

DAY ONE

56 LANGUAGES. 42 COUNTRIES. ONE COMMUNITY.
A GATEWAY TO A NEW LIFE.



HUY MACH/ST. LOUIS POST DISPATCH/POLARIS



HYDRO STUDIOS PRESENTS AN 88 FILMS PRODUCTION OF DAY ONE CO-PRODUCED BY BRIAN O'CONNELL
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS KIRT EFTEKHAR, PETER TAO & CHANDOS ERWIN MUSIC BY TOM HOWE & MIKE REED EDITED BY DAVID BEERMAN
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY BRIAN O'CONNELL PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY LORI MILLER



A Documentary by Lori Miller

Distribution

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DAYONE



Logline

DAY ONE follows a group of teens from war zones in the Middle East and Africa, as they are resettled in St. Louis, MO and enrolled at a unique public school for refugees-only.

Synopsis

Traumatized upon their arrival -- having survived war and years in refugee camps -- the kids are guided through an incredible program of healing, PTSD intervention, education and adjustment by the school's passionate and talented educators, some of whom have chosen to live with their families in the inner-city in order to be closer to their students.

Our featured teens come from Somalia, Afghanistan, the Congo, Iraq, and Syria. Some have lost one or both parents, have been unable to attend school for years on end, and have suffered war traumas. These students and their families are faced with economic, language, psychological and cultural challenges, sometimes dangerous living conditions, and the U.S.'s turbulent anti-immigrant political climate.

Filmed over the course of a year, we watch the kids progress through their layers of grief and loss as they attend school, forge new friendships, and prepare to be mainstreamed into "regular" public high-school with the support and mentorship of their unbelievably compassionate teachers and advocates.

Their triumphs and tribulations all unfold with St. Louis as the backdrop: a rust-belt city in the heart of America that has taken the bold step of welcoming immigrants not only for humanitarian reasons but also to benefit their economy and create diversity and excitement in their region.

Director's Statement

By Lori Miller

As the daughter of a refugee, and first-generation American, I was drawn to this unique story about refugee and immigrant children because it is both personal and timely. My mother was born in Germany in the mid-1930s, and her first memory was Kristallnacht, and specifically Nazi soldiers entering her home and violently smashing all of her and her family's belongings. This horrific experience, followed by a year of hiding and terror before escaping, has materially informed my own childhood and interest in the lives of children who are raised in war zones, and/or war-torn countries.

I was introduced to the Nahed Chapman New American Academy, "NCNAA" through an old friend, St. Louis architect Peter Tao, a first-generation Chinese-American. Peter became involved locally with immigrant and refugee resettlement and volunteered at the school. Upon learning that there was no outdoor recreation area for the kids, Peter was driven to enlist the Washington University architecture school to design and build a beautiful outdoor recreation area and soccer field and was able to raise \$200,000 from local St. Louis residents and businesses to complete the project.

Inspired by Peter's story, I traveled to St. Louis and was taken by the stories, passion, and energy of the students and the educators at NCNAA. I wanted to learn more about this community and to try to help tell their story in a way that could benefit others. While researching and beginning to film in the fall of 2016, Brian O'Connell (Director of Photography and Co-Producer) and I observed a snapshot of extreme humanity: the children, who are so grateful to be given a chance at a new life, and the educators and greater community, tirelessly giving their time and expertise to help save these kids and their families.

As we continued to film, the U.S.'s political climate grew more contentious and outwardly negative toward immigrants and refugees. We observed how this affected the families and kids portrayed in the story, and also the greater community in St. Louis whose humanitarian impulses and programs would soon be dramatically challenged, and we felt committed to complete the film and show this unknown, yet miraculous community in action.

Another inspiration for making the film was to shed light on what makes NCNAA a model public school. NCNAA is a trauma-informed school that serves a shining example for all schools working with children who have suffered trauma or are affected by violence in their communities.

Film Biographies

Lori Miller
Director/Producer

DAY ONE is Lori Miller's directing debut. She is a seasoned producer known for her documentaries about arts and culture: VIRTUOSITY, SHAKESPEARE HIGH, and THEY CAME TO PLAY. Her independent feature producing credits include: PANIC, THE LAST SUPPER, and PERFECT OPPOSITES. She is a graduate of Barnard College, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Kirt Eftekhar
Executive Producer

Kirt Eftekhar has nearly two decades of expertise in producing, financing, and theatrical distribution with vitally important event-driven and issue-based documentaries. Under his direction, award-winning films such as GLEN CAMPBELL...I'LL BE ME achieved critical and commercial success through traditional theatrical distribution, privately-hosted events, and sponsored nationwide tours.

