

You are a nurse in Africa. An epidemic is breaking out.

Would you help if you knew you might die the same horrible death?

Meet the Ebola nurses who did just that. 12 of them died. Why did they do it? Hear their stories.

The Background

Ebola struck Uganda in the fall of 2000. It hit Gulu - a northern community with over 200 nurses and 2 hospitals. Out of that number 50 volunteered to work in the isolation wards. The cost was high.



Without adequate protective gear and training, the nurses were vulnerable. Four died in the first week. Medical staff were suspected by villagers of spreading the disease. Distrust was one of many demons nurses had to battle. Friends turned their backs. Family members begged them to quit work. They refused.

Third world conditions and a shortage of protective gear heightened the trauma.

The World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control moved in. For the first time Canada was asked to join the Global Response Network Team. Health Canada sent in 3 field epidemiologists.

Before the disease was spent, 12 nurses, Dr. Matthew Lukwiya and 163 patients were dead.

The Documentary

Ebola War: The Nurses of Gulu transports us into the eye of a virulent epidemic. The power and poignancy of this heroic five month struggle against a modern day plague is told from the perspective of the health care workers.

Life is hard in Gulu. 16 years of civil conflict - then the killing fever. Despite the odds, the lack of equipment, the death of colleagues, fear and discrimination - these men and women remained with their patients until the very end.

Shot on location in isolation wards and villages - the stunning beauty of Africa collides with terror.

Viewers see painful reminders of suffering. But, they also experience the unspeakable joy and exuberance of February 27, 2001 - Ebola Free Day.

Trauma and triumph are explored in gripping eyewitness accounts, haunting music, unforgettable images and narration delivered by acclaimed actress, Marina Orsini.

“Ebola War: The Nurses of Gulu” is an intimate and moving look at the harsh reality of health care workers, the ethical decisions they face, the sacrifices they make.

A timely tale in an age of new heroes, new dangers.

What is Ebola?

- Highly contagious form of viral hemorrhagic fever. Melts internal organs. Causes bodily fluids to pour from every orifice. Causes death in up to 90% of all victims. Stays alive in bodies of the dead for three days.
- 1st identified - 1976 - Africa. The big unknown - how it lives in nature.
- Transmitted by direct contact with the secretions of infected persons.

- No vaccine exists. Isolation - barrier nursing conditions.
- Complicating factors: Fear, lack of protective equipment, phones and transportation. Distance from diagnostic labs.

Comments

“For one month the isolation ward was madness. I was in awe of those sacrificing their lives for no monetary gain. What these nurses did in this place of evil was extraordinary. This is a story that taps into all our senses.” - David Belluz - Filmmaker

“The biggest obstacles were fear. Ebola is an enigma that has potential to cause enormous damage”. - Dr. Bonnie Henry - Field Epidemiologist - Health Canada/Global Response Network Team

Creative Team

David Belluz - Producer, writer, director, cinematographer.

David has a passion for Africa and the stories it holds. He has worked in southern Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and Zimbabwe. David also holds a Religious Studies Degree - Honours from the University of Regina. “Ebola War: The Nurses of Gulu” is his first television documentary.

Further stories include that of the 2002 Zimbabwe election and Uganda’s child soldiers.

Lori Kuffner - Senior Producer. For 10 years has created internationally recognized and honoured documentaries including the Bronze Apple award-winning “The People in Black” and Gemini Nominated “The Boys Who Loved Hockey”. Her stories, which are seen around the world, range from families affected by suicide to today’s top

sports figures to historical works. She is president of Cooper Rock Pictures Inc..

Daryl K. Davis - Editor, Story Consultant. Numerous awards in 20 years of creating tv programs and films as producer, writer, director, editor and cinematographer. His credits include several Gemini nominated productions including "Walking with Giants: Grizzlies of Siberia" and "Home on the Range". Recent works include the series "The MAXimum Dimension", "Canadian Women of Courage and "Leap of Faith: The Nicole Watt Story".

Marina Orsini - Narrator. Prix Gemeaux - Best Actress for her role as Emile Bordeleau in "Les Filles de Caleb". Most recently in the mini series "The Last Chapter/Le Dernier Chapitre"

Nominated for a 2000 Gemini Award for her starring role in the tv movie "Dr. Lucille: The Lucille Teasdale Story". This program explored Canada's pioneering doctor - who along with her husband Piero Corti, transformed medical care and facilities in Uganda. Dr. Lucille died in 1996 from AIDS after contracting HIV in a Ugandan field hospital. Her passion for healing was passed on to the nurses featured in "Ebola War: The Nurses of Gulu".

J. Douglas Dodd - Composer of original score for "Ebola War". Three dozen film and television productions feature his music. He is also a performer, music director, arranger. Has half a dozen commissions - including the Parliament Hill presentation "Reflections of Canada - Symphony of Sound and Light". Extensive theatre and symphony credits. Jessie Richardson Award, Genie Nomination.

Joëlle Rabu - Vocalist. Winner of 2 Jessie Awards for her performance in the long-running "Piaf, Her Songs, Her Loves". As a singer/songwriter she and Dodd have created six albums, and performed around the globe. Rabu is described as "Magnifique in any language". She appears with symphony orchestras, on television and in 1997 founded the Young Island Voices

Children's Choir.

Funders

W Network

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Canadian Television Fund

Saskatchewan Communications Network

The Documentary Channel

Saskatchewan Film Employment Tax Credit.

Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit

SaskFILM

Alethia Productions

Canadian company - based in Regina, Saskatchewan. Created and owned by David Belluz.

Contact

Alethia Productions Inc

Phone 306-585-1597

www.alethiaprod.com

"Ebola War: The Nurses of Gulu" Premieres June 6, 9PM EST - W Network



Ebola War: The Nurses of Gulu