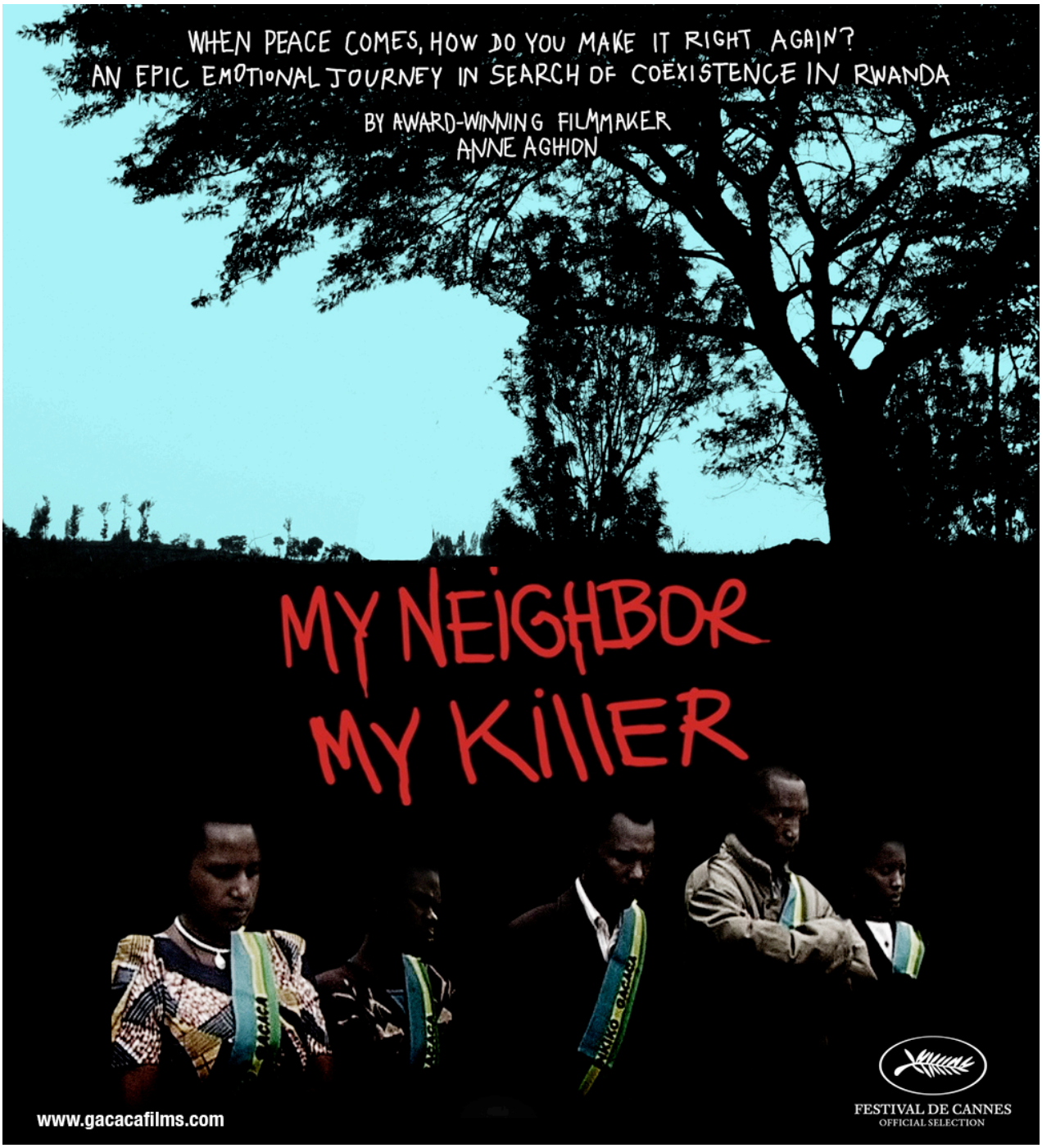

Official Selection, Special Screenings
Festival de Cannes, 2009

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Color. 80 Minutes. Digibeta. Stereo. In Kinyarwanda, with English and French subtitles

MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER

DEDICATION

This film is dedicated to the memory of Alison Des Forges, a historian and author of "Leave None to Tell the Story – Genocide in Rwanda", considered the most comprehensive account of the genocide, who died tragically in the February 12th, 2009 Buffalo plane crash.

Almost ten years ago, when I started working on this project, months before going to Rwanda the first time, I called Alison at her home in Buffalo one Saturday morning out of the blue to seek her guidance. I had just finished reading her book for the second time. She pointed me to a couple of people, and gave me the lay of the land. The advice she gave me that day turned out to be invaluable.

Alison had seen **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER** a few weeks before her death, and had written:

> *"As with Anne's other work, this film is both moving and perceptive in capturing the range of conflicting interests and emotions in this terribly complicated situation. What I admire most about her work is the way she has been able to get inside the context."*

As a senior consultant at Human Rights Watch, Alison's efforts, probably more than anyone else's, single-handedly put Rwanda on the map. She worked tirelessly to warn as the genocide was coming on the horizon, to save lives when the genocide was raging, and to explain and tell and bring the *génocidaires* to account when it had stopped. Alison's death is simply a monumental loss for Rwanda -- its memory, its present and its future -- and for the world.

Anne Aghion
May 2009

MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER

THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Director & Producer ..... Anne Aghion
Editor ..... Nadia Ben Rachid
Translator ..... Assumpta Mugiraneza
Camera ..... James Kakwerere
..... Linette Frewin
..... Claire Bailly du Bois
..... Mathieu Hagnery
Sound Recordists ..... Richard Fleming
..... Pierre Camus
Color Grading ..... Eric Salleron
Main Title Design and Graphics ..... Dorothée Perkins
Sound Editors ..... Roland Duboué
..... Dolorès Jordy
..... Anne-Marguerite Monory
Sound Mix ..... Nathalie Vidal
..... Yves Servagent
Assistant Editors ..... Jean-Marie Lengellé
..... Sarah Zaanoun
..... Nafi Dicko
Associate Producers ..... James Kakwerere
..... Adella Ladjevardi
Production Intern ..... Tami Woronoff
Additional Translators and Interpreters ..... Jean-Pierre Sagahutu
..... Aubert Ruzigandekwe
..... Sabiti Hakiziman
..... Serge Kamuhinda
Editing Interns ..... Myriam Renouard
..... Khadija Babaï
Image Post ..... Avidia (Paris)
Sound Post ..... Studio Orlando (Paris)
Subtitles ..... Noesis/Imagine (Paris)

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MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER

MUSIC

“Imyoma”
”Bakobwa mwirira”
”Mbahoze Nte?”
by
Florida Uwera
Production: Centre Universitaire des Arts - Université nationale du Rwanda

”Trompes Amakondera”
recorded by
Jos Gansemanns
Editions Fonti Musicali – Claude Flagel

”Kana”
by
Cécile Kayirebwa
Céka I Rwanda

MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER

SYNOPSIS

When peace comes how do you make it right again?

An epic emotional journey in search of coexistence in Rwanda.

Could you ever forgive the people who slaughtered your family? In 1994, hundreds of thousands of Rwandan Hutus were incited to wipe out the country's Tutsi minority. From the crowded capital to the smallest village, local 'patrols' massacred lifelong friends and family members, most often with machetes and improvised weapons. Announced in 2001, and ending this year, the government put in place the *Gacaca* Tribunals—open-air hearings with citizen-judges meant to try their neighbors and rebuild the nation. As part of this experiment in reconciliation, confessed genocide killers are sent home from prison, while traumatized survivors are asked to forgive them and resume living side-by-side. Filming for close to a decade in a tiny hamlet, award-winning filmmaker Anne Aghion has charted the impact of *Gacaca* on survivors and perpetrators alike. Through their fear and anger, accusations and defenses, blurry truths, inconsolable sadness, and hope for life renewed, she captures the emotional journey to coexistence.

MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Award-winning filmmaker Anne Aghion makes her Cannes debut with **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER**, the remarkable culmination to nearly ten years of filming one Rwandan community's halting efforts at justice and reconciliation in the aftermath of genocide. This feature documentary follows several surviving widows who struggle to remake their lives among the same neighbors who killed their husbands and children.

Timed to coincide with the 15th anniversary of the 1994 genocide, **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER** beautifully captures these women's passage from anger to resignation, and from grief to resilience as they confront the killers in social settings and in community courts.

At the core of the film are two survivors, Félicité Nyirasangwa and Euphrasie Mukarwemera, and two of the men accused in the killing of their families. The women are both Hutu widows of Tutsi husbands, whose children were considered Tutsi. Abraham Rwamfizi is a former low-level local leader who works to find his way back into the community on his return from prison. Vianney Byirabo, another suspected killer, gives matter-of-fact confessions that paint a chillingly vivid picture of how the genocide was carried out on that hill. These four people, along with others from their community, speak with an eloquence that can be poetic, profound and heartbreaking, and often terrifying.

As ordinary Rwandans try to make sense of the violence, the film grapples with age-old questions about humanity and inhumanity: What turns neighbor against neighbor? How do neighbors live together again after mass atrocity? Such universal concerns link this hill in Rwanda with Nazi-occupied Poland, with the Khmer Rouge's Cambodia, with Bosnia, and with Darfur.

MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER consciously steers clear of the violent images to which we have become so desensitized: the machetes and the skulls. Instead, it locates the remnants of violence in the everyday. The film subtly juxtaposes the mundane rhythms of daily life in rural Rwanda – a boy taking cows to pasture, a woman shelling beans – against the barely-repressed memories of extraordinary violence – a confessed killer nostalgically recalling the night patrols, a widow showing how her baby was dashed against the ground and hacked to death. This violence is all the more disturbing for being ever-present but unseen. The viewer is constantly unsettled by the discrepancy between the spoken violence and the pastoral landscape.

The film avoids narration and commentary, choosing instead to let Rwandans talk directly to the camera and, through the camera, to one another. Rwandans at

times sound like some latter-day Greek chorus commenting on their own tragedy, as well as the action of the film. At one moment, a widow plaintively remarks "We'll end up dying in sorrow and solitude" and another intones "Yes, we will wander alone and fade away." Later in the film, one of those widows asks in bitter amusement, " They [i.e. the filmmaker and her crew] ask us if we are happy! … These whites ask the strangest questions."

THE WORLD LOOKS TOWARDS RWANDA

In April 1994, Hutu extremists used the assassination of the Rwandan President to seize power, murder political opponents and UN peacekeepers, and unleash an extermination campaign against the Tutsi minority. The Rwandan genocide was remarkable for its speed, intimate violence, and widespread participation. Over the course of 100 days, extremists incited and pressured large numbers of ordinary Hutu farmers to massacre their Tutsi neighbors – and even their Tutsi family members – using machetes, hoes, and clubs. By the time the genocide ended, approximately three-quarters of the Tutsi population had been wiped out. What made this violence so extraordinary is that Hutu and Tutsi share the same language, culture, religion, communities, and often inter-marry.

Now, fifteen years later, this small Central African nation is once again in the spotlight, but this time hailed as a success story by an impressive cast of international actors including former President Bill Clinton, American evangelical pastor Rick Warren, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, and the music impresario Quincy Jones.

To be sure, part of this interest comes from shame over the failure to prevent or stop the genocide. This shame plus the ongoing genocide in Darfur help explain the film industry's rediscovery of the Rwandan genocide over the past five years: Terry George's "Hotel Rwanda," Raoul Peck's "Sometimes in April," and Michael Caton-Jones' "Shooting Dogs," among several others. But Rwanda has also garnered attention because of the government's impressive accomplishments in bringing peace, security, and economic growth to the country.

Rwanda's toughest challenges have been to deliver truth, justice, and reconciliation in the wake of the genocide. In a bold effort to achieve these goals and to reduce the large number of genocide suspects languishing in overcrowded prisons (at one point, over 130,000 detainees were awaiting trial), the government created approximately 11,000 community courts inspired by *Gacaca* (pr. ga-CHA-cha), a traditional dispute resolution mechanism of "justice on the grass."

