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Daily Messenger

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Bloomfield filmmaker highlights human-trafficking crisis at Bristol Valley Theater event

Bristol Valley Theater will host an event with Oscar-nominee Robert Bilheimer



Documentary filmmaker Robert Bilheimer of Bloomfield, formerly of Naples, is seen at left while filming in Senegal. Bilheimer will screen a documentary about human trafficking Saturday at Bristol Valley Theater in Naples. SUBMITTED

NAPLES — Just as the refugee crisis escalates in Europe a Bloomfield man whose documentaries have garnered international attention is working on a film about the trafficking of child refugees in the European Union.

“Heart of the Matter,” the new documentary by Robert Bilheimer and his company, [Worldwide Documentaries](#), will be a short (less than 30 minutes) companion piece to Bilheimer's film “Not My Life,” which will be shown at an event Saturday at Bristol Valley Theater in Naples.

“What is happening to children in the EU at the hands of human traffickers is frightening, dangerous, and terribly sad,” said Bilheimer, a former Naples resident who now lives in Bloomfield.

President of the nonprofit organization Worldwide Documentaries, Bilheimer for 30 years has used filmmaking to call attention to a variety of global concerns including the AIDS epidemic, child slavery and apartheid. He was nominated for an Oscar for his documentary “The Cry of Reason,” a feature-length documentary profiling the South African anti-apartheid leader Beyers Naude.

In talking about his film, “Not My Life,” and the new project, “Heart of the Matter,” Bilheimer said human traffickers will “always swoop in when a disaster occurs.” Disasters leave people vulnerable, and those events can be a physical disaster, like the earthquake in Haiti, “or a dramatic demographic shift like the one we are seeing right now in Europe,” Bilheimer said.

“Either way, it is the traffickers who profit, and the children, women and men whose lives are lost,” he said.

Saturday’s showing of “Not My Life” will include discussion and Q&A with Bilheimer and partners in his project that include locals helping promote it. The event from 6:30 to 10 p.m. will also include live music, a silent auction and refreshments. Tickets will be at the door and \$10 each. Money raised will help fund the making of “Heart of the Matter.”

People can also support the project through an Indiegogo campaign at <http://igg.me/at/hom>, which is raising funds for the new film.

If you go

WHAT Worldwide Documentaries film night

WHEN Saturday, Dec. 5, 6:30-10 p.m.

WHERE Bristol Valley Theater, 151 S. Main St., Naples

DETAILS Worldwide Documentaries and Oscar nominee Robert Bilheimer will show “Not My Life,” a documentary by Bilheimer on global human trafficking and child exploitation. Event will include a Q&A and Bilheimer and colleagues will talk about his film in the making, “Heart of the Matter,” on the trafficking of child refugees in the European Union. The event will raise money for “Heart of the Matter,” and include music by The Prickers, a silent art auction and refreshments. Tickets are \$10. For more information, visit worldwidedocumentaries.com or email Heidi@worldwidedocumentaries.com.

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