



Presents

Watchers of the Sky

A film by Edet Belzberg

120 min., 2014

Rated TBD

Press materials:

<http://www.musicboxfilms.com/watchersofthesky-press>

Official site:

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Music Box Films Marketing & Publicity

Brian Andreotti: bandreotti@musicboxfilms.com

Rebecca Gordon: rgordon@musicboxfilms.com

312-508-5361/ 312-508-5362

Distribution Contact:

Andrew Carlin

acarlin@musicboxfilms.com

312-508-5360

NY Publicity:

Susan Norget Film Promotion

Susan Norget

212-431-0090

susan@norget.com

LA Publicity:

Laemmle Theatres

Jordan Moore

(310) 478-1041 x 208

jordan@laemmle.com

SYNOPSIS

With his provocative question, “why is the killing of a million a lesser crime than the killing of an individual?” Raphael Lemkin changed the course of history. An extraordinary testament to one man’s perseverance, the Sundance award-winning film *Watchers of the Sky* examines the life and legacy of the Polish-Jewish lawyer and linguist who coined the term genocide. Before Lemkin, the notion of accountability for war crimes was virtually non-existent. After experiencing the barbarity of the Holocaust firsthand, he devoted his life to convincing the international community that there must be legal retribution for mass atrocities targeted at minorities. An impassioned visionary, Lemkin confronted world apathy in a tireless battle for justice, setting the stage for the Nuremberg trials and the creation of the International Criminal Court.

Inspired by Samantha Power’s Pulitzer Prize-winning book *A Problem From Hell*, this multi-faceted documentary interweaves Raphael Lemkin’s struggle with the courageous efforts of four individuals keeping his legacy alive: Luis Moreno Ocampo, Chief Prosecutor of the ICC; Samantha Power, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations; Ben Ferencz, a former Nuremberg prosecutor still tenaciously lobbying the UN for peace, and Rwandan Emmanuel Uwurukundo, UN Refugee Agency Field Director in Chad. Alternating live interviews with rare archival footage and striking animation, *Watchers of the Sky* illuminates the compassion and bravery of these humanitarians and powerfully demonstrates the ability of global activism to give a voice to the silent victims of genocide.

ABOUT RAPHAEL LEMKIN

Born in 1900 in the village of Bezwodne in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth occupied by Imperial Russia, Raphael Lemkin suffered deportations along with his Jewish relatives as a teenager during World War I, and lost almost his entire family during World War II. Devastated by these events and driven to change the world for the betterment of all men, Lemkin worked his entire life to make the crime of genocide punishable by law. As a lawyer and a linguist, Lemkin sought to create a new word to define the heinous crimes he witnessed and bring international condemnation to all who are accused of it – and move international organizations to enforce laws against it.

Though Lemkin died in poverty and obscurity in 1959, his life was a triumph. His lone efforts to pass the Genocide Convention at the UN have led to the existence of the ICC and improvements in global human rights law. In spite of the continued shortcomings of the international legal system, policy-makers and leaders who endorse or commit genocidal acts are now forced to consider the implications of justice.

BIOS

Edet Belzberg – Director, Producer

Edet Belzberg's films are distinguished by her choice of subject, in-depth treatment of place, and elegant storytelling. The MacArthur Foundation, in selecting Belzberg as a MacArthur Fellow and recipient of its grant, praised her for her "graceful and insightful" films. Belzberg's directorial debut, CHILDREN UNDERGROUND, was nominated for an Academy Award® and won the Sundance Film Festival's Special Jury Prize, the International Documentary Association's Documentary Award, and the Gotham Awards' Documentary Achievement Prize, among many others. Her film THE RECRUITER had its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival and its television premiere on HBO. It was awarded a DuPont-Columbia University Award for broadcast journalism. WATCHERS OF THE SKY won two awards at the Sundance Film Festival in 2014, a Special Jury Prize for the Use of Animation and the U.S. Documentary Editing Award.

Amelia Green-Dove – Producer

Amelia Green-Dove is a journalist and filmmaker. Before joining Propeller Films, she was a field producer for filmmaker Michael Moore's Academy Award-nominated feature documentary SiCKO. Previously, she was an associate producer for Bill Moyers and David Brancaccio on the PBS news magazine NOW WITH BILL MOYERS and later NOW. A native of Santa Monica, California, and graduate of Hampshire College, Green-Dove has worked internationally, including as a researcher at the BBC's Open University division in London. In 2007, she oversaw the launch and development of an entertainment website. Since 2008, she has worked with director Edet Belzberg, most recently on the award-winning documentary THE RECRUITER. In addition to being a producer of WATCHERS OF THE SKY, she is the Audience Engagement Campaign Manager for the film's outreach.

