

## Dream inspires Iran documentary film: *Silent Screams*

By MICHAEL MORAIN, November 14, 2009, Des Moines Register

Most people take vacations to relax. Karla Hansen went with a mission.

The Clive social worker and mental health therapist and her husband, Drake University economics professor Ismael Hossein-zadeh, took a trip this spring to visit family in his native Iran. Since she doesn't speak much Farsi, she figured she'd take a banner with a multi-lingual message of peace and video-record people's reactions.

"I knew I couldn't sit still for seven weeks," she said.

But her goodwill project took a different turn on the third night of the trip, in a hardscrabble Kurdish village near the Afghan border. She and her husband had celebrated a Muslim wedding - not so different from their own two years ago in Des Moines - when a dream woke her from sleep. She had seen visions of unmanned U.S. aircraft, called drones, bombing the wedding celebration from a few hours before.

Hansen, a peace activist, knew about the drones from volunteer work back home. She knew about their alleged inaccuracy in nearby Afghanistan and Pakistan. And she knew she wanted to reshape her film project into a more pointed documentary.

"I'm not a very patient person. I just want to rant and change things now, but this was my way to say it with a whisper," she said of the result of her work, a 30-minute film called "***Silent Screams***," which will be shown Sunday at the Fleur Cinema in Des Moines.



Karla in Iran

It weaves together still shots, satellite maps, newsreel and clips from 24 hours of footage Hansen shot herself.

The U.S. military developed the drones so operators could attack targets with remote controls, thousands of miles from danger. The devices are equipped with high-tech cameras and can hover undetected for extended periods of time.

But critics, especially those in Afghanistan and Pakistan, argue that the U.S. military shouldn't use the robots. They claim the drones kill scores of civilians.

Hansen doesn't claim to be an expert, but she worries about her new family in Iran. They're part of the reason she made the film, and why she finished it off with a recording of Martin Luther King Jr.

"We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for the victims of our nation and for those it calls 'enemy,'" he says, "for no document from human hands can make these humans any less our brothers."



Karla Hansen poses with children in Iran where she made a film about drone inaccuracy.



Karla Hansen, sits with her husband, Ismael Hossein-zadeh, a Drake University economics professor.