In the film, a Rwandan prosecutor explains *Gacaca* to an assembled throng of prisoners, saying: "Your lawyer will be your neighbor, your prosecutor will be your neighbor, your judge will be your neighbor." Indeed, each community elected ordinary people of good moral standing from their own midst to make up the tens of thousands of *Gacaca* judges.

Gacaca encourages genocide suspects—both the ones in prison and the ones still living in the community—to confess their crimes and make apologies in exchange for reduced sentences (half the length of which are served doing community service outside of prison). The confessed *génocidaires* then return to live side by side with survivors, along with the hundreds of thousands of suspected killers who have not yet been jailed, but are being brought to trial. The survivors, in turn, are asked to forgive the neighbors who killed their families.

Aghion learned about *Gacaca* by chance, when she met a group of Rwandan justice officials traveling in the U.S. Struck both by the promise and potential pitfalls of the idea, she wondered whether the process might actually get people to talk in public about what had happened, and avoid the eruption of more violence in years to come. Aghion is drawn to stories about how people live together in extreme circumstances. So the decision to make the documentary was immediate.

At that point Aghion had made one film, the 1996 "Se Le Movio El Pisò" ("The Earth Moved Under Him – A Portrait of Managua"), which looks at how slum dwellers in the Nicaraguan capital coped with the double shock of civil war and a massive earthquake. Shot in Hi-8, it was considered too raw for distribution, but the prize it won, the Havana Film Festival's *Coral Award for Best Documentary about Latin America by a Non Latin American Filmmaker,* recognized her ability to cross cultural boundaries, and listen carefully.

As a filmmaker, leaving facts and figures aside, Aghion focuses intently on the emotional and experiential core of the stories she follows, imparting what one reporter has called "the feel…the landscape, the texture of the place, the rhythm of speech and movement" of the people and places she covers.

Daring and controversial, *Gacaca* has received enormous attention from policymakers working on other post-conflict countries, scholars, human rights activists, and journalists.

Aghion brings a wholly unique perspective to this story. She concentrates on how *Gacaca* affects ordinary people at the local level. She explains, "There are plenty of people covering the politics and the mechanics of *Gacaca*, whether on film or in the press. In the media, there is a tendency to look at public policy like *Gacaca*, and want black or white answers to the very questions that reside in grey areas – 'What happened when?', 'Who did what?', 'What is the truth?' But these are incredibly delicate situations, and what is seldom examined is how these policies play out in the daily lives of people. I thought it was important to convey what it feels like to live through this difficult process.

"I set out to make **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER** to convey how Rwandans – survivors or perpetrators – would face these trials and the prospect of living together again.

"What happened in Rwanda is so much more extreme than what's happening elsewhere in the world today. If people there could talk to each other again, then people in Iraq, the Balkans, Cambodia, or Israel and Palestine could find something profound in this process."

CHRONICLING AN ERA

Going into Rwanda, Aghion had planned to make a single film about the impact of *Gacaca*, but as she worked toward completing the feature, the government's schedule for putting the trials in place stretched out over several years. In the meantime, she was collecting powerful footage, and decided to take advantage of what she had in hand. Her reasons were two-fold: She wanted to bring to the world the remarkable story that was unfolding in Rwanda, and—having gone into this venture with no outside help, she needed to build support to continue her work.

"When I started, I was an unknown filmmaker, and trying to convince funders to give money to film emotions was pretty hard," she laughs. As a result, she started compiling reels, and then eventually her one-hour films. The first to come on board was the Soros Documentary Fund, and later the Sundance Documentary Fund continued to support her. Television networks including Planète, Sundance Channel, ARTE and others followed suit. As her work became known in governmental and NGO circles around the world, a host of non-traditional film funders also joined in—the United States Institute of Peace, the Compton Foundation, the governments of Switzerland, Belgium, and Austria, and major European NGO's such as Oxfam-Novib in The Netherlands—all making their first forays into support of a film project, and major.

The result is "The *Gacaca* Series," three award-winning one-hour films that are internationally acknowledged as a seminal body of work on post-conflict justice. The titles are: *Gacaca, Living Together Again In Rwanda?* , winner of the 2003 UNESCO Fellini Prize; the 2005 Emmy-winner *In Rwanda We Say…The family that does not speak dies;* and the newly completed *The Notebooks of Memory*, which exclusively focuses on trials in the community.

Praised for their "open, human approach," the first two have been broadcast on television, in conferences, and screened in dozens of festivals and special venues such as the U.N., as well as from Jerusalem to Beirut and Port-au-Prince. "Someone even told me about bootleg copies playing to packed houses in Malaysian community centers," says Aghion in wonder.

In a sense, they have even become part of the *Gacaca* process itself, having been screened for aid workers and government officials across Rwanda. Most remarkably, with the help of the Belgian organization RCN Justice & Democracy which helped support the rebuilding of judicial institutions in the country immediately

after the genocide, they have been shown to tens of thousands of confessed killers before they were sent home from prison.

FINDING GAFUMBA

In **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER** Aghion hones in on a few of Gafumba's residents, and follows their emotional journey over time. It begins just as the government announces plans for local genocide trials in 2001 and "pre-Gacaca" hearings are held in Gafumba. It carries through 2003 when prisoners are sent home pending their trials, and ends in 2008, at the culmination of three years of weekly testimony, accusations and counter-accusations, sentences, appeals, and tenders of forgiveness. And through all of this, life continued. Young couples married, a few people died, children were born, fields were plowed. Most importantly, peace was maintained.

Making the film meant spending a lot of time in Gafumba, gaining people's trust and listening for hours, for days, for years. But first, Aghion had to find this place.

In mid '99, Aghion got right to work researching and looking for funds. By April of 2000, she made her first trip to Kigali. Arriving just in time for the annual genocide commemoration, she got a first-hand look at the scope of the horror that had taken place there. A mass grave had been found in a middle-income neighborhood, containing the remains of some 35,000 bodies. Bones were being removed and sorted by body part in a memorial burial site. "The word 'unfathomable' kept churning around in my head," remembers the director.

Over the next few months and several more trips, she started to learn the lay of the land, make the contacts and do the groundwork that would serve her over the entire course of production. The justice officials she'd met in the U.S. made key introductions and helped her get filming permits. Although she adds "The Rwandan government had very few resources, and I wasn't from a big news organization, so they left me alone." She got a lot of information from journalists, but was surprised—and a little relieved--to discover that she was far ahead of the pack in grasping the significance of the *Gacaca*. "The plan hadn't really gelled yet, and a couple of foreign correspondents told me point blank that I was wasting my time, that there was no film there," recalls the director. "It gave me a head start over the many other people covering Rwanda."

She also introduced herself to key staff at the NGO's working in the field of justice, both in the capital and out in rural communities across the "Land of A Thousand Hills." The Belgian group, RCN Justice & Democracy, made a crucial introduction: they took Aghion to meet Regional General Prosecutor Jean-Marie Mbarushimana, who had launched of a series of "Pre-*Gacaca*" hearings around the country to clear the prisons of innocent detainees, and to educate Rwandans about the *Gacaca* trials to come. He was also making the round of local lock-ups to explain the process to prisoners.

"He is a charismatic figure, and the hearings he led were a perfect way to explain what the *Gacaca* were all about, and what the government expected of people. I wanted to get him in the film, which meant waiting until a new round of hearings started."

Thus began a pattern that would continue for nearly eight years. "The scheduling of the *Gacaca* was very fluid, and stretched out for years. I would go back to New York, and kept in constant touch with my contacts in Kigali, waiting for developments. I had to be ready to drop everything and head to Rwanda, often with less than two weeks to get a crew together. Over the years, in addition to the Rwandan cameraman and interpreters that worked with me, I brought camera and sound people from New York, Paris, and Harare in Zimbabwe. But all of them were working elsewhere as well, and it was sometimes a real juggling act."

In March of 2001, Aghion got the call that Mbarushimana was ready to head out to several rural areas for a new round of hearings. This is how Aghion arrived in Ntongwe, the district in which Gafumba is located, and discovered that "I had found the place I was looking for."

Out in the countryside, at the time, there were just a few paved roads that led to Kigali. The closer people are to the main road, the more they are used to city people and foreigners looking into their lives. The filmmaker wanted to find a place that was as far away as possible from the influence of the outside. Depending on rain, the commute to Ntongwe runs anywhere from one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half hours from the capital. Gafumba itself is another twenty minutes down a path that trucks can barely travel on.

FINDING THE HEART OF GAFUMBA

Aghion and her crew spent years going and back and forth to Gafumba, recording the intertwining stories of survivors and prisoners, their visions of the future, and their interactions with the *Gacaca*. But out on Rwanda's hills, Aghion quickly learned, people are often mistrustful, secretive, and indirect. In addition to the basic mistrust of people in many small and isolated rural communities you would find elsewhere in the world, this reflects long-standing cultural practices that have been aggravated by fear and suspicion after the genocide. As Aghion observed, "Rwandans put on a polite face in conversation. It's the same thing you find in many countries, but here, on life and death issues, if you ask directly, they'll toe the government's line and say things like 'everyone is living together happily.' "

Aghion recalls that "In the beginning, I went to their houses every day for weeks. During interviews, I just let people speak. My standard opening was "So tell me about your story," or "Tell me what happened here." I asked very few specific questions. Sometimes, we would let the cameras roll during several minutes of silence. You could hear the flies buzzing. People just opened up eventually."

Reflecting back on why the people there—particularly the survivors--chose to begin speaking with her, Aghion believes it was a combination of factors. "First, I think they were intrigued that anyone would want to hear what they had to say. They might also have thought that they had to answer me, out of courtesy or because, being white and coming from Kigali they thought I was someone important."

In fact, the director was shocked to learn, years into the project, that when she first arrived, some of the Hutu Gafumbans believed that she was sent by the government to kill them. Over time, the crew became a familiar part of the local "family." The filmmaker laughs, "After a time, it was like going to see relatives—they would comment on how I looked, whether or not I had gained weight or seemed tired."

When word came down that confessed killers would be coming home from prison, it caused terrible emotional upheaval in the community. The director recounts that: "One of the most dramatic episodes in the film came when we got that news. We went to Euphrasie's house. She hadn't been in the mood to talk that day, but a few minutes later, her friend Bellancilla dropped by, and the women began a graphic conversation about their anger and fear, and about the conflict between what the government expected of them, and how they really felt. They also complained that we, the film crew, were complicating things with our questions." It is so powerful and revelatory a scene that Aghion devotes almost four minutes of the film to it.

Filming the trials was another matter altogether. In Gafumba, they were held one day a week, more or less every week from January 2005 until early 2008. Aghion and her full crew came on four separate occasions to film the procedures and do interviews, but since it was impossible to know when something significant would happen, to the degree that it was possible, it was important to have a camera at the trials as much as possible. So, Associate Producer and Cinematographer James Kakwerere, who works at the Rwandan national television channel, was charged with the double duty of keeping abreast of developments in the hill and reporting back to Aghion, and of making the long trek to shoot in Gafumba when something important happened. "James played a critical role in keeping track of years of events and relationships in Gafumba."

Bringing cameras into the mix clearly had an impact over time. "For example, the talk between Euphrasie and Bellancilla would have never taken place had we not been there," asserts the director. "The presence of the camera actually prompted people to address very difficult emotions and issues."

Aghion also believes that for Rwamfizi, being part of the film prompted him to reflect on the nature of his actions during the genocide. "It put him in a place where he had to think about it more than he would have. He worked hard to live with what he had done, and I think being in the film was part of that process."

As a filmmaker, Aghion's guiding principle is "to let people speak for themselves." To that end, she avoids narration, and, she explains, "I go into the field without any theories or prejudgments about what I'm going to find. My films are shaped by what I learn from people along the way."

That said, because of the time she spent there with her camera, in some sense she had become a mediator.

One event in particular really called into question Aghion's responsibility in the community. Once the prisoners had come home, and after months of taping people's conflicting fears, accusations and counter-accusations, and strained acceptance of reintegration, one of Aghion's interview subjects—Jean-Paul Shyirakera (who later is seen as one of the Vice-Presidents of the *Gacaca* judges) — suggested that she call a meeting with everyone she'd been talking to. "Next time you come, why don't you bring them along… And we'll have a talk with our killers," he challenged.

