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BANNED FILM POSITIVE HELL TO BE SCREENED IN DEFIANCE OF FESTIVAL DECISION

London, UK. Following its controversial 'no platform' banning by the London Independent Film Festival (LIFF), announced on Monday (<http://bit.ly/LIFFaxe>), the HIV & AIDs film Positive Hell is to be screened in London this coming Sunday, the day originally scheduled by LIFF, but independently of the supposedly 'independent' festival.

The film's writer, narrator and co-producer, Joan Shenton, announced this afternoon: "We do not accept that London's so-called 'independent' film festival should censor our film in this high-handed way, nor that it has the right to tell London film-goers what they can and cannot watch, just because it was 'got at' by four charities who have a vested interest in not challenging the AIDS status quo.

"So the screening of Positive Hell will go ahead, irrespective of LIFF, at noon on Sunday April 17, at the Soho Screening Rooms in D'Arblay Street, W1, followed by a Q&A. And this time tickets are available at no charge. This is Britain, not some totalitarian regime."

Positive Hell was originally selected and scheduled for screening by LIFF, until (as reported on Monday by several media outlets) Ms Shenton received an email from the festival director, Erich Schultz, to say that he had "pulled" the film after four HIV/AIDS charities had threatened protests at the screening venue and at festival sponsors' premises "if we [LIFF] don't comply".

Ms Shenton continued: "Other quite mainstream film festivals are very happy to screen Positive Hell. It was even nominated for best documentary at the Marbella International Film Festival, as well as being selected for LA Cinefest, the Digital Griffix online festival and the Indie Festival 01. And the previous time we screened Positive Hell in London, we received similar threats but nothing ever came of them.

"I believe this decision by Mr Schultz and his student selection panel is timid and incredibly short-sighted, as well as being blatant censorship and yet another denial of free speech through the practice of 'no platforming'. But we will not be censored. Sunday's screening will go ahead from noon in its new venue, and will be followed by a Q&A which may well touch on censorship as well as debating, rather than silencing, the issues raised by the film."

The screening of Positive Hell will take place at Soho Screening Rooms, 14 D'Arblay St, London W1F 8DY. Doors will open at noon for a 12.30 showing, followed by a Q&A. For all press pass and general ticket requests please email joanshenton@clara.co.uk <<mailto:joanshenton@clara.co.uk>>, who will confirm reservations by email.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Joan Shenton is available for interviews.

Positive Hell is a 30 minute documentary written and narrated by journalist Joan Shenton and co-produced in 2015 with director Andi Reiss.

* Nominated for best documentary at Marbella International Film Festival and Lucerne International Film Festival

* Selected for

- Los Angeles CineFest

- Digital Griffix online festival

- Indie Festival 01

* Selected for - then banned from - 2016 London Independent Film Festival

Positive Hell tells the stories of five individuals in the north of Spain who had been intravenous drug users or alcoholics in their teens. They were treated in rehab units and overcame their addictions but tested "HIV" antibody positive. Thirty years on, they were fit and well, despite no regime of antiviral medication. One of them, physician Dr Manuel Garrido, had never taken any antiviral medication, consciously swimming against the tide of HIV orthodoxy for three decades. Another, Manoel Penin, took antivirals for short periods of time but gave them up. Raquel Sanz stopped taking antivirals because they made her feel so ill. She married and had two daughters. Both daughters inherited their mother's HIV antibodies but (as is common) lost them after eighteen months. Raquel's eldest daughter went on to have six children and her younger daughter followed a successful career. Both daughters were immensely grateful to have been kept out of the "AIDS zone".

Positive Hell may be viewed at <http://www.positivehell.com> .

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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