

Finding Courage

Press Kit

USA | 82 MIN | TV HOUR | HD

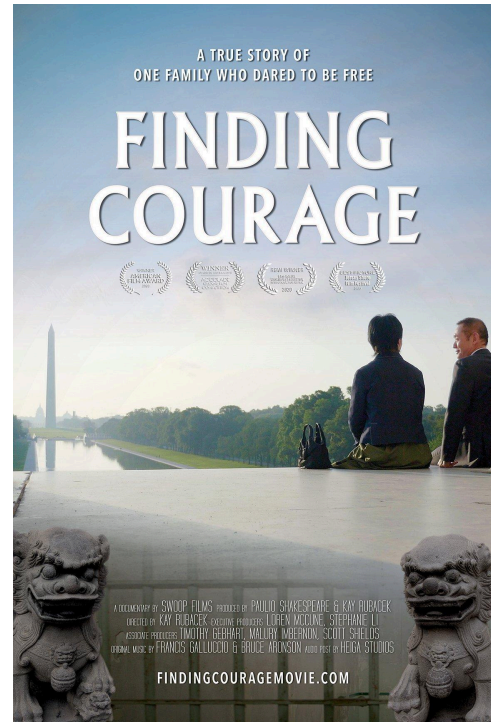
CURRENT AFFAIRS | FAITH | FAMILY | USA-CHINA |

POLITICS | HUMAN RIGHTS | IMMIGRATION

[Official Movie Trailer](#) [Key Art](#)
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LOGLINE

A former Chinese journalist living in exile in the United States, desperately tries to reunite her broken family and seek justice for the murder of her sister.



AWARDS

American Film Award – 2020

Gold Remi Award - 53rd Annual WorldFest Houston International Film Festival

Audience Choice Award, Best Feature Film - Jersey Shore Film Festival

Award of Excellence - Accolade Global Film Competition

MLC Award - MLC Film Gala

Best Documentary, Jury Award - Reel East Texas Film Festival

Official Selections

- My Story My Voice Film Festival
- Kalakari Film Festival
- Woods Hole Film Festival
- Black Cat Picture Show
- Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival
- ARFF Berlin Around International Film Festival
- Golden Door International Film Festival
- Malta Film Festival
- Social World Film Festival
- Catalina Film Festival
- Real to Reel International Film Festival
- Arizona Film Festival
- DocUtah Film Festival
- Indigo Moon Film Festival
- World Music International Film Festival
- LA Femme International Film Festival
- The Massachusetts International Film Festival
- Action on Film Megafest International Film Festival
- Red Rose Film Festival
- First Coast Film Festival
- Reel East Texas Film Festival
- Arlington International Film Festival
- Beyond Earth Film Festival
- Dunedin International Film Festival
- Treasure Island International Film Festival
- DocUtah International Film Festival
- Green Mountain Christian Film Festival
- Red Rose International Film Festival

***"Meticulously documented and
profoundly touching"***

*~ Chapman Chen, Hong Kong
Bilingual News*

"Essential viewing"

*~ Nick Holdsworth, European
Documentary Magazine*

***"A hard-hitting
documentary."***

*~ Anders Corr, Ph.D., Journal of
Political Risk*

***"This may be one of the most
important documentaries
we have ever received."***

~ Jersey Shore Film Festival

[Full List of Reviews and Press](#)

MAIN CHARACTERS IN 'FINDING COURAGE'

Yifei Wang, a former Journalist for the Chinese Communist Party becomes a victim of the crackdown on Falun Gong and seeks justice for her sister who had been beaten to death in a labor camp.



Leo, Yifei's brother tries to cope with his post-traumatic stress after suffering 12 years in prison. He builds a replica of the chair he was tortured in to help tell his story despite resistance from his wife.



Ex-Chinese Defectors have given us first-hand accounts from ex-Communist officials in rare and exclusive interviews on the atrocities the Chinese Communist Party is committing on its campaign to wipe out Falun Gong.



Falun Gong practitioners reveal the horrors of China's labor camp system. They give their first-hand account of their struggle to keep each other alive and endure unimaginable torture.



