

RETURN TO  
**MOGADISHU**

REMEMBERING BLACK HAWK DOWN

# PRESS RELEASE

## ARMY RANGER WHO INSPIRED BLACK HAWK DOWN RETURNS TO MOGADISHU FILM CREW FOLLOWS FIRST SOLDIERS TO BATTLE SITE

Austin, Texas, Sept. 12, 2013—The Battle of Mogadishu, an intense fight pitting U.S. armed forces against thousands of Somalis and inspiring the best-selling book and movie *Black Hawk Down*, marks its 20th anniversary on October 3, 2013. Recently, U.S. Army Best Ranger Jeff Struecker returned with a film crew to the battle site in Somalia—the first time ever a U.S. Ranger from this battle has returned to Mogadishu—to retrace the route of the rescue convoy as they braved enemy gunfire to save one of their own.

The new short film, *Return to Mogadishu: Remembering Black Hawk Down*, is available starting tomorrow at [ReturntoMogadishu.com](http://ReturntoMogadishu.com), YouTube and Vimeo. It documents Struecker's reaction during a trip to Somalia, caravanning through areas rarely seen by foreigners – the notorious “Bakaara Market,” the two crash sites, and the original target building of the fight. Keni Thomas, a fellow former Army Ranger who fought in the Battle of Mogadishu with Struecker, accompanies him on the emotional journey.

Struecker is one of the primary inspirations for the book and subsequent movie *Black Hawk Down*. But, as he says in the short film, “There is a great deal of killing, a whole lot of violence in the movie ‘Black Hawk Down’, but to be honest with you, it is a fraction of what really happened in Somalia.”

Producer Mary Beth Minnis, with independent Chicago director Matt Knighton, created this film after learning the inspiring story about Struecker facing down potential death by leaning on his faith during the brutal fighting.

*Return to Mogadishu* offers insight into not only a battle with enemy fire, but also the inner peace a soldier found in the midst of it all. Upon arrival in Mogadishu, Struecker said “Life and death became a lot less significant for me in Mogadishu.”

### *About Army Best Ranger Jeff Struecker*

Serving more than a decade with the 75th Ranger Regiment from Private to Platoon Sergeant, he is a decorated member of the U.S. Army's most elite fighting corps. His efforts in the Battle of Mogadishu were chronicled prominently in the national best seller *Black Hawk Down* which later became a major motion picture. In addition to his experience in Somalia, Struecker participated in the invasion of Panama, Operation Desert Storm, and more than a dozen combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq.

### *Return to Mogadishu Film*

Twenty years after the Battle of Mogadishu, Jeff Struecker, a former Army Ranger from the fight and a key character in the film *Black Hawk Down*, returns to what is still considered the most dangerous place in the world – the streets of Mogadishu - in order to relive the battle. In this attempt to retrace the exact route the rescue convoy took during the firefight, filmmakers share Jeff's first-hand story while driving through the city streets. With some of the first footage shot from inside “Bakaara Market” the film uncovers the emotions experienced by special operators during the battle, seen as Jeff wrestles with the aftermath of a place that reshaped his personal perspective on life and death.



# FILM SYNOPSIS

In 2000, the Academy Award winning film, *Black Hawk Down*, told the story of the 160 U.S. Special Operations Forces who were sent to Mogadishu, Somalia and tasked with the fateful mission of capturing war criminal Mohammed Farrah Aidid. Now, 20 years later, Major Jeff Struecker, a former Army Ranger from the battle and a key character in the film, returns to what is still considered the most dangerous place in the world, the lawless streets of Mogadishu, to relive the battle. In this audacious attempt to retrace the exact route the rescue convoy took during the firefight, filmmakers reveal Jeff's story first hand while driving through the narrow city streets as they identify key landmarks from the film and come within blocks of the original target building. With some of the first footage shot from inside the notorious "Bakaara Market" where the battle took place, *Return to Black Hawk Down* uncovers the fear, courage, and faith experienced by the special operators during the battle in a way never before experienced as Jeff wrestles with the aftermath of a place that reshaped his own perspectives on life and death.

