A&E IndieFilms Presents

An Our Time Projects Production

**CITY OF GHOSTS**

**A Film by Matthew Heineman**

**WORLD PREMIERE**

**U.S. DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION**

**SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL 2017**

**Public Screenings**

Saturday, January 21st, 5:30pm // The MARC, Park City

Monday, January 23rd, 8:30am // Egyptian Theatre, Park City

Tuesday, January 24th, 6:30pm // Rose Wagner Performing Arts, SLC

Thursday, January 26th, 3:15pm // Library Center Theatre, Park City

Saturday, January 28th, 8:30am // Egyptian Theatre, Park City

**Press & Industry Screening**

Tuesday, January 24th, 9:00am // Holiday Village 2, Park City

Running Time:90 minutes

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**SYNOPSIS**

Directed, produced, and filmed by Academy Award–nominated and Emmy-winning filmmaker Matthew Heineman (CARTEL LAND, 2015 Sundance Film Festival Directing Award), CITY OF GHOSTS is a singularly powerful cinematic experience that is sure to shake audiences to their core as it elevates the canon of one of the most talented documentary filmmakers working today. Captivating in its immediacy, CITY OF GHOSTS follows the journey of “Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently”—a handful of anonymous activists who banded together after their homeland was taken over by ISIS in 2014. With astonishing, deeply personal access, this is the story of a brave group of citizen journalists as they face the realities of life undercover, on the run, and in exile, risking their lives to stand up against one of the greatest evils in the world today.

**DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT**

As I was traveling with my last film CARTEL LAND, the plight of Syria was becoming a near daily part of the news cycle. I almost obsessively began reading about what was happening with the so-called Islamic State. But I couldn’t find an angle on the story. In the fall of 2015, I read an article about Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS), a group of citizen activists who came together to document the atrocities that ISIS was committing in their hometown – dubbed the capital of the Islamic State. I was struck by the sacrifices that they had endured as a group, and I knew their story could provide an intimate, character driven window into life under ISIS.

I made contact with members of RBSS, attempted to gain their trust, and soon began filming with them. I knew almost immediately that I wanted the spine of the story to be deeply personal verité footage, captured as the activists escaped Syria after the assassination of several members by ISIS. I followed them in Turkey and then eventually to Europe as ISIS continued to threaten them.

I knew that I wanted to juxtapose this present day journey with the dramatic footage they had captured, and were continuing to capture, inside Raqqa. Since ISIS took over the city in March 2014, journalists have been unable to enter the region, allowing the caliphate to control the narrative of what is happening inside the city with its slick propaganda videos. So, RBSS’s footage – including some that has never been released – provides a unique, up-close, and visceral window into daily life in Raqqa.

The contrast of ISIS’s videos, which proclaim a fully-functioning and prosperous state, with those of RBSS, which captured the dysfunction and violence of everyday life, is shocking. In a sense, it’s a war of ideas, a war of propaganda, a war being waged with cameras and computers, not just guns.

Over the year that I spent with the group, I was surprised that the film became so much more than the chronicles of RBSS versus ISIS. The more I shot with them, the more the story twisted and turned into one that also touched on the immigrant experience, the strength of brotherhood, and one’s haunting relationship with trauma.

And now America, Syria, Russia, Turkey, Iran, and local militias are poised to challenge ISIS in Raqqa in what may be a bloody and months-long military campaign. While this battle will surely be front-page news, there will be a no less important information war waged by groups like RBSS playing out on the ground, behind the scenes. It’s this ideological battle for the hearts and minds of the next generation that may end up having the most lasting impact on the fight against terrorism.

*-- Matthew Heineman, Director/Producer*

**FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

**MATTHEW HEINEMAN**

*Director/Producer/Cinematographer/Editor*

Matthew Heineman is an Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning filmmaker based in New York. His film CARTEL LAND was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature and won three Primetime Emmy Awards, including Exceptional Merit in Documentary Filmmaking and Best Cinematography. The film premiered in the U.S. Documentary Competition at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival, where Heineman won the Best Director Award and Special Jury Prize for Cinematography.

The film was released theatrically nationwide by The Orchard in July 2015 and had its broadcast premiere on A&E in January 2016. Heineman won the Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Documentary Award from the Director’s Guild of America for the film, as well as the Courage Under Fire Award from the International Documentary Association “in recognition of conspicuous bravery in the pursuit of truth.” He was also named one of Foreign Policy Magazine’s 100 Leading Global Thinkers of 2015. In addition, CARTEL LAND was nominated for a Gotham Award, Critics’ Choice Award, and BAFTA Award for Best Documentary, and was recently presented with the 2015 Documentary Award by the prestigious George Polk Awards in Investigative Journalism.

Previously, he directed and produced a feature-length documentary ESCAPE FIRE: The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare. It premiered at Sundance 2012, won numerous awards at festivals across the country, and was released by Roadside Attractions/Lionsgate to critical praise in October 2012. The film premiered on CNN in March 2013, and was subsequently nominated for an Emmy.

