



BURIED ABOVE GROUND to premiere on AMERICA REFRAMED
A film by Ben Selkow

Tuesday, June 28, 2016 at 8 p.m.
on Public Television's WORLD Channel

[AMERICA REFRAMED](#)

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“Powerful. BURIED ABOVE GROUND will contribute to reshaping the way our society thinks about mental health issues. It will help move viewers and help dispel the myths and misconceptions about PTSD.”— Rosalynn Carter, Former First Lady, The Carter Center

May 13, 2016 – (New York, NY) – Ben Selkow’s acclaimed documentary **BURIED ABOVE GROUND** will premiere **Tuesday, June 28, 2016 at 8 p.m.** to bring attention to the issue of post-traumatic stress disorder during National PTSD Awareness Month on WORLD Channel ([check local listings](#)), as part of the fourth season of **AMERICA REFRAMED**, public media’s newest documentary series hosted by Natasha Del Toro. The broadcast will be followed by 60 days of free streaming for audiences across the U.S. at www.worldchannel.org/americareframed starting on June 29th.

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Filmed over six years, **BURIED ABOVE GROUND** follows three Americans fighting to overcome the paralyzing grip of PTSD: Luis Carlos Montalván, an Iraq War veteran who has emerged as a *New York Times* best-selling author and a leading advocate for PTSD awareness; Erundina López, a survivor of child abuse and domestic violence who has battled addiction for many years; and Ashley Boudreaux, a fifth-generation New Orleans native whose home was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Their personal journeys shed light on an underreported mental health condition that is often misunderstood and left untreated.

The film builds on the growing awareness of PTSD as a phenomenon that negatively impacts large numbers of combat military veterans like Luis whose symptoms turn his daily life into a personal prison. A mental health condition triggered by a terrifying event, PTSD symptoms identified by the Mayo Clinic include acute anxiety, flashbacks, severe depression, hypervigilance, dissociation, suicidal thoughts, emotional numbness, and isolation, among others.



Far less visible are the stories of survivors like Erundina and Ashley who represent a large population of people affected by PTSD. The National Center for PTSD estimates that about seven or eight out of every 100 people will have PTSD at some point in their lives. Survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, community violence, and natural disasters are not included as frequently in the public discourse. Intimate moments from their therapy sessions, home life and relationships illustrate how the road to recovery takes many shapes while being fraught with obstacles and setbacks.

Luis, who suffered multiple war atrocities, remembers and relives the ambush, hand-to-hand combat and blunt-force trauma that left him unconscious on December 21, 2003. The film follows his difficult transition to civilian life. Erundina first experienced child abuse at the hands of her father. At age 14 she ran away. By the age of 17, she was a teen mother and married to an abuser. After a second abusive marriage, she sank into depression, embraced alcohol and began neglecting her son. Meanwhile, one week after Ashley was married in Congo Square in the heart of New Orleans, Hurricane Katrina struck and seared into her mind images of widespread calamity and overwhelming loss of life. Among Ashley's PTSD symptoms are recurring nightmares of Katrina's aftermath.

Over time and with support, each finds hope and new pathways to living a meaningful and purposeful life. Luis finds strength by telling his truths in an acclaimed debut memoir entitled *Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him*. Aided through the bond he forms with his service dog, "Tuesday," he becomes a national mental health advocate. Inspired by Luis and Tuesday, Senator Al Franken introduces a congressional bill to pair service dogs and veterans, which becomes law.

Armed with a desire to help other battered women, Erundina aspires to become a social worker and receives her master's degree from Barry University. In New Orleans, Ashley rebuilds her life by reconnecting with her community, confronting the legacy of Katrina, and celebrating her 10-year wedding anniversary in a new home she and her partner are lovingly restoring.

For director Ben Selkow, **BURIED ABOVE GROUND** follows his 2007 film, *A Summer in The Cage* about bipolar disorder, reaffirming his distinction as a storyteller who is committed to combatting mental-health stigmas through the power of documentary film. He said, "Our broadcast on America ReFramed will provide a prestigious opportunity to engage communities through television, streaming and social media on the importance of addressing PTSD and trauma across diverse American communities."

BURIED ABOVE GROUND has been supported, in part, by The Carter Center and Mental Health America (MHA).



Film Credits

Writer, Director, Producer: Ben Selkow
Producer: Marc Smolowitz
Editors: James Lester and Flavia de Souza
Music: Tim Kvasnosky

Web and Social Media

AMERICA REFRAMED can be accessed online via
<http://worldchannel.org/programs/america-reframed/>
and,
<https://www.facebook.com/WorldChannel>
<https://www.facebook.com/AmericaReFramed>
@worldchannelPTV
@americareframed
@ndeltoro

Media Contact

Journalists and reviewers may contact Neyda Martinez at **917 656 7846** or via email at neyda@amdac.org for interviews and special requests.

AMERICA REFRAMED Series Credits

Executive Producers: Justine Nagan, Chris Hastings, Chris White
Series Producer: Carmen L. Vicencio
Host: Natasha Del Toro

About AMERICA REFRAMED

AMERICA REFRAMED is a co-production of the WORLD Channel and American Documentary, Inc. and is hosted by journalist Natasha Del Toro.

Season 4 of AMERICA REFRAMED curates a diverse selection of films highlighting innovative and artistic approaches to storytelling from emerging and veteran filmmakers alike. Viewers will be immersed in personal stories from the streets of towns big and small to the exurbs and country roads that span the spectrum of American life. The documentaries invite audiences to reflect on topics as varied as culture, healthcare, politics, gun violence, religion and more. Several episodes feature a roundtable discussion moderated by host Natasha Del Toro with special guest commentators and filmmakers.

In 2015, AMERICA REFRAMED won a GRACIE Outstanding Series award, and was nominated for an EMMY award as well as an Independent Documentary Association award for best curated series. In its first season, AMERICA REFRAMED received five 2013 CINE Golden Eagle Awards, and one Imagen Awards nomination.



AMERICA REFRAMED Co-Producers

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia arts organization dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. AmDoc is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. For more information, visit: www.amdoc.org

The WORLD Channel delivers the best of public television's nonfiction, news and documentary programming, including original content by and about diverse communities, to U.S. audiences through local public television stations and streaming online at worldchannel.org. WORLD reached 35.8 million unique viewers 18+ last year (55% adults 18-49) and over-indexes in key diversity demographics. Online, the WORLD Channel expands on broadcast topics and fuels dialogue across social media, providing opportunities for broad and diverse audience interaction.

WORLD is programmed by WGBH/Boston, in partnership with American Public Television and WNET/New York, and in association with PBS and National Educational Telecommunications Association. Funding for the WORLD Channel is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Ford Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Kendeda Fund. For more information about The WORLD Channel, visit www.worldchannel.org