Kefei Wang had committed no crime, but ended up in a Chinese prison. For refusing to give up her faith, she had been tortured to death. Kefei is one of the hundreds of thousands of estimated victims in the persecution... each with a family and a story behind their names.



Gordon Fan, Yifei's husband puts his journalistic skills and life on the line to film the labor camp where Kefei had been murdered. He tries to collect evidence to bring those responsible to justice.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Kay Rubacek, Director/Producer

Kay has spent 20 years producing award-winning non fiction programming, from feature-length documentaries to short works, from cinematic content to digital and interactive media. "Finding Courage" (2020) is her feature-length directorial debut. Kay has been a producer for Swoop Films since 2015 and maintains a focus on the crimes of communism due to her Russian roots and her own experience of being locked in an underground prison cell in China in 2001 for being a human rights advocate.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

“Finding Courage” began as a short documentary profiling Yifei Wang, a former Chinese journalist, who I’d met during the production of our last documentary, “Hard To Believe”. In a follow-up interview with Yifei, I was blown away by how her personal experience connected to so many aspects of the Chinese regime’s persecution of the popular meditation practice, Falun Gong. I felt that telling her story could present the complexities of this highly politicized issue in a way that is relatable to a broader audience, beyond people who are already interested in Chinese politics or human rights.

As we began documenting Yifei’s journey, her brother, Leo, who had been in prison serving 13 years for printing Falun Gong flyers, was released and escaped to America with his wife. Traumatized, but in awe of American freedom, Leo and his wife began their journey of healing in front of the camera.

Soon we heard Yifei’s family in China were going to visit the labor camp where Yifei’s sister had been murdered because she refused to give up her faith in Falun Gong. The family agreed to use secret cameras to film the process. After they successfully relayed the footage out of China to us, I felt indebted to the family to tell their story in the form of a feature documentary.

We were able to track down survivors in the same labor camp as Yifei’s sister who has witnessed her persecution. We also tracked down a former labor camp director who defected from China because he refused to be an accomplice to the abuse of Falun Gong practitioners in his labor camp. His candid testimony, along with other defectors and witnesses, were surprisingly insightful for me, despite my own years of research into Chinese politics and society.

The access we gained to this story, due to the bravery of this family of survivors, astounds me to this day. It was their resilience that provided me the courage, as a first-time director, to traverse the difficult journey across cultural, linguistic, and political divides to interweave all the elements of this story into a single film about one family’s search for freedom and justice.

~ Kay Rubacek, Director, ‘Finding Courage’

KEY CONTRIBUTORS

Lea B. Olsen - Voice over of Yifei Wang

Lea is the founder of [Rethink The Win](#), a foundation dedicated to fostering a positive culture in youth sports. She was a former Big Ten basketball player for the University of Minnesota. She is currently a public speaker and broadcaster on ESPN'S national WNBA coverage.



Adrian Morales-Demori, Audio/ Post-production

Adrian is a Grammy award-winning artist with endorsements from major companies including: Universal, Warner Paramount Picture, Disney, and Coca-Cola. He currently works at Sony Corporation.

Malury Imbernon, Audio/ Post-production at [Heiga Studios](#)

Malury has an extensive background in Audio Engineering and Media Arts & Animation. She has produced for indie bands , music videos, independent businesses and has done visuals for major corporations such as Burger King, Popeyes, Tim Hortons, etc.

Bruce Aronson, Composer

New York based composer Bruce Aronson has created an all original music score for "Finding Courage." His expertise is in classical composition. Aronson also performs as a band leader and singer songwriter on the Manhattan club circuit. He is an accomplished guitar, bass, keyboard player and vocalist, as well as a programmer, audio engineer and producer.

Francis Galluccio, Composer / Music Supervisor

Composing songs for major artists such as Jennifer Lopez, Jessica Simpson, Celine Dion, Francis's songs have reached the top 10 of the Billboard charts and sold millions of copies worldwide. He also composes for commercials, film and television, including ABC, Cartoon Network and The CW. He scored and executive produced the feature film "Intersection" (2015) which has, to date, won 32 "Best Picture" awards.

