



"The relevance of this film cannot be overstated...Keep Saray Home drives home an empathetic call to action, putting light on an issue not often covered by mainstream Asian American media."

- Seattle Asian American Film Festival

"The film features an excellent combination of various storylines and perspectives to amplify the urgent conversations around migration and families."

- Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival



"Brian Redondo's Keep Saray Home bursts the bubble that separates Boston from Louisville, the Mexican border, Portland, the Californian forests, and the unrest that inhabits this nation."
- Anna Hoang, Boston Hassle

SYNOPSIS

One sentence synopsis:

In the outskirts of Boston, three Southeast Asian families face the impending threat of deportation.

One paragraph synopsis:

ICE doesn't just separate families at the border. In the outskirts of Boston, three families face the impending threat of deportation. As refugees from Cambodia and Vietnam, they know they'll have to fight together to stay together.

Two paragraph synopsis:

Far from the southern border, in the outskirts of Boston, Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees are facing their own battle against family separation. ICE is detaining and deporting community members on a scale not seen before. Though families live in uncertain fear, refugees have developed a knack for pulling through. They learn to rally together and are doing everything they can to keep their families intact. This portrait of a shaken community examines the on-the-ground impact of a broken immigration system through the eyes of three families facing the deportation of a loved one. They laugh, they cry, and they fight on.

SCREENINGS, FESTIVALS & AWARDS

- Best Documentary Short, Newburyport Documentary Film Festival
- Best Documentary Short, Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival
- Best Documentary Short, Seattle Asian American Film Festival
- Special Jury Award for Editing, Documentary Short, Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival
- Runner Up, Audience Award for Documentary Short, Anchorage International Film Festival
- Newburyport Documentary Film Festival
- Global Peace Film Festival
- Awareness Film Festival
- Chagrin Documentary Film Festival
- Boston Asian American Film Festival
- Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival
- Anchorage International Film Festival
- Seattle Asian American Film Festival
- DisOrient Asian American Film Festival
- CAAMFest
- Houston AAPI Film Festival
- Docs Without Borders Film Festival
- Austin Asian American Film Festival
- DC Asian American Film Festival
- Cambodia Town Film Festival
- Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival
- Next Generation Indie Film Awards



BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR

Brian Redondo is a documentary filmmaker based in Brooklyn, NY. He is committed to stories from the margins of society, often exploring issues of race, immigration, and how those topics intersect with culture. His most recent short documentary “KEEP SARAY HOME” (Best Short Film, Newburyport Doc Fest 2020) examines family separation and deportations in Boston’s Southeast Asian community. Previously, he directed a trio of short docs, commissioned by PBS’ Art21, “JES FAN IN FLUX” (DOC NYC 2019, Vimeo Staff Pick), “DOREEN GARNER SCULPTS OUR TRAUMA” (Best Documentary, Humboldt International Film Festival 2018), and “AZIKIWE MOHAMMED IS A GUY WHO MAKES STUFF” (Vimeo Staff Pick) which illustrate the ways in which the titular artists use sculpture to unpack problems of race and gender.

His first short documentaries “WHY WE RISE” (Loni Ding Award, CAAMFest 2014) and “THE LOOKOUT” (CAAMFest 2017) explore immigration through the perspectives of undocumented youth in NYC and volunteers aiding refugees in Greece, respectively. He also helped shoot the Sundance-premiered, Field of Vision short “LIBRE” and has edited short documentaries and documentary series for CNN, The New Yorker, Vox Media, and HBO Max.

Director’s Statement

When I was making this film together with the local activists and families who appear on screen, it became abundantly clear that an individual’s struggles are not theirs alone. Whether it be Saray or Minh or Thy, the predicament they face has crushing consequences for everyone else those individuals touch: their spouses, their children, and their community. And that impact can have severe and lasting reverberations, plunging families into spirals of hardship. Indeed, the circumstances that put Saray on a path to the criminal justice system may not be too different from the circumstances that his deportation may create.

And because these stories are linked rather than isolated or unique, I think it is worth considering how those circumstances came to be. Entire communities across the US are shaped and dictated by a number of forces that those communities have little control over. The refugee experience is a prime example of just that. Moreover, how the people of those communities are treated is the result of not only the whims of their neighbors but also the local and federal policies that have been put in place. When you think about Saray and the choices he's made, the options that were made available to him become just as important.

