



FILM: **20 DAYS IN MARIUPOL**

FDG RATING: 4.7 😊😊😊😊😊

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Mstyslav Chernov: *director*
Ukrainian Associated Press journalists

DATE: March 24, 2024

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **20 DAYS IN MARIUPOL**

The 2024 documentary, *20 Days in Mariupol*, won numerous awards including the Oscar for best feature documentary, but many of us, already distressed about the horrific images we had seen on the news, were reluctant to watch the film. The documentary, however, provided absolute astounding insight into the journalists and crew who risked their lives to film what was happening in the midst of bombs and explosions and had to figure out circuitous ways to get the film clips in the hands of international broadcasters. One discussion participant said she is grateful for what they did. Just as the lead doctor in the hospital said, "you've got to film this...the world has to see what is happening here".

An Associated Press team of Ukrainian journalists trapped in the besieged city of Mariupol were the last international reporters remaining in the city as Russian forces closed in. Mstyslav Chernov, a Ukrainian video journalist for The Associated Press, struggled to continue to film and document the atrocities of the invasion, along with several other AP journalists, speaking to people lost in the streets with no place to go after their homes were destroyed in the blasts, and capturing the chaos in hospitals as injured patients are moved out of decimated buildings. As reported, they capture what became some of the most defining images of the war: dying children, mass graves, the bombing of a maternity hospital, and more.

Many of us had the same reaction as the discussion participant who said she resisted watching but finally forced herself to watch it and is glad she did; the sheer grit of the filmmaker and crew, they risked their lives to capture what was happening and then get the clips put of the country intact to inform the world. It was nothing short of a miracle. A brilliant documentary, was another comment. It was as if you were inside the film rather than a distant observer. You would see a grisly scene immediately followed by the news clip that was broadcast. It put the hypocrisy of Putin's version front and center. Another comment was that although being aware of the war and seeing it broadcast, this film really brought it home. Without the bravery of the journalists, the world would not have known what was happening. The film is an impressive combination of solid purpose, good documentary technique, and capturing important information in a compelling visual form, was another astute observation.

When accepting the Oscar, Chernov said, "I will be the first director on this stage who will say I wish I never made this film. I wish to be able to exchange this to Russia never attacking Ukraine, never occupying our cities ... but I cannot change history. Cannot change the past."

Almost a perfect 5 on our scale of 1 to 5, we scored *20 Days In Mariupol*, an emotional 4.7.



See you at the movies!
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