Peter Tao
Executive Producer

Peter, from St. Louis and an architect by profession, is a community organizer and connector, deeply engaged with the St. Louis community in the areas of immigrants, refugees, culture, racial equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as the arts. Peter presently serves on the steering committee of the St. Louis Mosaic Project and was formally on the board of the International Institute of St. Louis.

Brian O'Connell
Director of Photography & Co-Producer

Brian O'Connell is a Director of Photography based in Venice California. He is an NYU Film School graduate with wide-ranging experience in documentaries commercials, and corporate films. He is the DP of the award-winning documentaries THEY CAME TO PLAY and SHAKESPEARE HIGH. His latest documentary, THE WOMEN IN THE SAND, about the Timbisha Shoshone tribe in Death Valley is currently being entered in festivals.

Tom Howe
Composer

Tom Howe is an award-winning composer from the UK who has scored over 70 Emmy and BAFTA-winning dramas and documentaries, including recent films like Aardman's animated feature EARLY MAN, directed by Nick Park and Annapurna Pictures' PROFESSOR MARSTON AND THE WONDER WOMEN, starring Luke Evans and Rebecca Hall. In addition to his film & TV projects, Tom has also written several international Top 40 hits, as a songwriter.

David Beerman
Editor

David Beerman is a Los Angeles based editor with ten years of experience working on feature films, trailers, music videos, and television commercials.

School Bio

Nahed Chapman New American Academy

The Nahed Chapman New American Academy is a K-10 public school in St. Louis, MO and was founded in 2008. Nahed Chapman, its founder who passed away in 2013, was an Egyptian immigrant who proposed that a delay in mainstreaming kids with PTSD, interrupted education, and limited English would stabilize and keep them in school, ultimately benefitting students as well as their communities.

The school serves both refugee and immigrant children as well as their families, and was designed to help immigrants deal with culture shock and discrimination through not only ESL learning but also trauma counseling and extreme acceptance, and through helping the kids and their families with their day to day needs until they could become more acclimated to their new environment.

Currently, the school serves children from over 30 different countries with over 20 different languages spoken.

Credits

Produced and Directed by Lori Miller

Director of Photography

Brian O'Connell

Edited by

David Beerman

Music By

Tom Howe

Mike Reed

Executive Producers

Kirt Eftekhar

Peter Tao

Chandos Erwin

Co-Producer

Brian O'Connell

Production Sound

Alexander Beasley

Supervising Sound Editor

Victoria Sampson

Featuring

Fatine Bourkadi

Danielle Carter

Maria Childress

Donnie Harris

Judith Holroyd

Kelly McBride

Kelly Moore

Keary Ritchie

Rekha Sivsaprasad

Production Supervisor

Marie Helene Riverain

Credits

Additional Photography

Brandon Fedde
Jonathan White

Additional Production Sound

Carlos Zuniga

Research Assistant

Emily Landa

Re-recording Mixer

Alex Weiss

Sound Mixed At

Anarchy Post

Post Picture Services Provided by

Pace Pictures

Digital Intermediate Colorist

Jason Knutzen

Assistant Editor

Michael Scotti, Jr.

“Nerea”

Performed by Joseph Bade, Jacob Chaco, and Isaac Omba,

Written by Sauti Sol

Co-written by Amos & Josh

Courtesy of Sauti Sol

Original Score

Violin: Nuno Carapina

Cello: Ella Rundle

Piano: Mike Reed

Guitar: Tom Howe

Score produced by: Tom Howe & Mike Reed

Score Prep: Nick Morse

Credits

Recorded at: Abbey Road Studios

Engineer: Toby Hulbert

ProTools Session Prep: Tony Lewis

Mixer: Lucas Owenson

Studio Manager: Fiona Gillot

Fixer: Anthony Willows

Equipment Provided By

Milton Santiago

Stray Angel

Legal Services

Lisa Callif, Esq.

Kate Serfoss, Esq.

Donaldson & Callif

Insurance Provided By

Momentous Brokerage Inc.

Very Special Thanks

Helen Lee

Jane Grady

Anna Crosslin & The International Institute of St. Louis

Betsy Cohen & The St. Louis Mosaic Project

Patrick Wallace

Alla Gonzalez Del Castillo

Gary Broome

Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church

Merilee Newman

Lee Keele

Chandos Erwin

Urs Baur

Henning Schwarze

Jim Kirchherr

Marek Fuchs

Moriasi Omambia

Sophie Otiu

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