But hopefully you agree that this film is not about suffering or being a helpless victim. To me it is a hopeful story because of how everyone responded to the moment. Despite the dire threat of deportation, the community stepped up. In the film we see people opening up about their experiences and finding similarities with other families. Saray's children become vocal. Hoa, a self-described introvert, takes the biggest leaps and shows up for others. A community comes together to demand justice. But none of that happens by coincidence. It requires the initiative of individuals and community organizations willing to invest the time in people and their stories. And that is where change begins.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Directed and produced by [Brian Redondo](#)

Co-produced by Bethany Li, Kevin Lam

Cinematography by [Brian Redondo](#) & [Diana Diroy](#)

Edited by [Jota Sosnowski](#) & [Brian Redondo](#)

Original music by [Robert Ouyang Rusli](#)

With support from [Working Films](#) and [Asian American Resource Workshop](#)

KEEP SARAY HOME

Directed by Brian Redondo

Produced by Brian Redondo, Bethany Li & Kevin Lam

2020, 31 minutes, United States, English and Vietnamese with English subtitles

Shooting format: 1080p digital

Aspect ratio: 16:9

Film sound: Stereo

Screening Formats Available: BluRay, HD, DCP

Trailer: <http://vimeo.com/747147393>

Social Media:

<https://www.facebook.com/keepsarayhome>

<https://www.instagram.com/keepsarayhome/>

<https://www.brianredondo.com/>

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Educational and Public Screenings:

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SEPTEMBER 18, 2020 0

"Keep Saray Home" film chronicles deportation struggles of South East Asians

by SHIRA LAUCHAROEN



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So narrates Thy Chea, a Cambodian refugee, who had lived in Lowell with his family, before he was deported by the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. The camera cuts to scenes of strife in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Chea was sent to stay there for eighteen months, until his case was won, and he was able to return home to Massachusetts.

On September 11, Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) and the Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW) held a sneak peak of the documentary "Keep Saray Home," a film that chronicles the stories of immigrants they had worked with in the fight against South East Asian deportations. The screening was followed by a panel discussion featuring Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, State Representative Liz Miranda, Lowell City Councilor Vesna Nuon, District Attorney Rachael Rollins, and Jassyran Kim, the daughter of Saray Im, who was targeted for deportation. The film captures the experiences of three families and derives its name from Im's struggle. It describes how in the 1970's and 80's, the United States resettled over a million South East Asians, who fled warfare in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos. They are the largest refugee community to settle in the United States.

During the movie, Im describes how because of a past criminal conviction, he was asked to routinely visit ICE for the last nineteen years. While living with his wife Tammie Christopulos and their children in Lynn, Im felt that he never knew when he might be deported, "snatched away" from his family with "no remorse." Im said that he has changed since the time of his trouble with the law. He is a father of three and coaches and mentors children in youth football leagues.

"If you have something to fight for, to live for, that's how people change," said Im, in the film. "That's how I look at it."

Kevin Lam, Organizing Director of AARW, and Bethany Li, Director of GBLS's Asian Outreach Program, led the discussion on concrete strategies to support community members impacted by deportation, following the screening. Lam explained that in the aftermath of September 11, many Muslim and South Asian communities were targeted, leading to their criminalization and increased surveillance in the country. The formation of ICE and the Department of Homeland Security brought

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Pressley spoke to the importance of legislation that has been passed on the federal level to support immigrants vulnerable to deportation. The New Way Forward Act addresses the connection between mass detention and deportation, reducing mass incarceration by ending mandatory detention and banning for profit immigration jails. It also gives judges discretion when deciding immigration claims for immigrants with criminal records and redefines the categories of "serious crimes" that currently bar immigrants from qualifying for asylum. Miranda and Nuon described narratives that are perpetuated in society about the existence of a "good immigrant" and a "bad immigrant." Individuals who make "positive" contributions to society are rewarded, while immigrants who commit crimes become part of a reductive storyline that is propagated through mainstream conversations. The reality, explained Nuon, is much more complex.

"Those are the notions that are used by the mainstream community, as a bias," said Nuon. "There is no bad immigrant. I came here in 1982, to the United States, facing a language and cultural barrier. ... There's a lack of structural support and systematic violence. And so what you do is you form your own group. ...Eventually it draws you to commit some crime."

Kim delivered an emotional account of experiencing the possibility of having her father deported. She was in school when she heard the news, and she described the impact that it had on her wellbeing there. She spoke to the pressure that she felt to represent herself as an exemplary member of the community, explaining that she believed she would not be heard unless she achieved success – that her story would not matter.

"This fight is everywhere," said Kim. "...I just hope that nobody else has to go through this anymore, because it is painful. I wish that no child has to have the conversation of 'why is my mom or dad no longer here?' It is emotionally and mentally taxing."

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