad and Isla Fisher to Star in *Wolf Like Me*, a 'Genre-Bending' Rom-com With a straight-to-series order from Peacock.

MY MEMOIR IS DROPPING | 1:01 P.M.
Lil' Kim Pens Memoir *The Queen Bee*, Reclaiming Her Title Bow down on November 2.

CHAT ROOM | 12:45 P.M.
Rutherford Falls Let Michael Greyeyes Finally Say What He's Been Wanting to Say "To be able to simply and bluntly speak our truth to power and be unapologetic ... when I first read that speech, I practically cried."

TEASERS | 12:34 P.M.
Billie Eilish Is Happier Than Ever to Release Her Second Album on July 30 She'll release the song "Your Power" and a music video on April 27.

MY SINGLE IS DROPPING | 11:43 A.M.
Jessie Ware to Keep the Party Going With *What's Your Pleasure?* Deluxe Listen to the sweaty, lively lead single, "Please," now.

FIRST LOOK | 11:27 A.M.
Nicole Kidman's Lucille Ball Wig Breaks Its Silence What is this color?

FASHION | 11:08 A.M.
Ewan McGregor Defends His Casting As Legendary Gay Designer Halston "I suppose, ultimately, I felt like it was just one part of who he was."

THEATER | 9:30 A.M.
A Great *Gatsby* Musical from Florence Welch Has Gotten a Green Light No, not a stage version of the Baz Luhrmann movie.

TRAILER MIX | 9:28 A.M.
Pixar's *Luca* Is Call Me By Your Name With a Sea Monster-Size Twist The movie hits Disney+ on June 18.

MORE STORIES →

SIGN IN TO COMMENT

VULTURE TV MOVIES COMEDY MUSIC WHAT TO STREAM



NEWSLETTERS ABOUT US CONTACT MEDIA KIT WE'RE HIRING PRESS TRADEMARK PRIVACY TERMS AD CHOICES DO NOT SELL MY INFO ACCESSIBILITY

VULTURE IS A VOX MEDIA NETWORK.

Less than \$5 for unlimited access to Vulture and everything else New York View Membership Options →