Sterling Campbell - Producer of theme song "Courage Is Found"

Sterling Campbell is an American musician and songwriter who has worked with numerous high-profile acts, including The B-52s, Duran Duran, Soul Asylum, Cyndi Lauper, Spandau Ballet, Gustavo Cerati, and David Bowie.

PRODUCTION STORIES



Finding the Story

Yifei Wang had been interviewed in Swoop's last film "Hard to Believe" for being blood-tested for organ harvesting while in detention in mainland China. The producers were intrigued by her story and background as a high-ranking journalist. Swoop Films interviewed Yifei with the intention of producing a short film about her. After finding out her full story and gaining access to the family's archive, and later the undercover labor camp footage, the producers felt a short film wouldn't do the story justice and embarked on this feature documentary instead.



Producing a Film in Chinese

A big thank you to the many translators and interpreters who assisted at all stages of this film! From research to production, and transcribing. Their help was invaluable. With the unique perspective of being cultural outsiders, we felt it gave us an advantage to tell this story to an American audience. For many Chinese citizens and "cultural insiders," the harrowing tales and issues they face were often seen as an ordinary part of living.



Finding Hope in Tragedy

Amongst the many horrific human rights abuses occurring in China, including this story in “Finding Courage,” we were looking for a silver-lining amidst so much heartache. In the people we interacted with, when their spirit is put to extremes, they fought with greater strength from within. We started to believe in and see for ourselves a simple phrase manifest in reality, love is the greatest force there is.

BACKGROUND

“Finding Courage” pulls back the veil on the much overlooked, misunderstood, and under-reported Falun Gong community, whose unexpected persistence for religious freedom in China has become the sharpest thorn in the side of the world’s largest dictatorship. Falun Gong itself is a Buddhist spiritual practice that is based on elevating one’s character and conforming to truth, compassion, and tolerance which has spread to nearly every country in the world. The persecution began in 1999 under the direction of the former dictator, Jiang Zemin. He saw the nearly 100 million practitioners of Falun Gong and the principles they put into practice as an opposition to Communist ideologies and a threat to the CCP’s absolute control of society. The persecution continues to this day...

STYLE

Incorporated in the film to drive the narrative are verite scenes of the protagonists and their family in action; stylized footage of exercise, meditation, and contemplation, as well as secret camera footage taken in China of key locations including the inside of a labor camp. We have gained rare and exclusive access to former CCP officials, which are filmed against a black background, and archival news media footage.

The vivid visuals of their family life contrast with the tragedy of their past, which is shown via secretly shot footage in China and media archives that are treated with filters and a reduced color palette. This footage brings audiences into an often-unseen side of modern China.

This visual approach mirrors the family’s attitude to their past. Externally, they are always bright and hopeful, most often smiling, and ever caring towards each other, their home, and their appearance. However internally, they each hold painful memories that long to be

resolved. The soundscape and rich music score will enhance the visuals by subtly reflecting the internal mood of the characters on-screen, which in some cases, will create a dynamic contrast with the imagery. Interviews with eyewitnesses to the family's past are shot in their home environments and bring multiple angles to the story—some in complement, and others in contrast.

PRODUCTION DETAILS

Duration: Feature Length, TV Broadcast Hour

Production Company: Swoop Films

Executive Producers: Loren McCune & Stephanie Li

Producers: Paulio Shakespeare & Kay Rubacek

Director & Editor: Kay Rubacek

Writer: Andrew Parker & Kay Rubacek

Assistant Editor: Mauricio Pineda

Associate Producers: Timothy Gebhart, Scott Shields, Kacey Cox, Malury Imbernon, Adrian Morales-Demori, Ray Chen, Susan Chen, Masha Savitz

Original Music: Francis Galluccio & Bruce Aronson

Audio Mix: Malury Imbernon & Adrian Morales-Demori at HEIGA STUDIOS

Current Stage: Complete

Release Date: May, 2020

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