



Contacts:

POV Communications: 212-989-7425. Emergency contact: 646-729-4748

Cathy Fisher, cfisher@pov.org, Jillian Ayala, jayala@pov.org

POV online pressroom: www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom

One White Family Defies Terrifying Odds to Keep Their Farm in Zimbabwe In POV's "Mugabe and the White African," July 26, 2011, on PBS

On Land and in Court, the Campbells Incur a Dictator's Wrath; In a Tragic Epilogue,
Family Patriarch Mike Campbell, 79, Dies From the Terrible Beating Recounted in This Film

"A potent mix of suspense, pathos and indignation. . ." — Ronnie Scheib, *Variety*

The Campbell family of Zimbabwe — Mike Campbell, his wife, Angela, their daughter, Laura, and their son-in-law, Ben Freeth — may have been white people determined to hold on to their farm, but they were not in the mold of colonialists hanging on to land extorted from blacks. They were among the native-born whites who did not flee in 1980 when Zimbabwe, the former Rhodesia, achieved full independence and black majority rule. Embracing the new country, Mike and Angela expanded their small farm that same year, buying additional land to create a game preserve, with the full approval of the newly elected government led by independence fighter Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party.

Twenty years later, the Campbells found themselves in the crosshairs of a brutal land redistribution program enacted by the same Robert Mugabe. Lucy Bailey and Andrew Thompson's **Mugabe and the White African** is an inspiring and chilling account of the Campbells' efforts to fight the government.

Mugabe and the White African has its national broadcast premiere on **Tuesday, July 26, 2011** at 10 p.m. on PBS as part of the 24th season of **POV (Point of View)**. POV runs through Sept. 27, 2011 on Tuesdays at 10 p.m. and continues with specials in November 2011 and winter/spring 2012. (Check local listings.) American television's longest-running independent documentary series, POV is the winner of a Special Emmy Award for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking, an IDA Award for Best Continuing Series and NALIP's 2011 Award for Corporate Commitment to Diversity.

Filmed over 12 months in 2008 in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia and Great Britain by Bailey and Thompson, with Thompson and sound recordist James Snowden working clandestinely in Zimbabwe under risk of arrest, **Mugabe and the White African** discovers a family of remarkable courage, one that stands up to violent intimidation and dares to take a despot to an international court. The secretly shot footage in the film also shows the violent methods that despot used. On April 6, 2011, Mike Campbell, age 79, paid the full price of his courage: He died in Harare, Zimbabwe from the brutal beating he received on June 2, 2008, as recounted in this film.

It is widely recognized that land redistribution is a ticking time bomb in Zimbabwe and neighboring South Africa, where native-born whites continued to own most of the land even after the arrival of black-majority rule. To avoid violence and keep their skilled white populations, many of whom, like the Campbells, identified as white Africans, governments in both nations adopted cautious approaches to land redistribution. In South Africa, such caution has so far succeeded in averting violent civil conflict. But in Zimbabwe, by 2000, something had gone seriously amiss.

That was the year armed gangs of supposedly landless former independence fighters, urged on by Mugabe, who had “cancelled” all title deeds and declared all land to belong to the government, began invading white-owned farms. The gangs squatted on the land, threatened and beat owners and workers and, if all else failed, burned the farms to the ground, killing those who got in their way. The land invasions were soon exposed and widely condemned as a cynical land grab meant to entrench Mugabe’s power while lining the pockets of the ruling circle. Adding insult to injury, the removal of so much land from productive use sent food prices and hunger soaring — especially among poor black Zimbabweans.

When **Mugabe and the White African** opens in December 2007, Mike Campbell and his family are among a handful of holdouts against Mugabe’s tactics. The film affords a harrowing taste of the constant vigilance and physical courage required of Mike and son-in-law Ben to defend their land. They must be ready to confront dangerous thugs — or well-connected Zimbabweans — at all hours. They typically arm themselves, but it soon becomes clear that cool heads, brave fronts and fast talk are their best weapons. They must also attend to the fears of the farm’s workers and their families (some 500 people), who face equally violent intimidation. In one revealing and terrifying scene, the son of a government minister shows up in an expensive car and berates Ben for not abandoning the land, saying that he wants the farm, that there is no place for whites in Mugabe’s Zimbabwe and that worse retribution awaits the family members if they don’t give up.

The Campbells realize they won’t be able to hold on to their farm in a country where the police offer no recourse and court orders halting the invasions are simply ignored. As 2008 opens, they have two hopes. In presidential elections that year, Morgan Tsvangirai’s Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) presents credible democratic opposition to Mugabe. And, in an unprecedented and highly public challenge, Mike has charged Mugabe with racism and human rights violations in an international court, the Tribunal of the South African Development Community (SADC), sitting in Windhoek, Namibia. The tribunal, created by the 14 nations forming the SADC, is charged with protecting the individual rights of citizens of the member nations.

