



PRESS KIT

Mugabe and the White African

**WINNER: BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY
BRITISH INDEPENDENT FILM AWARDS 2009**

Arturi Films Ltd.
in association with Explore Films,
Molinare Productions and The Film Agency for Wales

Directed by Lucy Bailey and Andrew Thompson
Produced by David Pearson and Elizabeth Morgan Hemlock

www.mugabeandthewhiteafrican.com

Mugabe and the White African

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Synopsis:

Mugabe and the White African

"I'm still the Hitler of the times. This Hitler has only one objective; justice for his people, sovereignty for his people. If that is Hitler, right... then let me be a Hitler ten fold."

Robert Mugabe

Michael Campbell is one of the few hundred white farmers left in Zimbabwe since President Robert Mugabe began his violent 'Land Reform' program in 2000. Since then the country has descended into chaos.

In 2008 Mike took the unprecedented step of challenging President Robert Mugabe in an International Court; accusing Robert Mugabe and his government of racial discrimination and violations of basic human rights. What follows is an intimate, moving and often terrifying account of one man and his family's extraordinary courage in the face of overwhelming injustice and brutality.

Set against the tumultuous 2008 Presidential elections *Mugabe and the White African* follows Mike and son-in-law Ben Freeth's harrowing attempt to save their farm and with it the homes and livelihoods of 500 black workers and their families. Filmed over 12 months, a gripping courtroom drama unfolds whilst all the time Mike, his family and the farm workers face the all too real threats of Mugabe's wrath on the farm. After months of frightening threats and a horrific attack the Court's judges finally rule unanimously in Mike's and Ben's favour. They return to the farm. But will Mugabe and his henchmen abide the Courts decision?

Much of this film was shot covertly.

To have been caught filming would have meant imprisonment.

Film Description:

Mugabe and the White African

Michael Campbell is one of the few hundred white farmers still left in Zimbabwe since President Robert Mugabe began enforcing his controversial land reform program. Initially, a policy meant to reclaim white-owned land and redistribute it to poor black Zimbabweans, it has instead been used to 'gift' farms to his loyal supporters. It has left the country in chaos. Since 2000, formerly thriving farms that employed thousands, now sit derelict whilst poverty and hunger thrive amongst the majority of the country's citizens.

Mike, like hundreds of farmers before him, have suffered years of multiple land invasions and violence at his farm, but this genial 75 year old, with a dry sense of humour, has refused to back down. In 2008, Mike took the unprecedented step of challenging President Robert Mugabe and his 'Land Reform' program in an International Court. He accuses Robert Mugabe's regime of illegal racial discrimination and violations of basic human rights.

Set against the tumultuous 2008 presidential elections, Mugabe and the White African, follows Mike and son-in-law Ben Freeth's harrowing attempt to save their farm and the lives and livelihoods of the 500 black workers that live and work on the farm. It is an unprecedented case, on whose outcome rests not only Mike and the families' future, but also the future of millions of ordinary Zimbabweans who continue to suffer at the hands of one of the world's most infamous tyrants. On the brink of losing everything, Mike and his family (wife Angela, daughter Laura who runs her own linen business, and her husband Ben Freeth) stand united by their courage, their faith and their hope.

In an intimate and often terrifying film, this is the only documentary feature film to have come out of Zimbabwe in recent years, where a total press ban existed.

Much of the footage was shot covertly. To have been caught filming would have lead to imprisonment.

Mugabe and the White African is perhaps the outside world's only real glimpse of what it is like to live inside Mugabe's Zimbabwe.

