

# Press Kit

Golden Gate Cinema, LLC  
Presents



# IRAN

*Hot Tea, Cool Conversations*

Mehdi Ghafourifar  
Executive Producer  
650.380.0065  
mehdi@goldengatecinema.com

Brenden Hamilton  
Director  
415.646.6506  
brenden@goldengatecinema.com

[www.IranTheMovie.com](http://www.IranTheMovie.com)

## **SYNOPSIS**

*Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations*—a revealing documentary that chronicles an American college student's eye-opening journey to Iran. A testament to Citizen Diplomacy, the film highlights unscripted, touching interviews with a number of individuals the filmmaker encounters from all walks of life during this once in a lifetime adventure. The human scale of the film cuts through the political rhetoric of the day unveiling a country full of warm and compassionate people who desire peace and friendship with America and the West.

## **ABOUT CITIZEN DIPLOMACY**

At Golden Gate Cinema, we strongly believe in the power of Citizen Diplomacy—the individual citizen's right, even responsibility, to help improve foreign relations. Citizen Diplomacy can effectively bring people together, especially when official diplomacy fails.

Citizen Diplomats are individuals who promote, in one way or another, understanding and cooperation among others. They have curiosity about and appreciation for other cultures and possess a passion for humanity and its rich diversity.

Citizen Diplomacy allows people from all walks of life to participate in making the world a more productive and peaceful place. Everyday citizens including students, teachers, athletes, business people, health practitioners, volunteers, organizational leaders, artists, scientists, or researchers engage in Citizen Diplomacy by interacting with others in foreign nations and cultures.

*Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations* is dedicated to Citizen Diplomats everywhere. Our goal is to increase awareness of Citizen Diplomacy, its global impact, and future potential so that more Americans recognize the importance of assuming their responsibility to develop constructive foreign relations.

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

When official diplomacy fails, Citizen Diplomacy is our only hope.

So long I had sat at the television, watching and listening to biased news coverage aimed at isolating Iran as part of the "Axis of Evil." This portrayal of Iran was difficult for me to believe. The media's antagonism inspired me to set out on a journey that's scope was far greater than I could have ever imagined. That once-in-a-lifetime trip blossomed into *Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations*.

Here at home, I interviewed many Americans who associated Iran with "War," "Violence," and the 1979 "Hostage Crisis." But I felt there had to be more to the story. I had to see Iran for myself. Little did I know that my journey would be one not of just travel, but self-discovery.

My journey began with a simple desire to travel off the beaten path and see Iran through my own eyes. The true impact made on me by the Iranian people came not as much during the shooting of the film in Iran, but back at home while putting it all together. Like a hermit on my computer, night, after night, I entered the timeless world of editing. It was not until then, with hours of video to be sorted, that I realized the full effect of this journey. I feel a responsibility to share an honest glimpse into this mystical place with my fellow Americans. This is more than a movie; it is a dedication to citizen diplomacy and citizen diplomats everywhere.

This documentary reflects a lyrical telling of my time in Iran as an American interwoven with my personal journey as a renegade filmmaker. *Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations* challenges the conventional media portrayal of Iran, a nation steeped in a deep sense of culture and humanity. Beyond all the noise and propaganda designed to separate us from one another, citizen diplomacy brings out the global citizen in all of us.

--Brenden Hamilton

## **BIO: MEHDI GHAFOURIFAR, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Iran, Silicon Valley, and now the world... Mehdi Ghafourifar has established a track record, developing innovative business and social projects that continue to touch the lives of many. His passion for social justice and education is contagious. With more than 20 years of dynamic business experience, in both for profit and non-profit sectors, his life's work is dedicated to the principles of positive social change. Currently, Mehdi leads the development of key international initiatives in the fields of energy, education, and entertainment.

Mehdi is the Executive Producer of the recently completed feature documentary, *Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations*. As an opportunity to promote citizen diplomacy, Mehdi partnered with American filmmaker, Brenden Hamilton, to produce this timely film chronicling Hamilton's eye-opening journey to Iran, an isolated nation misunderstood by the West.

Prior to his migration to the United States, Mehdi lived in Iran with his father during the first half of the Islamic revolution under martial law decreed by the Shah. During the 444-day Hostage Crisis in Iran, the broken diplomatic and financial ties between the two nations put an end to his father's support from Iran. Barely a teenager, Mehdi managed to sustain himself with menial jobs while pursuing higher education.

