

WHAT
BEGAN AS A
SMALL STORY
EXPOSING OUR
WORLD'S *LARGEST* WAR
HAS BECOME A CAMPAIGN
FOR **PEACE IN CONGO.**



WEAR YOUR **PROTEST** AND
BE A WHISTLEBLOWER
FOR *PEACE.*

FALLING WHISTLES

Falling Whistles began as a small story exposing our world's largest war.



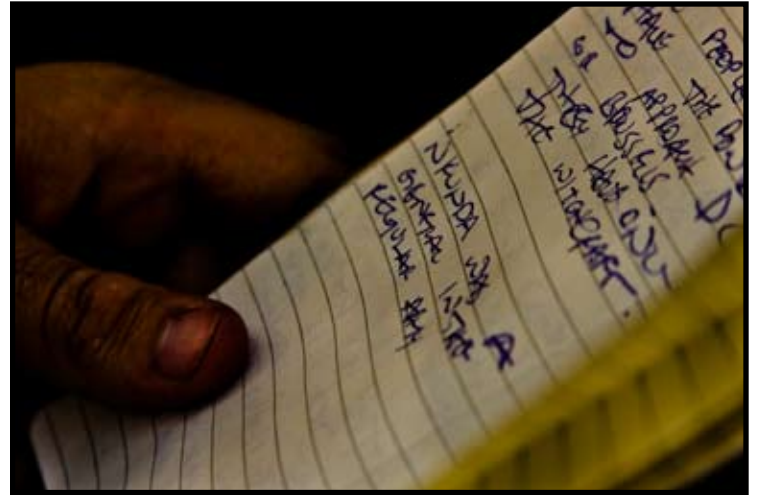
A little more than a year ago two Americans traveled into the Democratic Republic of Congo on what was meant to be a short learning expedition. By the week's end, they had discovered an illegal prison holding escaped child soldiers.



There they heard of the whistleblowers;
boys too small to carry a gun,
sent to the frontlines of war, armed with only a whistle.

That night Sean Carasso wrote in his journal,

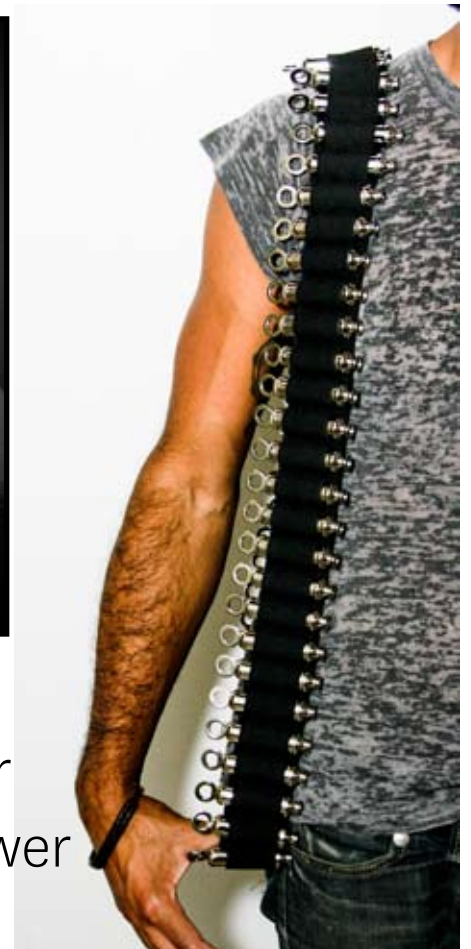
“With Falling Whistles, their only choice is to feign death or face it.”



With no other outlet, he sent the story of the whistleblowers to a small circle of family and friends, thousands of miles away. They began to forward the journal with the same urgency in which it was written. As the forwards continued, so did the questions of concerned readers. Searching for answers he spoke with Congolese government officials, rebel fighters, warlords, aid workers, and journalists, eventually gaining access to an International Peace Conference.



A friend welcomed him home with a fierce embrace and an unusual gift – **a whistle**. Hanging just over the heart, everywhere they went the whistle would cause conversation and provide an opportunity to speak up for these children.



The Falling Whistles campaign was launched with a simple plan– make their weapon your voice and be a whistleblower for peace in Congo.