Credits:

Mugabe and the White African

Arturi Films Limited
in Association with Explore Films
Molinare Productions and The Film Agency for Wales

Credit List

Directors:	Andrew Thompson Lucy Bailey
Producers:	David Pearson Elizabeth Morgan Hemlock
Executive Producers:	Steve Milne Pauline Burt
Film Editor:	Tim Lovell
Director of Photography:	Andrew Thompson
Sound Recordists:	Sebastian Dunn James Snowden
Composer:	Jonny Pilcher
Film Archive Researcher:	Daphne Mather
Re-Recording Mixer:	George Foulgham
DI Colourist:	Tim Waller
On Line Editor:	Justin Eely
Assistant re-Recording Mixer:	James Cullen
Senior DI Technician:	Andy Richards
Dialogue Editor:	Claire Ellis
Sound Effects Editor:	Lisa-Marie McStay
Post Production Manager:	Alan Pritt
Post Productions:	Molinare , London
For Molinare – Managing Director:	Mark Foligno
Chief Financial Officer:	Deepak Sikka
DI Film Consultant:	Justin Lanchbury
For Film Agency for Wales – Head of Talent	Keith Potter
Production Executive:	Kate Crowther
Talent Development Executive:	Adam Partridge
PR Manager:	Lisa Jenkins
Legal Services:	Mary Brehony, Brehon & Co.
For Channel Four - Head of Documentaries:	Hamish Mykura
Editor for More 4:	Tabitha Jackson
Deputy Comm. Editor, More 4:	Sandra Whipham
Archive:	AP Archive, BBC Motion Gallery CBS, Journeyman Pictures
Production Insurance:	Media Insurance Brokers
Production Bookkeeper:	John Simon

Publicity:	Sophie Toumazis, TPR-Media
Stills Photography:	Robin Hammond
Titles:	James Fletcher
Production and Marketing Assistant:	Ron Brunwin

With thanks:

Mike Campbell, Ben Freeth and their families and friends, the Workers and their families on Mount Carmel Farm, Elize Angula, Jeffrey Jowell, Jeremy Gauntlett, Saima Nambinga, Chris Jarrett, Jamie Whear, Jaselle Williams, Antony and Bridget Bailey, Malcolm and Margaret Thompson, Kenny MacDonald, Rania Yahia

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Arturi Films – Producers’ Profiles:

Mugabe and the White African

David Pearson –Producer

David has over thirty years experience as an award winning director, producer, executive producer & commissioning editor. He has successfully managed hundreds of productions, many of them on controversial subjects for the BBC, ITV, and a few for C4 including: Adopt Me I’m A Teenager in 2005, and including at the BBC: Under the Sun, 10x10, Comic Relief, Signs of The Times, Them and Us, United Celebrity Florists. As a producer and director he was nominated for the Prix Italia (Whose House Is it Anyway), twice nominated for the Grierson Award and BAFTA, and once for the Prix Nicki. He has won an RTS Award, FIPA, the Glenfiddich Award, and been commended at the Prix Europa, etc. Baglady, his film about Maggie a homeless woman for BBC 1- audience eight million- was nominated as the best documentary by BAFTA 1993 . Celebrity Florist for ITV in 2003 got a 23% share. Saddam’s Masks MBC/ PBS 2004 was shot without military oversight and looked for Saddam and his legacy in post-invasion Iraq. David also founded the International Screenwriters’ Festival in the UK for which he is Festival Director. It attracts 500-600 writers, producers and directors from 15 countries each year to celebrate the art, craft and business of screens story-telling.

Elizabeth Morgan Hemlock - Producer

Elizabeth’s career began at Working Title Films (Four Weddings and a Funeral; Bridget Jones’ Diary; Notting Hill) before spending ten years as a leading talent agent in London representing actors and directors; Film Finance Executive at film financing and international sales company, MHFTV where they also had Executive Producer roles on the independent Hollywood movies with budgets of US\$8-20M, they were involved with. She has been a script development executive and development producer on various feature films through her company, Wild Films. As Producer: Journey Man (Best Film Interfilm, Berlin; Best Int. Short film Amiens Int. Festival; NY Expo Barbizon Lighting Award; Runner up TCM Classic Shorts Award 2002; shortlisted Best Film by BAFTA LA for Taos Int. Film Festival). Associate Producer ‘The Mentors’ Si-Fi Series for Flextech. Elizabeth and David run Arturi Films and co-founded and launched the International Screenwriters’ Festival in June 2006, now in its fourth year with Oscar and BAFTA winning talents in the line-up. Elizabeth runs their feature film slate at Arturi Films.

Directors' Profiles:

Mugabe and the White African

Lucy Bailey - Director

Lucy has over ten years experience as a director in television, with the majority of shooting on the African continent, often covering sensitive subjects. Lucy has a background in anthropology and a huge passion for Africa.

