# GUTH GAFA & STORY MATTERS

# Impact Lab





story matters

guth gafa
INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL

DOCS IRELAND

Fís Éireann
Screen Ireland

# SUMMARY


## A HEALING THREAD

**Director Jessica Marcy and Producer Grace Odumosu.**

## AS THIS LEAVES ME HERE

**Director Kathy Raftery and Producer Laura Cranley.**

## FAMILY IN MY HEAD

**Director Leo Regan and Producer Isabel Freer.**

## HOW TO STOP A WAR

**Director Frankie Fenton and Producer Kathryn Kennedy.**

## THE LAST BALKAN COWBOY

**Director Dragana Jurišić and Producers Anna Rodgers and Zlata Filipović.**

## TRY!

**Director Oisín Mistéil and Producer Claire McCabe.**

## WHIDDY

**Director Adrian McCarthy and Producer Maria Horgan.**



# A Healing Thread

**Synopsis**

A Dublin tailor fights to uncover his identity and learn what happened when his Irish mother became pregnant out of wedlock with his Nigerian father. Raised in institutions shaped by shame and secrecy, Jude Hughes finally traces his father's Yoruba roots through DNA and decides to travel to Nigeria for the first time for his 85th birthday. *A Healing Thread* is a creative documentary capturing the untold experiences of institutionalized African-Irish children. It is a deeply Irish and Nigerian story as well as a universal tale about the search for ancestry and belonging, and making visible what has been hidden.

THEMES / ISSUE AREAS: Racial Equity and Racial Justice, Social Justice, Institutional Accountability.

DIRECTOR
Jessica Marcy

PRODUCERS
Grace Odumosu
Jessica Marcy (co-producer)

MAIN LOCATIONS
Ireland, UK, Nigeria

LANGUAGES
English, Irish, Yoruba

LENGTH
Feature length

PRODUCTION STATUS
Development

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE
Late 2027

## PURPOSE / IMPACT VISION

THIS FILM CAN HELP TO

- Increase visibility of the Black Irish experience and showcase and strengthen leadership in the African diaspora community in Ireland.

- Document the trauma of forced family separation in Irish institutions, highlight unique experiences of African-Irish survivors and promote DNA testing for family tracing, especially in Africa

- Correct the historical record and push for accountability from the Catholic church and Irish state about the harm caused by the redaction and denial of people's family information.

- Expand public perception of Irish identity in film and create opportunities for more diverse film crews.

## IMPACT STRATEGY

WHAT YOU HOPE TO DO

- Create space for conversations about mixed identities and the African presence in Ireland through community screenings and education

- Document stories of racism and violence in Irish institutions for children

- Use the film to support collective action around the African experience in Ireland and advance efforts to change culture and policy

- Strengthen cultural connections between Ireland and Nigeria

- Link film screenings to art and fashion that reflects the African-Irish experience

THE GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

- Ireland
- Nigeria
- Other Anglophone African countries
- UK
- USA



# As this leaves me here

**Synopsis**

*As This Leaves Me Here* is the story of Patrick Gallagher, a young man from rural Ireland who emigrated to America, and unbeknownst to his family served with the U.S Marines in Vietnam. Gallagher risked his life by diving on a grenade in order to save three comrades and was awarded the Navy Cross for bravery; only then did he tell his family where he was. As they prepared a hero's welcome at home, Patrick was killed in action six weeks before his return. Through letters, family memories, and veterans' testimony, the film explores the lasting impact of war and the risk immigrants are willing to take for the chance of a better life.

THEMES / ISSUE AREAS:
War & Conflict, Intergenerational trauma, Migration.

DIRECTOR
Kathy Raftery

PRODUCERS
Kathy Raftery
Laura Cranley

MAIN LOCATION
Ireland

LANGUAGE
English

LENGTH
Feature length

PRODUCTION STATUS
Pre Production

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE
Late 2027

## PURPOSE / IMPACT VISION

THIS FILM CAN HELP TO

- Uplift the stories of Irish men who served in the Vietnam War and the lasting impact of conflict on veterans, families, and communities.
- Humanise the experience of war by focusing on a universal story rather than statistics or political narrative.
- Connect audiences to the lived experience of soldiers and the families who waited at home.
- Encourage reflection on the emotional cost of conflict, beyond the battlefield.

## IMPACT STRATEGY

We intend to create spaces for conversations about the moral ambiguity of war, reflect on the human costs and the importance of remembrance.

We plan to hold screenings that include post-screening discussions with Veterans and community leaders.

We will encourage audiences to share family histories, engage in dialogue across generations, and consider peaceful alternatives to conflict.

The intended audience includes: young people faced with military service and recruitment, veterans, and their families and communities.

We hope to work with: Irish Veterans Organisations; American Legion (in the US & Ireland) and Veterans For Peace (US) diaspora groups, and cultural institutions.




# Family in my head

**Synopsis**
People who hear voices are often spoken about. Rarely are they listened to.

Over three years, FAMILY IN MY HEAD follows a group of voice hearers as they navigate friendship, conflict, trauma, humour and the everyday realities of living alongside voices that no one else can hear.

As trust grows, so do the complications. Boundaries begin to blur, difficult truths emerge, and the future of both the relationships and the film become uncertain.

At its heart, FAMILY IN MY HEAD is not a film about hearing voices. It's a film about what happens when people take the risk of being truly seen and heard.

DIRECTOR
Leo Regan

PRODUCERS
Isabel Freer
Kwesi Dickson
Roisín Geraghty

MAIN LOCATION
UK

LANGUAGE
English

LENGTH
90'

PRODUCTION STATUS
Rough Cut

## IMPACT STRATEGY

While hearing voices may be unfamiliar to many audiences, the questions at the heart of the film are universal: how we live with difficult experiences, how relationships sustain and challenge us, and what becomes possible when people are listened to without judgement.

Our impact work will begin with voice-hearers, their families, Hearing Voices groups, mental health practitioners and organisations, but it will not end there. The film speaks to wider conversations about family, trauma, trust, care and belonging.

We are developing partnerships in the UK and internationally with voice hearers, clinicians, psychotherapists and academics, including those involved in the world's largest randomised controlled trial of Open Dialogue, currently underway across multiple NHS trusts.

Early responses from clinicians, psychotherapists and researchers suggest a strong connection between the film and emerging approaches to mental healthcare rooted in listening, relationships and lived experience.

Rather than offering answers, FAMILY IN MY HEAD invites audiences into the complexity of people's lives. It asks what can happen when we make fewer assumptions, listen more closely, and take the time to hear one another?




# How to Stop a War

**Synopsis**
February 2003, the eve of war in Iraq. A small band of passionate idealists set off in three double-decker red buses and a taxi, on an epic road trip, they have just 3 weeks to travel 3,277 miles from London to Baghdad – where they will risk their lives as human shields. Amidst a media firestorm, powerful political opposition and intense infighting between the international activists – can they stop the bombs and halt the invasion of Iraq? Can they stop a war?

THEMES / ISSUE AREAS: Conflict Resolution, Social Activism.

DIRECTOR
Frankie Fenton

PRODUCERS
Kathryn Kennedy for
Kennedy Films
Fremantle UK

MAIN LOCATIONS
UK
various EU countries
Iraq
USA

LANGUAGE
English

LENGTHS
52' & 82'

PRODUCTION STATUS
Preproduction

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE
Late 2026

## PURPOSE / IMPACT VISION

THIS FILM CAN HELP TO

- Prove to a weary, apathetic generation that ordinary people, from all backgrounds, however flawed, can still change the course of events against the odds.

- Give the generation that marched against Iraq, and the generation now marching, a mirror that says: your resistance mattered, even when it failed.

- Show today's movement leaders, in concrete deeply human terms, how good causes can destroy themselves from the inside, and how to survive that.

## IMPACT STRATEGY

This film is for anyone who wants to create real social change, with a particular focus on Gen Z and Millennial audiences who are politically aware but increasingly cynical about whether protest can actually work.

Throughout production we will continue building partnerships with filmmakers, celebrities, human rights NGOs, student networks, Iraqi diaspora organisations, peace coalitions and political podcasters, assembling the audience before the film arrives.

Our central campaign is the "Great Big Red Bus Day", a single global weekend event featuring 100+ simultaneous screenings across the UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia, Baghdad, Beirut, Norway and online. Anchored by a Mobile Red Bus Screening Tour with projection screenings, panel debates and high-level events at universities and the United Nations in New York and Geneva, it is designed to make the film's release a cultural moment rather than a distribution event.

We plan to launch the film campaign in March 2028 on the 25th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq and simultaneously establish the Naama Alward Humanitarian Grant. It will be an annual award for exiled artists who tell stories of conflict and displacement from their homelands.



# The Last Balkan Cowboy

**Synopsis**
Artist Dragana Jurišić returns to post-war Bosnia to stage a short film in the style of a mythical cult Western director Hari Džekson. In meeting and casting the local community, she asks a fractured town and herself to confront the ghosts of the past.

THEMES / ISSUE AREAS: Confidential.

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE
July 2026

DIRECTOR
Dragana Jurišić

PRODUCERS
Zlata Filipović
Anna Rodgers

MAIN LOCATIONS
Bosnia, Croatia

LANGUAGES
English, Serbo Croat,
Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian

LENGTH
Feature length

PRODUCTION STATUS
Fine cut

## PURPOSE / IMPACT VISION

Confidential.

## IMPACT STRATEGY

Confidential.



# Try!

**Synopsis**
Richie wasn't allowed to play the sport he loves because of his disability - until Mixed Ability rugby came along. Try! follows four Irish players who defy all expectations on their journey to the most inclusive and competitive World Cup you've never seen.

THEMES / ISSUE AREAS: Disability Rights, Sports.

DIRECTOR
Oisín Mistéil

PRODUCER
Claire McCabe

MAIN LOCATIONS
Ireland, Spain

LANGUAGE
English

LENGTH
87'

PRODUCTION STATUS
Completed

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE
June 2026

## PURPOSE / IMPACT VISION

THIS FILM CAN HELP TO

- Improve access to and participation in mixed ability rugby clubs in Ireland and internationally using the film campaign to raise awareness and connect potential participants with club organisers.

