

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a white shirt and pink pants, stands in a doorway holding a large Syrian flag. The flag features a green top section, a white middle section with three red stars, and a black bottom section. The girl has a serious expression.

Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution

A Matthew VanDyke Film

www.SyrianRevolutionFilm.com

Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution

Directed by Matthew VanDyke, Produced by Matthew VanDyke and Nour Kelze

“Probably one of the most powerful films, documentary or otherwise that I have ever seen. Riveting, heart breaking, gut wrenching, powerful... Amazingly and brilliantly told, shot and presented. I truly can't say enough about this important film.” - Mark Clayman, Executive Producer of *The Pursuit of Happiness*

“This story is powerful. It conveys the power of not fearing death in fighting for revolution, and the sad state of war. Following two characters this closely through their triumphs and struggle makes the impact incredible. Its current relevance moves it to the top of my list for documentaries that are must see films.” - Gabe Lyons, Founder of Q Ideas

“This movie is deeply moving and was effective in letting the two people get their own stories out. The viewer gets a look into the degree of devastation and its impact on the people of Syria. It also shows the courage of the two people and their love for their country. The devastation in Syria comes to life in this film because of the focus on two individuals amidst the destruction, rather than news coverage that shows only damages to facade. The people in the film and the people who made the film took on great risks to themselves for this production.” - Carolyn Woo, CEO of Catholic Relief Services

“In a time of ‘war fatigue,’ increasing unease in the West about Muslim culture and values, and media emphasis on the radicalization of the Syrian conflict, this documentary helps us to realize that ‘the other’ is not so foreign. The film depicts educated, thoughtful youth, with a sense of humor (who are not that different from ourselves) and how they are willing to sacrifice it all in this dire war that we are only witnessing from afar. In an era where we are increasingly distrustful of the “other,” this film documents both the vast destruction of livelihoods and the resilient sense of normalcy in the voices of young, educated Syrians who are risking it all for a more democratic Syria. It is a reminder of the humanity and courage that persists even in the most violent and chaotic conflicts across the globe.” - Marcela Escobari, Executive Director of Harvard's Center of International Development

Winner of over 60 awards, screened in more than 200 film festivals around the world

Website: www.SyrianRevolutionFilm.com, **Trailer:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_hwm5MSIIQ

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Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution

Directed by Matthew VanDyke

Director's Statement

In 2007 I set out to traverse the Muslim world, after receiving an MA in Security Studies with a Middle East Concentration from Georgetown University. I had veered from my previous path towards government employment, choosing instead to get the personal experience that my textbook education had lacked. From 2007-2010, I filmed my travels through North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia for an autobiographical motorcycle documentary. I spent time in Libya in 2008 and formed a number of close friendships.

When the Libyan revolution began in 2011, I could not sit on my comfortable sofa as my Libyan friends begged with desperation, "why doesn't anybody help us?" It felt natural to me to join the revolution and support my friends in their fight for freedom. I joined as a rebel fighter and was captured by the Gaddafi regime during a reconnaissance mission. I spent nearly 6 months as a prisoner of war, held in solitary confinement in two of Libya's most notorious prisons. Upon escaping from prison, I returned to combat on the front lines until the end of the war. In prison, I had time to reflect on the meaning and value of freedom. When the Gaddafi regime fell, the joy I saw reflected in the Libyan people's eyes as they savored freedom was a powerful force. I felt passionately that all humanity deserves to enjoy freedom.

After the war, I returned to America and began focusing on the Syrian revolution. Some Libyan fighters went to Syria to fight, but I decided to pick up the camera this time instead of the gun. There has been a lot of misinformation in the press about the rebels - that they are jihadists, that they are terrorists, etc. I wanted to make a film that would show the world who the revolutionaries really are and for what they are fighting, and have the film translated into twenty languages so the message would be truly global. I was blessed to find two powerful characters for the film. I conducted many interviews with various fighters and civilians, but only when I met Mowya and Nour was I certain that I had a film. Nour's help as a subject, producer, and fixer was indispensable to getting the film made.

