

KUBLACOM PICTURES

PRESENTS

A FILM BY

JANE GURR & ED KUCERAK

THIS IS MY WITNESS



Documentary running time 25:26

*“This film will tear at your soul.
It will inspire and re-inspire you. It is sad but full of hope.”*
Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

SHORT SYNOPSIS

This is My Witness follows the journey and personal transformation of two women who go to New York to tell their stories of brutality at the hands of the military regime in Burma. Inspired by the example and leadership of their beloved Aung San Suu Kyi, the women join a global movement to bring democracy to Burma.

*“This is my witness...
this is not as story that has been told to me
....this is my witness, I was there.”*
Testifier, International Tribunal on
Crimes Against Women of Burma

*“If you are free, you have a chance and
a responsibility to help people who are not free.”*
Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate



SYNOPSIS

In New York City on March 2nd, 2010, one-by-one, twelve courageous women from Burma stood before a microphone to tell their stories to the world. They recounted their experiences of rape, assault, imprisoned, torture and forced labour, at the hands of soldiers of the Burmese military government.

In this very first People’s Tribunal on Crimes Against Women in Burma, the testifiers were heard by a panel of expert judges. Their testimony was recorded and their calls for justice in Burma were actualized in a set of recommendations issued by the judges, to the Burmese regime and to the international community.

This is My Witness is an intimate portrayal of two of the testifiers and their journeys through the experience of preparing for and delivering their testimony at the Tribunal. We first meet with women in their respective homes as they anticipate leaving to travel to New York. Testifying will not be easy, the memories of what happened are still vivid and emotions lie close to the surface. We witness their heartbreaking testimony and in the aftermath a transformation, intense satisfaction that the truth has been told, certainty about the just nature of their cause and their dreams for the Burmese people.



Saw Myat Mar, a supporter and friend of Aung San Suu Kyi, was arrested and held as political prisoner for several years in the notorious Insein prison. Now living a comfortable middle class life in San Jose California she can never forget what happened nor those she left behind. By agreeing to testify she uses the only weapon she has, the truth about what happened to her in Burma.



Living in poverty and on the margins as a refugee in Bangladesh Saw Ma Pu Sein was forced by the Burmese military to build roads by hand. When she became ill and her ten-year old daughter was forced to replace her on the crew, Ma Pu Sein knew that she could no longer remain in Burma. She fled, leaving her mother behind, whom she has not seen since.

Saw, Ma Pu Sein and the other testifiers confront us with the truth about crimes against women in Burma and challenge us, the international community, to face up to our responsibility to protect the people of Burma from human rights violations. They have knowingly put themselves at risk by speaking out publicly and telling their stories, they are courageous catalysts for change.

This is My Witness reaches viewers on an emotional level. It opens a window on the devastating impact that the actions of the Burmese military regime have had on individuals and their families. Its purpose is a call to action.

AWARD

This is My Witness won an Award of Merit at the 2011 Best Shorts Competition. The Best Shorts Competition recognizes film professionals who demonstrate exceptional achievement in craft and creativity, and those who produce standout entertainment or contribute to profound social change. For more details, go to www.BestShorts.net.

CREATIVE TEAM

Kublacom Pictures is an Ottawa-based independent film and television production company devoted to documentary storytelling with a purpose. Our purpose is to take viewers inside ordinary lives to extraordinary depths and to the universality of the human condition. We strive to make films that entertain, captivate, inform and move viewers to action.

Founded in 1995 by Producer/Director, Ed Kucerak, the company has produced documentary films with a variety of Canadian and US broadcast partners: American Public Television; Discovery Channel; Knowledge Network; TFO; TV Ontario; and TV5. And our films have been screened in numerous Canadian and international film festivals. Recent production titles include: *One of the Last*, *The Secret Lives of Butterflies* and *Bridge to Uluru*.

This is My Witness is one of two films by Kublacom Pictures that explores human rights abuses in Burma. A feature film to be released in 2011, *How Can a Boy*, tells the deeply moving story of a young man from Burma who fled as a boy from his village and now struggles to overcome his loss and to help his people.

ED KUCERAK, PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

Ed has 19 years of experience in the television/video production industry as an

Executive Producer, Producer and Director. His passion is for films that reach audiences on an emotional level and motivate them to get involved in the issues. The difficult stories about what is happening in Burma need to be told and *This is My Witness* presented a meaningful opportunity to do so.

JANE GURR, PRODUCER/WRITER

Jane joined the documentary filmmaking industry following on a 15-year career in the field of international development, as a specialist in gender equality issues and violence against women. Inspired by the power of documentary storytelling to bring women's and human rights issues to light, she began working as a documentary producer in 2002. *This is My Witness* has been a deeply affirming project because it combines the power of personal story with a human rights message.

JITH PAUL, EDITOR

Jith Paul is a filmmaker based in Ottawa, producer of the short film *Polar Bear Love*, winner of the Judges' Favourite award at the Ottawa International Film Festival's 72 hour film challenge 2011. He directed *Documenting Dreams* an official selection at the Ottawa International Film Festival 2010 and edited *This is My Witness*. Jith is the president of Treepot Media Inc., a company he founded in 2010. He collaborates with local artists, musicians and filmmakers to broadcast content on a web television channel called Treepot.tv.

PARTNERS

The International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women of Burma is a joint initiative of the Nobel Women's Initiative and the Women's League of Burma. *This is My Witness* was produced to document the Tribunal, so that the power and key messages of this unique and important international event can continue to be communicated.

NOBEL WOMEN'S INITIATIVE (WWW.NOBELWOMENSINITIATIVE.ORG)

Launched in 2006, the Nobel Women's Initiative is a strategic vehicle of the women Nobel Peace Prize Laureates to leverage the visibility and prestige of the prize to promote, spotlight and amplify the work of women's rights activists, researchers, and organizations worldwide addressing the root causes of violence.

In July 2008, the Nobel Women's Initiative led a delegation to the Thai-Burma border to meet with and learn from local activists and others working toward democracy, peace and justice for Burma. There they met and teamed up with a remarkable partner, the Women's League of Burma.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF BURMA (WWW.WOMENOFBURMA.ORG)

Since 1999, the Women's League of Burma, an umbrella organization comprising thirteen women's organizations from twelve different ethnic backgrounds in Burma, has worked for the advancement of the status of women towards a peaceful and just society.

KEY CREDITS

Director	Ed Kucerak
Writer	Jane Gurr
Producers	Ed Kucerak, Jane Gurr
Editor	Jith Paul
2 nd Unit Director (New York)	Ashifa Kassam
2 nd Unit Director (San Jose)	Barry Stone
2 nd Unit Director (Bangladesh)	Michael Glowacki
Original Music	Andrew Huggett

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