



PRESS KIT

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“Angkor Awakens provides an engaging narrative of Pol Pot’s devastating regime and how Cambodia is grappling with it today.”

-The Cambodia Daily



Synopsis

“Angkor Awakens: A Portrait of Cambodia” is an eye-opening snapshot of a nation poised at a political and cultural tipping point. Viewing the present through the lens of the country’s tangled history, the film follows the people of Cambodia as they fight to recover their culture and history in the wake of the Khmer Rouge genocide (1975-1979).

Though the legacy of past violence and present-day repression lives on, it is counterbalanced by the hopes and aspirations of Cambodia’s new generation.

“Angkor Awakens” is built around intimate interviews— including an unprecedented appearance by Cambodia’s Strongman/Prime Minister Hun Sen. Containing stunning footage of the country, this film provides a window into the lives of one of Asia’s youngest populations as it seeks to leave behind its brutal past.

The film examines Nixon and Kissinger’s secret bombing of Cambodia which set the stage for the rise of the Khmer Rouge.

“Angkor Awakens” is directed by Robert H. Lieberman. He is a best-selling novelist, award winning filmmaker (“They call it Myanmar,” “Last Stop Kew Gardens”), and a long-time member of the Cornell University Physics faculty. It is Lieberman’s background as a child of the Holocaust that has led him to explore the effects of the genocide on today’s young Cambodians.

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Director's Statement

A personal message from
Robert:

As a child of the Holocaust,
I was initially drawn to
Cambodia because I was
curious to see if there were
any lingering effects of the
Khmer Rouge genocide in today's young people.



I was determined not to make a doom and gloom movie. Rather, I wanted to provide a sweeping portrait of the country, its people and history, its politics and psychology. Of course there was no way to avoid Cambodia's darkest period.

I got lucky and got a two-hour, eyeball-to-eyeball interview with Hun Sen, Cambodia's strongman/prime minister who never gives interviews.

Rather than using a crew in Cambodia, I shot the 149 interviews recording the sound by myself and using only available lighting. It allowed people to be comfortable enough to share their most intimate thoughts. My intention is that this be a story of hope and recovery told through the Cambodian people— the young and old, artists and teachers, politicians and just plain ordinary people.

Having lived through the Vietnam war, I was forced to come to grips with Nixon and Kissinger's secret bombing and incursion into this neutral country that helped set the stage for the rise of the Khmer Rouge. It strikes me that in the present political climate the film has an immediacy that makes the story today as relevant as ever.

Our production team's hope is that this film will build on the major success of our previous film "They Call It Myanmar."

Robert H. Lieberman, Director

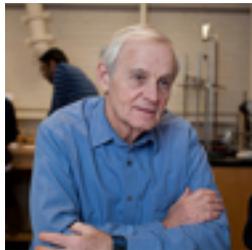
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Robert H. Lieberman

Director/Producer

Robert H. Lieberman is a best-selling novelist and film director. He is also a longtime member of the Physics faculty at Cornell University.

Mr. Lieberman has six published novels, his newest is *The Boys Of Truxton*.

His previous film, *They Call It Myanmar*, was a New York Times Critics Pick and was named one of the top dozen films of 2012 by Roger Ebert.

Filmography:

- They Call It Myanmar*
(Documentary featuring Aung San Suu Kyi)
- Last Stop Kew Gardens*
(American children of Holocaust survivors)
- Faces In A Famine* (PBS film covering 1985 Ethiopian famine)
- BoyceBall* (Film depicting the creation of an original ballet)
- Green Lights* (Comedy)

Deborah C. Hoard

Producer

Deborah C. Hoard has been a producer and director at PhotoSynthesis Productions for 25 years. With a strong focus on social justice, her work has won more than 100 international and national media awards.

Deborah was co-producer of *They Call it Myanmar: Lifting the Curtain*, which the late Roger Ebert called “a thing of beauty... a documentary with all the virtues of a great feature film.”

Her film, *CIVIL WARRIORS*, explores the experiences of 2 black families from upstate New York whose men enlisted in the U.S. Colored Troops and fought in the Civil War.

Her recent documentary *RE:THINKING* asks the question, “What if we taught students HOW to think instead of WHAT to think?” The film shows the powerful, positive change that occurs when teachers and students work together to build knowledge instead of memorize information.

David Kossack

Editor/Story

David Kossack is a graduate of Ithaca College’s Park School of Communications. Since joining PhotoSynthesis Productions he has worked as an editor and videographer on numerous PSP projects, including editing the award-winning documentary *They Call it Myanmar: Lifting the Curtain*.

David is also actively involved with *The Actor’s Workshop* of Ithaca where he teaches acting and has directed several stage productions for the Workshop’s theater company.

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Scott Hitz

Puppet Director

Scott Hitz is a Director, Producer, Puppeteer, and educator whose work has been seen worldwide. His company, PuppHitz, is dedicated to promoting the art of puppetry, and to expanding the idea of what that art form can do. He has been honored with the position of Artist in Residence at the Eugene O’Neil Theater Center summer puppetry program, and his work has taken him to Korea as part of the Chunchon International Festival for Puppetry. Scott has also been the recipient of a Henson seed grant for his production Ursa Major: The Voice of the Bear.
www.scotthitz.com

Norm Scott

Sound Design

Norm Scott got his first tape recorder at the age of five, and has been recording and archiving sound ever since. He likes robots and inventing essential new gadgets with no discernible purpose.