This is my first completed film. It was extremely difficult to make because my fundraising campaigns on Kickstarter and IndieGoGo were both suspended/cancelled and I received no money from them. Some potential donors stepped forward but they never came through with any money for the project. Nevertheless, I believed in the film and went to Syria anyway, paying for almost all of the travel, equipment, and production expenses myself. Although making this film has completely depleted my life savings, I know it was worth the sacrifice. It took months of hard work and was extremely dangerous, but I have no regrets. The people I met while making this film and the story I was able to bring to the screen make me proud to call this my first film.

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Short Synopsis

Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution is a 15 minute documentary short that tells the story of the Syrian struggle for freedom as experienced by a 32 year old rebel commander, Mowya, and a 24 year old female journalist, Nour, in Aleppo, Syria. The film clearly and concisely shows why the Syrian people are fighting for their freedom, told through the emotional words of two powerful characters whose lives have been turned upside down and torn apart by war.

Medium Synopsis

Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution is a 15 minute documentary short that tells the story of the Syrian struggle for freedom as experienced by a 32 year old rebel commander, Mowya, and a 24 year old female journalist, Nour, in Aleppo, Syria. The film clearly and concisely shows why the Syrian people are fighting for their freedom, told through the emotional words of two powerful characters whose lives have been turned upside down and torn apart by war.

Nour is a schoolteacher-turned-journalist who faces death on the front lines to tell the world about the war that is destroying her country. The film's title is derived from the opening line of the film, when Nour says, "I used to wear fancy dresses and high heels. Not anymore." Now she wears body armor and a helmet. She is fearless, determined, and brilliant, but also lives with the pain of friends who have been tortured, raped, and murdered by the Assad regime. She tells not only her story, but theirs, and in so doing she shows the audience what life is like for a Syrian girl who is spending her 20s in war as everything she knows and loves is destroyed.

Mowya is a young rebel commander who bears the scars, physical and psychological, of seven months of torture at the hands of the Assad regime. But this hasn't broken his spirit. With incredible wit and brilliance he tells his story and laments what has been lost in his city due to war. With disbelief and sadness he walks the streets of ancient Aleppo, telling of how life used to be in a thriving, vibrant city whose heart, as Mowya says, has stopped. Full of charisma, he clearly articulates why the Syrian people are fighting for their freedom.

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Long Synopsis

Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution is a 15 minute documentary short that tells the story of the Syrian struggle for freedom as experienced by a 32 year old rebel commander, Mowya, and a 24 year old female journalist, Nour, in Aleppo, Syria. The film clearly and concisely shows why the Syrian people are fighting for their freedom, told through the emotional words of two powerful characters whose lives have been turned upside down and torn apart by war.

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Mowya is a young rebel commander who bears the scars, physical and psychological, of seven months of torture at the hands of the Assad regime. But this hasn't broken his spirit. With incredible wit and brilliance he tells his story and laments what has been lost in his city due to war. With disbelief and sadness he walks the streets of ancient Aleppo, telling of how life used to be in a thriving, vibrant city whose heart, as Mowya says, has stopped. Full of charisma, he clearly articulates why the Syrian people are fighting for their freedom.

The film concludes with the powerful image of Mowya and Nour, as Nour pets a small cat in her arms. Mowya suggests that the film be put on YouTube so that people in America will see that there are cats in Syria who need help, because so far nobody is helping the Syrian people, but perhaps they will send help at least for the cats. When asked if Syrians feel that the world would be more likely to help prevent animal cruelty than human suffering, he says yes. Mowya acknowledges that it is hyperbole to say that Americans care more for the well being of cats than that of fellow humans, but the implication rings true. And it echoes through the mind of the audience. What is the value of human life? What is the value of freedom? And what can we do, as individuals, to help restore some balance, to help the Nours and Mowyas of Syria?

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Production Notes

Background

VanDyke was deeply inspired by what he and his fellow rebel fighters accomplished in Libya (where VanDyke participated as a combatant and was a prisoner of war for nearly 6 months in 2011). In October 2012, VanDyke traveled to Aleppo, Syria to make a documentary film that would capture the essence of the Syrians' struggle for freedom and show the world who the rebels are, and most importantly, why they are fighting the Assad regime.