Kerry Propper – Producer

Kerry Propper is a Co-founder and CEO of Chardan Capital Markets, an investment bank based in New York and Beijing. Propper serves on the Executive Board of Voices of Rwanda, a non-profit organization dedicated to filming and preserving the testimony of survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and sits on the International Advisory Council of the International Crisis Group. Since 2003, he has been producing WATCHERS OF THE SKY.

Elizabeth Bohart - Executive Producer, Director of Outreach Strategy

Elizabeth Bohart is a strategy consultant who works with non-profit organizations to develop and implement high impact programs. Many of her current projects are in sub-Saharan Africa and focus on poverty reduction through education, health and small business initiatives. Her involvement in WATCHERS OF THE SKY extends beyond the film. She is a key strategist behind the development and implementation of the film's outreach programs and its ongoing community engagement projects. She also has overseen the development of the film's educational outreach materials, including the website and middle and high school curriculums. Bohart worked as a Legislative Assistant in the US Senate and spent several years doing consulting work in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. She serves on the New York Advisory Board of Peace First and was the founding board chair of Maloto. She earned a Masters in Public Administration from American University and a BA in Sociology from Tulane. Elizabeth resides in NYC with her husband and three daughters.

Stanley Buchthal – Executive Producer

Stanley Buchthal has been an entrepreneur in the fields of fashion, venture capital, entertainment and the environment. In 1988, he founded the Dakota Group Ltd., a private investment holding company and LM Media GmbH, a Swiss-based movie and television financing and production company. Buchthal has been a leader in the independent feature world, producing such films as HAIRSPRAY, SPANKING THE MONKEY and UP AT THE VILLA. He has also produced a slate of high-profile documentary films, including SKETCHES OF FRANK GEHRY, JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT: THE RADIANT CHILD, HERB & DOROTHY, PAPER DOLLS, BOBBY FISCHER AGAINST THE WORLD, LENNON NYC, and BERLIN, performed by Lou Reed and directed by Julian Schnabel. In addition to MARINA ABRAMOVIC: THE ARTIST IS PRESENT, Buchthal produced LOVE, MARILYN.

CAST BIOS

Samantha Power

Ambassador Samantha Power is the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations and a member of President Obama's Cabinet. At the United Nations, Ambassador Power works to advance U.S. interests, promote and defend universal values, and address pressing global challenges to peace, security, and prosperity.

Prior to serving as U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Power served as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights on the National Security Staff at the White House. In this role she focused on issues including UN reform; LGBT and women's rights; the promotion of religious freedom and the protection of religious minorities; human trafficking; and democracy and human rights. Before joining the U.S. government, Ambassador Power was the Anna Lindh Professor of the Practice of Global Leadership and Public Policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, teaching courses on U.S. foreign policy, human rights, and UN reform. She was also the founding executive director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy.

Ambassador Power is the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (2002) and *Chasing the Flame: Sergio Viera de Mello and the Fight to Save the World* (2008), the basis for the award-winning HBO documentary "Sergio." She is also the recent co-editor of *The Unquiet American: Richard Holbrooke in the World* (2011). Ambassador Power began her career as a journalist, reporting from places such as Bosnia, East Timor, Kosovo, Rwanda, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, and contributed regularly to *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New Republic*, the *New York Review of Books*, and *The New Yorker*.

Ambassador Power immigrated to the United States from Ireland at the age of nine. She graduated from Lakeside High School in Atlanta, Georgia and received a B.A. from Yale University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School. She is married to Cass Sunstein, with whom she has two young children.

Benjamin Ferencz

Benjamin B. Ferencz was born in the Carpathian Mountains of Transylvania in 1920. When he was ten months old, his family moved to America. His earliest memories are of his small basement apartment in a Manhattan district appropriately referred to as "Hell's Kitchen." Even at an early age, he felt a deep yearning for universal friendship and world peace.

After graduating from Harvard Law School in 1943, he joined an anti-aircraft artillery battalion preparing for the invasion of France. As an enlisted man under General Patton, he fought in every campaign in Europe. As Nazi atrocities were uncovered, he was transferred to a newly created War Crimes Branch of the Army to gather evidence of Nazi brutality and apprehend the criminals.

On the day after Christmas 1945, Ferencz was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army with the rank of Sergeant of Infantry. He returned to New York and prepared to practice law. Shortly thereafter, he was recruited for the Nuremberg war crimes trials and sent with about fifty researchers to Berlin to scour Nazi offices and archives. Ferencz became Chief Prosecutor for the United States in The Einsatzgruppen Case, which the Associated Press called "the biggest murder trial in history." Twenty-two defendants were charged with murdering over a million people. He was only twenty-seven years old. It was his first case.

