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Hardcash, producers of BAFTA, Emmy and Grierson-winning Undercover: Inside China's Digital Gulag to follow up success with new ITV documentary

The production company behind the multi-award winning Undercover: Inside China's Digital Gulag, are to produce a new film, Outbreak: the Truth About Coronavirus (W/T) for ITV.

Hardcash Productions are making a 90-minute feature-length documentary filmed across four continents that tells the dramatic story of how the greatest pandemic of the past hundred years swept across the world.

The film focuses on how the Coronavirus pandemic broke out and how it spread, exploring the science, the politics and the stories of the victims.

Following the trail of the virus from China to Italy, the UK, USA and Brazil, it explores how the pandemic was and remains potentially within our control, and how the decisions that the World Health Organisation, governments, and public health officials take shape its course.

Key developments are illuminated, including the series of scientific discoveries about the Covid-19's dynamic, the desperate learning curve as researchers sought to find out how and why the virus spread in the first place and then ignited with devastating consequences in certain places, while others escaped almost untouched.

The film features testimony from experts and victims to provide a vivid insight into how the suffering unleashed by Covid-19 has bound the citizens of the globe uniquely together while their leaders have struggled to unite in common cause to stop its spread.

The announcement follows news that Hardcash's ITV Exposure film *Undercover: Inside China's Digital Gulag*, investigating the plight of Uyghurs and other Muslims in China, has won the 2020 Grierson Award for Best Current Affairs Documentary.

The award, which recognises outstanding investigative journalism, access and insights, is further recognition for *Undercover: Inside China's Digital Gulag*, which aired in July 2019.

Hardcash's reporting team went inside the secretive Xinjiang province in China to provide a vivid insight into how its government is holding an estimated million or more Muslims in detention camps without trial.

The programme, made by Robin Barnwell, Gesbeen Mohammed, Guy Creasey, Simon Russell and David Henshaw for Hardcash Productions, has also won awards including the International Emmy for Best Current Affairs Programme, the Bafta for Best Current Affairs, Best Documentary at the Prix Italia and the Venice TV Award for Best Documentary.

The Grierson Award judges said: "This eye-opening documentary alerted the world to the terrifying control exerted over a persecuted and tortured population.

The judges commended the courage of the undercover reporters who filmed at huge personal risk. As a journalistic investigation, this film had everything: immediacy, urgency and dedication to getting an important story out to the world."

Both programmes were commissioned by ITV's Controller of Current Affairs, Tom Giles.

Tom said: "The team behind the award-winning Undercover: Inside China's Digital Gulag will bring the same tenacity, bravery and storytelling power to this extraordinary once-in-a-generation global story. It will provide ITV viewers with a remarkable insight into how this virus came to shape and touch all our lives."

Executive Producer for Hardcash, David Henshaw, said: "Filmed across four continents, Outbreak is by some way the most ambitious project undertaken by Hardcash in thirty years - and probably the most important."

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