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# FILM

## THE BLOODIEST GAME IN OLYMPIC HISTORY

L.A. FILMMAKERS BRING HIT DOC HOME FOR GALA PREMIERE

feature BY AMANDA SAGE



THE OTTAWA SIBS: MEGAN RANEY AND COLIN GRAY

Colin Gray and Megan Raney have made it big in Hollywood. Known collectively as The Sibs, this brother/sister filmmaking team regularly rubs shoulders with the rich and famous, and even flew on Lucy Liu's private jet to the British premiere of *Charlie's Angels*. But The Sibs are still proud of their humbler beginnings north of the border. Says Gray: "Though I haven't lived here for 20 years

now, whenever someone asks me where I'm from, I say simply, 'Ottawa.'"

The Sibs are going back to their roots this month when they bring their latest project, a feature documentary called *Freedom's Fury*, to the National Gallery of Canada for its gala Canadian premiere. The film was a huge success at the 2006 Tribeca Film Festival in New York where it made its world premiere in April, and it

opened to great acclaim in Hungary earlier this month.

But it was important to Gray and Raney that they bring *Freedom's Fury* to Ottawa for its Canadian debut. Like The Sibs, the film – which parallels the stories of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the infamous water polo showdown between Hungary and the Soviet Union at the Melbourne Olympics – got its start in Ottawa.

"I owe everything that I am as a politically committed artist, social justice activist and water polo enthusiast to Ottawa," says Gray, who moved to the city in 1976. Raney was born in Ottawa that same year. Despite a healthy dose of terror suffered at the hands of her older brother, Raney was inspired by Gray from an early age. The two bonded over common teachers at Lady Evelyn Alternative School Council and trips to the Ottawa SuperEX, and before long they were plotting how to work together when they grew up.

Gray credits his former teachers and coaches at Lisgar Collegiate Institute for instilling in him a passion for water polo, politics and the arts. He went on to pursue all three interests at the University of Michigan, where he double-majored in political science and French literature. It was there that Gray met Hungarian water polo coach Ben Quittner, who told Gray about the famous water polo match. Known now as "The Bloodiest Game in Olympic History," the match was a physical manifestation of the political battle for communist Hungary. Tensions between the two teams escalated when Ervin Zador, the young star of the Hungarian team, had his head split open, literally turning the water red with his blood.

Upon graduating from university in 1990, Gray spent several years in Toronto and Los Angeles pursuing his dream of acting. But the story of the Hungary-Soviet Union water polo match stayed with him; he had always known that it would make a fantastic documentary. And so in 1998, when Gray had begun his career as a writer/direc-



A WOLO ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

# FREEDOM'S FURY



THE HUNGARIAN WATERPOLO TEAM (1956)

photo Bela Rajki

tor in Los Angeles, he brought the story to his colleague, producer Kristine Lacey, and to Raney, who was just beginning her film career. Both women were immediately drawn to the story and signed on as producer and director of photography.

### LUCY LIU AND QUENTIN TARANTINO

Actress Lucy Liu also took a keen interest in the film. Liu, whom Gray had befriended at the University of Michigan, shared The Sib's passion for provocative social justice stories and felt strongly that *Freedom's Fury* should be shared with the rest of the world. In 2001 both she and Quentin Tarantino signed on as executive producers. Liu was collaborating on Tarantino's film *Kill Bill* at the time. "Quentin hadn't heard much about the Hungarian Revolution, or water polo for that matter, and he was instantly captivated by the dual narrative story," says Gray. "He told us that the sports redemption part of the doc was one of 'the greatest stories never told.'"

Gray and Raney are about to change that. On September 29, The Sib's are proud to present *Freedom's Fury* at the National Gallery Auditorium. The gala screening is a fundraiser organized by the Canada-Hungary Educational

Foundation and Water Polo Canada. The event will be hosted by Canadian Olympic swimmer Carolyn Waldo and includes a VIP reception at 7 p.m. and a screening at 8 p.m.

But don't let the glitz and glamour fool you – Gray and Raney haven't forgotten where they came from. In addition to the gala premiere, The Sib's have arranged a private screening for Lisgar staff and students as a tribute to their hometown. Gray wouldn't have had it any other way. In his words: "Ottawa, the teachers, the coaches, the friends and the community we were surrounded by growing up, propelled and shaped me and Megan into the filmmaking team we are today."

## ( ) FREEDOM'S FURY

Directed by Colin Gray  
and Megan Raney

Friday, September 29, at 8 p.m.

National Gallery of  
Canada, Auditorium

For ticket information  
on the gala premiere, call  
(613) 567-5756

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