



# VOLCANIC SPRINT

"I can't go much higher or we'll crash," said the military helicopter pilot, hovering. Through the open cargo door, I saw a hundred spectators running for cover below. We banked another 360-degree turn down the mountain, spitting up more dust, and I fixed my camera on the lead runners streaking down the steep volcanic trail.

The Mount Cameroon Race of Hope is the most extreme running race in Africa—maybe the world. I know. I climbed the mountain myself in 1995 when I spent a great year living in

Cameroon. For more than a decade, I wanted to share some of the remarkable features that I enjoyed about the country. Today, VOLCANIC SPRINT is the first sports documentary shot entirely in Cameroon to play at film festivals around the world.

Climbing the tallest mountain in West Africa took me a day and a half. In our film, the leaders do the round trip in about 4 hours and 40 minutes—with no GPS watches, CamelBaks, or private trainers. Some runners did the 26-mile, 20,000 vertical-foot round trip wearing plastic shoes!

Witnessing those awe-inspiring performances, I knew I had to do something to give back to these runners—who had been so gracious as we came with cameras, invading their villages, mud huts, and their mountain. This has grown to become our partnership with Soles 4 Souls.

Beyond the race, I was hoping VOLCANIC SPRINT could get behind the sports drama to chronicle the hopes and dreams of the main runners. What drives them? Who are their families, and what are their livelihoods? Their stations in life were familiar: a

farmer, a teacher, and a high school dropout. Their aspirations weren't unlike those of my American friends, but their personal stories amazed and impressed me.

Dan Evans was an equal partner throughout the development of this film, and proved himself a fine writer, gifted editor, and efficient producer. I hope I have the opportunity to work with him well into the future. Our intrepid cinematographer Ryan Hill captured some incredible footage, as did our local shooters, who gave a good name to the term "African cameraman." Special distinction goes to Simon Gobina, Jr. who climbed to the freezing summit the night before and suffered through severe altitude sickness to capture some extreme footage of the ethereal roof of West Africa. Without Unit Producer Moki Charles Linonge, we could not have made this film. One of the Cameroon's well-known journalist/producers, Moki opened all doors in Buea, his hometown. Aretha Louise Mbango, Ange Sama, and Jean Paul Fosso were vital enablers as well. Thank you all.

Every February since 1973, runners have braved the Mt. Cameroon Race of Hope. But few people have even heard of it. For the first time, a film captures the spirit and resilience of these courageous competitors who—in their sport and their daily lives—face a mountain of obstacles. A one-of-a-kind film shot in the heart of the African rainforest, VOLCANIC SPRINT ultimately features some recognizable stories: one father's pressure on a son, the vengeance of an outsider, and a hero's coronation by a city.

I hope you enjoy VOLCANIC SPRINT. Thanks for watching.

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