Nour Kelze

VanDyke's first two weeks of filming in Syria did not go well. He had difficulty finding good translators and other assistance in Aleppo, nor was he able to find the compelling characters he had hoped for to carry his film. Finally, in November, VanDyke met Nour Kelze. She began working on the film, and as she worked, VanDyke began to turn the camera on her. She became the star of the film, and she so impressed VanDyke with her hard work and commitment to high standards off-camera that she also became a producer on the film.

Dangers of Filming in Aleppo

The film was very difficult to shoot and the working environment was especially dangerous. VanDyke was branded a terrorist by the Assad regime and they broadcast his image on numerous State TV channels. VanDyke and Kelze faced daily dangers such as kidnapping, snipers, bombing by aircraft, and artillery strikes while making the film.

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About the Filmmakers

Matthew VanDyke (Director, Producer)



Matthew VanDyke is an American documentary filmmaker. He received his Master's degree in Security Studies from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. VanDyke has been filming in North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia since 2007.

In 2011 VanDyke was the subject of international press coverage when he fought against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi in the Libyan revolution as an American freedom fighter and soldier in the rebel army. He was captured by Gaddafi's forces and spent nearly 6 months as a prisoner of war in solitary confinement, before escaping from Abu Salim prison and returning to combat until the end of the war.

His first film, titled *Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution*, was about the ongoing Syrian revolution. The film has won over 50 awards and has been screened in more than 150 film festivals around the world. VanDyke is a producer and cinematographer on a film about his life titled *Point and Shoot*, which won the Best Documentary Award at Tribeca Film Festival in 2014. He is currently working on a book, is a guest on television and radio programs, and frequently writes about the Arab world, revolutions and international security issues.

Nour Kelze (Producer, Subject)

On World Press Freedom Day (May 3, 2013), Nour Kelze became the first Syrian to ever win the IWMF (International Women's Media Foundation) Courage in Journalism Award. A 25 year old photographer for Reuters, she has been wounded twice on the front lines while reporting on the war in Syria. She speaks fluent English and also works as a fixer helping foreign journalists with their work in Aleppo, Syria.

Nour has been featured in stories on CNN, NPR, and Orient TV and is a rising public figure in the Syrian revolution. She hopes to provide opportunities for other Syrian women to work in the revolution, aware of the positive effects it will have in both the present and future of Syria.

Nour has a degree in Literature from the University of Aleppo, and before the war was working as an English teacher at Shams al-Assil school in Aleppo. Now she has become a journalist and film producer to help inform the world of what is happening to her country. As she says in the film, "I used to wear fancy dresses and high heels. Not anymore."



Ivan Kander (Editor)

Ivan Kander is a filmmaker based in Silver Spring, MD. A graduate of George Washington University in Washington, DC, he is the award winning writer, director, and editor of several short films that have screened at festivals across the country, including *Baggage*, *Finding Time*, *We Were None*, and *Dying Days*. His short documentary, *Survive. Recover. Live.*, was the 2012 recipient of the Sgt. William Genoust Award for documentary excellence from the Marine Corps Heritage foundation.

Several of Kander's feature scripts have placed in screenwriting competitions across the country. He is an experienced animator, having designed graphic and motion effects for commercial, government, and non-profit clients. Additionally, he is an assistant editor for the website *Short of the Week*, which highlights some of the best short form content on the internet.

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About the Cast

Nour Kelze



Nour Kelze is a 25 year old journalist from Aleppo, Syria. She works for Reuters as a stringer and photographer, and also works as a fixer helping foreign journalists with their work in Aleppo. She speaks fluent English.

Nour has been featured in stories on CNN, NPR, and Orient TV and is a rising public figure in the Syrian revolution. She hopes to provide opportunities for other Syrian women to work in the revolution, aware of the positive effects it will have in both the present and future of Syria.

Nour has a degree in Literature from the University of Aleppo, and before the war was working as an English teacher at Shams al-Assil school in Aleppo. Now she has become a journalist and film producer to help inform the world of what is happening to her country. As she says in the film, "I used to wear fancy dresses and high heels. Not anymore."

Omar Hattab (Mowya)

Omar Hattab, who is known in Aleppo by the nickname Mowya, is a 32 year old rebel commander who bears the scars, physical and psychological, of seven months of torture at the hands of the Assad regime. But this hasn't broken his spirit and he continues to serve in the revolution. Before the war, Omar owned a hardware store in the old city of Aleppo. Although he is a commander in the Free Syrian Army, he prefers the civilian life and plans to return to it once the war is over.



