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The Nature of Things Speaker Information

Speaker Name: Randy Olson
Speaker Title: Scientist-turned-filmmaker
Lecture Title: *Storytelling: Clear Proof that Scientists Descended from Humans*
Date: February 9, 2012, 7:00 p.m.
Location: Salt Lake City Main Library

Lecture Synopsis

Scientists often have a hard time with the idea of storytelling. Many even suffer from "storyphobia," the irrational fear of "bending the science to tell a better story." But Randy Olson, a scientist-turned-filmmaker, believes scientists descended from humans and still possess vestiges of storytelling skills that can make their communications more effective. In films like *Flock of Dodos* and *Sizzle*, Olson uses the power of story to put science front and center in an age of information overload. Olson explores the crucial role of storytelling in the mass communication of science when he launches *The Nature of Things* lecture series on Feb. 9.

Speaker Bio

Randy Olson earned his Ph.D. in biology from Harvard University and became a tenured professor of marine biology at the University of New Hampshire before moving to Hollywood and entering film school at the University of Southern California. Today, he is an independent filmmaker and no longer considers himself a scientist, but is fluent in the two languages of science and cinema which he brought together in his 2009 book, *Don't be Such a Scientist*. In addition to writing and directing his own feature films about major issues in science, he has worked with a variety of clients to assist them with the use of visual media in communicating science to the general public.

Film Credits

Flock of Dodos (2006; Writer, Director)
Sizzle: A Global Warming Comedy (2009; Writer, Director)

Authored

Don't be Such a Scientist (Island Press, August 28, 2009)

Relevant Links

<http://www.randyolsonproductions.com/>
<http://thebenshi.com/>