

TENTH ANNUAL
**MEDIA
THAT
MATTERS**

**Justice Denied: Voices from
Guantánamo** (11:14 min)
Directed by Joel Engardio
Produced by Joel Engardio and Ateqah Khaki



About the Film

The American Civil Liberties Union wanted to use audio recordings to preserve the testimonials of five former Guantánamo detainees who had been held and released by the Bush administration without charge. I suggested that it would be more powerful to interview the men on video and produce a short film that wove their stories together into one narrative arch. This was a more accessible and compelling way to share the experiences with a wide audience.

Former Guantánamo detainees are usually painted as one-dimensional caricatures and we rarely get to know them as people. What were their lives like before Guantánamo? What are they doing now to start over? What are their hopes, dreams and fears? What kinds of personalities do they have? By using video and the art of story telling, I hope viewers might have more reason to care about the important issues that surround indefinite detention once they realize what they have in common with the subjects of the film as fellow human beings.

I used sparse narration and avoided talking head commentary by lawyers and advocates. I felt it would be more effective to simply let the men speak for themselves. The purpose of the video was to provide an emotional connection to the issues by focusing only on the personal stories of the men involved. A web link appears at the end of the film for inspired audiences who want to investigate and learn more about things like rule of law and how to stay both safe and free in a troubled world.

Filmmaker Bios

Joel P. Engardio directed, wrote and narrated *Knocking*, an award-winning documentary on Jehovah's Witnesses that was nationally broadcast on the PBS series *Independent Lens* in 2007. It was named Best Documentary at the 2006 USA Film Festival.

Joel has written for WashingtonPost.com, USA Today, Los Angeles Times, Boston Globe, New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Weekly, Christian Science Monitor and P.O.V. Magazine. In radio, his essays have been broadcast on KQED San Francisco and the NPR series This I Believe. In public relations,

Joel worked as a senior media strategist for Manning Selvage & Lee, organized a national outreach campaign for his PBS documentary, and consulted for Stanford University's Jade Ribbon Campaign. Joel also worked as a communication strategist and multimedia producer for the American Civil Liberties Union where he used reporting methods to find plaintiffs and communicated ACLU issues by producing online videos.

Joel was born and raised in Saginaw, Michigan and graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in journalism and history. He currently lives in San Francisco. More of his work can be seen at

Take Action Links

Take Action with Cagedprisoners.com

(<http://www.cageprisoners.com/page.php?id=9>)

Write a supportive letter to a detainee and assure them they have not been forgotten.

Take Action with ACLU - Close Gitmo

(http://action.aclu.org/site/PageServer?pagename=page_not_found&JServSessionIdro04=gkw1lpnbd2.app225a)

Tell President Obama to reinforce his executive order to end indefinite detention and close Guantanamo for good.

Take Action with Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org/en/by-issue/news-filter/698>)

Sign up to receive action alerts on human rights issues and stay up-to-date on Guantanamo news.

**For more information about Justice Denied: Voices from
Guantánamo and the other films from the tenth annual Media That
Matters Film Festival, visit
www.mediathatmattersfest.org or contact us at
festival@artseengine.net.**

