



THE SECRET MARATHON

DIRECTED BY KATE MCKENZIE & SCOTT TOWNEND

LOGLINE

Inspired by a story of courage, a filmmaker and her legendary marathon mentor train and travel in secret to join the brave Afghan women who are standing up for equality and freedom, by running in the Marathon of Afghanistan.

SYNOPSIS

When the first Afghan woman stood up for her freedom and ran in the Marathon of Afghanistan, she started a movement for equality that spread around the world. Zainab's story inspired legendary marathon runner, Martin Parnell, to imagine what his life might be like if his gender prevented him from going outside to run. Martin vowed to run in the Marathon of Afghanistan the following year to support Zainab, and partnered with filmmaker and first time marathoner, Kate McKenzie, to tell the story. To avoid making the marathon a target for terrorist attack, they must train, and travel to Afghanistan in secret, where they will uncover unexpected beauty, incredible hardships, and the amazing people who stand for change. This is the story of the brave Afghan women who are risking it all for the freedom to run.



THE STORY BEHIND THE FILM

The reality of documentary filmmaking is that inevitably the story changes as you go. As you meet people, capture footage and hear stories you start to learn that perhaps what you set out to do, isn't where you will end up.

This reality was true for the making of *The Secret Marathon*, but we were also faced with making some drastic changes after we thought we knew what the story was.

After meeting incredible Afghan women, and capturing beautiful footage of a country that is not normally showcased as beautiful, we realized we had an amazing story to tell. After the first edit was complete, we sent it over to the women in the film. It was at this time that we learned that one of the women and her family had been receiving threats, simply because she ran in the marathon. Naturally, she asked to be removed from the film.

This was a tough thing to hear for many reasons. This brave woman had to be removed from the film because she was not safe to openly run. This became as important a story as the Afghan women who are finding the freedom to run. In the end, the safety of everyone involved in this project will always be our top priority.

We added a year in post production. Alongside a team of Afghan women advising us, we completely re-edited the film, adding an animation sequence that is woven throughout. While fictional, this piece represents the daily experiences of Afghan women.

It is our hope that with this film, we can share an uplifting story of change, while still bringing awareness to the reality that for many women in Afghanistan, they still do not feel free to run.





FREE
AFGHANISTAN

Scimitar

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Marathon of FREEDOM
AFGHANISTAN 2016

Scimitar

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Marathon of FREEDOM
AFGHANISTAN 2016

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Marathon of FREEDOM
AFGHANISTAN 2016

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Marathon of FREEDOM
AFGHANISTAN 2016

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

KATE MCKENZIE CO-DIRECTOR, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Kate McKenzie is Director & Founder of Worldviews Productions, a digital media production company specializing in stories of hope and innovation through a constructive journalism approach. Her most recent project is the feature length documentary film *The Secret Marathon* which premiered at Cinéfest Sudbury to a sold out crowd, followed by the Edmonton International Film Festival, also to a sold out crowd, where it won the Audience Choice Award for best documentary. The film has also inspired The Secret 3K, an annual run/walk in multiple cities across Canada and around the world to promote gender equality and safe and inclusive spaces. Kate is also the Manager of ATB X a business accelerator

where Kate helps businesses achieve growth. As a published author, exhibiting fine artist and professional public speaker, Kate is passionate about sharing meaningful stories across a variety of mediums. Her TEDx talk about the Power of Positive News has had nearly 10,000 views. Kate has a Masters in Digital Media from Ryerson University and a Bachelors in Education with a specialization in experiential learning from the University of Lethbridge.



SCOTT TOWNEND CO-DIRECTOR, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, EDITOR



We all have a story to tell. For Scott Townend, his just happens to be about telling stories. He may not have known it early on, but he's been a filmmaker his whole life. What started off with the family VHS camera and the magic of capturing a moment in time, eventually became a decision to go to film school, followed by a career working as a writer, director, producer and editor. He's worked on feature films, television, music videos and commercials, most recently completing the feature length documentary *The Secret Marathon*, which premiered at Cinefest Sudbury to a sold out crowd, followed by the Edmonton International Film Festival, also to a sold out crowd, where

it won the audience choice award for best documentary. Both screenings ended in with an overwhelming standing ovation. Scott has completed hundreds of productions over the past 15 years working as a professional filmmaker, and after all that time, he still feels that there is magic in telling a good story. For that reason, this is most likely just the beginning of his.

Martin Parnell

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

In 2010, following a 25-year mining career, Martin Parnell started his *Quests for Kids* initiative. Over the next five years he completed ten quests. These included running 250 marathons in one year, setting five Guinness World Records in endurance events and summiting Mount Kilimanjaro in 21 hours. At the end of 2014, he had raised over \$1.3 million dollars for the humanitarian organization Right To Play and 27,000 children had been given the gift of hope. Martin is a keynote speaker, workshop facilitator and author. His first book *Marathon Quest* was published by Rocky Mountain Books and CBC Radio listed him as one of Alberta's top five authors, for 2014. His second book, *Running To The Edge*, was released in November 2016. The final book of The Marathon Trilogy, *The Secret Marathon - Empowering women and girls in Afghanistan through sport* was published on October 30th 2018. Martin is also Executive Producer of *The Secret Marathon* documentary which had its World Premiere screening on September 22nd 2019 at the Cinefest Film Festival in Sudbury, Ontario to a sold out crowd, and a standing ovation.