Nasma



Nasma is a young girl from Aleppo, Syria who appears in a scene in ***Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution*** in which she is nearly killed by a mortar attack while singing her famous revolution songs. Nasma has become well-known in the Syrian revolution for leading protests and singing revolution songs. In addition to singing and being a political activist, she enjoys Barbie Dolls, like other children her age. She has said that when she grows up, she wants to be a journalist like Nour Kelze.

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Questions and Answers

Why did you make this film?

In 2011 I fought in the Libyan revolution as a heavy machine gunner and infantryman in the rebel forces. I was captured and was a prisoner of war for nearly 6 months in two of Libya's most notorious prisons, before escaping from prison and returning to combat until the end of the war. I was deeply inspired by what I and my fellow rebel fighters accomplished in Libya, and understood what was at stake in Syria. There was a lot of incorrect and misleading information in the press about who the revolutionaries were and why they were fighting the Assad regime, and public opinion was slowly being moved out of favor of the rebels. I felt compelled to try to reverse this trend by telling the story of the Syrian revolution in a way that people around the world could relate to, so they could understand who the revolutionaries are and why they are fighting for their freedom.

What was it like filming in Syria?

Filming in Syria was extremely dangerous. There was a constant element of random danger from artillery barrages, mortar attacks, aerial bombardment, and snipers. When filming in the city you often have to run across streets to avoid being shot by snipers. While I was filming in Syria, the Assad regime broadcast on numerous State TV channels that I was a terrorist who had come to join the Free Syrian Army. They showed photos and videos of me fighting in Libya and I was soon recognized on the street as having been on the State TV reports. This dramatically increased the already high danger of me being kidnapped. Filming in Syria was also psychologically taxing. On my first day in Syria, I saw a baby without a head brought to the hospital, and I would see far more suffering than I have ever seen before by the time I finished a month of filming.

What was the most difficult part of making the film?

Despite the dangers of filming in Syria, fundraising was the most difficult part of making this film. My fundraising campaigns on Kickstarter and IndieGoGo were both suspended/cancelled after some online journalists wrote catchy headlines and articles that humorously contemplated whether I was trying to fund a film or a combat mission. I was approached by some individuals in the film industry who claimed they would secure funding, but they never came through with the money. I spent everything I have on this film, over \$15,000, and in the end had to borrow even more money to finish it. But I have no regrets. This film had to be made.

How did you meet Nour Kelze?

My first two weeks of filming in Syria did not go well. I had difficulty finding good translators and other assistance in Aleppo, nor was I able to find the compelling characters I had hoped for to carry the film. Finally, in November, 2012, I met Nour Kelze through another Syrian who had been working as a guide and translator for the film. Nour began working on the film, and as she worked, I began to turn the camera on her. She became the star of the film, and she so impressed me with her hard work and commitment to high standards off-camera that she also became a producer on the film.

How did your family feel about you returning to a warzone?

As they had been when I went to Libya, my family was supportive. They drove me to the airport, gave me a hug, and told me to go do what I believe in. They are very supportive and believe strongly in my work and the cause.

Did you join the Free Syrian Army?

No. I was asked by a few Free Syrian Army battalions to join them as a fighter once they heard that I had fought in Libya. I politely declined all of their offers, telling them that I was in Syria only to film this time, not to fight.

Did you fight in Syria while making the film?

No. I did not engage in any combat while in Syria making the film.

How was this project different than filming you have done previously in the Middle East?

All of my previous filming was autobiographical in nature, focusing on my motorcycle adventures in North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, as well as my experiences fighting in the Libyan revolution. The footage from those years, 2007-2011, is currently being made into a documentary feature film directed by twice Academy Award Nominated director Marshall Curry (I am a producer on the film). *Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution* is the first time I have filmed a subject that is not autobiographical. I do not appear in the film at all, other than the sound of my voice on a few occasions when asking the subjects of the film a question.

Is this your first film?

Yes. Although I was filming in North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia from 2007-2011 for an autobiographical documentary, which is currently in production, *Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution* is my first completed film.

Are you a journalist?