Heineman collaborated for two years with a team at HBO on the groundbreaking, Emmy-nominated HBO series, *The Alzheimer's Project*, which aired in May 2009. He also directed and produced OUR TIME – a feature length documentary about what it's like to be young in today's America. Heineman has directed several short films and commercials and is in development on a few different projects.

**MATTHEW HAMACHEK**

*Editor*

Matthew Hamachek began his career working on the Oscar-nominated documentary STREET FIGHT with Marshall Curry and went on to collaborate with Curry on three films including IF A TREE FALLS which won the Documentary Editing Award at the Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for an Academy Award in 2012. Hamachek also won the Documentary Editing Award at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival for GIDEON’S ARMY. He followed that with MEET THE PATELS. In 2015 he co-produced and edited CARTEL LAND which went on to be nominated for an Academy Award and win three Emmy awards. His most recent film, AMANDA KNOX, premiered in the fall of 2016 to critical acclaim.

**PAX WASSERMAN**

*Editor*

Pax Wassermann is a film editor and producer with twenty years in documentary and fiction features. CITY OF GHOSTS is his second film with director Matthew Heineman, following 2015’s Sundance prize-winner CARTEL LAND (also nominated for a 2015 Academy Award). His other work includes DEVIL’S PLAYGROUND, PUSSY RIOT: A PUNK PRAYER, KNUCKLEBALL! And WHICH WAY HOME, which was nominated for an Academy Award in 2009.

**H. SCOTT SALINAS**

*Composer*

Award-winning composer, H. Scott Salinas has contributed towards an impressive variety of notable projects including Bruce Lee action fable BIRTH OF THE DRAGON, Aaron Sorkin's smash hit *The Newsroom*, TNT's dark thriller *Murder in the First*, and the Oscar-nominated documentary film CARTEL LAND.

Along with accolades such as the prestigious Cannes Lion, Clio, BMI, and Turner Classic Movies Young Film Composer awards, Scott's accomplishments have earned him esteem and recognition as a highly versatile yet specialized talent.

**JACKSON GREENBERG**

*Composer*

Jackson Greenberg is a composer, singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and producer originally based in Los Angeles, CA. Jackson’s recent film and TV work includes the Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning documentary CARTEL LAND *(*soundtrack, *Lakeshore Records*), and two projects premiering at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival: CITY OF GHOSTS(Dir. Matthew Heineman), and HOT GIRLS WANTED: TURNED ON(Netflix, April 2017). Jackson received an undergraduate degree in music from Princeton University and a graduate degree in composition/scoring from Motion Pictures and TV from The Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California.

**ALEX GIBNEY**

*Executive Producer*

Alex Gibney is an American documentary film director and producer. Gibney has been called “the most important documentarian of our time” by Esquire Magazine and “one of America’s most successful and prolific documentary filmmakers” by The New York Times. His previous work includes Taxi to the Dark Side, winner of the 2007 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, the Emmy-award winning Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief (2015), and Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room (2005), among others.

**MOLLY THOMPSON**

*Executive Producer*

Molly Thompson is Senior Vice President of Feature Films at A+E Studios. In 2005, she founded A+E Studios’ feature documentary production arm, A&E IndieFilms, which under her leadership has gained an unprecedented track record, garnering three Academy Award nominations for CARTEL LAND (2015), JESUS CAMP (2006) and MURDERBALL (2005), Sundance wins in several categories for LIFE, ANIMATED (2016), CARTEL LAND (2015), THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE (2009) and AMERICAN TEEN (2008), along with hundreds of other awards and nominations.

Thompson also serves as executive producer for documentaries produced under A+E Studios’ History Films banner, including DRUNK STONED BRILLIANT DEAD: THE STORY OF THE NATIONAL LAMPOON (2015), THE UNKNOWN KNOWN (2013), NO PLACE ON EARTH (2012) and CAVE OF FORGOTTEN DREAMS (2010). She has executive produced two narrative features for Lifetime Films—Eleanor Coppola’s PARIS CAN WAIT, starring Diane Lane and Alec Baldwin, which premiered at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival, and LILA & EVE (2015), starring Viola Davis and Jennifer Lopez.

**COMPLETE PRODUCTION CREDITS**

FRONT CREDITS

A&E Animated Logo

A&E INDIEFILMS Presents

An OUR TIME PROJECTS Production

In Association With JIGSAW PRODUCTIONS

A Film By MATTHEW HEINEMAN

END CREDITS

**Directed, Produced, and Filmed By**

MATTHEW HEINEMAN

**Edited By**

MATTHEW HAMACHEK

PAX WASSERMANN

MATTHEW HEINEMAN

**Music By**

JACKSON GREENBERG

H. SCOTT SALINAS

**Co-Produced By**

JUAN CAMILO CRUZ

MATTHEW HAMACHEK

JOEDAN OKUN  
MAYA SEIDLER

**Executive Produced By**

ALEX GIBNEY

MOLLY THOMPSON

**Executive Produced By**

MAIKEN BAIRD

DAVID FIALKOW

ELAINE FRONTAIN BRYANT

STACEY OFFMAN

ROBERT SHARENOW

SCROLL

**Footage Provided By**

Members of Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently

**Co-Editor**

Daniel Koehler

**Additional Editing**

Nicholas Biagetti

**Additional Cinematography By**

Marcel Mettelsiefen

Matt Porwoll

Max Preiss

**Assistant Editor**

Loulwa Khoury

**Production Assistants**

Maddie Goldberg

Jordan Schopick

Nadeen Shaker

Kristi Stout

**Local Fixer**

Mahmoud Al Basha

Khalid Alhasan

**Additional Footage Provided By**

Mohamad Zaidan

Carl Gierstorfer

Daniel Koehler

Dan Krauss

Amer Matar

Mezar Matar

Mohammed Nour Matar

Carlos Vasquez Martinez

**Executive Producer for Jigsaw Productions**

Richard Perello

**Post-Production Producer for Jigsaw Productions**

Erin Edeiken

**Feature Films Manager for A&E IndieFilms**

Christine Kecher

**Offline Post Production Facilities**

Duart Film and Video

**Audio Post Production Provided By**

Gigantic Post

**Sound Designer and Re-recording Mixer**

Tom Paul

**Sound Editors**

Leslie Bloome

Allison Casey

Ryan Collison

Joanna Fang

Eric Milano

Kevin Peters

Mark Philip

Nick Seaman

**Titles/Graphics**

Nicholas Biagetti

Colton Fordyce

**Color by**

RCO

**Colorist**

Seth Ricart

**DI Color Producer**

Sheina Dao

**DI Color Assist**

Bo Kim

**Music Mixed and Produced by**

Jackson Greenberg

H. Scott Salinas

**Music Editor**

Logan Stahley

**Violin and Viola**

Miguel Atwood-Ferguson

**Cello**

Artyom Manukyan

**Guitar**

Matthew Atticus Berger

**Vocals, Vibraphone, Piano, Percussion and Synths**

Jackson Greenberg

**Oud, Guitar, Synths and Piano**

H. Scott Salinas

**Percussion**

Faisal Zeidan

**Saxophone**

Jon Natchez

**Sample Editor**

Tyler Sabbag

**Recorded at**

The Village Studios

**Original Song “Broken Wing” Written by**

Jackson Greenberg

Wasfi Massarani

H. Scott Salinas

**Lyrics By**

Al-Dimashqia

**Performed by**

Wasfi Massarani

**Translations, Subtitles, and Transcripts by**

Dahlia Abbas

Mohamed Abo El Wafa

Reem Alothman

Yasmine Al-Sayyad

Renad Alziyabi

Mariam Bazeed

Dina Emam

Loulwa Khoury

Baraa Ktiri

Gamar Markarian

Reham Mohamed

Loubna Mrie

Sherif Rizk

Nadeen Shaker

Saphe Shamoun

Abu Bakr Shawky

Seraf Sidig

Iyad Yousef

Khalid Zaid

**Archival Footage**

Pond 5

Shutterstock

Transterra Media

**Accounting**

Justin Morris (JBM Business Management)

**Production Insurance**

Dylan Reiff (Reiff & Associates)

**Legal Services**

Jerry Dasti (Sloss Eckhouse LawCo)

Chris Perez (Donaldson + Callif, LLP)

**Financing and Distribution Advisory Service**

Cinetic Media

**International Sales**

Dogwoof

**Special Thanks**

Arash Amel

Karim Amir

David Appleton

Owen Arcata

Alan Barker

Barbara Becker

Josh Begley

Bruce Brown

Alan Buch

Catherine Casey

Joan Churchill

Joe Cohen

Scott Cohen

Phil Coleman

Michael Cooper

Marshall Curry

Jerry Dasti

Beth Earl

Zaina Erhaim

Myles Estey

Steven Farneth

Kristin Feeley

Susan Gallo

Alex Gladstein

Micah Green

Luke Silver-Greenberg  
Sara Greenberg

Pagan Harleman

Lilly Hartley

Chris Hegedus

Ben Heineman

Zach Heineman

Tabitha Jackson

Dan Janvey

Christine Kecher

Patrick Klauss

Jesse Klempner

John Lesher

Lara Logan

Joey Marra

Sherif Mansour

Brian McGinn

Metal Rabbit

Marcel Mettelsiefen

Peter Miller

Laura Nix

Dana O’Keefe

Erin Owens

Richard Pearce

Amanda Peet

DA Pennebaker

Laura Poitras

David Remnick

Bradley Ross

Cristine Russell

Sebastian Seelman

Ben Selkow

Ishai Setton

Greg Shapiro

Enat Sidi  
John Sloss

The Sundance Documentary Film Program

Beth Swofford

Ben Taub

David Teague

Tracy Droz Tragos

Alexandra Trustman

Chai Vasarhelyi

Andreas Wattenberg

Adam White

Tom Yellin

Jeremiah Zagar

Ida Ziniti

*This film was supported by a grant from the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program with support from Open Society Foundations, Ford Foundation JustFilms, Candescent Films.*

A Film By Matthew Heineman

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