

Ger McDonnell's story to feature in Sundance



Kilcornan's Ger McDonnell on the summit of K2 in 2008 - before the deadly ascent down the mountain

K2 film on top of the movie world

Alan Owens

A FEATURE-length documentary telling the tragic story of Limerick climber Ger McDonnell's summit of K2 has been selected for screening at the Sundance Film Festival.

The Summit, produced and directed by Nick Ryan, is the only Irish film to be selected this year for the world's biggest indie-movie festival, which was founded by Robert Redford.

The documentary tells the story of the shocking events on K2 when 11 of the 42 summiteers - including Kilcornan man Ger - died on the world's most dangerous mountain.

The film has been selected to screen in competition at Sun-

dance in January and was also nominated for a prestigious Grierson Award for Best Documentary at this year's London Film Festival.

It tells the tale of Ger's heroic rescue of three trapped climbers on the mountain - at the expense of his own life.

"At the heart of The Summit lies a mystery about one extraordinary man, Ger McDonnell, who was faced with a heart-wrenching predicament at the very limit of his mortal resources," explained Nick Ryan.

"He encountered a disastrous scene and a moral dilemma: three climbers tangled up in ropes and running out of time.

"In the death zone, above 8,000 metres, the body is literally dying

with each passing second. Morality is skewed 180 degrees from the rest of life. When a climber falls or wanders off the trail, the unwritten code of the mountain is to leave them for dead.

"Had Ger McDonnell stuck to the climbers' code, he might still be alive."

The film is spectacular with a fast paced narrative, boasting never before seen footage of the climb and its aftermath. The McDonnell family, while not involved in the film, have given it their blessing.

Producer Sarah Ryder, for RTE, said the Sundance selection was "a fantastic accolade for the team who have worked so hard to make this stunning documentary a reality".

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