This was a potentially explosive proposition, and the filmmaker spent weeks deliberating the possible consequences. "We went over and over the footage with my editor, Nadia Ben Rachid, and my translator Assumpta Mugiraneza, and we all found that the people of Gafumba looked lost. I decided Jean-Paul was right."

She decided to take the chance, and everyone Aghion had been following on the hill agreed to participate. As the camera rolled, mortal enemies sat in a room together for the first time in ten years. "You can see it in the film. As they entered the room where we held the meeting, the body language between them told the whole story," says the director. Over the course of four hours, in this emotionally charged place, they began to negotiate how they would talk about the past and the future. "They did not say anything of substance then, rather, they spoke about the modalities of how they would speak later—in the *Gacaca*," adds Aghion.

During the trials themselves, Aghion actually believes that being part of the film gave people a sense of security. "There was even one man who asked us to come to his house to record his story. He was scared of some sort of retribution, and felt that our presence, and his testimony on camera somehow shielded him."

KINYARWANDA IS A COMPLEX LANGUAGE

"Kinyarwanda is a rich, complicated, poetic and indirect language that is extremely difficult to learn," Aghion explains. The production had two interpreters working at all times, people who understood the nuances of Kinyarwanda spoken in the hills. Not always in a position to hear the translations while she was conducting interviews, Aghion claims that there were two advantages to not always understanding what was being said. "I didn't interrupt a lot," she observes. "The film I

made would not have been the same if I spoke the language because I would not have had the patience to let people speak."

The other advantage was that Aghion was so busy trying to keep up with the interviews and translations that she couldn't dwell on the horrors her subjects were describing. "I realized that during the filming I had understood enough to ask follow-up questions, but that I had not been absorbing the information. I never had a single nightmare during the shoot. They started six to eight months later, when I really began concentrating on the translations."

The translation process was a long one, especially for the last segment of the film including the trials. There are close to 150 hours of trial footage, and that alone took a full-time translator for over a year.

CONCLUSION

What Anne Aghion thought would be a quick two year project turned into an epic venture. **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER** took nearly ten years to make. It was edited over a year and a half from 350 hours of tape. Translations alone took nearly two years.

The emotional toll was huge. Says Aghion, "My amazing editor, Nadia Ben Rachid and I spent years looking at footage of people who had gone through—or inflicted--unimaginable tragedy. The footage of the trials, when killers told the stories of their vicious acts with complete *sang-froid* gave us nightmares for weeks."

In fact, two-thirds of the way through, the director took off half a year to make the critically acclaimed Antarctic documentary ICE PEOPLE (the film is currently in release in the United States). "At the time I went, I thought I was following an old dream of mine to spend time in Antarctica, but I realize looking back that I needed the break in order to finish the work I was doing in Rwanda. By that point, I had developed a real sense of responsibility to the people of Gafumba for seeing **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER** through to the end, but I was beginning to crack at the seams a little from constant immersion in the genocide. Spending time in the huge space and absolute quiet of Antarctica gave me the courage to go back."

After all that, Aghion is adamant that the film does not try to answer the most obvious question: Is *Gacaca* working? Her answer is simply, "I don't know.

"Neither the genocide nor the *Gacaca* happened in a uniform way. It was different from hill to hill. While I did observe trials in a few other towns, I can really only speak about Gafumba. And even there, it is far too early to tell."

There is tremendous controversy over the program. With some 200,000 non-professional judges presiding over cases largely unsupervised, there has been very uneven application of the law. Survivor groups protest that the process re-traumatizes victims, and in many cases even puts them in danger of retribution. The

government's insistence on forgiveness is clearly another bitter pill to swallow. On the other hand, human rights observers such as the late Alison des Forges have challenged the government's decision to exclude from the process any war crimes by Tutsi soldiers against Hutu.

Aghion still maintains that the *Gacaca* might have something important to offer. "There are a lot of elements of this program that could have been handled much better. The survivors in particular have had a very rough time. Despite this, at the very least, they have produced a kind of appeasement of the population that, for the most part, has kept violence from erupting again. But whether that's due to the *Gacaca* or simply to the passage to time is impossible to tell."

Yet, she posits that, "It will be decades, maybe generations, before anyone really knows whether the *Gacaca* has been a positive force. The government claims to be achieving reconciliation, but you don't reconcile with the people who killed your family, or for that matter with the people you tried to kill. Think of how long these kinds of psychic wounds take to heal—in Europe, we are still reeling from World War I and, sixty years on, are just starting to digest the legacy of World War II."

Spending year after year with the people of Gafumba has brought her the realization that coping with this kind of trauma is a daily process --how well you are doing depends on how you feel, how your crops came in, whether your malaria is acting up.

"The bottom line is that in Rwanda, like many other places, enemies have to learn to live together –their subsistence depends on it. The best you can hope for at this point is peaceful coexistence, and in Gafumba, so far so good."

MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER

THE FILMMAKERS

ANNE AGHION - DIRECTOR & PRODUCER

A filmmaker whose awards include an Emmy, a UNESCO Fellini Prize, and a Guggenheim fellowship, **Anne Aghion** has been praised by critics as a documentarian who succeeds in conveying, a strong sense of the people and places she covers. **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER** is the culmination of ten years of filming in rural Rwanda, following the *Gacaca Tribunals* from their inception. It ties together Aghion's previous films, while exploring the dilemma facing Rwanda's people: When peace comes, how do you make it right again? Two of her previous films, which deal with post-genocide justice in Rwanda, are recognized as seminal works that have played a key "real-life" role both within Rwanda and across the globe. Journalist Philip Gourevitch, author of "We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families, Stories from Rwanda," noted that Aghion "captures quite precisely much of what is most compelling and unsettling about Rwanda's quest for justice after genocide."

