

PEACE HAS NO BORDERS



THEY MADE A CHOICE, AND PAID A PRICE...





PEACE HAS NO BORDERS

64 min. documentary

52 min. version available

www.peacehasnoborders.com

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

Escaping one battlefield for another, contemporary soldiers of conscience wage a 10-year fight to avoid deportation and punishment if returned to the U.S. from Canada.

SYNOPSIS

Between 1965-1973, over 50,000 Americans made their way to Canada, refusing to participate in the Vietnam War. Forty years later, Canada has another moral choice – whether to give refuge to U.S. veterans of the Iraq War who crossed the border instead of serving another tour. Caught between two countries, today's resisters have support of the public, but still fight for the political will to allow them to remain in Canada.

THE STORY

During the Iraq and Afghan Wars, veterans from the United States crossed the border to Canada seeking relief and refuge from serving in what they viewed as an unjust and immoral war. *Peace Has No Borders* follows the struggles of a group of these resisters caught between two countries as they struggle to remain in an increasingly conservative Canada. Today, little is heard from veterans who made a stand when the wars were raging. *Peace Has No Borders* gives voice to the men and women who found themselves in an ethical and moral quagmire while serving. It is the story of their efforts to find refuge and of the people who provided sanctuary and support when they arrived in Canada.



Chuck, Navy Chief Petty Officer, served over 17 years. During the Iraq War, he realized flights leaving his ship were bombing civilian targets. Citing Nuremberg Principles, a set of guidelines for determining what constitutes a war crimes, Chuck refused further participation and crossed the border to Canada.



Kim, US Army Private First Class, joined the Army to support her family. She decided to go to Canada while on an emergency leave home.



Michelle Robidoux, War Resisters Support Campaign, is an organizer and activist who has worked tirelessly to persuade the legal system and politicians to allow the resisters to stay in Canada.



After serving nearly 10 years, including a year in Kuwait, Army Sgt. Patrick Hart left his base at Fort Campbell, Kentucky in 2005, a month before he was to be sent to Iraq for another tour of duty and went to Canada.

WHAT PEOPLE HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE FILM



“Often quite personal and emotional, *Peace Has No Borders* reminds the viewer that conscience does matter, even when it fails to overturn the machinery of war it is opposing.”

-Ron Jacobs/Counter Punch: [The Daily Courage of Resistance](#)

“*Peace Has No Borders* raises important questions about a soldier’s responsibility doing combat in times of war not to commit war crimes. This film tells a compelling and important story.”

-Michael McPhearson, Executive Director/
Veterans For Peace

“We owe a debt to a current generation of soldiers who have had the courage and moral fortitude to say “no”. *Peace Has No Borders* is an important story about a brave group of men and women who chose to seek refuge in Canada instead of participating further in the Iraq and Afghan Wars.”

-Dan Ellsberg, released Pentagon Papers

“My memories of the Vietnam era are vivid, not only of the war zone, but of the resistance into which I merged after returning to the States. Not the least poignant are of visiting friends granted sanctuary in Canada. That these political exiles had each made a vastly more honorable choice than I was a realization that haunts me still. Such things are supposed to be the stuff of a period piece, a sort of baggage peculiar to my own “Vietnam Generation.” The reality that they are happening again has been invisible to most Americans. *Peace Has No Borders* brings all this into focus at long last, and does so in a way making evasion or denial of the implications all but impossible.”

-Ward Churchill, activist/author

“Canada has had a long history of providing sanctuary for those who resist crimes against humanity. But few know that since the events of 9/11 Canada has turned its back on this honorable tradition and reputation. Despite opposition to the illegal wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and support for American war resisters from a majority of its citizens, the Canadian government has deported numerous veterans back to the United States where they have faced court martial and military prison for their acts of conscience... *Peace Has No Borders* documents this sad state of affairs and the political movement against it, a campaign that holds out hope that that nation will soon return to its honorable principles.”

- Paul Atwood, Author, *War and Empire: The American Way of Life*

OUR INSPIRATION



Philosopher and educator John Dewey argued that the function of art is to break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness. Our film follows a relatively obscure story about a war that is no longer in the forefront of public discourse. At the same time, *Peace Has No Borders* is a political thriller that captures an essence of Canada's Harper years and is a testament about just how difficult fighting the power of governments can be. *Peace Has No Borders* follows contemporary soldiers for peace, revealing both the

power and limitations of activism. When we began work on this film there were several good films being made about the Iraq War and we didn't want to duplicate those efforts. Instead, we found a parallel story about veterans who crossed the border to Canada seeking asylum, much like their Vietnam era counterparts. *Peace Has No Borders* keeps their story alive for future generations who will face their own decisions in the face of war.

Q&A WITH CO-DIRECTORS DEB ELLIS & DENIS MUELLER



Photo: Diane Walker

When and how did you first become familiar with this subject?

In 2006, we learned about a bi-national event called “Peace Has No Borders” held in support of Iraq War resisters who crossed the border to Canada instead of returning to war. We decided to check it out. In Buffalo, NY and Ft. Erie, ON where the event was held, we met members of Veterans For Peace (VFP), Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), and Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), all there to support a new group of war resisters who crossed the border, refusing participation in the Iraq War.

We quickly decided this was a story that interested us. Now, ten years later, we have finished the film, but the story of the war resisters is ongoing.