A Symbol of **Protest**



Simply by word of mouth, Falling Whistles has sold over 3,600 whistles and is continuing its rapid expansion.

Proceeds go to restoring the lives of war-affected children in the Democratic Republic of Congo, while U.S. whistleblowers build a coalition to fight for their freedom.

The **Problem:**

The Falling Whistles story reveals two urgent needs:

**1. Children displaced
by the war**

**2. Children forced to the
frontlines**



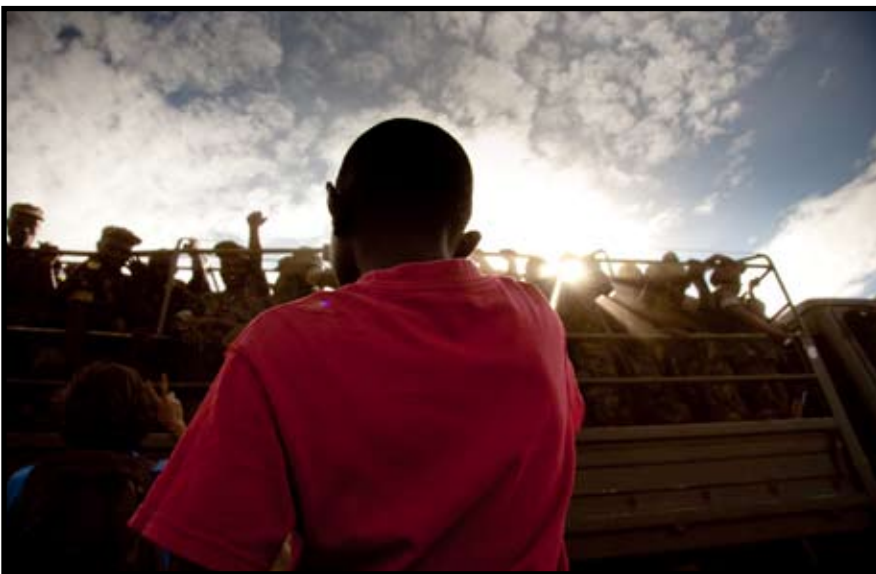
Often, traumatized, these children are rejected from their homes or return to find their communities disbursed and destroyed. Left with little recourse for action other than continued violence, their behavior often takes the form of street gangs or militia groups.

The Plan:

The Falling Whistles campaign addresses both these needs by:

1. Providing income through whistle sales to support war-affected children

2. Creating a coalition of whistleblowers to advocate for peace



Short **Term**

Children displaced by the war have few options for survival and are often pulled back into the cycle of war. We have partnered with Congolese community leaders to rehabilitate these children. This process develops local leadership and gives these children the tools to survive and thrive on their own through education, art, sports, music, human rights education, vocational skills training, medical treatment and nutritional services. Each organization is working to give children the tools to be whistleblowers and stand for peace within the war-region.





Long Term

In order to help the children forced to the frontlines, the war must end. Without an organized coalition demanding peace, there is little incentive for our leaders to act, and for those benefiting from the war to stop perpetrating it. To prevent further abuse of children and increase regional stability, our goal is to grow that coalition.



The first step toward that goal is to change the way we advocate in the West. Sold from pockets, living rooms, garages, concerts, warehouses and retail stores, the whistle provides an opportunity to spread the word about Congo and speak up for peace.

WEAR YOUR PROTEST
AND ELEVATE
COMMON
CONVERSATION.



The Background:

Since the first Europeans landed in Congo centuries ago, the vast resources have been persistently plundered. With so much wealth to be gained by countries, multinational corporations and individuals willing to perpetuate chaos, this historic problem has grown incrementally more complex over time.

These forces have come together to create our world's deadliest war. Since 1996 nearly six million people have lost their lives as a result of the conflict - twice the number of kids who will graduate high school in the United States this year. A new generation of Congolese youth are currently being forced to fight in a war that is not their own.



The War

The war is largely funded by the illicit trading of conflict minerals. These minerals are mined in Congo and used to create consumer electronics like computers, gaming systems, and cell phones. We find them in our homes, schools, and pockets. The lack of the transparency in the corporate supply chain has created an environment where purveyors of chaos profit from the war. Rather than providing fair jobs



for locals, the profits from tin, tungsten, tantalum, and gold in Congo are often used by militant groups to re-arm. They forcefully control the mines and profit from the dollars of corporate buyers who fail to use fair sources for their minerals.





We are raising the profile of this issue and building a coalition of whistleblowers to demand solutions. With global consequences attached to our actions and purchases, it is more apparent than ever that our collective liberties are intertwined. By providing our consumers with the tools to understand and speak up for one another, we will work alongside our political leaders toward peace in Congo and demand the products we buy are conflict-free.

We are training a new generation, both in the West and in Congo, to assume the qualities of a whistleblower and stand for a more peaceful and more free world.



Press



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 Could this little whistle end the world's largest war?



Every now and again someone experiences something that for a brief moment, causes their world to stop spinning, brings everything into focus and then forever changes life as they know it. Some keep these transformative events private; others share with friends. And then there are the unsuspecting crusaders who feel compelled not only to share their story with the entire world, but also to act on what they've seen, because quite simply -- it's just not OK not to. Such is the tale of Falling Whistles founder, Sean Carasso.

About 10 months ago, the 27-year-old from Los Angeles accompanied his friend Blake Mycoskie of TOMS Shoes on a light-spirited educational humanitarian trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But like any story worth hearing, something went awry. Carasso came across a

military camp for young boys. Boys, all under age 15, who had been abducted from their homes, beaten, forced to kill. Boys living in their own excrement and digging ditches for 20 hours a day. And most horrifying of all, boys who not yet old enough to hold guns, who are given whistles and put on the front lines as human shields: the **Falling Whistles**.



Falling Whistles: Making a Weapon a Symbol of Peace



Sean Carasso, the founder of Falling Whistles, first journeyed to Africa to help Blake Mycoskie on a TOMS shoe drop. In late 2007, he entered the war torn Democratic Republic of Congo for what was supposed to be a "short learning expedition." There, he met five boys being held in a children's prison by the Congolese Army. They told him the story of the whistleblowers.

According to the boys, in the rebel army, when children are too young to hold guns, they are armed with whistles instead. These tiny whistleblowers are sent to the front lines and told to make enough noise to distract the opposition. They die acting as temporary barricades for rebel forces. After hearing this story,

Sean arranged for the release of the five boys with help from the UN. When he left Africa, Sean vowed to do more to help others like them.

**MEN.
 STYLE.
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New Retailers Braving the L.A. Boutique Scene

What's New, L.A.?
 L.A. entrepreneurs go to the red carpet... and the streets of Hollywood. The city's fashion scene is in a state of flux, with new retailers and established brands vying for attention. Sean Carasso's Falling Whistles is one of the newcomers, bringing a message of peace to the fashion world.

The Economic Recovery: Are We There Yet?

The economic recovery is still in question, with many retailers reporting a slow start to the new year. Sean Carasso's Falling Whistles is one of the brands that has managed to stay afloat, thanks to its unique message and social media presence.



■ Saving The Congo's Child Soldiers

Sean Carasso founded **Falling Whistles** to bring attention to **child soldiers** in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. These innocents have been forced to serve in the **North Kivu** province. If the children were too small to hold a gun in **Africa's longest war**, the rebel army made them stand at the front lines as human shields armed only with a whistle. In an interview with **Inter**, Carasso told of his encounter with this level of cruelty:



I'd heard that the biggest war in the world is in Congo. I really didn't know any details, and knew that if that was the case -- if the biggest war in the world is happening and I didn't know anything about it, that was a problem in and of itself. I needed to go learn. So the idea was to go in for a five-day exploratory trip to start learning, asking questions, get as good of an understanding as I could in a few days and make some contacts so I could stay in touch. And at the end of those five days, we ended up discovering this illegal prison for kids. It was basically a military prison. That day, the 'Falling Whistles day,' was in a moment of total and complete vulnerability. One of those moments when everything stops and it's like, 'OK, this we have to do something about.' I haven't really gotten to a place where I can explain it. My ambitions, my desires, my dreams -- all went away.

