



A WOLO ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

FREEDOM'S FURY

Bloody Battle in Budapest and Melbourne

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It's one of the most exciting untold stories, said Quentin Tarantino, and decided to support the film proposal without further thought. Colin Keith Gray and Megan Raney Aarons prepared a documentary on the legendary water polo semifinal of the 1956 Olympics between the Soviet and the Hungarian team, using the glorious and tragic events of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 as a backdrop, with the support of well known film industry veterans. The following interview was prepared with the two creators of the feature length film entitled Freedom's Fury.

Writer-director Colin Keith Gray and DOP Megan Raney Aarons are siblings and partners. Freedom's Fury is their second feature documentary. The film recalls the story of the 1956 Olympic water polo semi-final between the Soviet and Hungarian national teams, which later went down in sports history as the "bloody game". Personal drama is embedded in the events of the political drama unfolding at the time, by introducing the political atmosphere of the 1950's as well as the national and international waves set forth by the eruption and defeat of the Revolution of 1956. Besides researching archive material the creators of this stunning picture prepared nearly fifty interviews with members of the water polo teams still alive today and with witnesses of the Revolution itself.



"We were very nervous," the siblings said following a private screening of the film at the Puskin cinema the other day. "Our heart beat in our throat, wondering how the first Hungarian viewers, including some of our interviewees, were going to react to what our film set out to say about those feverish times."





Much to their delight, reaction to the film was more than merely polite gratitude: both outsiders and those involved in it's making received it with great acclaim. But how did they come up with this topic? The water polo match itself has been all but forgotten; we know so little about it.

"I heard the story about twenty years ago," says Colin, "as a high school student in Canada. My water polo trainer told me about it, who happened to be Hungarian and had at one time trained with Dezso Gyarmati, captain of the '56 Olympic team. At the time I thought it was a fantastic story that must not be forgotten."



When Colin and his sister Megan decided to tell the story in their second documentary, they had to begin by raising adequate funding. "Its very difficult to get money for making a documentary," they admit. Lucy Liu was one of the first to support them, who had been friends with Colin ever since their years at the University of Michigan. At the time Lucy's career has just taken off - she was filming Kill Bill with Quentin Tarantino - and she agreed to lead fundraising and publicity activity in Los Angeles without hesitation. She invited Tarantino too, and he saw the promotion material edited from archive footage. He was very taken by the story, and he said it was the most exciting story, never told. It turned out that he is a fan of Hungarian cinema, and that he knew about the Hungarian Revolution, but not about the water-polo match. He decided to support the Siblings, and became one of their investors.



" The topic itself was humbling. We read every important book on the Revolution, as well as thousands of pages of research material, and then came to Hungary to prepare interviews - we met awe-inspiring individuals here - and then returned home feeling lost and overwhelmed. It was an incredible journey finding our way through this story. The part where we introduce the period before the Revolution, the Rákosi era, is 8 minutes long in the completed film; in the first version it was fifty minutes. And so we had to begin killing the material - one is forced to destroy one's creation - and we cut and cut. It was unbearably difficult. The hardest and most challenging part was keeping two basic requirements in mind: making sure the events and their correlation with each other are clear and understandable for a less informed international audience while creating a film which is authentic and rings true for its Hungarian audience."



“We strove to prepare a correct, accurate and true film from both perspectives, which is why it was such a moving moment for us when the screening in Budapest was over and the audience applauded – a sign of approval. We’re so thankful to the incredible work by our editor Mike Rogers. We now look forward to sharing this story with a global audience.”

“Terror is terror, and occupation is occupation. This is something people all over the world understand,” says Colin about the thought which led them to the solution. It was in recognition of this fact that he was finally able to decide how much of a historical explanation he should leave in the film. He also adds, that had the film been only about history, it would have been much more difficult to convince distributors to distribute it. Though interest in documentaries has gone up in the United States – “Michael Moore’s films opened movies theater doors to the genre” – the siblings hope their film will be of interest to a broad audience, especially that of the youth, because is also about a very popular sport.

As to their opinion about the preparation of a feature film produced by Andy Vajna inspired by their documentary, they say their goals connected in a very fortunate way: “Vajna saved us, because we had run out of money. We could not have finished the film without Vajna’s financial help. This way, however, we were also able to help him by having done all the research, the background work, for him. His feature film is based on the story our documentary is about. Another interesting thing is that Vajna left Hungary on December 6, 1956, the very day of the very water polo match between the Hungarians and the Soviets.”

The Hungarian premier of Freedom’s Fury is to be expected in May, during the time of the water polo championships, and a series of screenings and public discussions about the film will end at the time of the water polo world cup. It is the hope of the creators, and the indication of negotiations already underway, that the film is of interest in the US, Australia, Canada, Brazil and across Europe.