

Bidi Bidi Pitch

By Penny Randell

Headline: An Eye-Opening Visit to Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement in Northern Uganda

Timing: I visited the settlement in late April of this year and it is time-sensitive.

Content: Text is about 1700 words. A two to five-minute video will accompany the piece with audio from me and the people I spoke to, plus at least 20 still shots.

Components: I am a working journalist and will provide the text, photos, and video with audio.

The story: In 1998, while working at Capital Radio in Kampala, Uganda I became interested in the plight of the South Sudanese people and what was then called The War in the North. My every visit to Uganda since has included an effort to visit South Sudan and discover who these people really are and what has caused the longest war in African history. Because it has always been too dangerous to cross the border and enter the country itself, I visited this camp, the largest in all of Africa. Despite their anger and accusations of exploitation, I was able to speak to a crowd of many and answer questions concerning why I was there.

Acceptance into Bidi Bidi took quite the effort, but after six in-person interviews at the Office of the Prime Minister in Kampala, I received the document that allowed my entrance. My son, the videographer of the piece was punched in the neck by one angry member of the crowd. My driver was verbally assaulted and I was responsible for forcing peace before I could work. World Vision and UNHCR made sure we took no pictures of the rations that were being distributed. People were irate because food, water, Gerry cans, and medical supplies had been cut in half. Despite the soothing story of National Geographic in their April edition, I did not experience the “rapid growing city of peace” the magazine described.

Delivery Date: Two weeks after acceptance of my work.

Portfolio: Please refer to my website pennyrandell.com. There you will find the first five chapters of my book, *Becoming African*. In addition, essays and blogs can be read on this site.

Thanks so much for your consideration. It has long been my intent to give a voice to the voiceless.