Lucy specializes in bringing emotion to the forefront in her films, including Lorenzo's Oil- Miracle or Myth, BBC (04), and Saving Planet Earth- Saving Turtles, BBC (07)

Lucy has recently been working for Comic Relief to make their appeal films for Red Nose Day (07) and Sport Relief campaigns (06, 08) and for this work was nominated for the *One World Media - Popular Features Award 2008*.

Andrew Thompson - Director / Cameraman

Andrew is a BAFTA and RTS nominated cameraman who has over 12 years experience filming all over the world for C4, BBC, National Geographic and Discovery. Whilst most of his time is spent as a DOP, he increasingly has focused on directing. He shoots on all formats from Super 16mm to HD. He has extensive film-making experience in hostile environments and has worked in many parts of Africa. Previous credits include; Sex Traffic C4 (08), Inside The Kingdom BBC (07), Brain Keenan in Lebanon BBC (07), Ross Kemp in Afghanistan SKY (07), Geldolf on Africa (04).

Lucy and Andrew have filmed together on many occasions, and have developed a unique style and way of working. This is their first feature length documentary. In 2008 they formed Explore Films.

Directors' Q & A's:

Mugabe and the White African

Directors Lucy Bailey and Andrew Thompson

Q: Why Mugabe and the White African?

We felt that the white farmers' story was one that was repeatedly overlooked, but really needed telling. The film serves as a window into what is happening in Africa right now. The SADC court case represents a watershed moment in Southern Africa, where Africa really has an opportunity to stand up and be counted. At its core it is a story of good versus evil, of justice, bravery and faith - things all of us can relate to and question from anywhere in the world.

Q: What did you want to achieve with Mugabe and the White African?

We wanted to tell a great emotional story. We wanted to make an engaging and compelling film that would attract the widest possible audience so as to get the message to people about what is really happening inside Zimbabwe.

Q: Is the white farmers' story particularly close to your heart?

It is now! It was always a story that we thought was interesting and had been undersold by the press. The deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe and what Robert Mugabe was doing there made us both furious, so it was something we talked about, but with no obvious 'in' to tell the story it could well have been another of those program 'ideas' that we talked about but which never materialised.

Q: How did you find out about the Campbell case?

We both travel extensively in Africa with work and on holiday. We heard about the case whilst in South Africa and we both looked at each other and thought, " what a wonderful story". When we got home we followed it up with various phone calls and eventually got an email address for Ben.

Q: What happened then?

We contacted Ben only weeks before he and Mike were due to go to Windhoek, Namibia for the first appearance in court. This provided an ideal opportunity to meet with them both in one place at the same time - and without us having to risk life and limb getting into Zimbabwe for the sake of a preliminary recce.

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It was a huge gamble. Not only were we paying for expensive flights, accommodation and a brand new A1 camera, it clashed with other paid work we could otherwise be doing. And whilst we knew the story was strong, we also knew that if Mike and Ben were not strong enough and articulate enough as personalities, the film would be dead in the water.

The plan was to meet with Mike and Ben, see if we liked one another, gauge whether or not they would be effective in carrying the film and to get enough material shot to allow for a pilot tape to be assembled which we could use to show to Arturi Films back home, who we had already approached for advice with the hope that they would come on board as our producers and help to secure funding and broadcast interest.

Q What were some of the biggest challenges?

Filming in Zimbabwe 'illegally' particularly covering such a contentious subject, would almost certainly have led to imprisonment, and we had to take risks but manage those risks as carefully as we could. The logistics of filming illegally meant our forward planning had to be watertight and for each trip. We always wanted to make a film that was well shot and crafted. A film with this level of high production values, filmed in a dangerous country with restrictions on what we could film, can't just be shot from the hip. The team, producers David Pearson and Elizabeth Morgan Hemlock and ourselves, had many discussions about how to best cover the story and deal with the issues. We were also limited in what we could film while we were in Zimbabwe, as we were not supposed to be there! In an ideal world we could have included more Black Zimbabweans in the film, and to show just how much the farm invasions damage them too, but we had to limit filming to those who were comfortable to be included- as for many it was too dangerous for them to be associated with the film. In the end we think we did well to get as much coverage as we did.

With the court case being postponed as often as it was, and with the political situation in Zimbabwe being so fluid throughout 2008, we had to be ready to respond quickly to changing circumstances. Reconciling prior and paid professional commitments with the ever present prospect of needing to jump on the next available flight to Zimbabwe or Namibia or South Africa was tricky. Funding was also a major issue. Money, of course, was - and remains - a concern. We were routinely spending money we didn't yet have available to us. We couldn't expect people to give their time for free on the project so, while we and our producers could heroically defer paying ourselves, it was absolutely essential that everyone else was paid.

Q: So did you instantly recognise the family's potential for carrying the film?

Yes, we did which was a huge relief. We have both been working in documentaries long enough to know when someone is going to be good on camera and Mike and Ben were spot on. The fact that they are also such great company was a wonderful bonus as well. In the aftermath of that initial trip we felt very positive that the 'characters' and 'story' were both strong and compelling and we had also shot enough material to cut together a short 4 minute pilot film.

Q: Where did Arturi Films come in?

As we were about to go and shoot the pilot. We had both known and worked with David Pearson for some time (we had had various 'near misses' involving other programme ideas with him). We had always really admired the 'Under the Sun' strand that he ran at the BBC with its contemporary anthropological documentary films shot around the world. David's business and producing partner in Arturi was Elizabeth Morgan Hemlock, who came with additional film financing and sales experience, which all fed into the vision of what the film could be in terms of its distribution. The fact that Arturi Films were small, independent and flexible suited a production like this perfectly.

At this early stage David was a great help in acting as a sounding board and giving encouragement and advice. Thankfully, they were both enthusiastic about the story and were willing to take on the risk of trying to make this film, alongside us, before financing could be secured. It gave us the confidence to go ahead with the recce and run around and book flights and buy cameras with money we didn't have.

Q: What came out of the 'pilot' film?

With our editor Tim Lovell, we cut a 4 minute pilot which worked well and gave people enough of an idea of the story and characters. Arturi took us in to meet with 'More 4' commissioner, Sandra Whipham, who offered to buy the UK TV Rights for the 'True Stories' strand. It was a great boost, but it also meant that the real work now had to begin in earnest... it was a point of no return.

Q: How did you get funding?

Initially we funded the start of the production ourselves. We were aware that raising finance amongst broadcasters and public funders for a subject matter as contentious as this would require experience and relationships that we didn't have, which is why we approached Arturi Films. Thankfully our producers secured some private investment, two public funding awards from the Film Agency for Wales and our post production deal with Molinare, enabling us to work with the team who did the post production work on last year's Oscar winner, 'Man on Wire', to allow us to make a start on the film proper. Molinare have encouraged and supported us all the way through. Financially the film has been a huge gamble for all of us - and it still is.

Q: Aesthetically what did you seek to bring to the story?

The cinematography and sound had to be stylish and evocative, [Andrew is a cameraman] the visual look of the film is very important. Pictures and sound are what give a film its layers. So many TV productions today are shot with awful sound, so part of the challenge was to make an observational documentary film 'the old fashioned way' with craft technicians; camera, sound, editors. Many people in television today wouldn't think it possible to still make film this way. We hope we've demonstrated otherwise.

Q: The production incorporates a range of diverse locations around the world, was this a challenge?

We have, over the years, worked on many films that have taken us overseas, so filming in lots of different locations was never really an issue. However getting in and out of Zimbabwe safely - and with kit - was a bit lively at times! It wasn't so much the number of locations as the number of times we had to fly back and forth to the same locations! The court case kept being postponed so we ended up going out to Windhoek five times, Zimbabwe four times over the course of the year. It was a nightmare for our producers and ourselves to juggle the budget and financing for that around other work dates and life in general!

Q: Given the media restrictions in place in Zimbabwe, how did you get in and out with your equipment?

A lot of it is down to careful logistics - we were very careful with security at all times- but inevitably there were a few moments when things got a little hairy.

