

For Immediate Release

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**UNSETTLED follows LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East as they flee persecution to seek safety in the U.S.**

# UNSETTLED: Seeking Refuge in America

A documentary film by Tom Shepard

Airs on WORLD Channel via local PBS stations - June 28 (and on [WorldChannel.org](http://WorldChannel.org) from June 28-July 12)

**Filmmaker Tom Shepard and film subjects  
Cheyenne, Mari, Junior and Subhi are available for interviews**



**Trailer:**

<https://vimeo.com/342622800>

Open Door Productions LLC is proud to present the broadcast premiere of **UNSETTLED: Seeking Refuge in America**, a documentary revealing the untold stories of LGBTQ refugees and asylum-seekers, produced and directed by Tom Shepard and co-produced by Jen Gilomen. **UNSETTLED** had its World Premiere at the San Francisco International Film Festival and is the winner of the Best Documentary Feature Film at 2019 Outfest (playing at 55 festivals worldwide and winning 14 other top awards). **UNSETTLED** will lead Doc World's new season which broadcasts on public media's WORLD Channel on June 28 and will be available for streaming on [WorldChannel.org](http://WorldChannel.org) through July 12.

As current leadership in America continues to demonize immigrants and drastically restrict the flow of refugees and asylum seekers into the U.S., **UNSETTLED** brings to life the names, faces, and tumultuous backstories of LGBTQ individuals forced to flee intense persecution in their home countries:

**Subhi**, a gay Syrian refugee who, having survived multiple death threats from Islamic terrorists, beatings by a violent and homophobic father, and a nation devastated by years of war, finds his voice as a leader for refugee rights in the U.S. Along the way he meets then Ambassador Samantha Power and is invited to be the first gay man ever to testify before the U.N. Security Council. **Cheyenne and Mari**, a lesbian couple from Angola who, having faced brutal harassment from family and neighbors, seek uncertain asylum through the American immigration courts while pursuing their dreams of becoming musicians. **Junior**, a gender non-conforming gay man from the Democratic Republic of the Congo struggles intensely to find basic housing and livelihood while exploring a more fluid gender identity.

As the U.S. has increasingly closed its borders, these vulnerable refugees struggle to find safety and new homes on our shores. Landing in gay-friendly San Francisco and girded with new hope (aided by advocates, church volunteers and Jewish Family and Community Services, as well as ordinary citizens), their challenges only begin to multiply: finding new homes, new jobs and new identities in the country's most cost-prohibitive region forces these new immigrants to dig deep just in order to survive. But what are the costs persecuted immigrants pay for seeking refuge and how are everyday Americans stepping forward to help those most in need?

**About Tom Shepard, Director/Producer**

For 20 years, filmmaker Tom Shepard has produced, directed, edited, and distributed documentary films. Four of his feature projects – SCOUT'S HONOR, KNOCKING, WHIZ KIDS and THE GROVE – have aired nationally on PBS. Shepard's films have played in hundreds of festivals worldwide – including Full Frame, Silver Docs and the Sundance Film Festival (where he won two top awards for SCOUT'S HONOR in 2001). Tom states: *"As a member of the LGBTQ community, growing up in the U.S. I was faced with misrepresentations of queer people. Documentary filmmaking, for me, has become not only a craft but a way to reach into the darker corners of my own life and explore forces that scapegoat groups of people. There are few groups in current international discourse more maligned than refugees and immigrants. That discourse, in the U.S., has turned toxic."*

Web Site:

<http://www.unsettled.film>

2019 81 min In English, Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic with English subtitles USA Not Rated

To request online link for review / interview purposes, please contact Sasha Berman at Shotwell Media at [ShotwellMedia@gmail.com](mailto:ShotwellMedia@gmail.com) or at [310-450-5571](tel:310-450-5571)