



# Press Kit

# Synopsis

## Short

The Pink Room follows the journey of Mien and other young girls in the turbulent world of sex slavery that at times seems unfathomable. Mien grew up in Svay Pak, just eleven kilometers outside the capitol city of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, a vast and vicious epicenter of child sex slavery. This is a country notoriously renowned for its devastating genocide under the reign of Pol Pot in the 1970's. After burying over two million of their educated and religious citizens, the children of this horrific era are now the parents.

At a young age, Mien enters life in a brothel, and her virginity is sold at a high price. After her innocence is brutally stolen from her, her value becomes less and less with each purchase of her body. She is held captive and raped and sexually tortured twelve hours a day. Even when help is within reach, obstacles that appear too great to conquer squelch her dream of freedom.

The Pink Room shows passionate determination in attacking the complex issue of human trafficking with an even more complex and diverse response of rescue, restoration, reintegration and prevention. This is the story of redemption, ordinary people who become unlikely heroes, Cambodians rising up with compassion to take back their country and a town's process of rebuilding from the inside out. Mien gives hope in the midst of a blinding darkness. In a world where it is estimated that there are over one million children held captive and sexually abused, a flower blooms in the heart of Cambodia.

## Long

Cambodia is notoriously renowned as the international capital of sex-trafficking. In the devastating aftermath of the genocide in the 1970's, under the reign of Pol Pot, Cambodians buried approximately two million of their countrymen. Years later, the broken children of this horrific era are now the parents of the wounded nation. Dateline NBC Special Reports and journalists from around the world have shocked and appalled audiences with reports about Svay Pak, Cambodia's epicenter of the vast and vicious industry of

# THE PINK ROOM

child sex slavery. It is called a “pedophiles paradise” and is a port for the selling and exploitation of children as young as five.

In the last few years, awareness has grown and the world is beginning to understand the problem. However, many children who sit behind locked brothel doors have yet to see the fruit of that awareness. Many films focusing on this growing epidemic have left the watcher impotent, and angry. No one has been able to say what we have all longed to hear - “something is working”.

It was estimated in 2010 that there are over one million children held captive for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The truth is that sex slavery is a much more complicated issue than anyone ever anticipated. Raids and rash rescues may save one life, but the numbers only continue to grow and sustainable change is yet to be seen. It requires the long suffering work of sacrificial individuals who are willing to spend their lives seeing these victims rescued. It is a problem so suffocating that there seems to be no hope. In a place where parents are the ones selling their own children, and law enforcement is pulling the strings backstage, the burden seems to heavy to bare.

Mien grew up in Svay Pak where after years of watching her mother and siblings struggle under the abuse of her alcoholic father, she sold herself into a brothel. Her virginity was sold at a high price and she spent the next six years living as a sex slave, the ability to support her family financially helping her to carry on. Even when help is within reach, obstacles too great to conquer squelch her dream of freedom. In 2007, she was rescued from her torturous existence. Her exploitation ended the day she arrived at a restoration center founded for girls just like her. This center has been more successful with rehabilitation and reintegration than any governmental or non-governmental organizations in the nation of Cambodia.

Something is working.

This documentary follows the story of one young woman’s redemption, ordinary people who become unlikely heroes, Cambodians rising up with compassion to take back their country, and a town's process of rebuilding from the inside out. If we want to see change and freedom, we must stop covering our eyes and ears at the horrifying reality these children face. We must run at the problem with eyes wide open.

Mien’s journey gives hope in the midst of a blinding darkness. In an international sea of enslaved children, a flower blooms in the heart of Cambodia.

## Director's Statement

To say that the production of this film has been a “process” is definitely an understatement. It has been a pilgrimage at the very least. It has been filled with high emotions, high expectations but not without awkward moments and a lot of uncertainty. There have been moments of frustration, anger, hopelessness, joy, laughter and fulfillment, and it has all led to here, the completion of the film. Finishing the project has brought on an array of emotions. At times, I thought it would never really happen. I am happy to say that not only did it happen, but it is something I present with the utmost pride and the deep reverence for those who it represents.

What a privilege it has been to shoot and produce this film. Never could I have anticipated the impact it would have on me personally. Above all, I have become deeply aware of my own humanity and my connection to others near and far. It has produced something in me, something somewhat unexpected: a feeling of responsibility to this world and those in it. As a first time filmmaker, it is a reality that will in many ways shape and contribute to every project I ever do. I am so grateful and so humbled to have been a part of it.

# THE PINK ROOM

## Bios

### *Joel Sandvos, Director*



Joel Sandvos is a filmmaker in Northern California whose passion is not only to create, but to use it for good. His vision is to see media used to impact lives and change our world. He is a director, producer, cinematographer, editor, and musician, using a combination of all of these roles in diverse arenas to create relevant media. He has had the opportunity to work on projects all over the world, ultimately falling in love with documentary filmmaking.

The Pink Room is his directorial debut.

*Janey Shugart, Executive Producer*



Janey Shugart believes that we can make a difference in our world, one life at a time. After 15 years in the world of business, and 15 years raising her three daughters, she has been given the opportunity to stimulate her creative talents with gifted artists and share Mien's story. She is an active triathlete that believes that anything is possible.

# Credits

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <i>Director</i>               | Joel Sandvos   |
| <i>Executive Producers</i>    | Janey & Steve Shugart<br>Carl Shore  |
| <i>Producers</i>              | Joel Sandvos & Janey Shugart   |
| <i>Cinematographers</i>       | Micah Smith, Seth Shore & Joel Sandvos   |
| <i>Composer</i>               | Wyley Wilkin   |
| <i>Editor</i>                 | Joel Sandvos   |
| <i>Story Consultant</i>       | Fernanda Rossi   |
| <i>Assistant Editors</i>      | Adrienne Sandvos<br>Bradley Kelly<br>Charles Kelly   |
| <i>Creative Development</i>   | Adrienne Sandvos<br>Stephanie VanTassell<br>Lyndsay Wilkin<br>Bradley Kelly<br>Charles Kelly |
| <i>Additional Composition</i> | Bradley Kelly  |
| <i>Musicians</i>              | Joel Swastek   |

THE  
PINK  
ROOM

|                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                                      | Ryan Fuerst                          |
| <i>Sound Engineers</i>               | Scott Loudon                         |
|                                      | Bradley Kelly                        |
| <i>Additional Camera Operators</i>   | 100 Huntley Street                   |
|                                      | Billy Scanlin                        |
|                                      | Jeff Sommers                         |
| <i>Color Correction</i>              | Mike Burton                          |
| <i>Additional Equipment</i>          | Tass Souza                           |
| <i>Transcriptions</i>                | Micah Smith                          |
|                                      | Seth Shore                           |
|                                      | Alice Shugart                        |
| <i>Translations</i>                  | Teave Mam                            |
| <i>Graphic Design</i>                | Hans Bennewitz (modedesign.us)       |
| <i>Web Design</i>                    | Andrew Filip (Extraordinary Machine) |
| <i>Accounting and Administration</i> | Renee Burkhalter                     |
|                                      | Bobby Kris                           |
| <i>Legal</i>                         | Jennifer Seraphine                   |
|                                      | Maria Nelson                         |