

OUR MAN IN TEHRAN

A Film by Drew Taylor and Larry Weinstein

85 min / 2014 / English / Documentary / Digital (DCP & BluRay)



FIRST RUN FEATURES

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"In 1979 we found ourselves in an impossible situation. We had three CIA operatives in Tehran, but all three had been taken hostage in the American Embassy with the others. In those troubled days, we reached out to the Canadians. Ambassador Ken Taylor became our greatest asset. He was our man in Tehran."

– President Jimmy Carter

Our Man In Tehran is an in- depth, intimate exploration of the true story behind Ben Affleck's Oscar-winning film *ARGO*. In this gripping new documentary, the story of the "Canadian Caper" is told by the man who knows it best: Ken Taylor, Canada's former ambassador to Iran, who hid the six Americans in his official residence and obtained the counterfeit documents that allowed them to make their dramatic escape from Tehran. Based on Robert Wright's book, the film uncovers new information and adds valuable context, including an historical overview of Iran, interviews with the rescued Americans, former Prime Minister Joe Clark, ex-CIA officer Tony Mendez, and many others.

Praise for Our Man in Tehran:

"Engaging... more entertaining than *Argo's* fiction." - *Globe and Mail*

"An intelligent, complex and tension-filled story that breathes life into historical events [and] adds rich detail to the events from the people who were there." - *Toronto Star*

"Compelling!" - *Montreal Gazette*

Historical Timeline

December 31, 1977 – At a state dinner, Jimmy Carter proposes a toast to the Shah. The gesture incites mass protests in Iran.

February 1, 1979 – The Ayatollah returns to Iran after 14 years in exile. Upon his return, a crowd in the streets of an estimated 5 million people greets him.

February 11, 1979 – After months of escalating protests, and the return of the Ayatollah, the Shah accepts he has lost control of the country. The monarchy is dissolved, and the Shah goes into exile.

October 22, 1979 – After it is revealed that the Shah is terminally ill, he is permitted to enter the United States. This move incites anger among Iranians, who fear it is a CIA ploy to re-install the Shah. There are daily protests outside the United States Embassy.

November 4, 1979 – Iranian protesters scale the embassy walls and take the diplomats inside the embassy hostage. Six diplomats manage to escape, and hide out at one of the apartment of Bob Anders.

November 10, 1979 – Seeking a new place to hide, the six American fugitives arrive at the residence of Canadian Embassy official John Sheardown and his wife Zena. Four of the fugitives stay with the Sheardowns, and two stay at the residence of Ambassador Ken Taylor and his wife Pat.

January 28, 1980 – The successful exfiltration of the houseguests after spending almost 3 months in hiding. Led by CIA agent Tony Mendez, the six Americans assume their false Canadian identities and escape through Mehrabad Airport on a Swissair flight.

April 24, 1980 – After months of planning and with reconnaissance assistance from Ken Taylor, the United States launches a rescue effort for the remaining 53 hostages held inside the American Embassy. Operation Eagle Claw is a failure when one of the helicopters crashes and 8 servicemen are killed.

July 27, 1980 – The Shah dies while in exile in Egypt. The occupation of the American Embassy continues.

January 20, 1981 – After President Carter had lost the Presidency, the hostages were released. Although the release of the hostages was negotiated and secured under the Carter administration, the hostages were released moments after Reagan was sworn in as President.

About the filmmakers

Larry Weinstein (producer/director)

Co-founder of Toronto-based Rhombus Media, Larry Weinstein, has been called “one of the world’s pre-eminent directors of documentaries on musical subjects”. Films documenting the lives and art of twentieth century composers, such as RAVEL’S BRAIN; WHEN THE FIRE BURNS: Manuel de Falla; MY WAR YEARS: ARNOLD SCHOENBERG; SHADOWS AND LIGHT: JOAQUIN RODRIGO AT 90; SEPTEMBER SONGS: THE MUSIC OF KURT WEILL and THE WAR SYMPHONIES: SHOSTAKOVICH AGAINST STALIN have been screened at major film festivals and received top awards around the world. His films have earned numerous Gemini and Emmy Awards and in 1986, his MAKING OVERTURES - THE STORY OF A COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA received an Oscar nomination. In 1998, SOLIDARITY SONG: THE HANNS EISLER STORY won the Louvre’s coveted “Classique en Images” Award as the world’s best film on the arts over a three year span. Recent films include the musical/pathological/historical BEETHOVEN’S HAIR (2005); BURNT TOAST (2005), composed of eight original mini-operas; and MOZARTBALLS (2006) about Mozart obsession. TOSCANINI: IN HIS OWN WORDS (2008) is a recreation of a conversation of the famous Maestro. INSIDE HANA’S SUITCASE (2009), Weinstein’s first non-music film, is powerful story about a young Czech girl who was one of the millions of victims of the Second World War. In 2011 he completed an original Full-length political comic opera conceived for television: MULRONEY THE OPERA. He is currently working on a number of projects including OUR MAN IN TEHRAN.

Drew Taylor (producer/director)

Drew Taylor is making his first foray into film as a Director after co-founding Toronto-based Film House Inc in 2012. Drew co-directed/co-produced with Larry Weinstein and co-wrote with Robert Wright the feature-length documentary, OUR MAN IN TEHRAN. Prior to his transition to film, Taylor attended the University of Michigan for his Master’s work in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology and the University of Toronto for his PhD in Biomedical Engineering. Drew has also played professional baseball with the Toronto Blue Jays and Philadelphia Phillies. He is currently developing two projects with attention to sports, including a biography on his father, Ron Taylor, who was a pitcher for the World Champion 1969 New York Mets and the 1964 St. Louis Cardinals before returning to medical school and serving as the Toronto Blue Jays team physician.

Robert Wright

Robert Wright is a Canadian historian, author and screenwriter. He is the recipient of many research and publishing honors, including the Lela Common Prize for Canadian History for his first national bestseller *Three Nights in Havana* (2007). His second bestseller, *Our Man in Tehran* (2010), is the subject of the eponymous documentary. Wright is just finishing a book on the 1995 Québec referendum, his third for HarperCollins Canada.