

EXCLUSIVE FOR TODAY ДЕНЕС: Interview with Jason Miko, producer of "Name is a Name"

# We want the Macedonian community to get involved, attend and bring their non-Macedonian friends as well!

**You have made your stand very clear in support for Macedonians. Please tell us how you first met with our culture and how you got involved with our "name issue"?**

- I was working for a public relations firm in Washington, DC in the mid-90s. We had clients in the Balkans and on a trip to the region, I met the director of Mercy Corps, a Portland, Oregon-based humanitarian organization working in the region. The country director was in the process of moving his office to Skopje and had a three month job opening. I thought I would do the job for three months – as a way of getting out of Washington, DC for a while – and then come back. Three months came and went and I said I would do it for a year. That was 14 years ago.

I fell in love with Macedonia and felt the name issue was just an important issue to be involved in – it's about human rights.

**How did the crew that produced this project get together and how did the filming of the production progress?**

- Working with my friend Aleksandar Bilbilov in Skopje, we reached out to fx3x and asked them to come on board as the production house. The production consisted of one pre-production trip where we brought Sigurjon Einarsson, the director, to Macedonia to scout out locations, 2 production trips for filming – about 9 nine days in total – and 4 post-production trips.

**What happened with the intended promotion in New York and in Iceland? The movie eventually had a premiere in Canada and the USA; how do you picture the upcoming Australian opening?**

- There hasn't been a proposed promotion in New York or Iceland yet. You may be referring to the proposed one in Washington, DC in October of last year. Sigurjon, who is Icelandic, reached out to his ambassador in Washington, DC and he agreed to host a small gathering for the screening at the Embassy. People were invited – ambassadors, media, members of congress, etc. but when the Greeks heard about it, the Greek Foreign Ministry called the Icelandic Foreign Ministry and said 'no way.' You see, Iceland, too, is an EU candidate

country just like Macedonia – and Greece holds Iceland hostage as well.

As for Australia we are really looking forward to this! February 26 in Sydney at the beautiful and historic State Theatre. We expect a large and very enthusiastic crowd. I will be there, as producer of the film, and Sigurjon Einarsson, the director will be there too, to answer questions after the showing. And then we'll show it in selected cities around Australia. We want the Macedonian community there to get involved, attend and bring their non-Macedonian friends as well! Tickets can be purchased from Ticketmaster or the theatre.

As for the rest of the United States, we had a great showing to a packed house on February 1 in Washington, DC hosted by the United Macedonian Diaspora. We are showing it at Arizona State University on February 4 and both myself and Sigurjon are at both functions. And we have more cities around the USA, Canada and other countries lined up too!

**How come the film is not run on any of our national television broadcasts? There is significant interest in Republic of Macedonia although I believe your primary intention was to promote this side of the story globally.**

- We really want to broadcast in the Republic of Macedonia and I believe we will. However, we need a TV station willing to pay the screening fees and sponsors to help sponsor it and the grand VIP event we want to do.

**Your columns are very prominent. We are curious as to how you initially became captivated with Macedonia.**

- I think the best answer is above, but let me add this: I first thought I would stay 3 months in Macedonia and then one year. But 14 years later, I'm still very much involved because first, I have many, many dear friends in Macedonia and it is a second home to me (my home is Tucson, Arizona). But in addition, the people of Macedonia deserve support, encouragement and help in their desire to have the world recognize them as Macedonians. Although this really has been achieved – most people around the world

recognize the Macedonians and the Republic of Macedonia – Macedonia is still held hostage (EU and NATO) because of one government that wants to argue about things that happened 2,300 years ago. And that is not right.

**As a gracious American publicist, what would you recommend to the Macedonia politicians?**

- Be more united, especially when it comes to the name issue! United you stand; divided you fall.

**How well do you know Australia, and what would you most like to see from it?**

- I've been to Australia once, three years ago, for a book I'm looking to get published (Not in Arizona: Around the World from Australia to Zimbabwe). I love the place and anxious to see more. I would really love to spend 6 months wandering around the country writing a travelogue! As to what I would like to see from Australia? I would like to

see the Australian Government recognize the Republic of Macedonia by its constitutional name.

**Would you like to share some of your future plans with our readers?**

- We are getting this film out by offering it to national TV stations in countries around the world, in film festivals and through organized screenings, such as the ones we are doing in Australia. Eventually, it will go to DVD. In the meantime encourage your friends to visit the website [www.anameisaname.com](http://www.anameisaname.com) find us on Facebook and join the group and tell people about this! It is a powerful story told in a unique and artful way by non-Macedonians – we have an American producer, an Icelandic director and a Brit, Sir Andrew Motion, narrating it. And it has some great music in it – Morten Harket, the lead singer of Norwegian group a-ha gives us the title of the film and a song (A Name is a Name from his



album Letter from Egypt) along with Icelandic bands Sigur-Ros, mum, Earth Affair, California band Monte Negro, Graham Nash of the indomitable Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and of course, Macedonians Kiril and the late Tose.

## a name is a name

A unique film production focusing on Macedonian Name and Identity  
Icelandic, Norwegian, American, British and Macedonian Personalities Involved

Directed by Sigurjon Einarsson (Iceland), Jason Miko (US), and narrated by Sir Andrew Motion (UK's Poet Laureate for 10 years), *A Name is a Name* follows the journey of a mysterious Scandinavian traveler as he moves across country through the Republic of Macedonia exploring the patriotism of its citizens. The experimental documentary takes the audience to new perspectives through the eyes of the traveler who speaks with citizens from various backgrounds of what it means for them to be Macedonians.

*A Name is a Name* brings together personalities from Iceland, Norway, the United Kingdom the United States and Macedonia.

Featuring music by Morten Harket, lead singer of Norwegian rock group A-ha, Icelandic bands Sigur Ros, Mum and Earth Affair, Britain's Graham Nash, California band Monte Negro, and Macedonians Kiril Dzajkovski and the late Tose Proeski. The film's title – *A Name is a Name* – is a song from Morten's solo album, *Letter from Egypt*, released in 2008. This film is a production of Macedonian production house fx3x.

Join us for the Australian Premiere

Featuring live Q & A with Director, Sigurjon Einarsson, and Producer, Jason Miko on stage after the film

Friday February 26, 2010 - 7.30pm - State Theatre, Sydney

Tickets on sale Wednesday February 10 from Ticketmaster and the State Theatre box office

For more information, visit [www.anameisaname.com](http://www.anameisaname.com) or [www.withmacedonia.org](http://www.withmacedonia.org) email [Australia@withmacedonia.org](mailto:Australia@withmacedonia.org)