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# BEHIND THE SCENES



Producer - Mary Beth Minnis

After several years of serving in leadership roles with Cru, Mary Beth has shifted her focus to the world of documentary film-making. Propelled by a desire to make stories of redemption and hope known worldwide, she has been a part of producing two documentary shorts and one narrative short. “Return to Mogadishu: Remembering Black Hawk Down” is her latest film.

Director - Matt Knighton



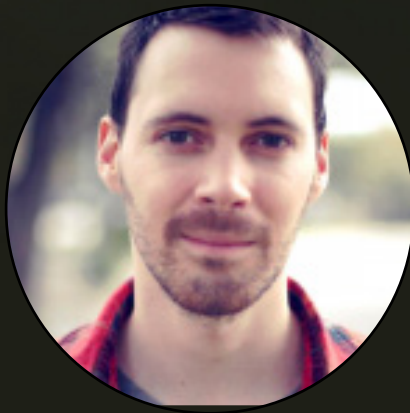
A Chicago native with a proud hint of Austin, Texan blood, Matt has worked as a Producer/Director in the documentary, broadcast television, and advertising industries since 2006. Having worked on projects in over 20 countries on 6 continents, his credits include producing the first film shot on the RED One camera platform to be finished by NBC Universal, as well as being a part of production teams for several award-winning reality programs produced for the BBC, HGTV, and Comcast SportsNet. Matt loves how non-fiction film can blend stunning visuals with adventurous stories to stir emotions and give audiences a fresh look at a world they may not have known. From the Ashes and Lord Montagu. Follow Jacob on *Twitter* or see more of his work *here*.

Director of Photography - Jacob Hamilton



Jacob’s work on short films, commercials, and music videos includes the 2009 Doorpost Filmmaker’s Choice Award Guest Room, and Manos De Madre (2009 AFS Showcase at SXSW). He was a cinematographer for Halogen TV’s Noble Exchange, which received a 2011 Telly Award. Recently Jacob was the Location Director for Zacuto’s BTS: Hit The Ground Running , a 2011 Telly Award winner and Emmy nominee. What attracts him to the art of film is its power to touch hearts, harness emotions, and inspire actions. Jacob spends much of his time helping non-profit organizations develop quality media, and his international feature documentary work includes cinematography for Rising From the Ashes and Lord Montagu. Follow Jacob on *Twitter* or see more of his work *here*.

Film Editor - Gabriel Cox



Gabe has worked alongside award-winning filmmakers for years in his role as editor. He strives not just to edit film well, but to tell meaningful stories. His focus on storytelling in the editing room has allowed him to shape films that influence viewers and leave audiences touched by the essence of each narrative. Whether through documentaries, music videos, or advertisement, he uses the tools of editing to challenge and inspire audiences, not simply by cutting together scenes, but by crafting the best story possible. Follow Gabriel on *Twitter* or see some of his other projects *here*.



## BATTLE INFORMATION

On October 3, 1993, U.S. Special Operations Forces from Task Force Ranger operating in Mogadishu, Somalia launched a daytime mission into the Bakaara Market to capture high-priority targets loyal to war criminal Mohammed Farrah Aidid. The raid, meant to last no longer than one hour, quickly shifted when armed Somalia militia, armed with assault weapons and RPG's, managed to shoot down multiple UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. As the numbers of armed Somalis quickly increased into the tens of thousands, U.S. Rangers and Special Operators, heroically attempting to defend both crash sites, quickly found themselves pinned down and surrounded in a 19-hour standoff that lasted throughout the night. Using AH-6 Little Bird helicopters and additional ground forces, many of whom went back into the city multiple times, U.S. forces repelled repeated attempts by the Somalis to overrun American positions until the morning when armored vehicles extracted the last American forces in the city. Ultimately, 18 U.S. soldiers were lost in the most intense combat firefight since the Vietnam War.

