

Edinburgh International Film Festival – Review: RBG ****



A scene from RBG. Photo courtesy of Magnolia Pictures.

In the documentary *RBG*, directors Betsy West and Julie Cohen seek to discover how softly spoken 85-year-old Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg is inspiring a whole new generation of women who are calling her “Notorious RBG.”

□ Born in Brooklyn to Russian Jewish immigrants, Ginsberg’s life was blighted by tragedy from a young age – having lost her elder sister and mother before graduating high school. She earned her bachelor’s degree at Cornell University and was a wife and mother before starting law school at Harvard, where she was one of nine women in a class of 500. The Dean of Harvard Law reportedly asked the female law students, “How do you justify taking a spot from a qualified man?”

Despite graduating joint top of her law school class, Ginsberg found she could not get a job as a lawyer purely because of her gender but remembered her mother’s advice: □ “anger □ is a

waste of time.” She used her seemingly limitless determination and impressive legal skills to fight for justice for women – a fight she has continued through five decades.

RBG has an enduring love story at its core between the Justice and her college sweetheart, the late esteemed lawyer Marty Ginsburg. She supported him through law school when he had treatment for testicular cancer and they took turns at being homemaker to give each other the opportunity to further their respective careers. Throughout his life, Marty was an ardent supporter of her work – even personally making the case for her to end up on the Supreme Court.

Not renowned for her vivacity – Ginsberg’s children Jane and James kept a record when they were young of the rare occasions she was humorous called “When Mom Laughs” (a very small book). *RBG* shows that while Ginsberg is one of the most formidable lawyers in her field but she’s also a mother, a friend, an advocate and just “bubby” to her grandchildren. You can’t help but warm to Ginsberg whether she’s giving an inspiring talk on stage or working out at the gym with her trainer while wearing a sweatshirt emblazoned with “Super Diva.”

RBG is a love story, a record of an illustrious career and an inspirational piece of film making. It’s easy to see why millennials are recognising her pioneering work and making memes, creating merchandise and even immortalising her in tattoos. The documentary was released in the US in May and become a surprise sensation – with grosses exceeding \$10 million. In a summer crowded with comic book blockbusters, America have discovered their very own superhero in *RBG*.

The European Premiere of *RBG* takes place at the Edinburgh International Film Festival on 27 June at 8.50pm at Cineworld, with a second screening on 29 June 2018 at 8.30pm at Vue Omni.

[More information and booking details here.](#)