No. Please do not call me a journalist. I am a filmmaker. I do not report the news, and I am not objective. I have been described as a former journalist by the press, and I accept that label only because I wrote a news article in 2009 and a features article in 2010, neither of which I was paid for. This is the extent of my journalistic past. I have been, and continue to be, a filmmaker.

In some of the production photos it appears that you have a shoulder holster with a handgun. Were you armed while working on this film in Syria, and why?

I am not a journalist. I am a combat veteran of the Libyan revolution of 2011, and as such I faced extraordinary dangers when working in Syria that other filmmakers and the journalists do not. For example, while I was working in Aleppo the Assad regime broadcast on four Syrian television channels that I was a "terrorist" who had come to fight with the Free Syrian Army (one of these broadcasts can be seen here - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzsVr_G6cM4). Some of the other broadcasts included photos and videos of me fighting in Libya, and people in Aleppo began to recognize me on the street as the American that the Assad regime had branded a terrorist. This, combined with suspicions among some of the extremist groups that I am a CIA agent and the threat of criminals kidnapping me for profit because I am a public figure, made the threat of kidnapping or death far greater for me than it is for journalists or other filmmakers.

In addition, because I was a target of the Syrian regime, it was my responsibility to take reasonable precautions to protect my crew (Nour and a fixer). Openly displaying a handgun meant we were no longer soft targets for kidnapping. Many Syrian photographers and journalists know this and also carry handguns, as several international journalists have been kidnapped while working in Aleppo.

What is your background?

In 2007 I set out to traverse the Muslim world, after receiving an MA in Security Studies with a Middle East Concentration from Georgetown University. I had veered from my previous path towards government employment, choosing instead to get the personal experience that my textbook education had lacked. From 2007-2010, I filmed my travels through North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia for an autobiographical motorcycle documentary.

I spent time in Libya in 2008 and formed a number of close friendships. When the Libyan revolution began in 2011, I could not sit on my comfortable sofa as my Libyan friends begged with desperation, “why doesn’t anybody help us?” It felt natural to me to join the revolution and support my friends in their fight for freedom. I joined as a rebel fighter and was captured by the Gaddafi regime during a reconnaissance mission. I spent nearly 6 months as a prisoner of war, held in solitary confinement in two of Libya’s most notorious prisons. Upon escaping from prison, I returned to combat on the front lines until the end of the war. In prison, I had time to reflect on the meaning and value of freedom. When the Gaddafi regime fell, the joy I saw reflected in the Libyan people’s eyes as they savored freedom was a powerful force. I felt passionately that all humanity deserves to enjoy freedom.

After the war, I returned to America and began focusing on the Syrian revolution. Some Libyan fighters went to Syria to fight, but I decided to pick up the camera this time instead of the gun. There has been a lot of misinformation in the press about the rebels - that they are jihadists, that they are terrorists, etc. I wanted to make a film that would show the world who the revolutionaries really are and for what they are fighting.

Do you really plan to release the film in twenty languages?

I firmly believe that the Syrian struggle for freedom is not just a Syrian struggle, but a human one. In that spirit, I plan to take the very unconventional approach of releasing the film with subtitles in twenty languages so that people around the world can understand and be inspired by the courageous people of Syria.

Do you really plan to send the film to all 535 members of the US Congress?

Yes. I made this film to have a positive effect on the cause of freedom in Syria, and one of the best ways to accomplish that is to encourage members of the US Congress to support the Syrian revolution. The first DVDs were mailed to several Congressmen and Congresswomen in June, and I plan to have all 535 DVDs mailed in early July.

Are you available for press interviews?

Yes. You can contact me anytime by phone at 443-831-4424, Skype at vandyke.matthew, or email at matthew@matthewvandyke.com.