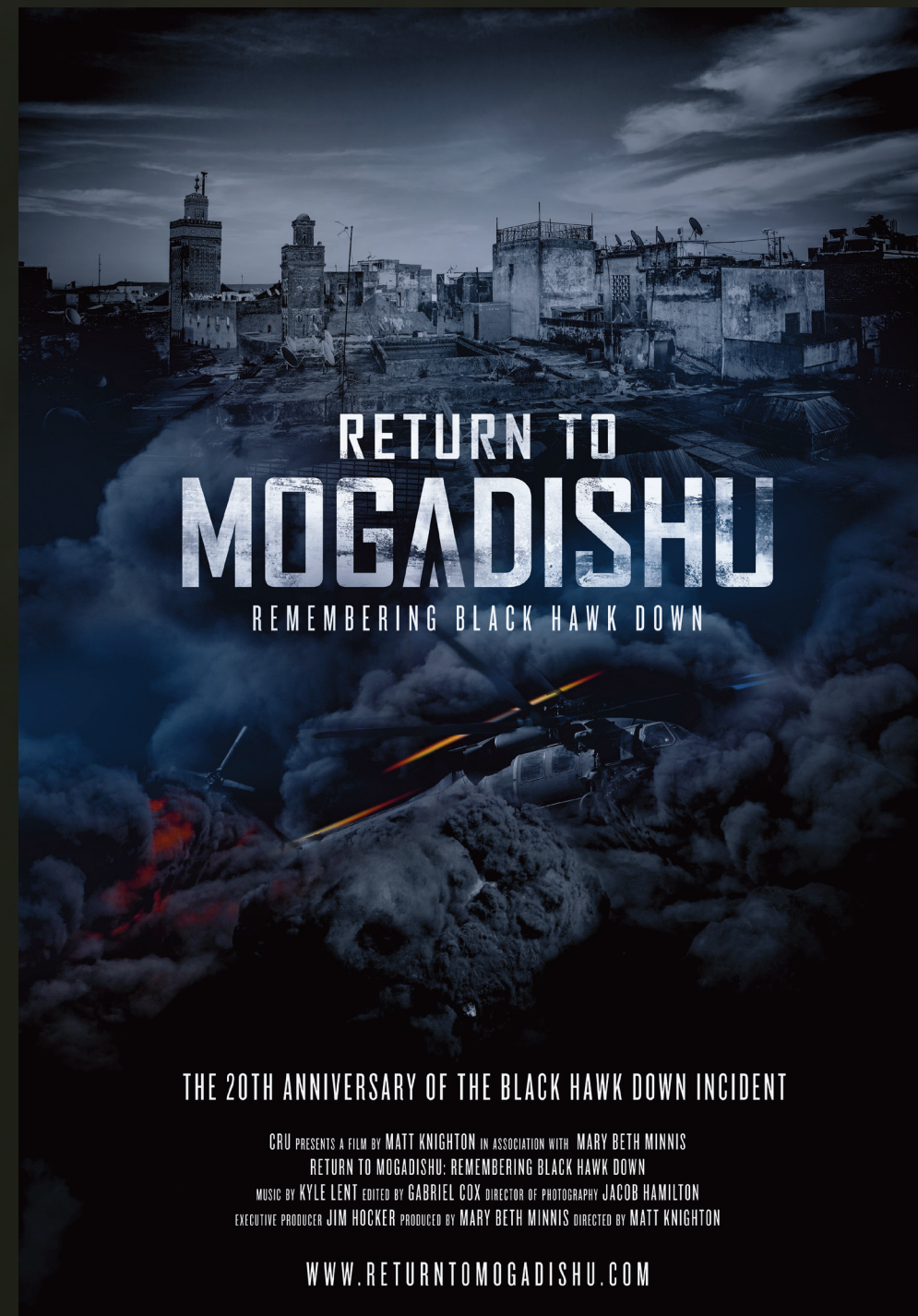
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11 X 16.5

16 X 24

20 X 30

24 X 36





# PRODUCTION STILLS





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