

Press Kit

Golden Gate Cinema, LLC
Presents



IRAN

Hot Tea, Cool Conversations

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SYNOPSIS

Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations—a revealing documentary that chronicles an American college student's eye-opening journey to Iran. A testament to Citizen Diplomacy, the film highlights unscripted, touching interviews with a number of individuals the filmmaker encounters from all walks of life during this once in a lifetime adventure. The human scale of the film cuts through the political rhetoric of the day unveiling a country full of warm and compassionate people who desire peace and friendship with America and the West.

ABOUT CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

At Golden Gate Cinema, we strongly believe in the power of Citizen Diplomacy—the individual citizen's right, even responsibility, to help improve foreign relations. Citizen Diplomacy can effectively bring people together, especially when official diplomacy fails.

Citizen Diplomats are individuals who promote, in one way or another, understanding and cooperation among others. They have curiosity about and appreciation for other cultures and possess a passion for humanity and its rich diversity.

Citizen Diplomacy allows people from all walks of life to participate in making the world a more productive and peaceful place. Everyday citizens including students, teachers, athletes, business people, health practitioners, volunteers, organizational leaders, artists, scientists, or researchers engage in Citizen Diplomacy by interacting with others in foreign nations and cultures.

Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations is dedicated to Citizen Diplomats everywhere. Our goal is to increase awareness of Citizen Diplomacy, its global impact, and future potential so that more Americans recognize the importance of assuming their responsibility to develop constructive foreign relations.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When official diplomacy fails, Citizen Diplomacy is our only hope.

So long I had sat at the television, watching and listening to biased news coverage aimed at isolating Iran as part of the "Axis of Evil." This portrayal of Iran was difficult for me to believe. The media's antagonism inspired me to set out on a journey that's scope was far greater than I could have ever imagined. That once-in-a-lifetime trip blossomed into *Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations*.

Here at home, I interviewed many Americans who associated Iran with "War," "Violence," and the 1979 "Hostage Crisis." But I felt there had to be more to the story. I had to see Iran for myself. Little did I know that my journey would be one not of just travel, but self-discovery.

My journey began with a simple desire to travel off the beaten path and see Iran through my own eyes. The true impact made on me by the Iranian people came not as much during the shooting of the film in Iran, but back at home while putting it all together. Like a hermit on my computer, night, after night, I entered the timeless world of editing. It was not until then, with hours of video to be sorted, that I realized the full effect of this journey. I feel a responsibility to share an honest glimpse into this mystical place with my fellow Americans. This is more than a movie; it is a dedication to citizen diplomacy and citizen diplomats everywhere.

This documentary reflects a lyrical telling of my time in Iran as an American interwoven with my personal journey as a renegade filmmaker. *Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations* challenges the conventional media portrayal of Iran, a nation steeped in a deep sense of culture and humanity. Beyond all the noise and propaganda designed to separate us from one another, citizen diplomacy brings out the global citizen in all of us.

--Brenden Hamilton

BIO: MEHDI GHAFOURIFAR, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Iran, Silicon Valley, and now the world... Mehdi Ghafourifar has established a track record, developing innovative business and social projects that continue to touch the lives of many. His passion for social justice and education is contagious. With more than 20 years of dynamic business experience, in both for profit and non-profit sectors, his life's work is dedicated to the principles of positive social change. Currently, Mehdi leads the development of key international initiatives in the fields of energy, education, and entertainment.

Mehdi is the Executive Producer of the recently completed feature documentary, *Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations*. As an opportunity to promote citizen diplomacy, Mehdi partnered with American filmmaker, Brenden Hamilton, to produce this timely film chronicling Hamilton's eye-opening journey to Iran, an isolated nation misunderstood by the West.

Prior to his migration to the United States, Mehdi lived in Iran with his father during the first half of the Islamic revolution under martial law decreed by the Shah. During the 444-day Hostage Crisis in Iran, the broken diplomatic and financial ties between the two nations put an end to his father's support from Iran. Barely a teenager, Mehdi managed to sustain himself with menial jobs while pursuing higher education.

A few years later, with a single client, Mehdi founded his first Silicon Valley start-up. On less than a shoestring budget, quickly he developed his company into the most innovative and successful entity of its type—eventually becoming the number one business organization in Silicon Valley. In the end, Mehdi successfully sold his venture to a national firm, allowing him to focus more on his life's true passion—social justice and global citizenry.

Over the years, Mehdi has successfully raised millions of dollars in equity capital, built critical partnerships and alliances, and participated in sales, mergers and acquisitions of various ventures. His client portfolio has included more than 2,000 companies and executives in 350 categories including media, technology, health, non-profit, energy, travel, entertainment, real estate, retail, manufacturing, education, and business & professional services.

BIO: BRENDEN HAMILTON, DIRECTOR

A San Francisco native, Brenden Hamilton was a storyteller from the moment he could speak. Inheriting the gift of gab from his mom and dad, Brenden could always spin a yarn, but it was not until his high school Video Production class, that he truly found his voice—cinema.

A true DV rebel, he spent countless nights, from sundown to sunrise, locked in the video class room, editing video on tape-to-tape. Brenden made a series of student shorts including Braveliver, Green Peace, Searching, and The Journey, to name a few.

Brenden left home to attend California State University, Long Beach, to pursue his filmmaking dreams. Teaming up with long-time friend and fellow filmmaker Ryan O'Halloran, the two established Stakeout Productions and made their first feature documentary, Bound. This enlightening film underscores the real life struggle of college basketball star Robert Johnson on his quest to the NBA, all the while bound for the professional leagues in Europe.

After Bound, Brenden received his Bachelor's degree in Film from New College of California. His most recent film, Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations, champions the concept of citizen diplomacy and global citizenship. Produced in collaboration with Silicon Valley veteran, Mehdi Ghafourifar, this revealing documentary chronicles Brenden's personal journey to Iran, presenting an unfiltered look at the life and culture in an amazing country isolated by the West.

FILM CREDITS

This Film is dedicated to
Citizen Diplomacy and all those
who promote understanding and cooperation among others

Executive Producer

Mehdi Ghafourifar

Director

Brenden Hamilton

Producers

Brenden Hamilton
Mehdi Ghafourifar

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Farzaneh Khademi
Kimia Sagarchi

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Jillayn Le Grand

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Brenden Hamilton

Additional Camera

Victor Murillo

Sound Editor

Greg Ammen

Assistant Editor

Ryan O'Halloran

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Mehdi Ghafourifar

Narration Script

Brenden Hamilton
Mehdi Ghafourifar
Jillayn Le Grand
Alston Ghafourifar
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Production Assistants

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Alston Ghafourifar
Brienne Ghafourifar
Victor Murillo
Ryan O'Halloran
Robert Johnson

Legal Counsel

Law Office of George Rush

Music

"Akharin Mashough"
Written and Performed by Majid Rokni
Courtesy of Pars Video, Inc.
Thought Equity Motion

Special Thanks

Ophelia Parvizad
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Eric Thompson
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Trevor Scott
R. Ludwick
Aidin Debaleh
Roxie Theater
Bill Banning
Bay Area Video Coalition
Angie Reza
David Hoffman
Martin Hamilton
Yuki Jenkins
Milly Henry

And

Newly made friends in Iran who helped make this film possible

Learn more about Citizen Diplomacy at
www.GoldenGateCinema.com

Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations

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