



## Water Polo Magazine Summer 2006



**T**he audience gave a standing ovation following the world premier of Freedom's Fury at the 2006 Tribeca Film Festival. The feature length film tells the story of the Hungarian revolution, the all too short 13 days of freedom from Russian communism and the water polo game that followed the Russian re-invasion of Hungary. The match, now commonly referred to as 'the bloodiest game,' was played in Melbourne, Australia during the 1956 Olympics.

In the fourth quarter, up 4-0, Hungary's Ervin Zador took a fierce elbow to the right eyebrow from a Russian opponent.

The hit, caught on film, caused Zador to duck under the water, which turned red with his blood. With two minutes remaining, the referees called the semifinal game as the police came on deck and spectators jumped from the stands in outrage.

Ervin Zador, the unassuming star, was on hand for the film's premier. He speaks frankly throughout the film about his experiences as a water polo player and Hungarian during a time when his country was in complete chaos.

Hungarians turned to water polo during the 1956 Olympics in hopes of gaining the upper hand, in some small way, over their oppressors. One of the odd twists in the historical documentary is that the Russian water polo team trained with the Hungarians for months leading up to the 1956 Games.

Freedom's Fury was directed by Colin Gray and produced by Lucy Liu. Gray, a Canadian water polo player, met his water polo coach, Hungarian Ben Quittner, while playing at the University of Michigan. The idea of making a movie about the revolution and water polo was born of Quittner's stories. Gray and Liu became best friends in theater class at University of Michigan while in a

production of Jesus Christ Superstar. During the press conference for the movie's premier, Liu was asked about her athletic background, which she says is non-existent. When pushed more about athletics, the actress told of her one and only soccer game.



She was kicked once and fell to the ground crying holding her shin. The self proclaimed, non-athlete, did gesture toward the movie poster of Zador and said, "This (level of play) is inspirational. It is a state of being."

Also at the April 27 premier was the film's narrator seven-time gold medalist swimmer Mark Spitz, 2000 and 2004 USA Water Polo Olympian Tony Azevedo, USA Water Polo Board member Rich Foster and USA Water Polo Men's National Team Coach Ricardo Azevedo. Freedom's Fury includes additional water polo footage that features USA Water Polo's Men's National Team members during a scrimmage and Referee Aaron Chaney. 1996, 2000 and 2004 USA Water Polo Olympian Wolf Wigo also has a significant role in the film.

Freedom's Fury will be released in theaters in Hungary in September. October 23, 2006 is the 50th Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution.