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â??The Longest Roadâ?? to Be Screened at Newport Beach Film Festival

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Southern Californians Make Documentary about Refugees in Iraq

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif., April 10, 2017 â?? â??The Longest Road,â?• an award-winning documentary that tells the powerful story of a group of Americans who visit Northern Iraq to help refugees living in the shadow of ISIS, will be screened April 25-26 at the Newport Beach Film Festival.

The title of the film comes from a Kurdish proverb â?? â??A good companion shortens the longest roadâ?• â?? that inspired the Southern California-based co-directors, first-time filmmaker Jennifer Salcido and documentarian Matthew Charles Hall.

â??The Newport Beach Film Festival is an incredible venue to share this story,â?• said Hall, a former Newport Beach resident. â??Making this film, we witnessed some horrendous atrocities that people in privileged Orange County canâ??t really imagine. It shook me when I experienced it, and if audiences can witness just a fraction of that, I know theyâ??ll be in for an eye opener.â?•

An estimated 2 million refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan have been displaced by ISIS. Their homes destroyed, many of them live in unsanitary conditions in tent villages, with their loved ones having been killed or sold into slavery. Often, the survivors suffer from PTSD.

Filmed in Iraq and Syria, â??The Longest Roadâ?• follows Iraq War veteran Richard Campos, Vietnam War veteran Stan Rapada and Gold Star father Kevin Graves as they head to the front lines of combat and see the havoc ISIS has wrought on the Kurds and Yezidis, an ethnic and religious minority.

The production team made three trips to Iraq to work on the film over the course of two years. While in the Middle East, they befriended a Muslim heart surgeon who shares her story in the film. Dr. Nemam Ghafouri, a former refugee herself, brought the finished film in March to London and Sweden, where it played to packed theaters.

Since its debut in September 2016, â??The Longest Roadâ?• has been an official selection at several film festivals and played on screens in Texas, California and Nevada. The film received an Award of Merit from Impact DOCS Awards in La Jolla, California.

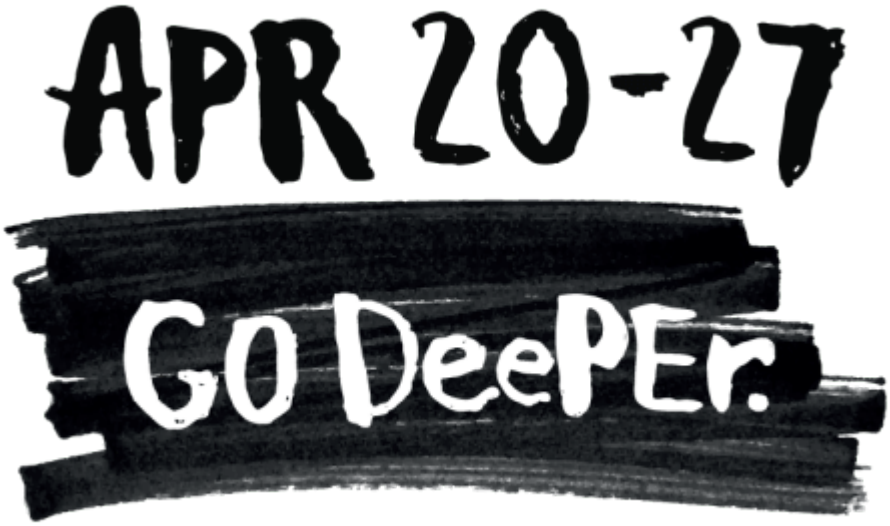
One of the most poignant moments in the film comes when Graves, at an outpost of Kurdish fighters about a mile from ISIS lines, breaks down in tears at the memory of his sonâ??s death in Iraq. When the fighters try to console him, he tells them he knows he will see his son in heaven and adds, â??In my heart, I will do what I can to help you to fight your fight, so my sonâ??s sacrifice will have more meaning.â?•

Campos was particularly moved by the plight of Yezidi children at Ghafouriâ??s clinic at a camp in Bajed, Kandala in northern Iraq. â??They need a school at that camp,â?• he said. â??They need a school at all the camps. Education is really a key for all the children.â?•

All proceeds from the film will go toward building an orphanage and school at the camp. The members of the production team also issued a call for Americans to help the refugees, saying that our common humanity is more important than any religious or ethnic differences.

â??To whom much is given, much is expected,â?• Salcido said. â??We are so privileged as Americans. Iâ??m ashamed as a human being that we would allow other human beings to go through this.â?•

The film will be shown at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 25 at the Lido Theater and at 5:15 p.m. Wednesday, April 26 at The Triangle. Each showing will be followed by a Q&A with the filmmakers. For more information on the Newport Beach Film Festival or to purchase tickets for â??The Longest Road,â?• please visit https://www.newportbeachfilmfest.com/.



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