

Final Cut for Real Presents

THE ACT OF KILLING

A film by Joshua Oppenheimer

Executive produced by Errol Morris, Werner Herzog and André Singer

Official Selection

Telluride Film Festival 2012

Toronto Film Festival 2012

CPH:DOX 2012

Winner of DOX:AWARD, the Grand Prize of CPH:DOX

115 mins. Denmark/Norway/UK HD 16:9 5.1 Dolby

www.theactofkilling.com

www.facebook.com/actofkilling

Sales Contact:

Cinephil

Philippa Kowarsky / Ori Bader

philippa@cinophil.co.il / ori@cinophil.co.il

Tel Aviv office: +972 3 5664129

Mobile: +972 54 4961114

Quotes

"If we are to transform Indonesia into the democracy it claims to be, citizens must recognize the terror and repression on which our contemporary history has been built. No film, or any other work of art for that matter, has done this more effectively than THE ACT OF KILLING. [It] is essential viewing for us all."

- National Human Rights Commission of Indonesia

"An extraordinary portrayal of genocide. To the inevitable question: what were they thinking, Joshua Oppenheimer provides an answer. It starts as a dreamscape, an attempt to allow the perpetrators to reenact what they did, and then something truly amazing happens. The dream dissolves into nightmare and then into bitter reality. An amazing and impressive film."

- Errol Morris

"I have not seen a film as powerful, surreal, and frightening in at least a decade... It is unprecedented in the history of cinema."

- Werner Herzog

"An absolute and unique masterpiece."

- Dusan Makavejev

"Every now and then a non-fiction film comes along that is unlike anything else I have seen: Buñuel's LAND WITHOUT BREAD, Werner Herzog's FATA MORGANA, Hara's THE EMPEROR'S NAKED ARMY MARCHES ON. Well, it's happened again. Here, Joshua Oppenheimer invites unrepentant Indonesian death-squad leaders to make fiction films reenacting their violent histories. Their cinematic dreams dissolve into nightmares and then into bitter reality. Like all great documentary, THE ACT OF KILLING demands another way of looking at reality. It is like a hall of mirrors—the so-called mise-en-abyme—where real people become characters in a movie and then jump back into reality again. And it asks the central question: what is real? Gabriel Garcia Marquez, in a Paris Review interview, wrote about reading Kafka's "Metamorphosis" for the first time, "I didn't know you were allowed to do that." I have the same feeling with this extraordinary film."

- Errol Morris

"THE ACT OF KILLING is the most powerful, politically important film about Indonesia that I have ever seen. The arrival of this film is itself a historical event almost without parallel. [It] witnesses the bloody destruction of a foundation of this nation at the hands of Indonesians themselves. On top of a mountain of corpses, our fellow countrymen rolled out a red carpet for the growth of gangster capitalism and political Islam. In documenting this, The Act of Killing exposes the hypocrisy at the heart of this country's notions of 'patriotism' and 'justice.' The film achieves all this thanks to the director's genius and audacious choice of filmmaking method."

- Ariel Heryanto, Historian and Cultural Critic, Tempo Magazine (Indonesia's premier newsmagazine)

Reviews & Articles

INTERNATIONAL

"The best, and most horrific, film of this year's Toronto film festival...every frame is astonishing."

- The Guardian, 5 star review

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2012/sep/14/act-of-killing-review?INTCMP=SRCH>

"Werner Herzog said, 'I have not seen a film as powerful, surreal and frightening in at least a decade.' I can't imagine what Herzog could have seen over a decade ago that would trump it."

"We wonder if films can change the world. This one is at least bound to have a devastating impact."

- Maclean's Magazine

<http://www2.macleans.ca/2012/09/12/the-horror-the-horror-the-act-of-killing-makes-history/>

Tom Charity of CNN calls The Act of Killing "a radical development in the documentary form and as an explosive journalistic expose. It's also a deeply disturbing emotional experience, a movie that some audiences will find upsetting or hard to stomach, even if it is also poetic, funny, profoundly strange and moving."

<http://marquee.blogs.cnn.com/2012/09/12/the-act-of-killing-creates-a-stir-in-toronto/>

"The Act of Killing, by first-time director Joshua Oppenheimer did not disappoint...a film at once wrenching and bizarre: a sequence of colour-drenched tableaux adding up to what must be one of the most complexly fine reckonings with the evil men do – and the stories we tell ourselves, in order to live – as we have."

- British Film Institute's Sight and Sound

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/news/telluride-film-festival-2012>

"The Act of Killing" is about more than just catharsis for mass murderers. It's about the depth of moral corruption in Indonesia today that enables evil to persist and prevail."

- Daniel Ziv, the Wall Street Journal.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324640104578160691013645074.html>

In her Toronto wrap for Fandor.com, B Ruby Rich calls THE ACT OF KILLING "shocking, transporting, unprecedented...the ultimate discovery of the festival".

<http://www.fandor.com/blog/toronto-2012-haunted-by-history>

Canada's Macleans magazine calls "shattering" Act of Killing the best film of Toronto International Film Festival

<http://www2.macleans.ca/2012/09/16/brian-d-johnson-picks-tiffs-top-10/>

"Really, you need to see this movie. You just do. It's one of the most compelling, riveting docs I've ever seen; I've never seen anything quite like it, and I'll bet you haven't either."

- Movie City News

<http://moviecitynews.com/2012/09/tiff12-review-the-act-of-killing/>

"A surreal, chilling and unprecedented examination of atrocity and accountability, it's difficult to think of another documentary—or piece of media—that so thoroughly captures a mass murderer's conscience—as well as charting its evolution."

- Screen Daily

<http://www.screendaily.com/reviews/the-latest/the-act-of-killing/5046417.article?blocktitle=The-Latest&contentID=598#>

"Easily the boldest documentary at Telluride this year—maybe one of the boldest ever seen anywhere—is the Morris-produced 'The Act of Killing'."

"A banality-of-evil portrait that culminates in an unforgettable realization of culpability and conscience among the otherwise remorseless killers."

"The 'final act of 'Killing,' in which one of the gangsters plays one of his own victims on film and is seemingly shattered by the experience, is as vivid an ending as anything you'll see in fiction or non-fiction this year."

- The Wrap

<http://www.thewrap.com/movies/column-post/marion-cotillard-beautifies-foreign-film-and-doc-dominated-day-telluride-54481?page=0,1>

"The result is an emotionally exhausting, perverse examination of guilt and regret that ends with a powerfully visceral moment of vulnerability that will leave audiences speechless. 'The Act of Killing' is a truly great film. 5/5"

- The Documentary Blog

<http://www.thedocumentaryblog.com/index.php/2012/09/13/tiff-2012-capsule-reviews-stories-we-tell-reincarnated-the-act-of-killing-9.79-west-of-memphis/>

The Wrap's Steve Pond lists The Act of Killing as favorite film of the 2012 Toronto Film Festival.

<http://www.thewrap.com/movies/column-post/5-lessons-toronto-film-festival-56661>

Indonesian review of The Act of Killing in Jurnal Footage

<http://jurnalfootage.net/v4/artikel/kekerasan-massal-dan-manusia-bebas-dalam-the-act-of-killing>

"The study of the 1965-1966 killings in Indonesia, and for that matter the study of the country's politics more generally, will never be the same again with the recent release of the documentary film The Act of Killing."

- Ariel Heryanto in the IIAS Newsletter (International Institute for Asian Studies in the Netherlands)

http://www.iias.nl/sites/default/files/IIAS_NL61_1617.pdf

"The most unsettling movie about mass killing since 'Shoah'"

- Indiewire

<http://www.indiewire.com/article/telluride-review-harrowing-act-of-killing-is-the-most-unsettling-movie-about-mass-killing-since-shoah>

"A documentary like no other I've seen... Hypnotic."

- Collider.com

<http://collider.com/the-act-of-killing-review/195727/>

"The Act of Killing is a minor miracle."

- Badass Digest

<http://badassdigest.com/2012/09/10/tiff-movie-review-the-act-of-killing/>

"The Act of Killing" is uncomfortable, disquieting and riveting; as the final credits rolled, with "anonymous" standing in for the names for the Indonesians who would surely be killed if their names were made public, you recognize that while the film is over, Indonesia's nightmare is not, and won't be and will never be as long as a government and a people make killers into movie-style heroes."

- MSN.com

<http://social.entertainment.msn.com/movies/blogs/the-hitlist-blogpost.aspx?post=dd8a965e-ce19-4b55-8c8f-204587c99f0b>

"Bizarre, hypnotic, audacious, The Act of Killing is also one of the queasiest and most distressing films to play TIFF in the last 15 years."

