

## ***The Plane Truth Asks What Happens to the Families***

*December 2008—Boston, MA*

Nearly 17 years ago in France, on a cloudy evening, Air Inter takes off from Lyon-Saint Exupéry, headed for Strasbourg. There are 90 passengers, and a crew of six. One hour later, nearing the German border and its destination airfield, the plane banks sharply left, circling Mont Sainte-Odile, and rapidly losing altitude. The crew is able to correct the sharp turn, but apparently is unaware of the rate of descent. Minutes later, the Airbus 320 slams into the 2,500-foot mountain.

Rescuers take four-and-a-half hours to reach the site. In that time, several who survived the crash have died of hypothermia. Only nine survive. The other 87 are gone—husbands, wives, lovers, fathers, mothers.

A simple monument of respect marks the location of the tragedy. A new marker debuted in private screenings with the film participants in Paris, Strasbourg, and Lyon, France this fall. *La Vérité du Ciel: Notre Humanité Commune, Notre Tragédie Partagée - The Plane Truth: Our Common Humanity, Our Shared Loss*. The American Premiere will be at the Santa Fe Film Festival, Warehouse 21, on December 5 at 2:15 p.m. and December 7 at 7:15 p.m.

Documentary filmmaker Jim McSherry explores the lives of the families forever shattered by the crash. In their own words, seven families quietly recall that day—and the days since. It is clear that each life veered as sharply as that plane. Some live with more gratitude; some with more faith; some with pain so raw it's as if death struck 16 days ago, rather than 16 years.

This film is no exploitation of pain and loss. Too many pages have turned on the calendar. These are people with quiet, dignified recollections and emotions. Sharing an intimate conversation of real, human connections. Connections that were severed, but not lost. The viewer can almost feel the physical and psychic pull that remains—on different levels of awareness for each member of the families left behind. Some are stronger; some remain crippled.

“...To know that my father doesn't know my wife. He doesn't know my brother-in-law. He

doesn't know his granddaughter. It's necessary to take a deep breath and find the courage to get through it. It's never easy.”

McSherry's film *The Plane Truth* teaches us that loss forever alters the loser. That joy and beauty are hard-fought to rediscover. And treasured when found.

He asks each what they would do with 24 more hours with that lost loved one. One declines the time, saying it would be too difficult, knowing the pain would be back. The others ask for simple things: a walk and a talk, to share a good bottle of wine. More time.

Seven families. Gently, quietly, courageously remembering. It is a rare glimpse into the true aftermath of tragedy. *The Plane Truth*.

Many questions remain about the crash of France's largest domestic airline. Investigators looked at ergonomic laws, a faulty navigation system, computer malfunctions. Exact cause is never clear. What is clear is the crew was unable to see what was happening.

Mont Sainte-Odile is a peak of the Vosges Mountains in the Alsace region of France. It is best known for the centuries-old monastery at its top, now a convent/hotel open year-round to visitors. The mountain is named for Saint Odile, patroness of good eyesight.

###

## **Jim McSherry & JRM Films**

Jim McSherry is a writer, producer, and director. He began work on *The Plane Truth*, as an exploration of human loss across cultures. Would he find a common, shared humanity—and could it be captured on film? His subjects are all French, but differ widely in faith, relationships, and character. Their commonalities, however, reach us all: coping with sudden, searing loss; and

the journey through darkness and back again.

*Homeboy*, McSherry's first film, chronicled the stark world of gang life in East Los Angeles. It was completed in the fall of 2006 and premiered internationally at Documenta Madrid in May 2007. The film continues to serve as an educational tool by gang-intervention organizations in the United States, and has been added to the Harvard Film Library.

Jim is an entrepreneur, inventor, founder of two successful national companies, and world-traveler. He has more than 25 years of entrepreneurial and start-up experience in private and non-profit industries, providing professional support services domestically and overseas. He has an MBA from Suffolk University in Boston and studied international business at IESE in Barcelona. His Bachelor of Science in Architectural Studies is from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign including study abroad at the Ecole des Beaux Artes in Versailles, France.

For more information on McSherry and his work, visit [www.jrmfilms.com](http://www.jrmfilms.com).

###