CULTURAL ADVISORS



Zainab

Zainab is an Ambassador for the charity Free to Run as well as the Program Officer for Skateistan. She is helping to promote women's participation in sport in her community and across Afghanistan. In 2015 she successfully completed a 250km self-supported footrace across the Gobi desert in China making history as part of Afghanistan's first ultra-marathon team. In 2015 Zainab also became the first woman to complete an official marathon in Afghanistan.



Murwarid Ziayee

Murwarid Ziayee is an advocate for women's rights and for girls' education in Afghanistan. She is the Senior Director for the charity, Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan and is responsible for program management and support for public engagement outreach and fund development. She maintains strong connections between the country office in Kabul and the Canadian board, executive team and membership. Murwarid has a BA in Political Science and Law from Kabul University. She has worked in women's rights issues with different organizations including United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and Office of the President of Afghanistan.



Hirra Farooqi

Hirra Farooqi is an aspiring documentary film-maker, recently graduated with her Bachelors in Journalism from Ryerson University. Hirra is a first generation immigrant of Afghan-Pakistani parents. Hirra hopes to produce her own documentaries focusing on marginalized communities within Central and South Asia in the near future.

There are many women who can not be named here, but we hope that through the film they feel that their voice is being heard.

ANIMATION



KENDYL LAUZON ARTIST

Kendyl Lauzon has been drawing for as long as she can remember, taking inspiration from artists like Mary Blair, Chuck Jones, and Bill Watterson. She graduated from the Alberta College of Art and Design's Visual Communications program, and has since worked as an illustrator in the private sector, as a freelance artist, a designer, a painter, and most recently has been hired to create the art for video games. Her passion and artistic style bring emotion to everything she creates, and her work on *The Secret Marathon* is no exception.



HOSAI ZURMATI CULTURAL ADVISOR & NARRATOR

Hosai Zurmati is a graduate from the University of Guelph where she received an Honours in Political Science and minor in International Development.

"I enjoy working with youth and participating in cultural events to learn and be exposed to diverse lifestyles. I'm grateful to be a part of *The Secret Marathon*, I view this project as the most dignified way to make people aware of their human rights, especially for Afghan girls or youth, who wish to take part in a run. In a region where several constraints prevent girls from tasting freedom, running and participating in a marathon can reignite that feeling of freedom. As a narrator, I do not speak with my own voice, rather I have tried my best to make the audience hear the thousands of unheard voices of the girls of Afghanistan in the native languages of Pashto and Dari as well as English. And I hope that is exactly what you hear, for they want you to empathize with them not just sympathize."





MAIN CREW

KATE MCKENZIE

CO-DIRECTOR
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
DOCUMENTARY SUBJECT

SCOTT TOWNEND

CO-DIRECTOR
"CANADIAN CREW"
EDITOR
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

MARTIN PARNELL

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
DOCUMENTARY SUBJECT

**COLIN SCHEYEN
LIAM KEARNEY**

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY - AFGHANISTAN
LOCATION SOUND - AFGHANISTAN

**KENDYL LAUZON
HOSAI ZURMATI
PIPPA JOHNSTONE**

ANIMATION ARTIST
ANIMATION NARRATION
ANIMATION NARRATION RECORDING

**WILLIAM BAIRD
STEVE DIERKENS**

MUSIC
RE-RECORDING MIX & SOUND DESIGN

SHANE LABELLE

COLOUR

TECHNICAL DETAILS

TITLE	THE SECRET MARATHON
DURATION	76 MINUTES
ASPECT RATIO	1.90:1
FORMAT	2K DCP
SOUND	5.1 SURROUND
YEAR	2019

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION	AFGHANISTAN & CANADA
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PRODUCTION COMPANIES	TOWNEND FILMS WORLDVIEWS PRODUCTIONS
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Cinéfest
SUDBURY
2019 OFFICIAL SELECTION



HAYLEY WICKENHEISER
OLYMPIC ATHLETE

"As human beings, we are all chasing freedom. The Secret Marathon tells the story of that chase, literally, in the form of a beautiful story of women running for just that, propped up by people who believe so deeply in them. The world can be so cruel. Leave it to sport to show the best of humanity that lies in all of us."

JOHN STANTON
OWNER, RUNNING ROOM

"I just loved it and it was an emotional roller coaster..."

"I think fundamentally as a runner it shows you the power of what being a runner is about."

FEATURED ON



CONTACT

THE SECRET MARATHON

Kate McKenzie

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TheSecretMarathon.com



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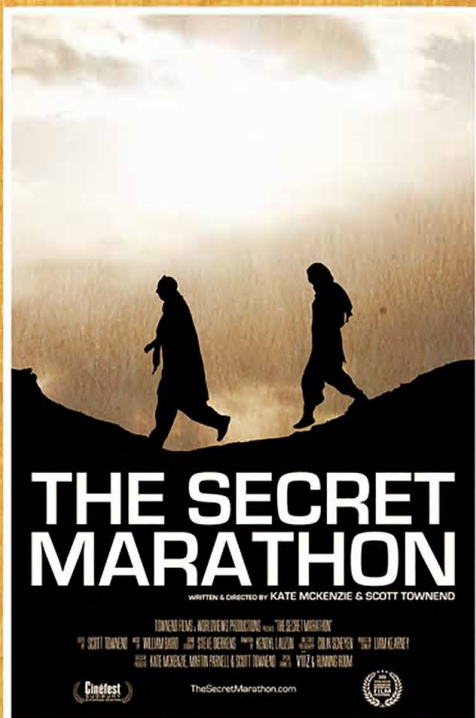


[@aSecretMarathon](https://twitter.com/@aSecretMarathon)



[TheSecretMarathon](https://www.youtube.com/TheSecretMarathon)

Poster & Production Stills



Trailer