On June 29, 2008, just two days after a stolen presidential run-off election, Mike, along with Angela and Ben, suffer horrendous beatings at the hands of ZANU-PF thugs. With hope for democratic change all but gone, Mike and family pin their hopes on the SADC court, which is due to hear their case in November. Their lawyers are precise and articulate in pressing their claims. The judges are solicitous and scandalized. Mugabe’s large team of lawyers offers little defense. The sight of Ben, still hobbled by the beating, being wheeled into court in a wheelchair is heart-rending but also heartening. Yet it is also an ominous sight. And when the court rules decisively in the family’s favor, the critical question remains: Does the court have the means and the will to protect the Campbells in Zimbabwe?

Mugabe and the White African is a rare inside report on a growing economic and human rights disaster in a country that should be one of Africa’s richest. It is also a portrait of almost unbelievable fidelity and bravery on the part of a family that, in other circumstances, might seem quite ordinary.

“There’s been a lot of reporting on the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe, but we felt the white farmers’ story had been mostly overlooked and needed telling,” says co-director Lucy Bailey. “For one thing, the SADC court case represented a watershed moment in southern Africa, where those nations were challenged to stand up for basic human rights.”

“The film is a window on what is happening in Zimbabwe now,” says co-director Andrew Thompson. “It is also fundamentally a story of the bravery and faith of ordinary people confronting corrupt power, and that’s a story that seems to be breaking out all over.”

Mugabe and the White African is a production of Arturi Films Ltd. in association with Explore Films, Molinare Productions and The Film Agency for Wales.

About the Filmmakers:

Lucy Bailey (Co-director)

With a background in anthropology and a passion for Africa, Lucy Bailey has over ten years' experience as a director in television, much of it shooting on the African continent. Her credits include "Lorenzo's Oil — Miracle or Myth" (BBC, 2004) and "Saving Planet Earth — Saving Turtles" (BBC, 2007). Bailey has also worked for the charity Comic Relief, making promotional films that were nominated for the One World Media Popular Features Award in 2008. She formed Explore Films with Andrew Thompson in 2008. She lives in Great Britain with her co-director and life partner, Andrew Thompson.

Andrew Thompson (Co-director/Cinematographer)

Andrew Thompson is a BAFTA- and RTS-nominated cameraman who has more than 14 years' experience filming all over the world for Channel 4 (C4), BBC, National Geographic and Discovery. While he works mainly as a director of photography, he has increasingly turned his attention to directing. His cinematography credits include "Sex Traffic" (C4, 2008), "Inside the Kingdom" (BBC, 2007), "Brian Keenan in Lebanon" (BBC, 2007), "Ross Kemp in Afghanistan" (SKY, 2007) and "Geldof in Africa" (BBC, Discovery 2004). Thompson is the co-founder, with Lucy Bailey, of Explore Films. He lives with Bailey in Great Britain.

Credits:

Co-directors:	Lucy Bailey, Andrew Thompson
Producers:	David Pearson, Elizabeth Morgan Hemlock
Executive Producers:	Steve Milne, Pauline Burt
Director of Photography:	Andrew Thompson
Sound Recordists:	Sebastian Dunn, James Snowden
Editor:	Tim Lovell
Original music:	Jonny Pilcher

Running Time: 86:46

POV Series Credits:

Executive Producer:	Simon Kilmurry
Co-Executive Producer:	Cynthia López
Director of Production/Programming:	Chris White
Series Producer:	Yance Ford

Awards and Festivals:

- Best Feature Documentary, British Independent Film Awards, 2009
- Grand Jury Prize, Silverdocs, 2009
- Special Jury Award, Hamptons International Film Festival, 2009
- Sterling Award for a World Feature, Silverdocs, 2009
- Prix Italia SIGNIS Award, 2010
- Camera Justitia Award, Movies That Matter Festival, 2010
- Nominated, BAFTA Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director, Producer, 2010
- Shortlisted, Best Feature Documentary, Academy Awards, 2010
- Best Cinema Documentary, Grierson Awards, UK, 2010
- Best Documentary Award, Royal Television Society, UK, 2011



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 24th season on PBS, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 300 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. Visit www.pbs.org/pov.

POV Digital (www.pbs.org/pov)

POV's award-winning website extends the life of our films online with interactive features, interviews, updates, video and educational content, as well as listings for television broadcasts, community screenings and films available online. The *POV Blog* is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss their favorite films and get the latest news.

POV Community Engagement and Education

POV films can be seen at more than 450 events across the country every year. Together with schools, organizations and local PBS stations, POV facilitates free community screenings and produces free resources to accompany our films, including discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. With our community partners, we inspire dialogue around the most important social issues of our time.

Major funding for POV is provided by PBS, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, The Educational Foundation of America, New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, FACT and public television viewers. Special support provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Funding for POV's Diverse Voices Project is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Project VoiceScape is a partnership of Adobe Youth Voices, PBS and POV. POV is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including WGBH Boston and THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG.

American Documentary, Inc. (www.amdoc.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc develops collaborative strategic-engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.



Media Sponsor:

