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OFFICIAL SELECTION



GOD SLEEPS IN RWANDA

A film by Kimberlee Acquaro and Stacy Sherman



Academy Award Nominee, Best Documentary Short



A WOMEN MAKE MOVIES RELEASE

Women Make Movies • 462 Broadway, 5th Floor • New York, NY 10013
Tel: 212.925.0606 • e-mail: webinfo@wmm.com • www.wmm.com

GOD SLEEPS IN RWANDA



SYNOPSIS

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide left the country nearly 70% female heading Rwanda's women an extraordinary burden and an unprecedented opportunity. An inspiring story of loss and redemption "God Sleeps in Rwanda" captures the spirit of five courageous women as they rebuild their lives, redefining women's roles in Rwandan society and bringing hope to a wounded nation.

BACKGROUND INFO

Kimberlee Acquaro and Stacy Sherman set out to make a film that would both recognize the tragedy the women of Rwanda had endured during the 1994 genocide and honor their strength and spirit. Out of respect for the sensitive nature of the women's experiences the filmmakers worked in Rwanda with only two cameras and with no crew except for their translator, Norah Bagirinka, a genocide survivor herself. Over time an atmosphere of trust developed between the filmmakers and their subjects and the project became more than a film to both Acquaro and Sherman. When Fifi Mukangoga passed away during one of their visits due to HIV/AIDS contracted while being raped repeatedly during the genocide - and because she could not afford the antiretroviral drugs that had just become available for less than eighty dollars a month - the filmmakers resolved to use the film to raise money as well as awareness for the women survivors in Rwanda. Through fundraising screenings they have raised nearly \$25,000 to date. With the help of Amnesty International they were also able to bring their translator, Norah, to the US in the fall of 2004 to travel with them and speak at film screenings. Norah applied for asylum and is now living in the US and attending nursing school. The filmmakers are working to reunite Norah with her three sons who are still in Rwanda.

FESTIVAL SCREENINGS

For the most updated list, visit www.wmm.com

- Academy Award Nominee for Best Documentary Short
- Aspen Shorts Fest - Audience Award
- Silverdocs/AFI Film Festival -Audience Award -Jury Special Mention
- MoMA Documentary Fortnight
- Palm Springs International Fest of Short Films - Audience Award
- Int'l Documentary Association - Distinguished Short Film Nominee, Pare Lorentz Award Nominee
- Phoenix Film Festival- World Cinema Short Award
- Ojai Film Festival - Festival Award
- Jackson Hole Docuweek - Critic's Choice Award
- Black Reel Awards- Best Independent Mini Doc
- Bahamas International Film Festival
- Hawaii International Film Festival
- The Boston Museum of Fine Arts
- DocuDay, Directors Guild of America Theater, New York
- Through Women's Eyes Film Festival, Florida



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CREDITS

2006 - 28 minutes – Color

Directors
Kimberlee Acquaro
Stacy Sherman

Editor
Craig Tanner

Narrator
Rosario Dawson

Translator
Norah Bagarinka

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QUOTES

“Illuminating...finds unforced and incredibly moving silver linings where you’d think there’d be none.”

- LA Weekly

“Might be the most powerful piece of media I’ve ever seen.”

-Planet Jackson Hole

“Everyone must see this film of inspiration and human courage.”

-Lorraine Sheinberg

Feminist Majority Foundation,
Ms. Magazine Advisory Board

“...an incredibly powerful portrait...”

-Sandra Ruch, Executive Director

International Documentary Association

“God Sleeps in Rwanda affords these women the a opportunity to emerge from the shadows to tell their stories a and inspire us with their courage and quiet dignity....”

-Bonnie Abaunza, Director

Artists for Amnesty, Amnesty International USA

“Gripping testimonies and haunting stories of one of the worst crimes against humanity of the past century.”