- The Globe and Mail

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/awards-and-festivals/tiff/tiff-reviews/tiff-movie-review-the-act-of-killing/article4533189/?cmpid=rss1>

The Act of Killing is *"surreal, disturbing, timeless... Could well change how you view the documentary form..."*

- LA Times

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/moviesnow/la-et-mn-in-act-of-killing-a-shocking-look-at-mass-murder-20120915,0,3026499.story>

Criticwire made a survey among film critics at Toronto International Film Festival: Tom Charity (CNN.com), Steve Dollar (The Wall Street Journal), Jordan Hoffman (ScreenCrush.com), Adam Nayman (The Grid), Jordan Smith (IONCINEMA.com) and Kim Voynar (Movie City News) name The Act of Killing the best documentary at TIFF 2012 (and several other critics call it the second best).

http://www.indiewire.com/article/criticwire-at-toronto-the-best-films-performances-poll?utm_source=iContact&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Indiewire+Today&utm_content&page=3#articleHeaderPanel

Jay Kuehner calls The Act of Killing *"mind-bending, hyper-reflexive documentary"* on Fandor.com

<http://www.fandor.com/blog/postcards-from-the-zone>

"Unforgettable, unmissable, horribly brilliant."

- The Guardian, video report from Toronto International Film Festival

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/video/2012/sep/13/toronto-film-festival-much-ado-about-nothing>

The Film

In a country where killers are celebrated as heroes, the filmmakers challenge unrepentant death squad leaders to dramatize their role in genocide. The hallucinatory result is a cinematic fever dream, an unsettling journey deep into the imaginations of mass-murderers and the shockingly banal regime of corruption and impunity they inhabit.

Synopsis

Anwar Congo and his friends have been dancing their way through musical numbers, twisting arms in film noir gangster scenes, and galloping across prairies as yodeling cowboys. Their foray into filmmaking is being celebrated in the media and debated on television, even though Anwar Congo and his friends are mass murderers.

Medan, Indonesia. When the government of Indonesia was overthrown by the military in 1965, Anwar and his friends were promoted from small-time gangsters who sold movie theatre tickets on the black market to death squad leaders. They helped the army kill more than one million alleged communists, ethnic Chinese, and intellectuals in less than a year. As the executioner for the most notorious death squad in his city, Anwar himself killed hundreds of people with his own hands.

Today, Anwar is revered as a founding father of a right-wing paramilitary organization that grew out of the death squads. The organization is so powerful that its leaders include government ministers, and they are happy to boast about everything from corruption and election rigging to acts of genocide.

THE ACT OF KILLING is about killers who have won, and the sort of society they have built. Unlike ageing Nazis or Rwandan génocidaires, Anwar and his friends have not been forced by history to admit they participated in crimes against humanity. Instead, they have written their own triumphant history, becoming role models for millions of young paramilitaries. THE ACT OF KILLING is a journey into the memories and imaginations of the perpetrators, offering insight into the minds of mass killers. And THE ACT OF KILLING is a nightmarish vision of a frighteningly banal culture of impunity in which killers can joke about crimes against humanity on television chat shows, and celebrate moral disaster with the ease and grace of a soft shoe dance number.

A Love of Cinema. In their youth, Anwar and his friends spent their lives at the movies, for they were “movie theatre gangsters”: they controlled a black market in tickets, while using the cinema as a base of operations for more serious crimes. In 1965, the army recruited them to form death squads because they had a proven capacity for violence, and they hated the communists for boycotting American films – the most popular (and profitable) in the cinemas.

Anwar and his friends were devoted fans of James Dean, John Wayne, and Victor Mature. They explicitly fashioned themselves and their methods of murder after their Hollywood idols. And coming out of the midnight show, they felt “just like gangsters who stepped off the screen”. In this heady mood, they strolled across the boulevard to their office and killed their nightly quota of prisoners. Borrowing his technique from a mafia movie, Anwar preferred to strangle his victims with wire.

In THE ACT OF KILLING, Anwar and his friends agree to tell us the story of the killings. But their idea of being in a movie is not to provide testimony for a documentary: they want to star in the kind of films they most love from their days scalping tickets at the cinemas. We seize this opportunity to

expose how a regime that was founded on crimes against humanity, yet has never been held accountable, would project itself into history.

And so we challenge Anwar and his friends to develop fiction scenes about their experience of the killings, adapted to their favorite film genres – gangster, western, musical. They write the scripts. They play themselves. And they play their victims.

Their fiction filmmaking process provides the film's dramatic arc, and their film sets become safe spaces to challenge them about what they did. Some of Anwar's friends realize that the killings were wrong. Others worry about the consequence of the story on their public image. Younger members of the paramilitary movement argue that they should boast about the horror of the massacres, because their terrifying and threatening force is the basis of their power today. As opinions diverge, the atmosphere on set grows tense. The edifice of genocide as a "patriotic struggle", with Anwar and his friends as its heroes, begins to sway and crack.

Most dramatically, the filmmaking process catalyzes an unexpected emotional journey for Anwar, from arrogance to regret as he confronts, for the first time in his life, the full implications of what he's done. As Anwar's fragile conscience is threatened by the pressure to remain a hero, *THE ACT OF KILLING* presents a gripping conflict between moral imagination and moral catastrophe.

Director's Statement – Joshua Oppenheimer

Beginnings

In February 2004, I filmed a former death squad leader demonstrate how, in less than three months, he and his fellow killers slaughtered 10,500 alleged 'communists' in a single clearing by a river in North Sumatra. When he was finished with his explanation, he asked my sound recordist to take some snapshots of us together by the riverbank. He smiled broadly, gave a thumbs up in one photo, a victory sign in the next.

Two months later, other photos, this time of American soldiers smiling and giving the thumbs up while torturing and humiliating Iraqi prisoners, appeared in the news (Errol Morris later revealed these photographs to be more complex than they at first appear). The most unsettling thing about these images is not the violence they document, but rather what they suggest to us about how their participants wanted, in that moment, to be seen. And how they thought, in that moment, they would want to remember themselves. Moreover, performing, acting, and posing appear to be part of the procedures of humiliation.

These photographs betray not so much the physical situation of abuse, but rather forensic evidence of the imagination involved in persecution. And they were very much in my mind when, one year later, I met Anwar Congo and the other leaders of Indonesia's Pancasila Youth paramilitary movement.

Far away or close to home?

The differences between the situations I was filming in Indonesia and other situations of mass persecution may at first seem obvious. Unlike in Rwanda, South Africa or Germany, in Indonesia there have been no truth and reconciliation commissions, no trials, no memorials for victims. Instead, ever since committing their atrocities, the perpetrators and their protégés have run the country, insisting they be honored as national heroes by a docile (and often terrified) public. But is this situation really so exceptional? At home (in the USA), the champions of torture, disappearance, and indefinite detention were in the highest positions of political power and, at the same time, busily tending to their legacy as the heroic saviors of western civilization. That such narratives would be believed (despite all evidence to the contrary) suggests a failure of our collective imagination, while simultaneously revealing the power of storytelling in shaping how we see.

And that Anwar and his friends so admired American movies, American music, American clothing – all of this made the echoes more difficult to ignore, transforming what I was filming into a nightmarish allegory.

Filming with survivors

When I began developing THE ACT OF KILLING in 2005, I had already been filming for three years with survivors of the 1965-66 massacres. I had lived for a year in a village of survivors in the plantation belt outside Medan. I had become very close to several of the families there. During that time, Christine Cynn and I collaborated with a fledgling plantation workers' union to make

THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES, and began production on a forthcoming film about a family of survivors that begins to confront (with tremendous dignity and patience) the killers who murdered their son. Our efforts to record the survivors' experiences – never before expressed publicly – took place in the shadow of their torturers, as well as the executioners who murdered their relatives –

men who, like Anwar Congo, would boast about what they did.

Ironically, we faced the greatest danger when filming survivors. We'd encounter obstacle after obstacle. For instance, when we tried to film a scene in which former political prisoners rehearsed a Javanese ballad about their time in the concentration camps (describing how they provided forced labor for a British-owned plantation, and how every night some of their friends would be handed over to the death squads to be killed), we were interrupted by police seeking to arrest us. At other times, the management of London-Sumatra plantations interrupted the film's shooting, "honoring" us by "inviting" us to a meeting at plantation headquarters. Or the village mayor would arrive with a military escort to tell us we didn't have permission to film. Or an "NGO" focused on "rehabilitation for the victims of the 1965-66 killings" would turn up and declare that "this is our turf - the villagers here have paid us to protect them." (When we later visited the NGO's office, we discovered that the head of the NGO was none other than the area's leading killer – and a friend of Anwar Congo's – and the NGO's staff seemed to be military intelligence officers.)

Not only did we feel unsafe filming the survivors, we worried for their safety. And the survivors couldn't answer the question of how the killings were perpetrated.

Boastful killers

But the killers were more than willing to help and, when we filmed them boastfully describing their crimes against humanity, we met no resistance whatsoever. All doors were open. Local police would offer to escort us to sites of mass killing, saluting or engaging the killers in jocular banter, depending on their relationship and the killer's rank. Military officers would even task soldiers with keeping curious onlookers at a distance, so that our sound recording wouldn't be disturbed.

This bizarre situation was my second starting point for making THE ACT OF KILLING. And the question in mind was this: what does it mean to live in, and be governed by, a regime whose power rests on the performance of mass murder and its boastful public recounting, even as it intimidates survivors into silence. Again, there seemed to be a profound failure of the imagination.

Seizing the moment

In this, I saw an opportunity: if the perpetrators in North Sumatra were given the means to dramatize their memories of genocide in whatever ways they wished, they would probably seek to glorify it further, to transform it into a "beautiful family movie" (as Anwar puts it) whose kaleidoscopic use of genres would reflect their multiple, conflicting emotions about their "glorious past." I anticipated that the outcomes from this process would serve as an exposé, even to Indonesians themselves, of just how deep the impunity and lack of resolution in their country remains.

Moreover, Anwar and his friends had helped to build a regime that terrorized their victims into treating them as heroes, and I realized that the filmmaking process would answer many questions about the nature of such a regime – questions that may seem secondary to what they did, but in fact are inseparable from it. For instance, how do Anwar and his friends really think people see them? How do they want to be seen? How do they see themselves? How do they see their victims? How does the way they think they will be seen by others reveal what they imagine about the world they live in, the culture they have built?

The filmmaking method we used in THE ACT OF KILLING was developed to answer these questions. It is best seen as an investigative technique, refined to help us understand not only what we see,

but also how we see, and how we imagine. (The resulting film may best be described as a documentary of the imagination.) These are questions of critical importance to understanding the imaginative procedures by which human beings persecute each other, and how we then go on to build (and live in) societies founded on systemic and enduring violence.

Anwar's reactions

If my goal in initiating the project was to find answers to these questions, and if Anwar's conscious intent was to glorify his past actions, there is no way that he could not, in part, be disappointed by the final film. And yet, a crucial component of the filmmaking process involved screening the footage back to Anwar and his friends along the way. Inevitably, we screened the most painful scenes. They know what is in the film; indeed, they have profound debates about filmmaking inside the film, openly discussing the film's consequences. And seeing these scenes only made Anwar more interested in the work, which is how I gradually realized that he was on a parallel, more personal journey through the filmmaking process, one in which he sought to come to terms with the meaning of what he had done. In that sense, too, Anwar is the bravest and most honest character in THE ACT OF KILLING. He may or may not 'like' the result, but I have tried to honor his courage and his openness by presenting him as honestly, and with as much compassion, as I could, while still deferring to the unspeakable acts that he committed.

There is no easy resolution to THE ACT OF KILLING. The murder of one million people is inevitably fraught with complexity and contradiction. In short, it leaves behind a terrible mess. All the more so when the killers have remained in power, when there has been no attempt at justice, and when the story has hitherto only been used to intimidate the survivors. Seeking to understand such a situation, intervening in it, documenting it – this, too, can only be equally tangled, unkempt.

The struggle continues

I have developed a filmmaking method with which I have tried to understand why extreme violence, that we hope would be unimaginable, is not only the exact opposite, but also routinely performed. I have tried to understand the moral vacuum that makes it possible for perpetrators of genocide to be celebrated on public television with cheers and smiles. Some viewers may desire a formal closure by the end of the film, a successful struggle for justice that results in changes in the balance of power, human rights tribunals, reparations and official apologies. One film alone cannot create these changes, but this desire has of course been our inspiration as

well, as we attempt to shed light on one of the darkest chapters in both the local and global human story, and to express the real costs of blindness, expedience and an inability to control greed and the hunger for power in an increasingly unified world society. This is not, finally, a story only about Indonesia. It is a story about us all.

Co-Director's Statement – Anonymous

I was one of thousands of Indonesian students who stood face to face with riot police in 1998, urging the New Order military dictatorship to go. I was not one of the student leaders who delivered heated speeches to the crowd; I was only a supporter, who felt that this moment might be historically important.

After more than three decades in power, General Suharto had finally stepped down. Since then, there have been some changes. The constitution has been amended four times. The press has become relatively freer. The President and Governors are elected by the people. There are no

limitations on the numbers of political parties, although it remains illegal for any of them to declare a Marxist affiliation.

However, working with grassroots communities, trying to create a fairer distribution of natural resources, for example, I repeatedly hit a dead end. Everywhere, corruption is still rampant. Munir, a human rights activist, was murdered by leading officials in the Indonesian intelligence services while on a flight to Holland, where he was to pursue a graduate degree -- and there has been no effort to prosecute those responsible. Violence is still often used as the primary language of politics. The buying of votes has transformed 'democracy' into, at best, a formal, almost stage-set procedure... In other words, nothing has really changed since the day General Suharto seized power -- even now, 14 years after he gave it up. The façade of Indonesian politics might have altered since the 1998 political reforms but, behind it, the old machinery still works in exactly the same way.

In 2004, I met Joshua and helped him begin his filmic exploration of the 1965-66 genocide in North Sumatra. Initially, I came to help for a month, not realizing that it would mark the beginning of an eight year collaboration. Making this film has become a personal journey for me, in seeking to discover why this social and political stasis remains.

Through the imaginations and recollections of the mass murderers featured - men who supported, even created this corrupt structure -- I understand, with particular clarity, how one of the devices of the old regime is still working so efficiently. It is the 'projector' that keeps playing, on an endless loop, a fiction film inside every Indonesian's head. People like Anwar and his friends are the projectionists, showing a subtle but unavoidable form of propaganda, which creates the kind of fantasy through which Indonesians may live their lives and make sense of the world around them; a fantasy that makes them desensitized to the violence and impunity that define our society.

This is the true legacy of the dictatorship: the erasure of our ability to imagine anything other.

I worked with Joshua to make THE ACT OF KILLING in order to help myself, other Indonesians, and human beings living in similar societies around the world, to understand the importance of

questioning what we see, and how we imagine. How else are we to envision our world in a different way?

I must remain anonymous, for now, because the political conditions in Indonesia make it too dangerous for me to do otherwise.

Producer's Statement – Signe Byrge Sørensen

Ever since I was young I have wondered about the Nazi extermination of the Jews, as well as other genocides. Why do they happen? What makes some people turn on other people in such a terrible way? Why do neighbors start killing neighbors? And why do others let this happen? When studying these issues more closely, I discovered that the stories people tell about each other play an enormous role in the process of genocide. If we identify a group of people, define them as terrible, evil, and very strong, somehow it becomes easier to kill them. After all, the killers can claim it was all in self-defense, and that the victims were the 'bad guys'.

And if, at the same time, the people in charge have hierarchies, resources, and henchmen in place, then the process becomes terribly easy, and sometimes extremely fast. If, on the other hand, we have critical voices who ask difficult questions about the legitimacy of what is happening, then the

killing process may be interrupted, and the outcome less inevitable – and this interruption may at least give everyone some time to think. In the best case, it may even stop the process, before it is too late.

Joshua Oppenheimer is someone who asks difficult questions. And in this film he questions the people we fear the most: the killers. However, he does not only focus on the lower level perpetrators, and he is not satisfied by easy psychological explanations. He persists until he can show the whole hierarchy involved, and he reveals layer by layer how storytelling, killing, politics and economics are closely related. When I met Joshua and heard about his project, I met a director who was not out simply to make a film (as hard as that is), but also to make a fundamental investigation into the human, social, and political conditions that make genocides possible. I am proud to be on this journey with him.

Production Notes

First Encounter with the 1965-66 Massacres – THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES

In 2001-2002, Christine Cynn and I went to Indonesia for the first time to produce THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES (2003), a participatory documentary project made in collaboration with the Independent Plantation Workers Union of Sumatra. Using their own forbidden history as a case study, these Indonesian filmmakers worked with us to trace the development of contemporary globalization from its roots in colonialism to the present.

THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES exposes the devastating role of militarism and repression in building the global economy, and explores the relationships between trade, third-world debt, and international institutions like the IMF and the World Trade Organization. Made by some of the poorest workers in the world, the film is a lyrical and incisive account of how our global financial institutions shape and enforce the corporate world order.

Several scenes in THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES reveal the earliest traces of the methods we refined in the shooting of THE ACT OF KILLING: plantation workers stage a satirical commercial for the pesticide that poisons them; worker-filmmakers pose as World Bank agents who offer microfinance to 'develop' local businesses – offers that are both brutal and absurd, yet tempting nonetheless.

While shooting and editing THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES, we discovered that the 1965-66 Indonesian massacres were the dark secret haunting Indonesia's much-celebrated entrance into the global economy. One of the military's main objectives in the killings was to destroy the anti-colonial labor movement that had existed until 1965, and to lure foreign investors with the promise of cheap, docile workers and abundant natural resources. The military succeeded (THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES is a testament to the extraordinary courage of the plantation worker-filmmakers as they challenge this decades-long legacy of terror and try to build a new union).

The killings would come up in discussions, planning sessions, and film shoots nearly every day, but always in whispers. Indeed, many of the plantation workers were themselves survivors of the killings. They would discretely point out the houses of neighbors who had killed their parents, grandparents, aunts, or uncles. The perpetrators were still living in the same village and made up, along with their children and protégés, the local power structure. As outsiders, we could interview these perpetrators – something the plantation workers could not do without fear of violence.

In conducting these first interviews, we encountered the pride with which perpetrators would boast about the most grisly details of the killings. THE ACT OF KILLING was born out of our curiosity

about the nature of this pride – its clichéd grammar, its threatening performativity, its frightening banality.

THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES was a film made collectively by the plantation workers themselves, with us as facilitators and collaborating directors. THE ACT OF KILLING was also made by working very closely with its subjects, while in solidarity and collaboration with the survivors' families. However, unlike THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES, THE ACT OF KILLING is an authored work, an expression of my own vision and concerns regarding these issues.

The Beginnings of THE ACT OF KILLING

By the time I first met the characters in THE ACT OF KILLING (in 2005), I had been making films in Indonesia for three years, and I spoke Indonesian with some degree of fluency. Since making THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES, Christine Cynn, fellow filmmaker and longtime collaborator Andrea Zimmerman and I had continued filming with perpetrators and survivors of the massacres in the plantation areas around the city of Medan. In 2003 and 2004, we filmed more interviews and simple re-enactments with Sharman Sinaga, the death squad leader who had appeared in THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES. We also filmed as he introduced us to other killers in the area. And we secretly interviewed survivors of the massacres they committed.

Moving from perpetrator to perpetrator, and, unbeknownst to them, from one community of survivors to another, we began to map the relationships between different death squads throughout the region, and began to understand the process by which the massacres were perpetrated. In 2004, we began filming Amir Hasan, the death squad leader who had commanded the massacres at the plantation where we made THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES.

In late 2004, Amir Hasan began to introduce me to killers up the chain of command in Medan. Independently in 2004, we began contacting 'veterans' organizations of death squad members and anti-leftist activists in Medan. These two approaches allowed us to piece together a chain of command, and to locate the surviving commanders of the North Sumatran death squads. In early interviews with the veterans of the killings (2004), I learned that the most notorious death squad in North Sumatra was Anwar Congo and Adi Zulkadry's Frog Squad (Pasukan Kodok).

During these first meetings with Medan perpetrators (2004 and 2005), I encountered the same disturbing boastfulness about the killings that we had been documenting on the plantations. The difference was that these men were the celebrated and powerful leaders not of a small rural village, but of the third largest city in Indonesia (Greater Medan has a population of over four million people).

Our starting point for THE ACT OF KILLING was thus the question: how had this society developed to the point that its leaders brag about their own crimes against humanity, recounting atrocities with a cheer that is both celebratory and also intended as a threat?

Overview and Chronology of the Methods used in THE ACT OF KILLING

Building on THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES and our film work outside Indonesia, we had developed a method in which we open a space for people to play with their image of themselves, re-creating and re-imagining it on camera, while we document this transformation as it unfolds. In particular, we had refined this method to explore the intersection between imagination and extreme violence.

In the early days of research (2005), I discovered that the army recruited its killers in Medan from

the ranks of movie theater gangsters (or preman bioskop) who already hated the leftists for their boycott of American movies – the most profitable in the cinema. I was intrigued by this relationship between cinema and killings, although I had no idea it would be so deep. Not only did Anwar and his friends know and love the cinema, but they dreamed of being on the screen themselves, and styled themselves after their favorite characters. They even borrowed their methods of murder from the screen.

Of course, I began by trying to understand in as much detail as possible Anwar and his friends' roles in the killings and, afterwards, in the regime they helped to build. Among the first things I did was to bring them to the former newspaper office directly across the road from Anwar's old cinema, the place where Anwar and his friends killed most of their victims. There, they demonstrated in detail what they had done. Although they were filming documentary re-enactment and interviews, during breaks I noticed that they would muse about how they looked like various movie stars – for instance, Anwar compared his protégé and sidekick, Herman, to Fernando Sancho.

To understand how they felt about the killings, and their unrepentant way of representing them on film, I screened back the unedited footage of these early re-enactments, and filmed their responses. At first, I thought that they would feel the re-enactments made them look bad, and that they might quit the film, or else come to a more complex place morally and emotionally. I was startled by what actually happened. As we see in the film, Anwar was mostly anxious that he should look young and fashionable. Instead of any explicit moral reflection, the screening led him and Herman spontaneously to suggest a better, and more elaborate, dramatization.

To explore their love of movies, I screened for them scenes from their favorite films at the time of the killings – Cecil B. DeMille's *Samson and Delilah* and, ironically, *The Ten Commandments* topped the list – recording their commentary and the memories these films elicited. Through this process, I came to realize why Anwar was continually bringing up these old Hollywood films whenever I filmed re-enactments with them: he and his fellow movie theatre thugs were inspired by them at the time of the killings, and had even borrowed their methods of murder from the movies. This was such an outlandish and disturbing idea that I in fact had to hear it several times before I realized quite what Anwar and his friends were saying.

He described how he got the idea of strangling people with wire from watching gangster movies. In a late-night interview in front of his former cinema, Anwar explained how different film genres would lead him to approach killing in different ways. The most disturbing example was how, after watching a "happy film like an Elvis Presley musical," Anwar would "kill in a happy way."

In 2005, I also discovered that the other paramilitary leaders (not just the former movie theater gangsters) had other personal and deep-seated relationship to movies. Ibrahim Sinik, the newspaper boss who was secretary general of all the anti-communist organizations that participated in the killings, and who directly gave the orders to Anwar's death squad, turned out to be a feature film producer, screenwriter, and former head of the Indonesian Film Festival.

In addition to all this, Anwar and his friends' idea of being in a film about the killings was essentially to act in dramatizations of their pasts – both as they remember them, and as they would like to be remembered (the most powerful insights in *THE ACT OF KILLING* probably come in those places where these two agendas radically diverge). As described, the idea of dramatizations came up quite spontaneously, in response to viewing the rushes from Anwar's first re-enactments of the killings.

But it would be disingenuous to claim that we facilitated the dramatizations only because that's what Anwar and his friends wanted to do. Ever since we produced *THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES*, the thing that most disturbed us was the way the killers we filmed recounted their stories. One had the feeling that we weren't hearing memories, receiving performances. And we understood, I think, that the purpose of these performances was to assert impunity, to create a threatening image, to perpetuate the autocratic regime that had begun with the massacres themselves. Boasting is a means by which regimes of terror sustain themselves.

We sensed that the methods we had developed for incorporating performance into documentary might, in this context, yield powerful insights into the mystery of the killers' boastfulness, the nature of the regime of which they are a part, and, most importantly, the nature of human 'evil' itself.

So, having learned that even their methods of murder were directly influenced by cinema, we challenged Anwar and his friends to make the sort of scenes they had in mind. We created a space in which they could devise and star in dramatizations based on the killings, using their favorite genres from the medium. Fiction would be the canvas on which they could paint their own portrait and stand back and look at it.

We started to suspect that performance played a similar role during the killings themselves, making it possible for Anwar and his friends to absent themselves from the scene of their crimes, while they were committing them. Thus, performing dramatizations of the killings for our cameras became a re-living of a mode of performance they had experienced in 1965, when they were killing. This obviously gave the experience of performing for our cameras a deeper resonance for Anwar and his friends than we had anticipated.

And so, in *THE ACT OF KILLING*, we worked with Anwar and his friends to create such scenes for the insights they would offer, but also for the tensions and debates that arose during the process – including Anwar's own devastating emotional unraveling. This created a safe space, in which all sorts of things could happen that would probably elude a more conventional documentary method. The protagonists could safely explore their deepest memories and feelings (as well as their blackest humor). I could safely challenge them about what they did, without fear of being arrested or beaten up. And they could challenge each other in ways that were otherwise unthinkable, given Sumatra's political landscape.

Anwar and his friends could direct their fellow gangsters to play victims, and even play the victims themselves, because the wounds are only make-up, the blood only red paint, applied only for a movie. Feelings far deeper than those that would come up in an interview would surface unexpectedly. One reason the emotional impact was so profound came from the fact that this production method required a lot of time – the filmmaking process came to define a significant period in the participants' lives. This meant that they went on a deeper journey into their memories and feelings than they would in a film consisting largely of testimony and simple demonstration.

Different scenes used different methods, but in all of them it was crucial that Anwar and his friends felt a sense of fundamental ownership over the fiction material. The crux of the method is to give performers the maximum amount of freedom to determine as many variables as possible in the production (storyline, casting, costumes, mise-en-scene, improvisation on set).

Whenever possible, I let them direct each other, and used my cameras to document their process of creation. My role was primarily that of provocateur, challenging them to remember the events they were performing more deeply, encouraging them to intervene and direct each other when they felt

a performance was superficial, and asking questions between takes – both about what actually happened, but also about how they felt at the time, and how they felt as they re-enacted it.

We shot in long takes, so that situations could evolve organically, and with minimal intervention from ourselves. I felt the most significant event unfolding in front of the cameras was the act of transformation itself, particularly because this transformation was usually plagued by conflict, misgivings, and other imperfections that seemed to reveal more about the nature of power, violence, and fantasy than more conventional documentary or investigative methods. For this same reason, we also filmed the pre-production of fiction scenes, including castings, script meetings, and costume fittings. Make-up sessions too were important spaces of reflection and transformation, moments where the characters slip down the rabbit hole of self-invention.

In addition, because we never knew when the characters would refuse to take the process further, or when we might get in trouble with the military, we filmed each scene as though it might be the last, and also everything leading up to them (not only for the reasons above), because often we didn't know if the dramatization itself would actually happen. We also felt that the stories we were hearing – stories of crimes against humanity never before recorded – were of world historical importance.

After almost every dramatization, we would screen the rushes back to them, and record their responses. We wanted to make sure they knew how they appeared on film, and to use the screening to trigger further reflection. Sometimes, screenings provoked feelings of remorse (as when Anwar watches himself play the victim during a film noir scene) but, at other times, as when we screened the re-enactment of the Kampung Kolam massacre to the entire cast, the images were met with terrifying peals of laughter.

Most interestingly, Anwar and his friends discussed, often insightfully, how other people will view the film, both in Indonesia and internationally. For example, Anwar sometimes commented on how survivors might curse him, but that “luckily” the victims haven't the power to do anything in today's Indonesia.

The gangster scenes were wholly improvised. The scenarios came from the stories Anwar and his friends had told each other during earlier interviews, and during visits to the office where they killed people. The set was modeled on this interior. For maximum flexibility, our cinematographer lit the space so that Anwar and his friends could move about freely, and we filmed them with two cameras so that they could fluidly move from directing each other to improvised re-enactments to quiet, often riveting reflection after the improvisation was finished.

The large-scale re-enactment of the Kampung Kolam massacre was made using a similar improvisational process, with Anwar and his friends directing the extras. What we didn't expect was a scene of such violence and realism; so much so that it proved genuinely frightening to the participants, all of whom were Anwar's friends from Pancasila Youth, or their wives and children. After the scene, we filmed participants talking amongst themselves about how the location of our re-enactment was just a few hundred meters from one of North Sumatra's countless mass graves. The woman we see fainting after the scene felt she had been possessed by a victim's ghost. The paramilitary members (including Anwar) thought so, too. The violence of the re-enactment conjured the spectres of a deeper violence, the terrifying history of which everybody in Indonesia is somehow aware, and upon which the perpetrators have built their rarefied bubble of air conditioned shopping malls, gated communities, and “very, very limited” crystal figurines.

The process by which we made the musical scenes (the waterfall, the giant concrete goldfish) was

slightly different again. But here too Anwar was very much in the driver's seat.

In the end, we worked very carefully with the giant goldfish, presenting motifs from a half-forgotten dream. Anwar's beautiful nightmare? An allegory for his storytelling confection? For his blindness? For the willful blindness by which almost all history is written, and by which, consequently, we inevitably come to know (and fail to know) ourselves? The fish changes throughout the film, but it is always a world of "eye candy", emptiness and ghosts. If it could be explained adequately in words, we would not need it in the film.

The Televisi Republik Indonesia "Special Dialogue" came into being when the show's producers realized that feared and respected paramilitary leaders making a film about the genocide was a big story (they came to know about our work because we were using the TVRI studios.) After their grotesque chat show was broadcast, there was no critical response in North Sumatra whatsoever. This is not to say that the show will not be shocking to Indonesians. For reasons discussed in my director's statement, North Sumatrans are more accustomed than Jakartans, for example, to the boasting of perpetrators (who in Sumatra were recruited from the ranks of gangsters – and the basis of gangsters' power, after all, lies in being feared).

Anwar and his friends knew that their fiction scenes were only being made for our documentary, and this will be clear to the audience, too. But at the same time, if these scenes were to offer genuine insights, it was vital that the filmmaking project was one in which they were deeply invested, and one over which they felt ownership.

Historical Context

THE 1965 – 1966 MASSACRES IN INDONESIA

Edited from observations on the massacres, their aftermath and implications, by Historian John Roosa. Additional opening and closing notes by Joshua Oppenheimer.

In 1965, the Indonesian government was overthrown by the military. Sukarno, Indonesia's first president, founder of the non-aligned movement, and leader of the national revolution against Dutch colonialism, was deposed and replaced by right-wing General Suharto. The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which had been a core constituency in the struggle against Dutch colonialism, and which had firmly supported President Sukarno (who was not a communist), was immediately banned.

On the eve of the coup, the PKI was the largest communist party in the world, outside of a communist country. It was officially committed to winning power through elections, and its affiliates included all of Indonesia's trade unions and cooperatives for landless farmers. Its major campaign issues included land reform, as well as nationalizing foreign-owned mining, oil, and plantation companies. In this, they sought to mobilize Indonesia's vast natural resources for the benefit of the Indonesian people, who, in the aftermath of three hundred years of colonial exploitation, were, on the whole, extremely poor.

After the 1965 military coup, anybody opposed to the new military dictatorship could be accused of being a communist. This included union members, landless farmers, intellectuals, and the ethnic Chinese, as well as anybody who struggled for a redistribution of wealth in the aftermath of colonialism. In less than a year, and with the direct aid of western governments, over one million of these "communists" were murdered. In America, the massacre was regarded as a major "victory over communism," and generally celebrated as good news. Time Magazine reported "the West's

best news for years in Asia," while The New York Times ran the headline, "A Gleam of Light in Asia," and praised Washington for keeping its hand in the killings well hidden.

(The scapegoating of the ethnic Chinese, who had come to Indonesia in the 18th and 19th centuries, was done at the incitement of the US intelligence services, which sought to drive a wedge between the new Indonesian regime and the People's Republic of China. The slaughter of village-level members of the PKI and its affiliate unions and cooperatives was also encouraged by the US, who was worried that without a "scorched earth" approach, the new Indonesian regime might eventually accommodate the PKI base.)

In many regions of Indonesia, the army recruited civilians to carry out the killings. They were organized into paramilitary groups, given basic training (and significant military back up). In the province of North Sumatra and elsewhere, the paramilitaries were recruited largely from the ranks of gangsters, or "preman." Ever since the massacres, the Indonesian government has celebrated the "extermination of the communists" as a patriotic struggle, and celebrated the paramilitaries and gangsters as its heroes, rewarding them with power and privilege. These men and their protégés have occupied key positions of power – and persecuted their opponents – ever since. The pretext for the 1965-66 genocide was the assassination of six army generals on the night of 1 October, 1965.

1.10.1965: The Thirtieth of September Movement (Gerakan 30 September, or G30S), made up of disaffected junior Indonesian Armed Forces Officers, assassinated six Indonesian Army Generals in an abortive coup and dumped their bodies down a well south of the city. At the same time, the Movement's troops took over the national radio station and announced that they intended to protect President Sukarno from a cabal of right-wing army generals plotting a seizure of power. The Movement was defeated before most Indonesians knew it existed. The senior surviving army commander, Major General Suharto, launched a quick counter-attack and drove the Movement's troops from Jakarta within one day.

Suharto accused the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) of masterminding the Movement and then orchestrated an extermination of persons affiliated with the party. Suharto's military rounded up over a million and a half people, accusing all of them of being involved in the Movement. In one of the worst bloodbaths of the 20th century, hundreds of thousands of individuals were massacred by the army and its affiliated militias, largely in Central Java, East Java, Bali, and North Sumatra from late 1965 to mid-1966. In a climate of national emergency, Suharto gradually usurped President Sukarno's authority and established himself as the de facto president (with the power to dismiss and appoint ministers) by March 1966.

The massacres were out of all proportion to their ostensible cause. The Movement was a small-scale conspiratorial action organized by a handful of people. In total, it killed twelve people. Suharto exaggerated its magnitude until it assumed the shape of an ongoing, nation-wide conspiracy to commit mass murder. All the millions of people associated with the PKI, even illiterate peasants in remote villages, were presented as murderers collectively responsible for the Movement.

Indonesian government and military officials, to the very end of the Suharto regime in 1998, invoked the specter of the PKI in response to any disturbance or sign of dissent. The key phrase in the regime's argument was "the latent danger of communism." The unfinished eradication of the PKI was, in a very real sense, the *raison d'être* of the Suharto regime. The original legal act under which the regime ruled Indonesia for over thirty years was Sukarno's presidential order of 3rd

October 1965, authorizing Suharto to “restore order.” That was an emergency order. But for Suharto, the emergency never ended.

In constructing a legitimating ideology for his dictatorship, Suharto presented himself as the savior of the nation for having defeated the Movement. His regime incessantly drilled the event into the minds of the populace by every method of state propaganda: textbooks, monuments, street names, films, museums, commemorative rituals and national holidays. The Suharto regime justified its existence by placing the Movement at the centre of its historical narrative and depicting the PKI as ineffably evil. Under Suharto, anti-communism became the state religion, complete with sacred sites, rituals, and dates.

It is remarkable that the anti-PKI violence, as such a large-scale event, has been so badly misunderstood. No doubt, the fact that both military personnel and civilians committed the killings has blurred the issue of responsibility. Nonetheless, from what little is already known, it is clear that the military bears the largest share of responsibility and that the killings represented bureaucratic, planned violence more than popular, spontaneous violence. The Suharto clique of officers, by inventing false stories about the Movement and strictly controlling the media, created a sense among civilians that the PKI was on the warpath. If there had not been this deliberate provocation from the military, the populace would not have believed the

PKI was a mortal threat since the party was passive in the aftermath of the Movement. (The military worked hard to whip up popular anger against the PKI from early October 1965 onwards; and the US Government actively encouraged the Indonesian military to pursue rank and file communists). It prodded civilian militias into acting, gave them assurances of impunity, and arranged logistical support.

Contrary to common belief, frenzied violence by villagers was virtually unheard of. Suharto’s army usually opted for mysterious disappearances rather than exemplary public executions. The army and its militias tended to commit its large-scale massacres in secret: they took captives out of prison at night, trucked them to remote locations, executed them, and then buried the corpses in unmarked mass graves or threw them into rivers.

The tragedy of modern Indonesian history lies not just in the army-organized mass killings of 1965-66 but also in the rise to power of the killers, of persons who viewed massacres and psychological warfare operations as legitimate and normal modes of governance. A regime that legitimated itself by pointing to a mass grave at the site of the well, vowing “never again,” left countless mass graves from one end of the country to the other, from Aceh on the western edge to Papua on the eastern edge. The occupation of East Timor from 1975 to 1999 similarly left tens, if not hundreds, of thousands dead, many anonymously buried. Each mass grave in the archipelago marks an arbitrary, unavowed, secretive exercise of state power.

The obsession with a relatively minor event (the Movement) and the erasure of a world- historical event (the mass killings of 1965-66) has blocked empathy for the victims, such as the relatives of those men and women who disappeared. While a monument stands next to the well in which the Movement’s troops dumped the bodies of the six army generals on October 1, 1965, there is no monument to be found at the mass graves that hold the hundreds of thousands of persons killed in the name of suppressing the Movement.

Focus on who killed the army generals on 30th September, 1965 has functioned as a fetish, displacing all attention from the murder of over one million alleged communists in the months that followed. Suharto's regime produced endless propaganda about the brutal communists behind the

killing of the generals, and still today most discussion of the genocide has been displaced by this focus. And this is true even in most English-language sources. To me, participating in the debate around "who killed the generals" feels grotesque, which is why it does not feature in THE ACT OF KILLING. The Rwandan genocide was triggered when Rwandan president Juvénal Habyarimana (a Hutu) died after his airplane was shot down on its approach to Kigali. To focus on who shot down the plane (was it Tutsi extremists? was it Hutu extremists acting as provocateurs?) rather than the murder of 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates over the next 100 days would be unconscionable. Similarly, who started the Reichstag fire is irrelevant to an understanding of the Holocaust. Whether or not the disgruntled army officers behind the killing of the six generals had the support of the head of the PKI is much more than beside the point: it plays the pernicious role of deflecting attention from a mass murder of world-historical importance. Imagine if, in Rwanda, the fundamental question about what happened in 1994 was "who shot down the president's plane?" This would only be thinkable if the killers remained in power.

FILMMAKER BIOS

Joshua Oppenheimer, Director

Born 1974, Texas, USA. Joshua Oppenheimer has worked for over a decade with militias, death squads and their victims to explore the relationship between political violence and the public imagination. Educated at Harvard and Central St Martins, London, his award-winning films include THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES (2003, co-directed with Christine Cynn), THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE (1998, Gold Hugo, Chicago Film Festival), THESE PLACES WE'VE LEARNED TO CALL HOME (1996, Gold Spire, San Francisco Film Festival) and numerous shorts. Oppenheimer is Senior Researcher on the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council's Genocide and Genre project and has published widely on these themes.

Filmography (Forthcoming)

- CO-EXISTENCE (working title, documentary; a family of survivors confronts the men who murdered their son, 2013).

Filmography (as Director)

- SHOW OF FORCE (short, 2007)
- THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES (documentary, co-directed with Christine Cynn, 2003)
- LAND OF ENCHANTMENT (short, co-directed with Christine Cynn, 2001)
- THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE (50 mins, 1997; Gold Hugo, Chicago Film Festival, 1998; Telluride Film Festival, 1997; Best Experimental Film, New England, 1998)
- THESE PLACES WE'VE LEARNED TO CALL HOME (short, 1997; Gold Spire, San Francisco Film Festival, 1997)

Signe Byrge Sørensen, Producer

Signe Byrge Sørensen has been a producer for 14 years. She began in SPOR Media in 1998, moved to Final Cut Productions ApS in 2004 and founded Final Cut for Real ApS in 2009. She has produced documentaries in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Thailand, Argentina, Denmark and Sweden. She was the Danish co-producer for STEPS FOR THE FUTURE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. She holds an MA in International Development Studies and Communication Studies from Roskilde University, Denmark, and is a graduate of both EURODOC (2003) and EAVE (2010). She has lectured at Roskilde University, the University of Århus, the Danish Film School, the School of Oriental and African Studies in London and on the documentary training courses ESODOC and ExORIENTE.

Amongst the films that Signe has produced are: THE KID AND THE CLOWN (dir. Ida Grøn, 2011), FOOTBALL IS GOD (dir. Ole Bendtzen, 2010) and LETTERS FROM DENMARK (dir. 10 Danish directors, 2006). She has also produced and co-directed (with Janus Billeskov Jansen) VOICES OF THE WORLD (2005) and THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING MLABRI (2007). She was the post producer on Jan Troell's EVERLASTING MOMENTS (2008), which won six national awards and was nominated for a Golden Globe.

