

3,000 CUPS OF TEA

A film by Jennifer Jordan & Jeff Rhoads

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3,000 Cups of Tea: The Mission and The Madness of Greg Mortenson

Director's Statement

From Jennifer Jordan, Feb. 2014:

"In 2000 and 2002 Jeff and I made the arduous, week-long journey into base camp at the foot of K2, the world's second highest mountain, to research future books and shoot a documentary. Those treks took us through dozens of remote mountain villages. In many of those villages, there would be one building, its four plumb walls, bright tin roof, and flowers in the window boxes, setting it apart from the stone and mud huts. Those buildings turned out to be Central Asia Institute schools.

"Then in 2011, *60 Minutes* charged that many of those schools didn't exist and that the Institute's founder, Greg Mortenson, had used the foundation as his "personal ATM." Having helped us with both of our expeditions through the troubled and fractious Northern Territories of Pakistan, Mortenson had become a friend and colleague. When he came to Salt Lake City only months after the attacks of 9-11, I interviewed him about his experience building schools for girls in the nexus of the Taliban and Al Qaeda's powerbase.

"I watched the *60 Minutes* segment feeling horror and heartbreak; horror because of the irreparable damage being done to not only a man, but also to his invaluable mission of building schools and educating girls, and heartbreak because no matter the truth or falsehood of the allegations, Mortenson's epitaph was being written by his enemies. Jeff and I were also confused: we had seen the schools, we knew the man, so none of what we were watching made sense. We decided to find out for ourselves what had happened—with Mortenson, with his schools, and perhaps, with the state of American journalism.

"3,000 Cups of Tea is the result of that investigation."