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Photo Gallery

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Featured Interviews

Hun Sen

Prime Minister of Cambodia

Sam Rainsy

Opposition Leader, Cambodia National Rescue Party
(CNRP)

Andrew Mertha

Professor of Government, Cornell University

Tioulong Saumura

Member of Parliament
(wife of Opposition Leader Sam Rainsy)

John Gunther Dean

U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia
March 1974 – April 12, 1975

San Soubert

Appointed by King Sihanouk to the Constitutional
Council
(Son of the former prime minister)

Mealy Truong

Former Ambassador to Japan
Member of FUCINPEC (King Sihanouk's royalist party)

Richard Solomon,

Asst. Secretary of State, 1989- 1992
Under President H.W. Bush

Chhun Chenda Sophea

NGO: Impact Cambodia

Nayan Chanda,

Journalist, Editor-in-Chief YaleGlobal Online
Author "Brother Enemy"

Dr. Sotheara Chhim

Psychiatrist
Executive Director of TPO

Sonita Men

Student, Royal University of Phnom Penh

Sopheakmonkol Sok

CEO at start-up Codingate, Small World Cambodia

Vuthy Huot

Journalist
Radio Free Asia

Chansreineang Rong

Interior Designer

Benny Widiono

Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General
in Cambodia,
1994- 97

Phloeun Prim

Executive Director Cambodian Living Arts

Nicholas Koumjian

Tribunal Prosecutor ECCC
(Extra Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia)

Pich Sopheap

Sculptor/Artist

Michael Lessac

Global Arts Corp

Noun So Thero

Managing Director The Cambodia Daily

Henri Locard

Historian and Professor, Royal University of Phnom
Penh

Hannah Phan

Sr. Lecturer, Khmer Studies, Cornell University

Richard Garella

Journalist

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"The film pulls a rabbit out of the hat with its extensive interview with strongman Prime Minister Hun Sen, whose reflections on the state of his country as well as his memory of the Khmer Rouge era become a centerpiece of the story.

In the documentary *Angkor Awakens*, director Robert H. Lieberman condenses the past and present of Cambodia into 90 minutes. From the ruins of Angkor Wat to the Khmer Rouge horror and present-day testimonies, the film highlights the key episodes in the country's cultural and political development."

- Bangkok Post

"Decades after the Khmer Rouge genocide, Cambodia remains a fractured nation with an untold history. An emotive new film, *Angkor Awakens*, tells this tragic story in full, and finds plenty of cause for hope at the end."

- Open Democracy

"Mr. Lieberman's use of Khmer shadow puppets to illustrate the country's history brings a unique color to the documentary without trivializing the gravity of the story. The detailed historical account provides foreign audiences ample context for later events under Mr. Hun Sen's leadership."

- *The Cambodia Daily*

Over four years in the making, "*Angkor Awakens*" features prominent Cambodian figures including interviews with longtime Prime Minister Hun Sen, exiled opposition leader Sam Rainsy, journalists, historians and others to explore the country's emergence from devastation.

- Khaosod English

Lieberman's film covers a great deal of complex history and background on Cambodia, taking in the Vietnam War, Kent State and Nixon and Kissinger.

- Ithaca Times

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Praise for the Producers' previous film, They Call It Myanmar.

“They Call It Myanmar’ is a thing of beauty... a documentary with all the virtues of a great feature film; its cinematography, music and contemplative words make it... a hymn to a land that has grown out of the oldest cultures in Asia.”

- Roger Ebert, Chicago Sun Times

“...One of the best documentaries I saw in 2012.”

- Roger Ebert's Journal, Chicago Sun Times

” ‘They Call It Myanmar’ reveals a face long hidden... the result is eye-opening and insightful”

- New York Times: Critics' Pick

“The documentary is as quietly enthralling as Myanmar’s people. Various tough and poetic... Lieberman possesses a warm and genuine curiosity.”

- Los Angeles Times

“There are a number of quietly startling moments . . . a solid and subtly moving portrait of the people of Burma... Lieberman manages to capture the country’s beauty, along with the proud perseverance of its people.”

- The Washington Post

“...Defies the odds of creating a travelogue and, instead, delivers a compelling portrait . . . dwells with you . . . the definitive film on a country...”

- The Hollywood Reporter

“...Robert H. Lieberman’s exceptional, truthful and exciting documentary . . . a documentary with all the virtues of a great feature film. He has succeeded brilliantly.”

- San Francisco Examiner

“The striking beauty of the country; the people; the decayed infrastructure; the extreme poverty; archival footage; an interview with pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi; Robert H. Lieberman has put together a collage of voices sounds and images. A labor of Love.”

- BBC World News

“It’s a great example of the potential power of film . . . It may not be a big production, but it has a big heart.”

- Saturday Night at the Movies, Berkeley, CA

“You’ll be amazed.”

- Aye Chan Naing, The Democratic Voice of Burma

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