Anonymous, Co-Director and many others

Due to the nature of this film - its subject matter, production methods and the context in which it has been made - it has unfortunately been necessary to credit numerous Indonesian partners and

collaborators, working across all aspects of the film (from Co-Direction and Cinematography to Sound Recording, Production Management, Make Up, Music, Choreography

and Technical Support) as Anonymous. Behind this honourable and historically resonant naming stand many remarkable people, who have worked tirelessly to bring these profoundly disturbing stories to wider attention. Their courage has made this film possible. Without them, it could not have been more than an idea, a wish. We share with them a deep hope that our collective labour might contribute in some way to a shift in the forces currently shaping and governing Indonesia, and towards a justice for both individuals and communities. We thank them for their trust in us, and the extraordinary commitment they have brought to this project.

Christine Cynn, Co-Director

Christine Cynn has been directing documentary and experimental films for the past 14 years. For the last decade, she has been developing new ways to document the human imagination. Educated at Harvard, and the recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship to Uganda, she co-directed THE GLOBALIZATION TAPES (2003) with Joshua Oppenheimer. She has written screenplays for FilmFour and was a founding member of the Vision Machine Film Project in London. She was a researcher on the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council's Genocide and Genre project. Cynn is currently developing a project, Science Future, combining documentary with fiction, about how scientists imagine the future.

Errol Morris, Executive Producer

Errol Morris became executive producer of THE ACT OF KILLING in early 2010, after Joshua Oppenheimer screened two hours of roughly edited scenes for him at his office in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Fascinated, Errol compared the material to one of his favorite films of all time, Kazuo Hara's THE EMPEROR'S NAKED ARMY MARCHES ON. Ever since, Errol has been a passionate ambassador and champion of both the movie and its innovations in filmmaking method and language.

Filmmaker and author Errol Morris' films include TABLOID (2010), STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (2008), THE FOG OF WAR (2003) MR. DEATH: THE RISE AND FALL OF FRED A. LEUCHTER, JR. (1999), FAST, CHEAP AND OUT OF CONTROL (1997), A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME (1992), THE THIN BLUE LINE (1988), VERNON, FLORIDA (1981), and GATES OF HEAVEN (1978). He has won many awards, including an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, an Emmy, the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance Film Festival, the Silver Bear at Berlin International Film Festival, the Golden Horse at the Taiwan International Film Festival and the Edgar from the Mystery Writers of America. His documentaries have repeatedly appeared on many 'ten best' lists and he has been the subject of a full retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1999.

Morris has directed over 1000 television commercials, short films for the 2002 and 2007 Academy Awards and for charitable and political organizations such as Stand Up to Cancer and Moveon.org. In 2000-2001, Morris directed two seasons of the television series First Person. He has received five fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Guggenheim Fellowship and a MacArthur Fellowship. In 2007, he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

His new book "Wilderness of Error: The Trial of Jeffrey MacDonald" (2012) examines the nature of evidence and proof in the notorious MacDonald murders. His previous book, "Believing is Seeing: Observations on the Mysteries of Photography," was a New York Times bestseller and a New York Times notable book of 2011.

Werner Herzog, Executive Producer

In May 2012, our UK executive producer, André Singer, introduced a fine cut of THE ACT OF KILLING to Werner Herzog. Astonished by the film, he called it "unprecedented in the history of cinema." Since then, he has been a tireless friend and supporter of the film, and has offered invaluable creative feedback during the final stages of editing.

Werner Herzog was born in Munich on September 5, 1942. He grew up in a remote mountain village in Bavaria and studied History and German Literature in Munich and Pittsburgh.

He made his first film in 1961 at the age of 19. Since then he has produced, written, and directed more than sixty feature- and documentary films, such as EVEN DWARFS STARTED SMALL (1970), AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD (1972), STROSZEK (1977), NOSFERATU (1978), FITZCARRALDO (1982), LESSONS OF DARKNESS (1992), LITTLE DIETER NEEDS TO FLY (1997), MY BEST FIEND (1999), INVINCIBLE (2000), GRIZZLY MAN (2005), ENCOUNTERS AT THE END OF THE WORLD (2007), THE BAD LIEUTENANT (2009), CAVE OF FORGOTTEN DREAMS (2011), and INTO THE ABYSS (2012).

Werner Herzog has published more than a dozen books of prose, and directed as many operas. Werner Herzog lives in Munich and Los Angeles.

André Singer, Executive Producer

André Singer was awarded his doctorate from Oxford University as an anthropologist specializing in Iran and Afghanistan. He moved into film and television in the 1970s to work on anthropological films for Granada Television. He has worked in documentary film since then, as a researcher, producer, director, executive producer and commissioning editor. He was Series Editor of Disappearing World, then headed the BBC Documentary Department's Independent Unit where he set up the Fine Cut series (later to become Storyville) and worked with Jean Rouch, Werner Herzog, D.A. Pennebaker and Fred Wiseman.

As an independent producer, he established Café Productions and later West Park Pictures (now a DCD Media owned company). André is currently serving on the TV Committee of BAFTA, he is a Documentary Campus board member, a Vice President of the Royal Anthropological Institute and Chair of their Film Committee. He has been responsible for several hundred hours of factual programs for the international TV market and producer or executive producer of fourteen films with Werner Herzog since Lessons of Darkness in 1992.

Anne Köhncke, Producer

Anne Köhncke holds an MA in Film and Media. She has specialized in the financing of documentaries in the Nordic countries. She joined Final Cut for Real in 2009, after holding a position as Commissioning Editor for DR2. Before that she was a Sales Executive at TV2 World, and has worked for EDN and Filmkontakt Nord. Anne attended the EAVE Producer Workshop in 2011. Anne has produced FOOTBALL IS GOD (dir. Ole Bendtzen, 2010), THE KID AND THE CLOWN (dir. Ida Grøn, 2011) and RETURNED (dir. Marianne Hougen- Moraga, 2011).

She is currently developing the series Cathedrals of Culture together with Neue Road Movies in Berlin and 10 awardwinning directors, including Wim Wenders, Michael Glawogger, Victor Kosakowski and Michael Madsen.

Joram ten Brink, Producer & Executive Producer

Joram ten Brink works as a writer, director and producer of documentary and experimental films in the UK and Holland. His films have been broadcast and theatrically released in the UK, USA, Holland, Israel, France, Germany and Spain. His work has been screened at international film festivals and museums, including the Berlin and Rotterdam film festivals and at MOMA in New York. His recent publications include "Building Bridges: the Cinema of Jean Rouch" (2007, Wallflower Press) and "Killer Images: Documentary Film, Memory and the Performance of Violence" (2012, Columbia University Press). Joram ten Brink is a Professor of Film at the University of Westminster in London and heads its practice-based PhD programme in the moving image.

Torstein Grude, Co-Producer

Co-producer Torstein Grude is an award winning film director, cinematographer and producer. He is founder and partner in Piraya Film and Hinterland Nova and Kudos Family Distribution. His recent productions include the Emmy nominated BELARUSIAN WALTZ (dir. Andrzej Fidyk, 2007), the Joris Ivens finalist YODOK STORIES (dir. Andrzej Fidyk, 2009) and the Chicago Film Fest winner ON A TIGHTROPE (Dir. Petr Lom, 2007). He has also recently produced GULABI GANG (dir. Nistha Jain, 2012), co-produced by Final Cut for Real, which won the Grimstad Film Festival Documentary award in 2012.

Carlos Arango de Montis, Cinematographer

Carlos Arango de Montis has shot some of the most distinctive documentaries and features to come out of Latin America in recent years, including Diego Luna's portrait of the legendary Mexican boxer, J.C. CHAVEZ (2007, Tribeca Film Festival) and Maria Roque's PAPA IVAN (2004, Best Documentary, Havana Film Festival). His fiction films include Newton Aduaka's EZRA (2007, Sundance, Cannes, FESPACO Grand Prix) and RAGE (2001, FESPACO Best First Film), as well as VIOLET OF A THOUSAND COLORS (Colombian Film Award, 2005) and STORIES OF DISENCHANTMENT (2005).

Lars Skree, Cinematographer

Studying originally with the famous Danish photographer Morten Bo, Lars Skree founded the photo agency Modlys in 1988 and has produced work internationally, from Iraq to Afghanistan, and exhibitions on the Berlin Wall, the end of Czechoslovakia, the Intifada and the Kurdish PKK. He graduated from the Danish National Film School in 1997. His award-winning cinematography includes ARMADILLO (nominated for four EMMYs including one for cinematography), TICKET TO PARADISE, LOVE ON DELIVERY, FREEWAY and SVENKAS. He has worked on numerous documentaries globally and a number of Danish features, as well as commercials.