In 1970, with the United States sinking ever deeper into the quagmire of Vietnam, Ferencz decided to gradually withdraw from the private practice of law and dedicate himself to studying and writing about world peace. His book *Defining International Aggression-The Search for World Peace* was published in 1975, followed by another two-volume documentary history, *An International Criminal Court-A Step Toward World Peace* in 1980 and *Enforcing International Law-A Way to World Peace* in 1983. In order to spread the word to a larger audience, he condensed the gist of his thinking into a small, inexpensive paperback, *A Common Sense Guide to World Peace*.

In 1988, Ferencz wrote *PlanetHood* with Ken Keyes, Jr., to offer practical steps for the average citizen to help establish international law and urge U.N. reform. When the Rome Statute was affirmed in 1998, Ferencz addressed the Conference asserting that "an international criminal court - the missing link in the world legal order - is within our grasp." Since Rome, he has been active at Preparatory Commission sessions for the ICC, monitoring and advising on current efforts to define aggression. Ferencz has continued to mobilize support for the ICC, take on media punditries, and inform an oft-misinformed media about the ICC.

Ferencz lives with his wife, Gertrude, in New Rochelle, New York. They have four grown children. He continues to write and speak worldwide for international law and global peace.

Luis Moreno-Ocampo

On April 21, 2003, the Assembly of States Parties elected Luis Moreno-Ocampo of Argentina as first Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. Moreno-Ocampo has a distinguished career as a prosecutor, trial attorney, university lecturer and legal strategist on issues ranging from international criminal justice and human rights law to corruption control and journalists' protection. In 1984, he led investigations into the case against nine senior Argentine Army commanders, including three former heads of state, from the military juntas that ruled Argentina between 1976 and 1980. The subsequent trial led to sentencing of five of the accused and was the first case brought against individuals responsible for mass killings since the Nuremberg Trials of Nazi officers.

During the proceedings, Moreno-Ocampo presented arguments for 700 counts of "murder, kidnapping and torture," calling 835 witnesses and citing thousands of documents. He later prosecuted those responsible for mass killings during the 1987 and 1992 military rebellions in Argentina. For a decade after the so-called "Junta Trials," Moreno-Ocampo was involved in several high profile cases of international criminal justice, including extradition of the former Nazi officer Erich Priebke to Italy, the trial of Chilean secret police for the murder of General Carlos Prats, and a case against military commanders accused of malpractice during the Malvinas/Falklands war. A member of the global board of Transparency International, he has been a visiting professor at Stanford University and Harvard University. He resigned from all of these institutions in order to remain impartial during his tenure as Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

Emmanuel Uwurukundo

Emmanuel Uwurukundo is a true humanitarian who survived the Rwandan genocide but lost his entire family, including his mother and father. Rather than seek violent revenge against those responsible for the deaths of his loved ones, he made a conscience decision to choose humanity over violence.

Uwurukundo runs 3 of the largest refugee camps in eastern Chad, serving over 57,000 of the world's most vulnerable individuals. His desire to help comes from his determination to end cycles of violence. Uwurukundo hopes his work in the camps demonstrate the power of individual choice, proving there are alternatives to violence, even for those who are victims of the most horrific crimes.

Uwurukundo summarizes his actions and desires best: "when you are a survivor of something like this, you have two choices. Either you come to the conclusion that life is meaningless, and for all intents and purposes, you are dead to the world, without hope. Or you think, if I am still alive, there must be a reason for it. There must be something that I can do with my experiences to make things better."

CREDITS

Director: Edet Belzberg

Producers: Edet Belzberg, Amelia Green-Dove, Kerry Propper

Executive Producers: Elizabeth Bohart, Stanley Buchthal, Lisa Kleiner Chanoff,

Editors: Jenny Golden, Karen K. H. Sim

Additional Editing: Bernadine Colish

Lead Design & Animation: Molly Schwartz

Design & Animation: Garry Waller, Dana Schechter, Eyal Ohana

Cinematographers: Edet Belzberg, Sam Cullman, Mai Iskander, Martina Radwan, Bob Richman, Jerry Risius, Nelson Walker III

About Music Box Films

Music Box Films is a leading distributor of international, American independent, and documentary content in North America.

Past releases include Guillaume Canet's hit thriller TELL NO ONE and the film adaptations of Stieg Larsson's trilogy of international mega-selling novels. The first in the series, THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO—with over \$10 million in US box office—was one of the most popular foreign-language releases of recent years.

Recent titles include Roger Michell's LE WEEK-END, written by Hanif Kureishi and starring Jim Broadbent; Pawel Pawlikowski's IDA, the official Polish submission to the Academy Awards®, and Nadav Schirman's Sundance award-winning documentary THE GREEN PRINCE. Upcoming releases include Dominik Graf's BELOVED SISTERS, Germany's official submission to the Academy Awards®.

Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates The Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premiere venue for independent and foreign films.