For better or worse, we didn’t know what we were getting into. We started following one family. As we

continued to shoot, we saw a bigger picture that included multiple characters, and the War Resisters Support Campaign, led by Michelle Robidoux. Reality has a funny way of intervening in the best laid plans! We got ourselves into the story and didn’t crawl out until the Harper government was voted out of power in 2015.

How does this film relate to other work you have done?

Our films examine significant social and political movements. *Peace Has No Borders* is another chapter, reflecting on the impact of social activism and resistance to war. Our films are important reminders that some people make great sacrifices to talk truth to power and that often they pay a price.

Peace Has No Borders tells an untold story about Iraq War veterans who crossed the border to Canada seeking asylum, much like their Vietnam era counterparts and keeps the story alive for future generations who will make their own decisions in the face of war.

What insight did this film give you into the relationship between Canada’s government and public opinion?

Working on this film has reinforced our sense that governments do not always respond to public opinion. A 2008 Angus Reid poll showed 64% of Canadians believed U.S. Iraq War resisters should be allowed to stay in Canada. A new 2016 Insights West public opinion poll confirms this sentiment. A majority of Canadians agree with allowing these former U.S. soldiers to become permanent residents. But, many politicians have not responded to public opinion on the issue.

In 2006, Canada’s Conservative Party was elected to power and Stephen Harper was appointed Prime Minister. Harper was vehemently opposed to allowing the resisters to stay in Canada. Today, Justin Trudeau’s Liberal Party is in power. Despite verbally speaking out in support of the resisters when he was a Member of Parliament, he has been silent since taking power.

The resisters who remain in Canada live in limbo. Change is difficult. And, that’s one of the things our film is about.

WHO WE ARE

Deb Ellis and Denis Mueller Co-Directors

Our films examine significant social and political movements. *The FBI's War on Black America* is a rigorous examination of the FBI's infamous COINTELPRO program, and remains a relevant cautionary story about the dangers of government surveillance. *Howard Zinn: You Can't be Neutral on a Moving Train* (short-listed for an Academy Award in 2005) looks at the history of social movements of the 20th century through the eyes of activist and historian Howard Zinn. *Peace Has No Borders* is another chapter, reflecting on the impact of social activism and war. Both Denis and Deb live in Burlington, VT where they continue to make films. Deb teaches at the University of Vermont.

Alex Lisman – Principal Photography

Lisman has been actively covering the War Resisters Support Campaign efforts since 2004. He has created numerous video advocacy clips for use in social media campaigns supporting the resisters. His short film, *Let Them Stay: Voices of U.S. War Resisters in Canada*, is featured on the NFB's CitizenShift website. Lisman works as a freelance cameraman and producer in Toronto.

David Cohen – Consulting Editor

Cohen's editorial credits include *Love and Stuff* (director Judith Helfand), *Deep Run* (executive producer Susan Sarandon), *Holy Land* (director Peter Cohn), *All of Me* (Independent Lens Project 360, director Alexandra Lescaze), *Coming Up Roses* (starring Bernadette Peters, director Lisa Albright) and *The Toe Tactic* (director Emily Hubley). For several years, he was primary editor on *Heat Map* (formally *Cooked*), Judith Helfand's forthcoming feature documentary. He's currently editing *Love Gilda*, a feature documentary about Gilda Radner.

Richard Martinez – Composer

Martinez has worked as a composer, music producer, music director and performer in New York City since his arrival in 1978. He has composed music for the documentaries *The Longoria Affair*, *The Miracle of Spanish Harlem*, *Antonia Pantoja Presente!*, *BLAST!*, *The Last Conquistador*, and *Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train*. He also composed music for the film *Bossa Nova*, and a score for *The Daytrippers*. His music also appears on recordings by Dave Valentin, Blood, Sweat and Tears, and Al MacDowell.

SELECTED SCREENINGS

- Vermont International Film Festival

Vermont Filmmakers' Showcase - Audience Favorite
Burlington, VT 2016

- Lake Champlain International Film Festival,

Champy Award for Contribution to Regional Filmmaking
Plattsburgh, NY 2016

- Big Muddy Film Festival,

Official Selection, Carbondale, IL, 2017

- 5th Annual Screening Scholarship Media Festival:

On the Psyche and the Boundaries of the Political
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 2017

- White River Indie Festival

Official Selection, White River Junction, VT, 2017

- University Film Video Association Annual Conference Screening

California State University, Los Angeles, August 2017

- Spotlight Documentary Film Award 2017

- Veterans for Peace Annual Convention

Program Selection, Chicago, August 2017

CAST & CREW

Co-Producers/Directors

Deb Ellis and
Denis Mueller

Principal Camera and Co-Producer:

Alex Lisman

Additional Camera:

Michael Connolly,
Deb Ellis,
David Hermolin,
Denis Mueller,
Dinesh Sabu

Consulting Editor:

David Cohen

Original Score Composed by:

Richard Martinez
Recorded at Light Body Music

Re-Recording Mixer:

Joe Egan, Egan Studios

Colorist:

Ben Zacklin

Music Clearance:

Rosie Howe

Technical Advisor:

Art Bell, Dreamlike Pictures

Titles:

Ana Banu, Black Horse Mansion

Logo Design:

Keri Piatek-Crafts

Intern

Shaunese Crawford

Primary Characters

Patrick and Jill Hart

Kimberly Rivera

Chuck Wiley

Michelle Robidoux, WRSC

IN MEMORY OF

David Cline

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Deb Ellis and Denis Mueller