The broadcast of "*GACACA, LIVING TOGETHER AGAIN IN RWANDA?*" on French television yielded "Special Picks" in eight of the country's top national publications, along with reviews calling it "remarkable," and "riveting," and praising Aghion's "open, human approach." **Variety** called the film "seminal." When it aired together with "*IN RWANDA WE SAY... THE FAMILY THAT DOES NOT SPEAK DIES*," the second part of her *Gacaca Trilogy*, on the Sundance Channel in April, 2004, to mark the ten-year commemoration of the genocide, the **Washington Post** called "*IN RWANDA WE SAY…*" "astonishing," and the **Connecticut Post** said they were "two of the best documentaries you are likely to see this year." "*IN RWANDA WE SAY…*" won a 2005 Emmy Award; "*GACACA*" received the 2003 Fellini Prize from UNESCO. Filmed over the course of four years in a tiny rural community, both films have been used by organizations involved with peace-building as a tool in understanding the "heart and mind" issues involved in bringing stabilization to a society after strife. They have also been screened in Rwanda—by NGOs as part of their training, and in programs to re-acclimate confessed perpetrators of genocide crimes, before release back into their communities. In 2009, the *Gacaca* Trilogy will be completed with the release of "*THE NOTEBOOKS OF MEMORY*," its chilling final chapter.

Aghion's first film, "Se Le Movio el Pisò" ("The Earth Moved Under Him—A Portrait of Managua" was the winner of the Havana Film Festival's 1996 Coral Award for Best Non-Latin American Documentary on Latin America. That film explored how slum dwellers in Nicaragua's capital had survived a series of natural, political and economic disasters. Her latest film, "*ICE PEOPLE*," is a feature-length documentary that explores the physical, emotional and spiritual adventure of doing science in

Antarctica, the earth's coldest continent. Described by **Variety** as "staggeringly beautiful," "*ICE PEOPLE*" conveys the vast beauty, the claustrophobia, the excitement, and the stillness of an experience set to nature's rhythm. When it opened in New York recently, the film was a critic's pick in **Time Out** New York and **New York Magazine** which called "*ICE PEOPLE*" "immersive, mesmerizing," **The New York Times** wrote that it was "instantly compelling. *ICE PEOPLE* sticks in the mind."

For most of her life, Aghion has been a dual resident of New York and Paris. She spent the first eight years of her career in both editorial and administrative capacities at The New York Times Paris bureau, and at the International Herald Tribune. Moving into film, she worked in a variety of capacities including videographer, production and post-production manager with filmmakers such as Richard Leacock & Valérie Lalonde, and Judith Abitbol, and for documentaries aired on major cable networks such as Canal+ and ARTE.

Aghion was awarded a prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship in 2005, and has received repeat grants from the Soros Documentary Fund, the Sundance Documentary Fund, and the United States Institute of Peace. She also received grants from the New York State Council on the Arts, the Compton Foundation, and the Peter S. Reed Foundation. In addition, she was able to generate funding for the *Gacaca* Trilogy from the Austrian Development Agency, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Development Cooperation, and Oxfam Novib thanks to the significant impact of "*GACACA*."

Anne Aghion holds a Bachelor of Arts Magna Cum Laude in Arab Language and Literature from Barnard College at Columbia University in New York, and following her studies, spent two years living in Cairo.

NADIA BEN RACHID – EDITOR

MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER is editor **Nadia Ben Rachid**'s fifth collaboration with filmmaker Anne Aghion, following their work on Emmy-winner "*IN RWANDA WE SAY… THE FAMILY THAT DOES NOT SPEAK DIES*," the UNESCO Fellini Prize-winner, "*GACACA, LIVING TOGETHER AGAIN IN RWANDA?*" and "*THE NOTEBOOKS OF MEMORY*," the final chapter in the *Gacaca* Trilogy, as well as on the highly acclaimed "*ICE PEOPLE*," a feature-length documentary that explores the physical, emotional, and spiritual adventure of living and conducting science in Antarctica.

With the rare talent to work equally well with documentaries and features, Paris-based Ben Rachid has amassed dozens of film, television and commercial credits since 1997. She has edited all the films by the world-renowned director Abderrahmane Sissako, including his most recent feature, "BAMAKO," which played at major showcases around the world, including the Cannes and New York film festivals. Following its stellar box office performance in France, the film was distributed to critical acclaim worldwide, including in the U.S. via New Yorker Films. In 1999, her work on Sissako's "LIFE ON EARTH" earned Ben Rachid the Editor's Award at

FESPACO (Ouagadougou Pan-African Festival for Film and Television). The film premiered at Cannes and went on to collect numerous awards at festivals around the world, including the Golden Spire at the San Francisco International Film Festival.

Ben Rachid also worked with noted French director Yamina Benguigui, including on her 2002 feature "Inch'Allah Dimanche"; the documentary "The Perfumed Garden," which won Best Documentary for that year at the African and Caribbean Film Festival (Vues d'Afrique) in Montreal; and a segment of the acclaimed 1998 documentary "Mémoires d'immigrés."

Among numerous other projects, she edited Michka Saäl's 2005 "Beckett's Prisoners" for the National Film Board of Canada; the 1999 documentary "Woubi Cheri" for award-winning documentarians Philip Brooks and Laurent Bocahut, which garnered Best Documentary awards at the New Festival in New York, the Turin Festival in Italy, and the Transgender Festival in London; and Rachid Bouchareb's first feature, "My Family Honor."

Ben Rachid's commercial work includes the trailer for The Michael Jackson Tour, for legendary producer Tarek Ben Ammar. Among her credits as assistant editor are Roman Polanski's "Bitter Moon," "Frantic," and "Pirates"; Claude Berri's "Germinal" and "Uranus"; Roland Joffe's "City of Joy"; Jacques Perrin's "The Children of Lumière"; and Agneska Holland's "The Conspiracy."

JAMES KAKWERERE - CAMERA

Cameraman **James Kakwerere** has been working with Anne Aghion since she first embarked on her *Gacaca* Trilogy in 2000. Since 1998, he has worked at ORINFOR, the Office Rwandais d'Information, an umbrella group that oversees Rwanda's news and media organizations, as a cameraman and photo editor. Kakwerere first met Aghion while she was researching her first film on the *Gacaca* and working on HIV-AIDS programming for USAID and Rwanda Television. As a native Rwandan and the only person behind the camera who spoke Kinyarwanda, he has contributed significantly to **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER** and Aghion's three earlier films about the quest for justice in Rwanda.

