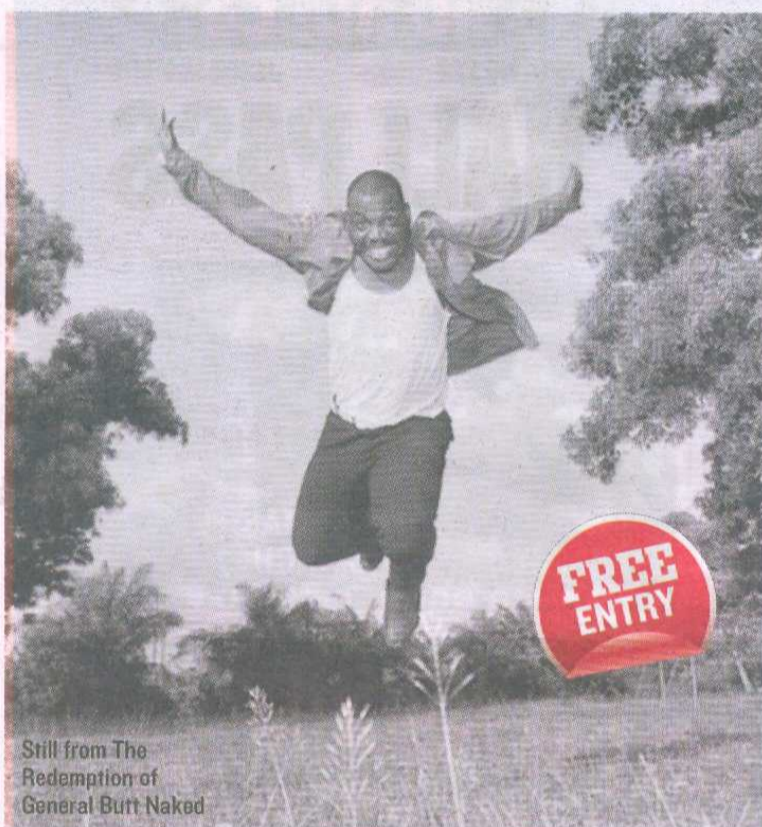


RINGSIDE VIEW OF WAR AND ITS HUMANE SIDE



Still from The Redemption of General Butt Naked



Afghan National Army Soldier in a Poppy Field

G EXHIBITION

REDEMPTION PLAYS A BIGGER ROLE THAN MAKING WAR IN PHOTOGRAPHER RYAN LOBO'S NEW SHOW TITLED WAR AND FORGIVENESS THAT OPENS TODAY

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Ask Bangalore boy, international photographer and documentary filmmaker Ryan Lobo about the thrills and chills of being in the war zones of Afghanistan, Iraq and Liberia where he shot the subjects of his show War and Forgiveness, and he will surprise you with his response. For Ryan says that more than war and its after effects, it's the power to forgive and absolve people of their crimes which he witnessed, made this photographic journey have a bigger impact. In 2007, Ryan travelled to Iraq, Afghanistan and Liberia and had a front row view of other people's suffering, the debilitating effects of war and feared for his life on more than one occasion.

Ryan, whose works have been screened regularly on the National Geographic and Animal Planet channels and also has been a speaker on compassionate storytelling at the TED India in 2009, will present the story of these war torn areas and people as viewed through his lens in this show. Ryan is also producer of the film Redemption of General Butt Naked, a documentary shot on a Liberian war criminal turned evangelist who is believed to have murdered more than 10,000 people during the country's civil war. The film won for best cinematography at this year's Sundance Film Festival. In a candid chat with the Guide, Ryan tells us why photographs speak more than sensational documentaries sometimes, why forgiving someone is more powerful than killing and being fortunate enough to live and tell this tale.

How was the experience of shooting in crisis torn Afghanistan, Liberia and Iraq?

I have come away from war with a sense of guilt which for a long while I could not explain. I wondered what use it would be to exhibit photographs, of far-away wars in India until I decided that the most depressing thing about working in war zones was not the fear of death. It is seeing the same thing, perhaps the seeds of the same

thing within us, myself, in our conversation and in the way we treat our own people.

Can you share a personal anecdote?

I think that our filmmaking in Iraq and Afghanistan would have been suicidal if it was not for the presence of our security contractors who we had hired, especially in Iraq where we could hear gunfire and bombs going off. In Afghanistan there was one time when we had to flee a village where heroin was being farmed as our informer told us that the Taliban were on their way there to kidnap us. On another note however, I don't know exactly how dangerous or not these trips were really because there is also that much spin around the danger element, especially when you are far way and there's no way of corroborating what 'those people' were really up to.



Captured Insurgent in Baghdad

Tell us more about your film The Redemption of General Butt Naked?

Eric Strauss, my long time former filmmaking partner and one of the film's directors noticed a blurb about the general in the book The World's Most Dangerous Places about ten years back. The general got his moniker "butt naked" from the fact that he was in the habit of fighting stark naked. We had discussed the possibility of making an independent documentary on the man at that time. In 2005, Eric tracked him down through some pastors in West Africa and went down to meet him. Later, we went down to shoot a film about him and that process continued for five years.

What separates Joshua from a lot of other mass murderers is that he was willing to confess and speak about his crimes openly and ask for forgiveness. What made the filming possible was that in Liberia no war criminal has been convicted of his crimes.

AT Tasveer, Sua House, Kasturba Cross Road
ON TILL March 19, 11 am to 7 pm
CALL 22128358

Ryan Lobo will also take visitors on a guided tour of his show. Call Tasveer for date and timing details.