A few years later, with a single client, Mehdi founded his first Silicon Valley start-up. On less than a shoestring budget, quickly he developed his company into the most innovative and successful entity of its type—eventually becoming the number one business organization in Silicon Valley. In the end, Mehdi successfully sold his venture to a national firm, allowing him to focus more on his life's true passion—social justice and global citizenry.

Over the years, Mehdi has successfully raised millions of dollars in equity capital, built critical partnerships and alliances, and participated in sales, mergers and acquisitions of various ventures. His client portfolio has included more than 2,000 companies and executives in 350 categories including media, technology, health, non-profit, energy, travel, entertainment, real estate, retail, manufacturing, education, and business & professional services.

**BIO: BRENDEN HAMILTON, DIRECTOR**

A San Francisco native, Brenden Hamilton was a storyteller from the moment he could speak. Inheriting the gift of gab from his mom and dad, Brenden could always spin a yarn, but it was not until his high school Video Production class, that he truly found his voice—cinema.

A true DV rebel, he spent countless nights, from sundown to sunrise, locked in the video class room, editing video on tape-to-tape. Brenden made a series of student shorts including Braveliver, Green Peace, Searching, and The Journey, to name a few.

Brenden left home to attend California State University, Long Beach, to pursue his filmmaking dreams. Teaming up with long-time friend and fellow filmmaker Ryan O'Halloran, the two established Stakeout Productions and made their first feature documentary, Bound. This enlightening film underscores the real life struggle of college basketball star Robert Johnson on his quest to the NBA, all the while bound for the professional leagues in Europe.

After Bound, Brenden received his Bachelor's degree in Film from New College of California. His most recent film, Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations, champions the concept of citizen diplomacy and global citizenship. Produced in collaboration with Silicon Valley veteran, Mehdi Ghafourifar, this revealing documentary chronicles Brenden's personal journey to Iran, presenting an unfiltered look at the life and culture in an amazing country isolated by the West.

**FILM CREDITS**

**This Film is dedicated to**  
Citizen Diplomacy and all those  
who promote understanding and cooperation among others

**Executive Producer**

Mehdi Ghafourifar

**Director**

Brenden Hamilton

**Producers**

Brenden Hamilton  
Mehdi Ghafourifar

**Appearances by**

Gerald A. Dekker  
Farzaneh Khademi  
Kimia Sagarchi

**Research**

Jillayn Le Grand

**Animation**

Beth J. Wilson  
bethjwilson.com

**Camera**

Brenden Hamilton

**Additional Camera**

Victor Murillo

**Sound Editor**

Greg Ammen

**Assistant Editor**

Ryan O'Halloran

**Translation**

Gerald A. Dekker  
Mehdi Ghafourifar

**Narration Script**

Brenden Hamilton  
Mehdi Ghafourifar  
Jillayn Le Grand  
Alston Ghafourifar  
Jenny Lenore Rosenbaum

**Film Advisor**

Parisa DeFaie

**Graphic Design**

Ricardo Villagomez

**Web Design & Marketing**

vPresentation.com

**Subtitles**

Kerry Lichlyter  
Brienne Ghafourifar

**Production Assistants**

Jillayn Le Grand  
Alston Ghafourifar  
Brienne Ghafourifar  
Victor Murillo  
Ryan O'Halloran  
Robert Johnson

**Legal Counsel**

Law Office of George Rush

**Music**

"Akharin Mashough"  
Written and Performed by Majid Rokni  
Courtesy of Pars Video, Inc.  
Thought Equity Motion

**Special Thanks**

Ophelia Parvizad  
Damoon Masarrati  
Pezhvak  
Nasrin Ghazizadeh  
Mohsen Rahbar  
Raymond Samat  
Jess Black  
Jennifer Adrian  
Heidi Wallis  
Kristy Jordan  
Robert Sarmiento  
Milena Sosa  
Fabrizio Di Lorenzo  
Michele Tucker  
Chris Knowdell  
Deborah Galaski  
Eric Thompson  
Dylan Hamilton  
Trever Scott  
R. Ludwick  
Roxie Theater  
Bill Banning  
Bay Area Video Coalition  
Angie Reza  
David Hoffman  
Martin Hamilton  
Yuki Jenkins  
Milly Henry

**And**

Newly made friends in Iran who helped make this film possible

**Learn more about Citizen Diplomacy at**

[www.GoldenGateCinema.com](http://www.GoldenGateCinema.com)

***Iran: Hot Tea, Cool Conversations***

***©2008 Golden Gate Cinema***