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### ***MN FILMMAKER LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN FOR JACOB WETTERLING DOCUMENTARY***

*After filming hours with Jacob's family and several people central to the Wetterling story, filmmakers turn to crowdfunding for next step in sharing tale of loss, resilience, and purpose*

**MINNEAPOLIS — APRIL 17, 2019** — A [documentary project](#) examining the story of abduction victim Jacob Wetterling is launching a spring crowdfunding tour through Minnesota and neighboring states, raising funds to reach the next critical stage of work on the film. The online [GoFundMe campaign](#) will launch April 23 along with a series of special events in five cities, including [Minneapolis on May 1](#), with [follow-up events](#) in St. Joseph, Duluth, Fargo and Sioux Falls throughout May.

Director Chris Newberry and his filmmaking team have created a brand new trailer for the [film](#), which will be unveiled at each of the [five special Trailer Release Parties](#). The events will serve as additional fundraisers for the film, and each will feature a speaker from the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center or local partner, an exclusive first look at this never-before-seen film footage, and a conversation with the filmmakers about what motivated them to tackle this important subject. The presentation will provide insights into the filmmaking process, and will touch on the shocking developments that almost derailed the project in its early days—and how they led to a story arc more powerful and purposeful than anyone could have expected.

“Jacob’s case received so much attention — when he was abducted and again when the truth of what happened was revealed. The Wetterlings are sharing their story, and hoping to direct that attention toward an issue that uses Jacob’s name to make a positive impact,” said Chris Newberry. “Children need to know that if something bad happens, they can speak up and find trust, support and protection within their community. Our film will help start crucial conversations — ones that both parents and communities need to have — to help end the abuse and exploitation of children.”

The filmmakers reached out to Patty and Jerry Wetterling when Jacob’s disappearance was still a 26-year-old cold case in 2015. What they couldn’t have predicted when they sought the Wetterling’s participation was that the story was about to explode. At the end of October 2015, authorities announced they had arrested the man who would ultimately confess to Jacob’s kidnapping, assault, and murder.

Newberry and his crew were there, watching, as the Wetterlings got the answers they had been seeking for decades. And it was bigger than just one family – a nation that had lost its innocence, and a generation of parents who changed the way they approached parenting, finally had resolution. At the same time, word spread about other child victims of Jacob’s assailant, exposing the true cost of burying children’s experiences under shame and silence.

“We were able to capture the Wetterlings’ incredible resilience and show how they turned their very personal tragedy into tremendous good,” said Newberry. “What happened to Jacob was part of a predator’s pattern of behavior, but the secrecy and inability to confront sexual assault on boys in and around Stearns County allowed this predator to roam free. We’re still a long way from building a culture that empowers all children to come forward, but the Wetterlings are determined to change that, and our completed film will be a compelling tool for spreading their message.”

“This is an opportunity to show what we’re fighting for. It speaks of the world that Jacob knew and believed in, because I refuse to let that go. I believe in it, I believe there are way more good people in the world than bad, and I believe that hope is real. Hope carried us, and it found Jacob,” said Patty Wetterling, mother of Jacob Wetterling and co-founder, the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center. “This is an opportunity to address what happened, what we all did with it, and all that we can do going forward.”

The documentary footage is ready for editing, and the crowdfunding goal is to raise \$60k with the community’s help. This [GoFundMe](#) campaign is part of a larger drive to raise all the financing necessary to take the film to the next critical stage of post-production, an estimated \$100k overall. Said Newberry, “If we reach our GoFundMe goal, we’ll be able to assemble a rock-star editing team with the tools and experience to shape this story into something really special.”

Contributors to the film’s [GoFundMe campaign](#) will be part of a community effort to give Jacob’s story the exposure on the national stage that it deserves. Donors will have a chance to choose from several levels of support – from \$15 to \$5000.

[Chris Newberry](#)’s previous films have aired nationally as part of two acclaimed series on PBS — *Independent Lens* and *America ReFramed*; and he is the recipient of a regional Emmy award. For the Wetterling project, Newberry is heading a team of award-winning filmmakers – including [Norah Shapiro](#), [Mark Steele](#) and [Erica Ticknor](#) – whose recent work has been featured at the Tribeca Film Festival and received nominations at the NAACP Image Awards and the Daytime Emmys. To learn more about this latest endeavor, visit [www.jacobwetterlingfilm.com](http://www.jacobwetterlingfilm.com).

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