When Kakwerere first began filming "*GACACA, LIVING TOGETHER AGAIN IN RWANDA?*" he had been trained for television and had to learn how to create the longer, in-depth shots used in film. During the *Gacaca* Trilogy he learned how to film with his ears as well as his eyes and integrate sound with the visual imagery. With the skills he accumulated working on the Trilogy, he was selected to film several major events in Rwanda, including a visit by the President of the World Bank. In addition to his work on **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER**, Kakwerere is now the lead cameraman at Rwanda Television.

LINETTE FREWIN - CAMERA

Camerawoman **Linette Frewin** brings years of experience with documentary films to **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER**. Based in Zimbabwe, she has worked extensively in the Middle East on films like "Saddam's Killing Fields" (Mayavision/Central) and "Exporting Evil" (ITN/Channel 5), and in West Africa on an Associated Press report about ethnic violence between Christians and Muslims. She has also worked on the acclaimed "In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great" (Mayavision/Channel 4) which swooped across the Middle East from Egypt to India, in China on "Three Gorges Dam" and "Lost Treasures of the Yangtze" (both by Discovery), and in Haiti on "A Pig's Tale" (Channel 4). As a production assistant she was involved in J. Lee Thompson's 1985 remake of "King Solomon's Mines," with Richard Chamberlain and Sharon Stone, marking the centenary of Haggard's famous novel. In addition to **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER**, Frewin recently filmed and directed "Spreading the Word: On Tour with the Vagina Monologues" about that play's reception in Botswana and Mozambique. She also lends her talent to top local and international news agencies, including SABC, AuBC, NHK, and Reuters. Frewin has won several awards for her work, including the Population Institute's Global Media Award (2005), the Rory Peck Global Impact Award (2005) for Humanitarian Imagery, and the Prix Bayeux (2006).

RICHARD FLEMING - SOUND RECORDIST

Richard Fleming, sound recordist for **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER**, has worked with director Anne Aghion on the Emmy-winning documentary "*IN RWANDA WE SAY... THE FAMILY THAT DOES NOT SPEAK DIES*," and on "*THE NOTEBOOKS OF MEMORY*," the final chapter of the *Gacaca* Trilogy, as well as on Aghion's groundbreaking documentary, "*ICE PEOPLE*."

Since 1990 Fleming's film work has brought him to the farthest reaches of the globe. He has camped the frozen deserts of Antarctica, accompanied Kofi Annan around the world, flown missions over Kandahar with the U.S. Army Reserve, followed Imelda Marcos on the presidential campaign trail in the Philippines, and sweltered on the decks of a nuclear aircraft carrier plying the waters of the Persian Gulf.

Among his numerous credits are the documentaries From "Kansas to Kandahar," by noted director Cal Skaggs for the PBS series "America at a Crossroads," "Show of Force's Carrier Project," and "Kofi Annan: Center of the Storm," by renowned filmmaker David Grubin, both for PBS; "Sumo East and West," by Ferne Pearlstein, and "Iron Butterfly, The Story of Imelda Marcos," by Ramona Diaz, both for ITVS. Other credits include "Les Illuminations de Madame Narval," by Charles Najman, for the Franco-German television channel ARTE, and work as both a writer and recordist on Alex Wolfe's "Santo Domingo Blues." His dramatic credits include the multiple award-winning theatrical feature "La Ciudad," by David Riker.

Fleming is also an accomplished writer, photographer, and amateur musicologist. His

blog, "A Brooklynite on the Ice" <http://antarcticiana.blogspot.com/>, which began as an account of his adventures during his four-month shoot in Antarctica with Aghion, now focuses on his "actual and literary meanderings." His book "Walking to Guantanamo" and the companion volume of photographs, "The Road to Guantánamo," chronicling Fleming's year-long walk across the island of Cuba, has garnered glowing critical praise.

ASSUMPTA MUGIRANEZA - TRANSLATOR

Assumpta Mugiraneza has been working with Anne Aghion on translation of all her footage since the very first shoot. At first, she was one of eight translators. For the second film of the series, she shared the work with just one other translator. For **MY NEIGHBOR MY KILLER**, she worked almost entirely alone. In total, Mugiraneza has translated close to 350 hours of footage. Having grown up in Rwanda, she left in the late eighties to pursue her clinical psychology studies in France, where she settled for close to a decade. After many members of her family perished in the genocide, she shifted her focus from clinical psychology to social and cognitive psychology and she started teaching at Paris VIII University. She also decided to focus her studies on the hate language of genocide, comparing the Nazi discourse with the propaganda of the extremist Hutu power movement. Working with **Aghion**, she realized there was a need for her special expertise to help bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between the accounts of ordinary Rwandans in the hills and filmmakers and other researchers. This led her to delve deeper into her own research and in 2008, to organize an international conference in Kigali on "Speaking, Thinking and Writing the History of the Genocide." She then co-edited the proceedings of this conference in a special issue of the Revue d'Histoire de la Shoah in Paris, on Rwanda 15 years after the genocide. She decided to return to Rwanda in late 2007 to raise her four children there.

MON VOISIN MON TUEUR

UN FILM ÉCRIT, PRODUIT & RÉALISÉ PAR ANNE AGHION

Quand vient la paix, comment retisser les liens?

Une épopée émotionnelle en quête de coexistence au Rwanda.

SYNOPSIS

Comment accorder le pardon à ceux qui ont tué vos enfants ? En 1994, au Rwanda, des centaines de milliers de Hutu sont incités à exterminer la minorité tutsi. De la capitale à la colline la plus retirée du pays, les "patrouilles" locales hutu, armées de machettes et d'autres outils improvisés, massacrent sans distinction parents, amis et proches. Sept ans plus tard, en 2001, le gouvernement met en place les *gacaca* (pr.ga-CHA-cha), des tribunaux de proximité, dans lesquels les Rwandais des collines sont appelés à juger leurs voisins. Dans le cadre de cette expérience de réconciliation, les génocidaires ayant avoué leurs crimes sont relâchés, tandis que les survivants traumatisés sont invités à leur pardonner et à vivre à leurs côtés. Filmé sur près de dix ans sur une même colline, **MON VOISIN MON TUEUR** retrace l'impact de ces *gacaca* sur les survivants et les bourreaux. A travers les peurs et les colères, les accusations et les dénis, les vérités floues, l'inconsolable tristesse et l'espoir dans la vie retrouvée, Anne Aghion nous donne à voir le chemin émotionnel vers la coexistence.