- Champion a vision of sport where inclusion, belonging, and meaningful competition are all on the same team.

- Encourage rugby clubs, schools, and sports organisations to adopt more inclusive practices and create new mixed-ability opportunities.

## IMPACT STRATEGY

This campaign will use the film as a catalyst to expand mixed ability rugby in Ireland and beyond by linking inspiring stories, local clubs, and clear paths to action.

Screenings at rugby clubs, secondary schools, and community venues will be paired with accessible toolkits that help stakeholders understand the mixed ability model and start or grow teams.

Partnerships with Mixed Ability Sports Ireland and existing clubs will support “Start Mixed Ability Rugby” and “I Play” initiatives, connecting potential players, families, and allies to local opportunities.

Audience journeys will move from awareness to connection, participation, and advocacy through a simple Learn–Connect–Act–Share steps.



# Whiddy

**Synopsis**

WHIDDY is a creative and cinematic documentary film about Big Business, Money and Power set in the world of Big Oil. Using playful and at times darkly humorous archive and powerful testimonies, it tells the story of how a small rural town in Ireland's beautiful Bantry Bay welcomed in a major global oil company with open arms — farmers left the land, fishermen hung up their nets, the community felt like it had won the lottery. But just ten years and numerous oil spills later, it was to end in a tragedy that silenced and divided the local community and that still haunts it to this day. 50 people lost their lives at Whiddy island. Even after that, the local community was still desperate for Gulf Oil to stay.

THEMES / ISSUE AREAS:
Big Business, Money, Power, Oil.

DIRECTOR
Adrian McCarthy

CO-DIRECTOR
Brenda Morrissey

PRODUCER
Maria Horgan

MAIN LOCATIONS
Bantry, Ireland
Brittany & Marseille, France

LANGUAGES
English, French

LENGTH
105'

PRODUCTION STATUS
Completed

COMPLETION DATE
Spring 2026

## PURPOSE / IMPACT VISION

THIS FILM CAN HELP TO

- Promote community engagement and active citizenship in communities dealing with major, divisive issues affecting their lives.

- Sound the alarm on the scale of environmentally destructive businesses around the globe, starting with the affected communities.

- Ignite a community-led push for accountability to confront political and institutional failures in their local areas.

## IMPACT STRATEGY

The 'MY TOWN' campaign gives communities a shared in-real-life space to debate how to deal with new industries that promise revenue at the price of long-term environmental impact.

The campaign will begin with a series of screenings in the Sperrin Mountains, a community divided for years over plans for a major mining project, since Whiddy is about a different controversy we believe it can serve as a neutral proxy to frame discussions.

Special screenings in Ireland and the UK will include a community town hall featuring a professionally facilitated discussion about shared concerns.

Our partners will include environmental advocates and non-partisan groups - Rotary clubs, tidy town committees etc – that draw community members from across the political spectrum.

# IMPACT LAB TEAM

**Patricia Finneran**, Head of Programme
Media Impact Strategist, Founder of Story Matters Media

**David Rane**, Head of Programme
Producer, Co-Founder of Soilsiú Films & Guth Gafa

**Anouk Schober**, Programme Coordinator, Guth Gafa

# MENTORS

**Ana Castañosa**, Head of FIFDH Impact Days

**Kristin Feeley**, Director of Labs and Artist Support Sundance Institute

**Stefania Gualberti**, Facilitator & Field Expert, Thinking Changes

**Ben Kempas**, Impact Strategist & Founder of Film & Campaign

**Tia Lessin**, director of *Steal This Story, Please!*

**Eliza Licht**, Founder of Red Owl Partners

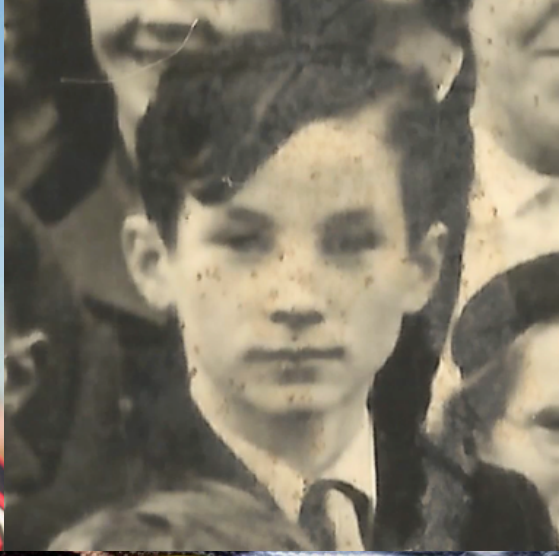
**Odera Onyore Nyambok II**, Communications Officer, DocA – Documentary Africa

**Neasa Ní Chianáin**, Film Director, Co-Founder of Guth Gafa & Soilsiú Films

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PROUD VOICE HEARER
PATSY HAGE
THANK YOU

