The Independent Critic - "Oscar Arias: Without a Shot Fired"
Latest Nobel Legacy Film Release

FEATURING
Oscar Arias Sanchez
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
Dawn Gifford Engle
MPAA RATING
NR
RUNNING TIME
63 Mins.
DISTRIBUTED BY
PeaceJam Foundation
OFFICIAL WEBSITE

“Nuclear wars kill many people all at once, but other weapons kill many people, little by little, every day, everywhere in the world.”

- Oscar Arias

The recipient of the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize, Oscar Arias is the subject of the latest cinematic release from the PeaceJam Foundation as part of their Nobel Peace Prize Film Series, an increasingly epic franchise, to borrow a Hollywood term, recognizing the tremendous diversity of Nobel Peace Prize recipients with previous subjects including the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Betty Williams and Rigoberta Menchu.

The life of Arias is a fascinating one. Born in Costa Rica in 1941, Arias grew up in a country that had become the first to declare peace with the world by disbanding its standing army in favor of investing in education, healthcare and the environment for the bettering of its people. Arias studied law and economics in Costa Rica, the United States and Great Britain eventually receiving a doctorate in economics. He joined the social democratic party and joined the Costa Rican government in the 1970s, becoming President of the country in 1986 at a time when neighboring countries Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala were experiencing civil war.

Arias was a groundbreaking President, working to deal with Costa Rica’s heavy foreign debt and economic concerns but, even more than that, he became known for his efforts to establish peace in a region that had seen very little of it. In February 1987, the Arias Plan laid the groundwork for an all-encompassing peace in the region including ceasefires between governments and rebel forces, guaranteed amnesty for political prisoners and free and democratic elections in all the participating nations.

It was a bold plan. It worked.

After winning the Nobel Peace Prize, Arias formed the Arias Foundation for Peace & Human Progress to promote peace, justice, and equality in Central America. After Costa Rica amended its constitution allowing him to run again, he was re-elected as the nation’s President from 2006-2010.
Written and directed by Dawn Gifford Engle, an activist and filmmaker who herself has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize sixteen times, *Oscar Arias: Without a Shot Fired* is one of my favorites of the Nobel Peace Prize Film Series because of its intelligent construction yet emotional resonance that largely comes courtesy of a tremendous amount of material that features Arias himself, an eloquent and passionate speaker whose drive is endlessly compelling.

As a longtime activist myself, I've grown to love this particular series of films and find myself informed, inspired and energized after watching them. They should be considered "must see" cinema for activists, creatives and even those on the political scene. *Oscar Arias: Without a Shot Fired* will have its world premiere at the Monte Carlo T.V. Festival in Monaco on June 18, 2017.

While some may argue that *Oscar Arias: Without a Shot Fired* is a little too straightforward of a documentary, the 63-minute film does exactly what it's supposed to do and it's refreshing to have a filmmaker who trusts the material and simply allows the remarkable story to be told.

For more information on *Oscar Arias: Without a Shot Fired*, visit the film's website linked to in the credits to the left of this review. If you get a chance, or when you get a chance, definitely check the film out.

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