

SOUND OF FREEDOM

Directed by Alejandro Monteverde

Produced by Eduardo Verastegui

Distributed by Angel Studios

Released in 2023

Don't look away. Films like *Sound of Freedom* are rare, indeed. Such unapologetic truth-telling, particularly as it exposes the closeted machinations of governments and elitist multi-millionaires (e.g. Jeffrey Epstein's cabal) in the largest organized-crime frenzy the world has ever seen, *must* be supported.

And while the film *represents* something brave and profoundly overdue, as a work of art, *Sound of Freedom* is deserving of praise. It boasts a clear, driving narrative, extraordinary acting (particularly from the brother-sister victims played by Cristal Aparicio and Lucas Avila), and an appropriately downbeat production design. Still, Brian Scofield's editing tolerates too many short scenes that feel out of place without montages to anchor them.

The film just manages to incorporate enough of an adventuresome spirit (albeit one reminiscent of the Rambo films, particularly the 1985 and 2019 installments) that the rare static over-the-shoulder dialogue scenes (such as Vampiro's confession, detailing his shift from druggy-degenerate to underground crusader) feel earned, never preachy or maudlin.

This is an important movie, a movie of surpassing worth. And, yet, somehow, even though the film has nothing to do with him, and the events depicted transpired before his 2016 election, it's Donald Trump's fault that scores of children were rescued. Indeed, to leftists, anything that might reflect well on President Trump must be discredited or suppressed. This kind of collectivist groupthink is asinine. If the filmmakers are demented, and sex traffickers *aren't* grabbing kids right down the street, is it wrong to investigate further, just to make sure? What do we always hear from leftists regarding politically contentious issues, particularly when a conservative is accused of wrongdoing? *It's not the truth of the allegations, it's the gravity of those allegations that matters.* But castigating leftists as hypocrites doesn't work. They simply don't care, since the value of anything, even children, depends on its context.

Granted, not every detail of the film lines up with Tim Ballard's crusading adventures. With becoming modesty, he admits to bouts of fear and second-guessing that were not depicted on-screen. Still, the hostility of many critics to this sleeper hit is most revealing. They hold this film to a different standard than other 'true-life' stories. But, then again, maybe they should. More than most, they know how powerful cinema can be. And, to be sure, this is no ordinary movie. Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar; sometimes a movie is just a movie. But *Sound of Freedom* is a different kind of movie. It's a manly summons to battle that barely qualifies as entertainment.

It will be years before the smoke of controversy clears and we can have consensus. In due course, *Sound of Freedom* will stand as an angry wake-up call, or collapse as a mawkish, overblown tearjerker. But making this film took guts. Jim Caviezel frames the issue succinctly: "Listen, you do *Schindler's List* fifty years later, you're a hero. Try doing *Schindler's List* when the real Nazis are right there. Understand how that becomes more dangerous?"