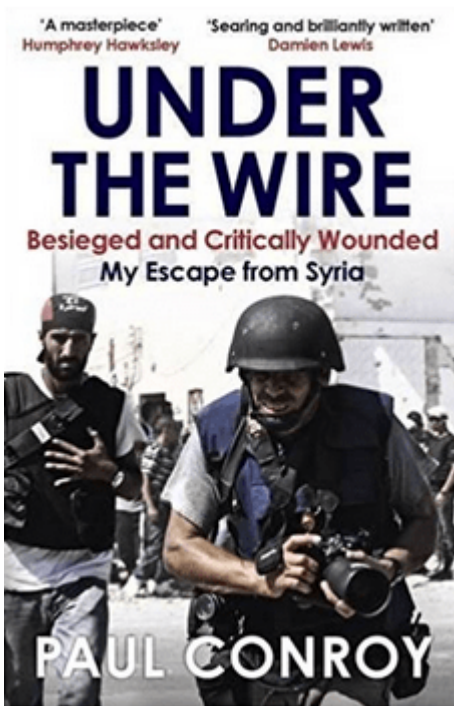




AFI DOCS Film Review: Under the Wire (Martin, 2018): USA

Description



t of the 2018 American Film Institute's AFI DOCS.

[Under The Wire](#) tells the story of a daring entry on 13 February 2012,

into war-ravaged Syria by two journalists. One of them was celebrated Sunday Times war correspondent, Marie Colvin. The other was photographer, Paul Conroy. Their aim was to cover the plight of Syrian civilians trapped in Homs, a city under siege and relentless military attack from the Syrian army and report on the untold suffering of women and children who were the kept secret of Assad regime's assault on dissenters. Under the cloak of combating terrorism, the regime was effectively silencing the call for democracy.'

The film opens with footage Conroy at one of his darkest moments in Baba Amr, a city-district in southwest Homs, in central Syria. Much of the opening sequence gives a feel of an expose. However, that soon gives way to a non-linear narrative that juxtaposes, at first Conroy, and later fellow journalists, recollections of those two and a half weeks they spent together attempting to tell the world what was happening to the women and children in Baba Amr. At the center of the story is their martyr, Marie Colvin, an American war correspondent, regarded as one of, if not the finest, combat journalist of her generation. Colvin came to fame through her reporting in East Timor in 1999. Without Marie's reporting the UN said the people of East Timor would have perished.

In 2012, despite the exodus of virtually every Western journalist, Colvin, felt compelled to tell the world what was really happening in Syrian towns, especially the 28,000 civilians who were in Baba Amr. So much so, Colvin risked her life until finally paying the ultimate price when a precision bombing attack successfully neutralized its target, what was known in Baba Amr as the media center which in reality was a concrete "shithole" room on the 6th floor of an evacuated building.

Meanwhile, the United Nations and the world looked on helplessly as the Assad regime continued its daily bombing assault beginning first at 7:00 A.M. and later moved up to 6:30 A.M. According to French journalist, Edith Bouvier, who suffered a serious and potentially life-threatening leg injury when the targeted bomb hit the "media center" as many as fifteen shells would hit in the first thirty seconds of the precision bombing.

Eventually, the wounded, surviving journalists would make a last-minute escape. Having been told a Red Cross ambulance would be coming to take her and her co-journalists to safety during the first-ever cease fire, the journalists were warned by a man from the Red Crescent not to get in the vans waiting outside. Following his heeding the group refused to leave. Soon after, a group of rebels shepherded the correspondents to safety only asking that the journalist tell the world what was really happening in Baba Amr.

Under the Wire is a story of international fear and apathetic response from the global community. Despite numerous videos surfacing from Colvin and what many describe as a miracle worker, Dr. Mohammad Mohammad, pleading for the international community to halt the slaughter of innocent civilians whose only crime was a want for a more democratic way of life, nothing happened. Conroy's life was saved. His mission has been to tell the world what happened in Syria. Utilizing archival news reports from the BBC and CNN (with Anderson Cooper), personal footage and photos from his times with Colvin, Conroy has set out to tell the world what happened.

Under the Wire is the story of Marie Colvin's passionate commitment to tell the world the story of the women and children in Baba Amr and their shared experience of the "widow's basement," an underground shelter for women and children crammed with thin mattresses, little food and without basic medical assistance. This is not an easy film to watch. Part expose part action/adventure while booming sound, partial profile shots, fuzzy footage, along with some shaky, point-of-view, hand-held shots create tension and unease. Nevertheless, this is a story that needed to be told and now it needs an audience. The world needs to know the truth of what really happened. Highly recommended.

Category

1. #AFIDOCs
2. Documentary

Date Created

June 21, 2018

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