Q: What equipment did you use and how did this determine the way the film was produced?

[Lucy]: "Because Andrew is such a camera snob, he would only use a large format camera. He owns a DSR 450 camera which he used with HD lenses. We shot 25p. Some of the Zimbabwe footage was shot on a DSR 570 at 50i with a camera body hired in from VE Projects. We left Ben and Mike with a Sony A1 camera with which to shoot footage on the farm in our absence. It was generally passed around the farming community and this was invaluable in getting material that we'd never have got with the larger camera."

Q. How Did You Edit the Film?

Our editor was Tim Lovell whom Lucy had worked with previously on the Comic Relief appeal films. As an editor, he is an outstanding storyteller. He also has his own Avid suite at home, so we cut in his front room. There were lots of dogs, children and, towards the end Lucy had to go into hospital and then there was a new baby in tow too! We wanted people to watch the film and feel what it was like to be in the Campbell's position and see what they had to go through, and we did not want to use commentary, but with so many rushes on a story spread out over year, and with multiple setbacks in court it was quite a task to make the story flow. With David's input we decided during the editing to increase Ben's role in the narrative, as it became clear during the filming he was key to helping Mike's campaign. Ben is very articulate and fair minded man. His presence all through the film helped draw the audience into the story. The contribution of the post-production team at Molinare, was excellent. Their colour grading, sound design and mixing, and online editing all further polished Tim's great work.

Q: How did your vision for the film evolve over the course of the production process?

Our ambition and vision for the film never really changed, but our expectations for how the film would eventually turn out did and we think for the better. When we started the project the case was scheduled for March 2008, but only eventually got heard in July 2008, with the result still not announced until November. The case became caught up in the wider political situation in Zimbabwe, namely the two presidential elections. None of us could have foreseen that. It complicated the production, financing and delivery schedule but has resulted in a better film that enabled us all to embrace a wider vision of where the film might play in terms of distribution.

Q: Music plays a big role in the film. How did it come together?

Music can make or break a film, so a lot of time was spent trying to find the right composer to write the score. That person eventually turned out to be Jonny Pilcher. He liked the project and he seemed to immediately sense the mood that we were trying to capture. Initially he wrote generic music beds, which Tim could cut to and later as the structure of the film came together and the fine cutting process began, wrote specific pieces for specific sequences in the film.

Q: How long did it take to make Mugabe and the White African?

From concept to completion / delivery it will have been in excess of 16 months. The shooting itself took place over a 9 month period, the edit (there will be 2 distinct versions, one for theatrical release and a shorter TV version) spanned almost 4 months.

Q: Can films of this kind really make any 'difference'?

We hope, by making this film, to find out the answer to that. Certainly from our experience of making the Comic Relief appeal films over so many years, it seems that they can make a difference. Film and television can be very powerful tools. It is our responsibility as filmmakers to get the message out there, to give a voice to people who wouldn't otherwise be heard.

Q: Who will watch this film?

Anyone who likes an amazing story. The issues at stake in the Campbell case are far bigger than any individual, or indeed any single country. Human Rights, the rule of law, democracy - all these things are universal and touch all of our lives wherever we're from and whatever our background. It will have an obvious appeal to niche groups and people who already have an interest in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, but we hope the film will capture the attention of an audience that extends well beyond that. Our film is hopefully made in a way that is conscious of this and is thus accessible and meaningful to everyone, everywhere. Our hope is that people will see it and be moved and outraged and compelled to engage in a dialogue about the issues raised.

Q: Should we concern ourselves with the internal troubles of another country?

Yes, people should care about what is going on inside Zimbabwe. The eradication of the white farming community is just one small part of the whole mess that Zimbabwe finds itself in - but it seems extraordinary in this day and age that as a global community we still have no means to stand up to a dictator who brutalizes and subjugates his people, both black and white. Concerning ourselves with such a situation, and informing ourselves about it, is the first crucial step towards ultimately seeing it addressed.

Composer's Profile / Statement:

Mugabe and the White African

Composer Jonny Pilcher

A sonic artist with a wealth of experience in numerous professional capacities. In 2008, in addition to his score for 'Mugabe and the White African', Jonny also composed music for a three-part documentary on science and religion. He wrote music for a number of television broadcast 'idents', among them; BBC 1, BBC 2, Sky Sports, GMTV and Nickelodeon – and provided music for Sara Crow's arts council funded dance theatre production 'In the Days that Followed'. Jonny co-composed music for Darren Johnston's dance piece 'outré' which enjoyed a critically acclaimed run at the aurora nova venue at the Edinburgh festival and enjoyed additional sell out performances at Royal Festival Hall. He composed the score for 'The Smallest Things', a dance-film and live work, also by choreographer Sara Crow, performed at numerous venues across London and Eastern England, the film element of the work was shown at numerous film festivals including a run at Edinburgh. In addition Jonny composed the score for a short film by Jamie Paul Quantrill called 'Valerian' which was premiered at the Curzon cinema in Mayfair and screened at numerous film festivals. Outside of his contributions to film and theatre Jonny plays for his band 'Weevil' (signed to Wichita Recordings/V2). Weevil recently supported on tour with Athlete & Snow Patrol.

Statement

First and foremost I wanted the music to be emotional. The family go through so many highs and lows in the film, sometimes feelings changing minute by minute as the situations develop rapidly. I wanted the music to accurately reflect this, composing the music specifically to portray the rollercoaster of emotions the family go through.

I also intentionally avoided culturally specific sounds, except during landscape shots. Oppression, corruption and brutality is sadly a common occurrence in so many countries of the world, I wanted to emphasize the human side of the story, how this family cope with the situation they are in, their bravery, sadness, fear, love and resolve. These are universal emotions and I wanted the music to reflect that.

Directors' Statement:

Mugabe and the White African

We have worked together for eight years - and much of that time has been spent filming in Africa, for which we have a huge passion. We've recently been working on short films in Africa, where we have been privileged to tell the stories of people who are so poor that they would never have 'mattered' otherwise.

We have been in many life and death situations with our contributors and have cried and laughed with them as we shared some of the most intimate moments of their lives. It is for sometime, and based on this, that we have been developing and working on longer format documentary ideas in Africa; and the story of Mugabe and the White African is a story that we feel the world should hear.

Much has been reported about the eradication of white owned farms in Zimbabwe and the deterioration and the subsequent collapse of the country. We have all seen news images of beaten up farmers and seen the desperation in people's eyes as they live in hunger, hopelessness and fear. We wanted to make a film about a big issue like the land reform program policy in Zimbabwe, but in a very intimate and personal way.

We believe our audience for this film to be sophisticated, and able to read images and characters. There is no commentary, and we allow our 'characters' to speak for themselves so as to build up a compelling narrative. The film is hinged with emotional moments in image and sound, so its impact on the memory will last long after the facts have been forgotten. This has been our trademark, particularly in our work for Comic Relief. The camera dwells on details - we like shots that are lavish and lingering and show a trust in the relationship with our subjects. This story is both epic and at the same time intimate, and the shooting style reflects this. We let the unfolding action dictate the pace, but the feel will be cinematic and in the moment.

We have done everything we can to tell this extraordinary story; one that would no doubt otherwise forever remain as a 'newspaper snippet.' We want this film to take the viewer to the heart of a historical moment, one that could be pivotal in Africa's future. The film responds to what unfolds, but at the end of the day we want the viewers to be able to make up their own minds.

LUCY BAILEY & ANDREW THOMPSON 2009.

Producers Statement

Arturi Films have a slate of feature films in development, all of which are co-productions with other countries and yet their common strengths are that they enable the audience to go on an emotional journey with the characters in the story. The story of Mike Campbell and this fight for justice and the return of law in Zimbabwe, immediately struck a chord with us and so immediately felt that it would with a wider audience, especially because Mike was fighting for Human Rights and against Racism. The fact that he was taking this action because his own President was the perpetrator of such actions and the story was based in Africa, it gave it a relevance and urgency that we don't come across very often. Our combined skills of David's filmmaking and Executive Producer's experience in TV and Elizabeth's producing and financing knowledge, coupled with our goals of making theatrical movies, we thought that we could bring something unique to Andy and Lucy's vision for the film. Financially and creatively, we were willing to take the risk alongside our Directors.