Niels Pagh Andersen, Editor

Niels Pagh Andersen started as an assistant to two of the most influential editors in Danish cinema, Christian Hartkopp and Janus Billeskov Jansen. A freelance editor since 1979, he has edited more than 200 titles, including features, documentaries, short and educational films, television programmes and commercials, among them THE THREE ROOMS OF MELANCHOLIA (dir. Pirjo Honkosalo, Venice Film Festival, 2004, CPH-DOX First Prize (shared), Prix Italia) and EVERLASTING MOMENTS (dir. Jan Troell, Golden Globe nominated, Swedish entry for Academy Awards 2008).

He has worked in Sweden, Norway and Finland, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Britain, USA, Brazil, Zimbabwe and the Fiji Islands. He is also a regular visiting lecturer. In 2005, he received the Roos Award from the Danish Film Institute.

Janus Billeskov Jansen, Editor

Since 1970, Janus Billeskov Jansen has edited a great many internationally acclaimed feature films and documentaries, and directed numerous Danish documentaries. He has worked with many of the most influential Danish directors of the past 30 years. Most significant has been the lifelong creative relationship with the Academy Award-winning director Bille August. Collaborations include LES MISERABLES (1998), THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS (1993), THE BEST INTENTIONS (1992, Palme d'Or, Cannes) and PELLE THE CONQUEROR (1988, Palme d'Or, Cannes; Academy Award for Best Foreign Film; Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Film).

Recent work includes THE HUNT, (2012, Dir. Thomas Vinterberg), THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO (2009, dir. Niels Arden Oplev) and BURMA VJ: REPORTING FROM A CLOSED COUNTRY (2008, Dir. Anders Østergaard; awarded a.o. the World Cinema Editing Award at Sundance 2009, Joris Ivens Award 2008, Grierson Award 2008, nominated for Academy Award). He teaches editing and narrative development at The National Film School of Denmark. He won The Danish Film Academy Award in 1984, 1988 and 1995 and a Bodil Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005.

Charlotte Munch Bengtsen, Editor

Originally trained as a dancer and choreographer, Charlotte Munch Bengsten studied film editing at the UK's National Film and Television School. She has edited a number of documentaries, including AMERICAN LOSERS (dir. Ada Bligaard Søby, 2006), TANKOGRAD (dir. Boris Bertram, 2011), COMPLAINTS CHOIR (dir. Ada Bligaard Søby, 2009), and, most recently, THE BASTARD SINGS THE SWEETEST SONG (dir. Christy Garland, 2012).

Ariadna Fatjó-Vilas Mestre, Editor

Based in London, and a graduate of the UK's National Film and Television School, Ariadna Fatjó-Vilas Mestre has edited many fiction titles, documentaries, animations and commercials, including award-winning titles by Ana Viana, Eva Weber, Nicola Mills, Aine O'Brien and Alan Grossman. She has produced work for a number of major broadcasters, including the BBC, Channel 4, PBS, RTE and MTV.

Mariko Montpetit, Editor

Working across fiction and documentary, performance and the arts, Mariko Montpetit's feature titles include THE SWEENEY, SEX, NEEDLES AND ROUBLES, VIRTUAL BORDERS and A JOURNEY TO AFRICA. Her work in performance includes collaborations with Cirque du Soleil, Laila Diallo and many productions with Simon McBurney and Complicite.

Final Cut for Real ApS, Denmark

Final Cut for Real is dedicated to high-end creative documentaries for the international market. Our policy is to be curious, daring and seek out directors with serious artistic ambitions. We do not from the outset set any limits on subjects or locations. We look for interesting stories, great characters and in-depth social analysis – and we also try to give the films a twist of humor.

Our method is for our producers to work closely with “their” directors from the first idea to the final film, and keep on exchanging ideas and feedback. Together we cover a wide range of development and production expertise – and work with younger talent as well as established filmmakers to create a productive mixture of experience and new approaches to documentary filmmaking.

Among recent productions are FOOTBALL IS GOD by Ole Bendtzen (2010), THE KID AND THE CLOWN by Ida Gron (2011) and RETURNED BY MARIANNE HOUGEN-MORAGA (2011). Among recent co-productions are GULABI GANG by Nistha Jain with Piraya Film in Norway and CANNED DREAMS by Katja Gauriloff with Oktober Oy in Finland.

Our films are often supported by the Danish Film Institute, Danish and Nordic ministries and NGOs. We usually work with the Nordic public service channels (DR, TV2 Denmark, SVT, YLE, NRK, TV2 Norway) and regularly with European and international channels such as VPRO (the Netherlands), ZDF/Arte (France/Germany), More4 (UK), SBS (Australia), IBA (Israel), and sometimes NHK (Japan), VRT (Belgium), Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya. Our films have won Danish, Nordic and international awards and have been screened at numerous festivals around the world.

Piraya Film AS, Norway

Piraya Film is an independent production company based in Stavanger, Norway. The company was founded in 1999 by filmmakers Torstein Grude and Trond Kvist with the aim of making creative high-end documentaries for release in the market worldwide. The company has since made 20 productions, which have received broad recognition and many nominations and awards. e.g. 2009 Emmy nomination, Joris Ivens finalist, Winner Jerusalem Film Festival, Winner Golden Chair Norwegian Film Festival, Winner Chicago Intl Film Festival. Among the latest works are documentaries on Human Rights issues in North Korea, Georgia, Belarus and China, e.g. YODOK STORIES, RUSSIAN LESSONS, ON A TIGHTROPE and BELARUSIAN WALTZ. Piraya Film is also regularly involved in international co-productions.

Novaya Zemlya Ltd., United Kingdom

Novaya Zemlya Ltd is an independent production company established in 2008 for the production of Joshua Oppenheimer and Christine Cynn's filmic exploration of the 1965-66 genocide.

Spring Films Ltd., United Kingdom

Spring Films is a London based production company specialising in international co-productions and high-end documentaries for television, cinema, DVD, IMAX and multi-media platforms.

Spring Films has expanded its creative team to include some of the most successful directors, producers, executive producers and commissioning editors in UK television. Between them they have created hundreds of award-winning films, working with figures such as Werner Herzog, Carol Morley, Bettany Hughes, Stephen Fry, Brian Blessed, Michael Palin and Hugh Laurie.

Led by André Singer, the Spring Films board consists of Sir Tom Shebbeare, Richard Creasey, Richard Melman, Lynette Singer, Bob Vallone and John Paul Davidson. They have produced hundreds of hours of award-winning programming for theatrical release and international broadcasters such as the BBC, Channel 4, ITV, SKY, Channel 5, RTE, Canal +, France 1&2, ARTE, ZDF, SVT, YLE, NRK, VRT, RAI, ABC, SBS, Discovery, National Geographic, PBS, History Canada, the Reader's Digest Association, ITVS, NHK & CCTV.

CREDITS

Director: Joshua Oppenheimer

Co-directors: Christine Cynn, Anonymous

Cinematographers: Carlos Mariano Arango de Montis, Lars Skree

Editors: Niels Pagh Andersen, Janus Billeskov Jansen, Mariko Montpetit, Charlotte Munch Bengtsen, Ariadna Fatjó-Vilas Mestre.

Sound: Gunn Tove Grønsberg, Henrik Gugge Garnov

Composer: Elin Øyen Vister

Produced by: Signe Byrge Sørensen

Producers: Joram ten Brink, Anne Köhncke, Michael Uwemedimo, Joshua Oppenheimer, Christine Cynn, Anonymous.

Executive Producers: Errol Morris, Werner Herzog, André Singer, Joram ten Brink, Torstein Grude, Bjarte Mørner Tveit

Production Company: Final Cut for Real, DK

Co-Producers:

Torstein Grude and Bjarte Mørner Tveit, Piraya Film, NO
Joshua Oppenheimer and Christine Cynn, Novaya Zemlya, UK
in association with André Singer, Spring Films Ltd, UK.

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DR K, Flemming Hedegaard Larsen
NRK, Tore Tomter
YLE, Iikka Vehkalahti and Erkki Astala
SVT, Axel Arnö
VPRO, Nathalie Windhorst
Against Gravity, Artur Liebhart

Producer Contact:

Final Cut for Real ApS Forbindelsesvej 7 - DK 2100 Copenhagen Ø -Denmark T: +45 35 43 60 43 /
www.final-cut.dk Signe Byrge Sørensen: M: +45 41 18 48 90 / byrge@final-cut.dk Anne Köhncke:
M: +45 28 78 61 97 / anne@final-cut.dk