NOTE D'INTENTION DE LA RÉALISATRICE

Il y a maintenant près de dix ans, je me rendais au Rwanda pour la première fois afin d'y réaliser un film sur les juridictions *gacaca*, ces tribunaux de proximité, que le gouvernement rwandais avait décidé de mettre en place pour juger les crimes de génocide. Je voulais voir de près à quoi ressemblerait cette tentative de justice complète qui devait permettre aux rescapés et aux bourreaux de se remettre à vivre ensemble dans ce petit pays ravagé par le cataclysme du génocide le plus efficace du XXème siècle.

J'avais alors l'intention de suivre la mise en place des *gacaca* dans une petite communauté rurale, et de clore le récit du film avec les premiers procès prévus sur cette colline. Très vite, je me suis rendue compte que l'établissement des *gacaca* prendrait plus de temps que je ne l'avais imaginé, et j'ai donc commencé par faire un premier film d'une heure, puis un deuxième, avant même que les procès ne démarrent. Après près de dix ans de tournage **MON VOISIN MON TUEUR**, que

j'achève aujourd'hui, est *LE FILM* que je suis partie faire fin 1999 lorsque j'ai démarré cette aventure.

L'idée des *gacaca* me semblait être d'une audace folle. Il s'agissait non seulement d'épingler chaque crime à chaque coupable, mais aussi de faire en sorte que la vérité soit exprimée au grand jour, à l'image de ce génocide dont on ne cesse de répéter qu'il a été perpétré en plein jour. Enfin, l'objectif des *gacaca* était aussi d'avoir une fonction cathartique pour permettre aux Rwandais des collines – Hutu, Tutsi et Twa - de retisser les liens sociaux qui les unissaient depuis des générations.

Pour mieux comprendre les enjeux de cette reconstruction, il faut imaginer que le Rwanda aujourd'hui, c'est un peu comme si, dans les années 50, on avait mis la Pologne, l'Allemagne, la France et Israël à l'intérieur des mêmes frontières, sans aucune possibilité pour les Juifs de quitter le territoire - et les gens - qui avaient tenté de les exterminer. Lorsque l'on constate la douleur qui perdure plus de 60 ans après la fin de la guerre, on commence à prendre la mesure de l'ampleur de la tâche qui attend les Rwandais.

Comme beaucoup d'autres de ma génération ayant grandi en France après la Shoah, j'ai éprouvé le besoin presque thérapeutique de comprendre et surtout de ressentir ce que la génération de mes parents – des Juifs - avait éprouvé au sortir de ce cataclysme. Le Rwanda de l'après-génocide m'a permis d'entr'ouvrir une porte sur la douleur insondable qui avait été si peu exprimée autour de moi.

En fait, **MON VOISIN MON TUEUR** rassemble dans un seul film, toutes les raisons pour lesquelles j'ai pris une caméra il y a près de 15 ans : refus de simplifier les émotions – volonté de décrire sur un temps long, et non de produire une vérité immédiate – et, plus que tout, comprendre comment les hommes, quand ils y sont obligés, font pour vivre ensemble dans des conditions extrêmes.

BIOGRAPHIE

Anne Aghion est une cinéaste franco-américaine qui vit à New York. Elle vient de terminer **MON VOISIN MON TUEUR**, un long-métrage sur la *gacaca* (Ga-CHA-cha) au Rwanda, qu'elle a tourné sur près de dix ans. Ses autres films au Rwanda, qui incluent *GACACA, REVIVRE ENSEMBLE AU RWANDA ?* (**prix Fellini de l'Unesco en 2003**), et *AU RWANDA ON DIT… LA FAMILLE QUI NE PARLE PAS MEURT* (**Emmy 2005**), ont été diffusés sur ARTE et Sundance Channel, et diffusés dans le monde entier. Elle vient également d'achever *LES CAHIERS DE LA MEMOIRE* le troisième volet de sa trilogie sur les *gacaca*.

En 2008, Anne Aghion réalise *ICE PEOPLE*, un film co-produit par ARTE, ITVS International et Sundance Channel qu'elle tourne en Antarctique et qui explore les défis personnels et émotionnels de la vie des chercheurs dans cet environnement extrême.

Son premier film, *SE LE MOVIO EL PISO – UN PORTRAIT DE MANAGUA* remporte un prix au Festival de la Havane en 1996.

Elle démarre sa carrière dans la presse écrite quotidienne, au bureau parisien du New York Times, et à l'International Herald Tribune. Anne Aghion a grandi à Paris. Elle est diplômée de langue et littérature arabes de Barnard College (Université de Columbia) à New York et est lauréate en 2005 de la prestigieuse **Fondation Guggenheim** aux Etats-Unis.

FICHE TECHNIQUE

Réalisation : Anne Aghion

Ecriture : Anne Aghion

Production : Anne Aghion

Montage : Nadia Ben Rachid

Image : James Kakwerere, Linette Frewin, Claire Bailly du Bois, Mathieu Hagnery, Simon Rittmeier

Son : Richard Fleming, Pierre Camus

Etalonnage : Eric Salleron

Montage son : Roland Duboué, Dolorès Jordi, Anne-Marguerite Monory

Mixage :Nathalie Vidal, Yves Servagent

Moyens techniques : Avidia, Studio Orlando, Noesis/Imagine

MON VOISIN MON TUEUR est une production de Gacaca Productions. Produit avec le soutien du Service fédéral des Affaires étrangères de Belgique, la Compton Foundation, le New York State Council on the Arts, Oxfam-Novib, la Coopération suisse au développement, et le United States Institute of Peace.

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