Pictured: Mike Campbell, Ben Freeth (Mike's son-in-law), Laura Freeth (Mike's daughter), Angela Campbell (Mike's wife).

*Oh lift high the banner, the flag of Zimbabwe
The symbol of freedom proclaiming victory;
We praise our heroes' sacrifice,
And vow to keep our land from foes;
And may the Almighty protect and bless our land.*

*Oh God, we beseech Thee to bless our native land;
The land of our fathers bestowed upon us all;
From Zambezi to Limpopo
May leaders be exemplary
And may the Almighty protect and bless our land.*

Blessed be the land of Zimbabwe (The Zimbabwe National Anthem)

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AWARDS:

Winner: Best Feature Documentary, British Independent Film Awards 2009

Winner: Grand Jury Prize, Silverdocs Film Festival, USA 2009

Winner: Special Jury Award, Hamptons Film Festival, USA 2009

QUOTES ABOUT THE FILM:

'Moving, gripping and important, "Mugabe and the White African" is the finest new documentary I've seen this year and, if there's any justice, a surefire nominee in the best documentary category at next year's Academy Awards'
(Washington Post – June 2009)

'The three of us on the International Jury have very different backgrounds, sensitivities and outlooks. But all three of us were totally unanimous in our verdict. Our chosen film displays a moral conviction which grew from the vision behind it, became an integral part of the trusting relationship between the contributors and the filmmakers, and that powerfully elevates a resonant story to a global stage. We want to commend the filmmaking team for the physical risks they took in their relentless pursuit of the story, and for having the wisdom and humility to simply give their characters the freedom to intimately express anguish, doubt and resolve.

Lastly, we want to underline the craft and artistry so evident in this beautifully shot and edited film. It is not a mere document of a series of events, but masterfully uses cinematic expression to allow all of us to engage in an incredible and historic struggle'.

(SilverDocs Jury - June 2009)

'This film highlights the importance of the rule of law, it doesn't matter if you are black or white, any member of society who feels their rights are trampled on should be able to turn to the rule of law... This is about building a house of justice in Africa.'

(Botswanan Judge – September 2009)

'It is a stark reality of our region that the history of colonialism and racism cannot be wished away. The extent to which it has scarred our regional psyche means that for some, it seems almost impossible to distinguish in a rational manner, those areas which are directly linked to the history and those which are not. It continues to be a challenge which we deal with in different ways - some less subtle than others. I again, congratulate you and Andrew on the film ... it was really brave of you and those about whom the story is, to take that leap of faith to tell the story of an aspect of human rights violations and the rule of law (or lack thereof) which has hitherto not been told.'

(Alice Mogwe : Botswana Centre for Human Rights/ BOCIZCOS – August 2009)

FIVE STAR REVIEW RATING- TIME OUT

"Superb' ...Thought-provoking, distressing, shockingly tense and always very sad, it is surely one of the best documentaries of the year." Derek Adams, Time Out

"Potent mix of suspense, pathos and indignation"
Ronnie Schieb, Variety

"Evidently filmed illicitly but betrays none of those signs in a handsome, HD-shot production which seems set for theatrical consumption. Its story is tense and surprisingly moving" Fionnuala Halligan, Screen International

FOUR STAR REVIEW RATING – EMPIRE MAGAZINE

"Long listed for the 2010 Best Documentary Oscar, Lucy Thompson and Andrew Bailey's expose of the reality behind President Mugabe's Zimbabwe is compelling, nerve shattering, tremendously moving cinema. Shot covertly (but beautifully) due to an international media ban, Mugabe... movingly etches the story of Mike Campbell, a white farmer trying to hold onto his land in the face of Mugabe's Land Reform Act, a nexus of intimidation and violence. Thompson and Bailey's film never forgets the people within the politics — Campbell and his son in law Ben emerge as heroes — as Campbell's plight becomes part suspense thriller, part court-room drama, part heartbreaking weepie. Even if the ending ties up the story too neatly, this is a movie that demonstrates the tenacity of the human spirit far greater than 99.9% of Oscar baiting dramas."