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MEGAN MYLAN and JON SHENK
directors/producers

JON SHENK
cinematographer

KIM ROBERTS and MARK BECKER
editors

FRANCES REID
executive producer

“Fascinating! Getting an audience so caught up is no small feat; it is a tribute to the directors’ storytelling.”

–Elvis Mitchell, New York Times

“Spellbinding! Lost Boys is a gem.”

–Jonathan Curiel, San Francisco Chronicle

“A potent engrossing look at several young refugees from Sudan’s disastrous, endless civil war... A fast-paced detail savvy narrative package.”

–Dennis Harvey, Variety

“The filmmakers capture – with both humor and subtlety— something of the American character, the generosity and arrogance.”

–Ernest Hardy, LA Weekly

“An extraordinarily rich documentary, one of the best I’ve seen!”

–Henry Sheehan, NPR’s FilmWeek

Lost Boys of Sudan is a feature-length documentary that follows two Sudanese refugees on an extraordinary journey from Africa to America. Orphaned as young boys in one of Africa’s cruelest civil wars, Peter Dut and Santino Chuor survived lion attacks and militia gunfire to reach a refugee camp in Kenya along with thousands of other children. From there, remarkably, they were chosen to come to America. Safe at last from physical danger and hunger, a world away from home, they find themselves confronted with the abundance and alienation of contemporary American suburbia.

In English and Dinka with English subtitles, 87 minutes.

Lost Boys of Sudan won an Independent Spirit Award and screened theatrically in 70 cities across the U.S. The film was broadcast nationally on the PBS series P.O.V. in the fall of 2004 and earned two Emmy nominations. An extensive outreach campaign is making the film a powerful educational and community organizing tool. Film events have raised more than half a million dollars in direct educational support for the nearly 4,000 “Lost Boys” now living in the U.S. The film has screened on Capitol Hill for the Congressional Human Rights and Refugee Caucus staff as well as at the State Department. *Lost Boys of Sudan* is a co-production of Actual Films and Principe Productions in association with ITVS and P.O.V./American Documentary, Inc.

www.LostBoysFilm.com

Winner, IFP Independent Spirit Award
Truer Than Fiction Award

Golden Gate Award, Best Bay Area Documentary, San Francisco International Film Festival

Joris Ivens Finalist, International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam

Crystal Heart Award, Best Documentary Feature, Heartland Film Festival

Nominee Best Documentary Feature, International Documentary Association

Background

For the last twenty years, civil war has raged in Sudan killing an estimated two million people and displacing more than four million. The Islamic fundamentalist government in the North is fighting Southern Sudanese separatists who are Christian and Animist. Forced famine, modern day slavery, and attacks deliberately targeting civilians, plague Southern Sudan. Hardest hit have been the cattle-herding Dinka tribe. In the late 1980's Dinka villages throughout the South were destroyed. Scores of adult men were killed. Women and girls were taken into slavery. Thousands of Dinka boys who traditionally had spent time away from their village in cattle camps, survived the attacks. They were forced to flee into the bush. A group of 20,000 young boys formed, wandering the desert seeking safety. They became known as the "Lost Boys of Sudan." The boys crossed hundreds of miles of desert. They faced enemy fire, lion attack and hunger. Thousands died along the way. The survivors found safe-haven in UN refugee camps in Ethiopia and then Kenya. With peace in the Sudan unforeseeable and without family or opportunity in the camp, the U.S. government decided to bring the "Lost Boys" to America. In 2001, four thousand of the boys, who are now young men, were given high priority refugee status and began settling all across America—from Houston to Kansas City, San Jose to Little Rock.

The Film

The film begins in the Kakuma Kenya Refugee Camp as a group of "Lost Boys" waits to see if their names will appear on a travel list posted in the camp twice a month. For many, these are the last few days they will spend with their friends and what remains of their families. They have been living in mud huts, eating once a day, trying to maintain the ways of their people for a decade. Soon, they board a plane that will taxi them down a dirt airstrip toward a modern American life quite different from the one they have imagined. We meet Peter Nyarol Dut and Santino Majok Chuor, the film's two main characters, as they say their farewells. Peter gathers his friends to give away his prized possessions, a 1950's basketball how-to book and a pair of tattered high-top sneakers. His friends in turn remind him of their shared history and tell him that his journey to America will be "like going to heaven." As Santino shares a farewell meal with friends, he reveals his fear of being lonely in America. Without friends, he "will grow thin and not be able to eat." Before their departure both Santino and Peter receive guidance from their elders who instill in them the importance of the opportunity they are being given and direct them to return to Sudan one day to help their people.

On September 1, 2001, Peter and Santino arrive in Houston, Texas and begin to face the everyday challenges of their new lives: learning to ride the bus, night-shift jobs, car payments and sending money home to Africa. The film intimately follows their first year of struggle to find their place in an American society they were ill-prepared for and that understands them even less. Their journey raises the questions: is America's society of plenty available to immigrants? How will the reality of their new lives compare to their expectations of the U.S. as the land of education and financial opportunity? How effective is the U.S. response to this crisis? Woven throughout the film is a discussion of race. To what degree do our characters find kinship with African-Americans? Will they choose to identify with other immigrants? What role will their Christianity play in their American lives? As Peter and Santino struggle to create new lives for themselves, hold on to their traditions and cope with the psychological scars of their past, they help us look at issues of immigration, foreign aid, race and cultural identity in a new way.

Producer/Director/Sound

Megan Mylan is a New York-based documentary filmmaker and co-director and producer of *Lost Boys of Sudan*. Megan also directed the documentary *Batidania* on Brazilian resistance music, and is currently in production on a film about the struggle for racial equality in Brazil. She has worked on documentaries for PBS, HBO, Showtime and the BBC including the Oscar nominated, *Long Night's Journey Into Day*. She has a Bachelor's from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and Masters' degrees in Journalism and Latin American Studies from the University of California at Berkeley.

**Producer/Director/
Cinematographer**

Jon Shenk is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and cinematographer. He is the co-director/producer of *Lost Boys of Sudan*. He co-directed *Afghanistan: Hell of a Nation* for PBS's Wide Angle series, and produced *New Heroes*, a series for PBS about social entrepreneurs. He also produced, directed, and photographed *The Beginning*, about the making of *Star Wars: Episode I, The Phantom Menace*. Jon has worked on documentaries for MTV, PBS, National Geographic, A&E, Bravo, CBS, NBC, and the BBC. He earned his Masters in Documentary Filmmaking from Stanford University in 1995.

Executive Producer

Frances Reid has been producing, directing, and shooting documentary films for over 30 years. Her most recent production is *Long Night's Journey Into Day* on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The film, co-directed with Deborah Hoffmann, received a 2000 Academy Award® nomination and won the Sundance Grand Jury Prize. Her film, *Skin Deep*, is a documentary exploring race relations on college campuses, it was broadcast nationally on PBS and is now in use by nearly 2,000 colleges and universities nationwide. In 1994, she received an Academy Award® nomination for her documentary short *Straight From The Heart*. Her producing and directing credits include such films as the groundbreaking documentary *In the Best Interests of the Children* and *The Faces of AIDS* awarded First Place by the Black Filmmakers' Hall of Fame.

Editor

Kim Roberts has written, directed and edited a number of award winning documentary and narrative films. Her editing credits include, *Daughter from Danang*, 2002 Sundance Grand Jury Prize, Academy Award® Nominee, for PBS-American Experience; *Daddy and Papa*, Sundance 2002, PBS; *The Wolf*, Nightline; *Great Wall Across the Yangtze*, PBS.

Credits

LOST BOYS OF SUDAN is a co-production of Actual Films and Principe Productions in association with American Documentary, Inc and ITVS

featuring
SANTINO MAJOK CHUOR
PETER NYAROL DUT

directors/producers
MEGAN MYLAN
JON SHENK

editors
KIM ROBERTS
MARK BECKER

cinematographer
JON SHENK

sound mixer
MEGAN MYLAN

executive producer
FRANCES REID

associate producers
KELLY DAVIS
BEN AJIEK AJIEK
THON DENG
JOE HARRISON
MARIO MAKOL
VICKY MAULEÓN

additional cinematography
MICHAEL CHIN
NICHOLAS DOOB
JOHNNY SYMONS

additional sound
DOUG DUNDERDALE
PETER NUBILE
BOB SULLIVAN
JOHNNY SYMONS

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