-John Prendergast

Advisor to the International Crisis Group,
Former Director of African Affairs at the National Security Council



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BIOGRAPHIES



Kimberlee Acquaro, Director/ Photojournalist

Kimberlee Acquaro is a filmmaker and photojournalist whose work has appeared in The New York Times Magazine, The Washington Post Magazine, Time Magazine, US New & World Report, Mother Jones and many international publications. Her work has also been featured on CBS, NPR, The Tavis Smiley Show, Voices of America and BBC/PRI's The World. She was awarded a Pew Fellowship in International Journalism for her work documenting Rwandan women's emerging rights and roles in the country's reconciliation and reconstruction. Her photographs have been exhibited in New York, NY, Santa Barbara, CA and Washington, DC and are currently on display through the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. "God Sleeps In Rwanda" is her first documentary film. A new mother, Acquaro lives in Venice, CA with her husband and son.



Stacy Sherman, Director

Stacy Sherman holds a Bachelor's Degree from UCLA in International Relations and a Master's Degree from USC in Journalism. She has written screenplays for 20th Century Fox and Tri-Star Pictures and is currently writing a screenplay for Imagine Entertainment & Warner Bros. Ms. Sherman has also co-written, co-produced and co-directed, "Waitress" a documentary short about Kaye Coleman, a Los Angeles waitress who died this year, but touched hundreds of lives with her humanity and spirit. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and two children.

Craig Tanner, Editor

Craig Tanner is a graduate from the Air Force Academy and served in the Air Force for 8 years as a film editor for the Armed Forces. After his military career he went on to work as an editor on feature films including "The Family Stone" (associate editor 2005), "The Passion of the Christ" (assistant editor 2004), "The Young Black Stallion" (first assistant editor 2003), "Shattered Glass" (associate editor 2003), "We Were Soldiers" (assistant editor 2002), "Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles" (assistant editor 2001). He is currently working on "Breach" with director Billy Ray. Tanner lives in Mexico with his wife, Gina, and sons Chili and Texas but continues to work on features and is a creative force in the industry.

Rosario Dawson, Narrator

Rosario Dawson has starred in numerous films with today's most acclaimed actors and directors most recently as 'Mimi Valdez' in the upcoming adaptation of the famed Broadway play RENT. Since her debut in Larry Clark's KIDS she has appeared in Robert Rodriguez/Frank Miller's SIN CITY; Oliver Stone's ALEXANDER opposite Collin Farrell; Director Billy Ray's critically acclaimed SHATTERED GLASS; Spike Lee's films 25th HOUR and HE GOT GAME; MEN IN BLACK 2 with Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones; the indie film THIS GIRLS LIFE; Ethan Hawk's CHELSEA WALLS and Ed Burns' SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK among others. Dawson produced BLISS VIRUS, a short film by director Talia Lugacy and hopes to produce Lugacy's first feature. Born and raised in New York, Rosario continues to make her home there.

Norah Bagarinka, Translator

Norah Bagarinka is a genocide survivor and mother. As an untiring advocate for women she has worked extensively for their aid, education and rights. She most recently directed a program with the International Rescue Committee aiding women victims of violence and genocide sexual survivors and training judges in the handling of women's cases in the genocide trials in Rwanda. Norah came to the U.S. to travel with the film and recently received asylum here. She is currently attending nursing school in Columbus, OH and working with the filmmakers to bring her three sons to the U.S. to live with her.



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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"As a photojournalist working in Africa I was moved by the hope and the courage of the women I met in Rwanda. Ignored by the world during the genocide and despite the immensity and challenge of their tragedy they had transformed their survival into an extraordinary determination to change their lives and their world.

I wanted to make a film that would give a voice to these women who had been silenced for so long and whose stories deserved to be told. They opened their lives and hearts to us. My hope is that we have made a film that will do them justice."

-Kimberlee Acquaro

"God Sleeps In Rwanda" was a project that I pursued out of a long held passion for international journalism. I was immediately drawn to these women, their stories and their incredible strength; introduced to them through the tremendous work of photojournalist Kimberlee Acquaro.

Words cannot describe the experience of being in Rwanda, of having the honor of meeting these survivors. I will never forget the kindness they extended toward us and hope that monies raised will benefit them in any way possible. I went to glimpse their lives and they ended up changing mine. Their spirits will resonate with me forever."

-Stacy Sherman



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