

LOUNG UNG | BIOGRAPHY – 2020



Courage is when you dare to be yourself, in whatever ways you want to be – to not be afraid, to just be authentically you.”

~ Loung Ung

LOUNG UNG is a bestselling author, public speaker, activist and co-screenplay writer of **First They Killed My Father**, the critically acclaimed 2017 Netflix Original Movie directed by Angelina Jolie, based on her memoir, now streaming on Netflix.

BIO: Born in 1970 to a middle-class family in Phnom Penh, Loung Ung was only five years old when the Khmer Rouge Soldiers stormed into her city and her family was forced out of their home in a mass evacuation to the countryside. By 1978, the Khmer Rouge had killed Ung's parents and two of her siblings. In 1980, she and her older brother escaped by boat to Thailand, where they spent five months in a refugee camp.

Loung's first memoir, the national best-seller *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers* (Harper Perennial), details her survival of Cambodia's killing fields, one of the bloodiest episodes of the twentieth century. Some two million Cambodians -- out of a population of just seven million -- died at the hands of the infamous Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge regime. Of her family of nine, five survived. In her second book, *Lucky Child* (HarperCollins), Ung picks her story back up in Burlington, Vermont, where she and her brother relocated, and describes the arduous process of adjusting to a new country and culture. Her latest book, *Lulu in the Sky* (Harper Perennial), tells the next chapter in Ung's life, revealing her daily struggle to keep darkness, anger, and depression at bay while falling in love at college with Mark Priemer, who is now her husband.

In 1995, after attending a memorial service in Cambodia, Ung was shocked and saddened to learn that 20 of her relatives had been killed, and thousands of the survivors of the Khmer Rouge genocide were still being maimed, injured, and killed each year by antipersonnel land-mines. Returning to America, Ung served as the spokesperson for the Campaign for a Landmine Free World from 1997-2005, and has since made over forty trips back to Cambodia. Today, she has shared her messages of building resilience, healing from trauma, civic service, activism, and leadership in the U.S. and across the world. She has spoken at numerous schools and universities, as well as at; Stanford University, Boston College, Yale University, Phillips Academy, Cathay Pacific Airlines, U.S. Coast Guard, the Young Presidents' Organization, The Million Dollar Round Table Plenary, Linkage Inc., Crowe Chizek and Company LLP, SONY, Omega Women's Leadership, the UN Conference on Women in Beijing, the UN Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, and the Child Soldiers Conference in Nepal.

Named one of the "100 Global Youth Leaders of Tomorrow" by The World Economic Forum, Ung is the subject of an hour-long documentary for the German ARTE, Japanese NHK, and U.S. NECN. She is also a contributing writer for the groundbreaking film *Girl Rising*, which profiles nine girls from nine countries, including Cambodia, who are struggling against odds to achieve an education. She has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Boston Globe*, *London Sunday Times*, *Biography*, *Glamour*, *Jane*, and *Ms.* magazine. In addition, Ung has shared her story on *The Diane Rehm Show*, *Talk of the Nation*, *Weekend Edition*, *Fresh Air with Terry Gross*, *The Today Show with Matt Lauer and Katie Couric*, and has appeared on ABC NEWS *Nightline*, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox, and C-SPAN.

When not writing, Loung can be found riding around Cleveland, Ohio on a tandem bike with her husband Mark Priemer, or at one of their three restaurants and two microbreweries they co-own in Ohio City.

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