



Mountainfilm FILM REVIEW: “A Home Called Nebraska” • Where Muslims and Refugees are Welcome

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

A Home Called Nebraska, a Limited Screening selection at the 2020 Mountainfilm Film Festival, directed by Beth and George Gage, delves into the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program and its manifestation in the state of Nebraska. Nebraska, a conservative state, provided many new homes for innocent victims of terrorism, civil war, rape, attempted murder, and persecution through the Resettlement Program. Unfortunately, the Trump administration’s policies have fueled a growing hatred of Muslims and refugees. 2019 saw the lowest number of refugees entering the US since the inception of the Resettlement Program in 1980.

The film opens in poetic fashion with concepts of love, peace, calm, and beauty juxtaposed with imagery of blood and sweat. A plethora of text titles and a myriad of testimonials and interviews inform and enlighten the audience throughout the film. Omaha’s Lutheran Family Services emerges front and center with its outgoing members explaining why it’s so important to be part of the Resettlement Program. In addition, archival interviews and current interviews document survivor stories from the Yazidis where thousands of men, women, and children were killed and raped by Isis rebels while the world watched.

Many translators and interpreters who served alongside US military men and women have been resettled into Nebraskan communities. Many others have been killed by their Iraqi and Afghan brothers for helping the United States. Other refugees from Somalia and South Sudan have escaped certain death as warring sects and civil war ravages the countryside decimating anyone in their paths. Surprisingly, Omaha, “in the middle of nowhere and in the middle of everywhere,” has been welcoming refugees for quite some time.

The refugees in Nebraska are vital components to the economy and socio-political apparatus. And, like any good Nebraskan, they love attending the University of Nebraska Cornhusker football games. They are business owners providing essential services. They came to the United States for safety and a chance for a new life. They came to the United States because it was said the United States was a free

country. A recurring issue for refugees is the status of their mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters.

On January 27, 2017, by an immigration executive order, the President of the United States signed “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States” that suspended refugees admission to the United States and visas from seven named countries. In addition, the ceiling for refugees was lowered to 50,000 from 110,00 in the fiscal year 2017 (Obama).

According to the Gages and their subject matter expert, most resettlement refugees undergo a 3-5 year vetting process by the Federal Bureau of Investigations or the Central Intelligence Agency before being granted asylum, usually after living in a refugee displacement camp for up to ten years or more. In addition, no refugee has been involved in a terrorist killing since the inception of the Refugee Act in 1980.

Notwithstanding, *A Home Called Nebraska* is very informative highlighting a community welcoming newcomers, building bridges, creating hopeful futures, and dispelling fear while combating the hatred of racist nationalism. The Gages capture some exquisite interior footage as a traditional Thanksgiving meal is shared in a vibrant community where human beings are treated as human beings regardless of their skin color and hair texture. Highly recommended.

Category

1. television

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