www.MatthewVanDyke.com
www.SyrianRevolutionFilm.com

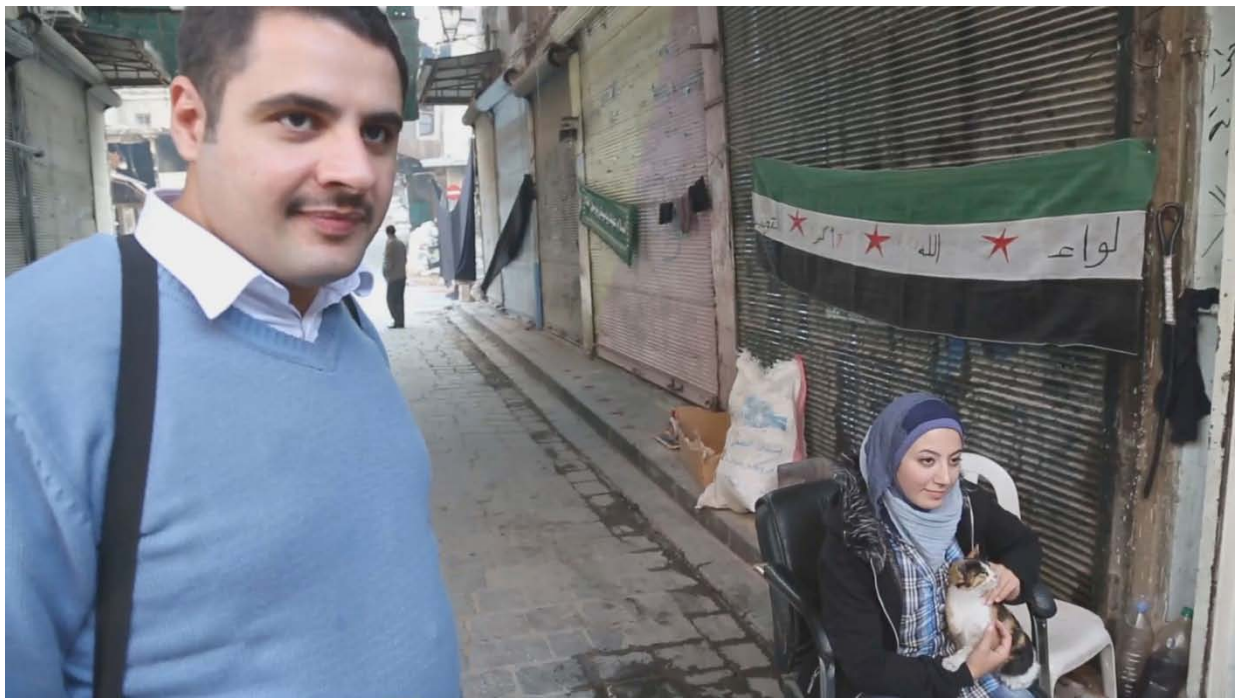
Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution

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Awards and Film Festivals

Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution has won over 60 awards and has been screened in more than 200 film festivals in 20+ countries. For an updated list of film festivals and awards, please visit:

<http://www.syrianrevolutionfilm.com/film-festivals.html>



Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution

Photo: Matthew VanDyke

Mowya and Nour in the memorable final scene of
Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution



Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution

Photo: Matthew VanDyke

Nour and her friend mourn the death of their friend who was arrested, raped, tortured,
and killed by the Assad regime



Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution

Photo: Matthew VanDyke

A civilian standing in his destroyed home holds a photograph of his daughter



Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution

Photo: Matthew VanDyke

Nasma proudly holding a Free Syria flag



Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution

Photo: Nour Kelze

Matthew VanDyke running across a street with his camera to avoid gunfire from snipers



Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution

Photo: Mahmoud Al Basha

Nour Kelze and Matthew VanDyke on location in Aleppo, Syria filming Nour's account of her friend Ehsan's death

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Websites and Social Media Links

Websites

Film Website: www.SyrianRevolutionFilm.com

Director's Website: www.MatthewVanDyke.com

Preview trailer for film: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_hwm5MSIIQ

Social Media (The Director's social media profiles are being used for the film)

Facebook (Director's public fan page):

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Matthew-VanDyke/102993809826639>

Twitter: @Matt_VanDyke (https://twitter.com/Matt_VanDyke)

Google+: <https://plus.google.com/104793985853923581272>

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/matthewvandyke>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/VanDykeMatthew>

IMDB (Film page): <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2856934/combined>

IMDB (Director's profile): <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm5636662/>

Matthew VanDyke's private, personal Facebook profile (For journalists to contact or network with VanDyke):

<https://www.facebook.com/vandyke.matthew>

Matthew VanDyke's email: matthew@matthewvandyke.com