

In interviews, Deborah Harris speaks about seeking women's perspectives, although the violence was directly suffered mainly by men. The soundtrack features the contemporary reggae artist Queen Takiya with "Elder's Song." She asks, "Did you know how the elders suffered to bring this livity to I-and-I?" The only woman directly involved in the incident who testifies in the film is Sister Enis, a legend in the area. She describes hiding her husband in a mattress and giving birth the next day to a baby who lived for only seven days.

What really happened? Rasta carried on.

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Rehad Desai, director. *Miners Shot Down*. 2014. English, Xhosa, Zulu, and Fanakalo, with English subtitles. 86 minutes. South Africa. Icarus Films. \$398.00.

Documentary film played an important role in recording the atrocities of apartheid, capturing the resistance movement, and mobilizing support against apartheid. Within South Africa a radical documentary film movement emerged, which captured ordinary people taking on the oppressive regime. People were shown at work and in their communities organizing labor strikes, protesting apartheid, and being subjected to violence. This grassroots movement has been described as an example of Third Cinema, since it served as a tool to educate and inform, as well as to document violence and inequity and encourage action.

Now, two decades after the end of apartheid, a similar set of documentaries has begun to crop up, but these films are holding the democratically elected government accountable. The production quality of these films is higher than those produced under apartheid, but they still give voice to the disenfranchised masses, in this case, those for whom the multiracial democracy has not brought substantial change, especially in terms of economic equality. Rehad Desai's 2014 documentary *Miners Shot Down* is one such film. Desai follows the 2012 wildcat strikes at Lonmin, a British-owned platinum mine located in the North West province town of Marikana. The strike begins with workers demanding higher wages and ends in a massacre as police kill thirty-four workers and suppress the strike.

With more than a dozen films, including *Born into Struggle* (2004), *The Heart of Whiteness* (2005), and *The Battle for Johannesburg* (2010), Desai is known for engaging the legacy of colonialism and apartheid in contemporary South Africa. As he often does, Desai inserts himself into the film as narrator, reflecting on the events leading up to the massacre and articulating his own fear that "lives are now being sacrificed for

money, and the young democracy we had so much hope for [is] now under threat.” On August 10, 2012, rock drill operators began a wildcat strike. They were dissatisfied with the majority union at the mine, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which refused to address their concerns about wages. These workers felt that NUM had become too close to Lonmin management and they demanded an increase in wages from the U.S. equivalent of \$500 a month to \$1250. Desai uses video footage from Lonmin security cameras, police cameras, and media coverage to reconstruct the six days of the strike leading up to the massacre on August 16, 2012. This footage is intercut with interviews with miners, lawyers representing the slain workers, union leaders, and politicians, as well as recorded testimony from the Marikana Commission of Inquiry. Despite claims by the police that they acted in self-defense against threatening strikers, what emerges is a chilling account of police officers shooting workers without provocation.

As Desai notes, the Marikana massacre evoked memories of apartheid-era massacres, including Sharpeville in 1960 and Soweto in 1976. Indeed, these massacres exposed the brutality of the apartheid government and served as important catalysts in the struggle for freedom. Despite the new political dispensation, one gets the eerie sense that just as with the colonial and apartheid governments, when it comes to the interests of capital, black life is expendable. Hours before the massacre, hundreds of police arrive at the scene with thousands of rounds of live ammunition and four vans are ordered from the mortuary. As this activity is unfolding, Joseph Mathunjwa, president of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), the competing union at the mine, addresses the striking workers who are sitting quietly on the mountaintop across from the mine. Mathunjwa leads them in singing “Senzeni na?” (What have we done?), a dirge that was a staple during apartheid protests, and then encourages workers to disperse, stating, “Comrade, the life of a black person in Africa is so cheap. They will kill us, they will finish us and then they will replace us and continue to pay salaries that cannot change black people’s lives.” The film is filled with these moments of foreboding, as it becomes increasingly clear that the police, acting in collusion with Lonmin and the African National Congress (South Africa’s governing party), are preparing for a confrontation with the workers in order to stop the strike from spreading throughout the country. As the workers are walking down the mountain to return home, police box them in with armored vehicles and razor wire before firing bullets. Twenty minutes later the mayhem continues as unarmed mineworkers fleeing the area are hunted down and executed. A haunting soundtrack and lingering shots of the carnage make this unsettling film both an important historical document and a call to action.

Miners Shot Down has won awards at the One World Human Rights Film Festival, Encounters International Documentary Film Festival, and Durban International Film Festival, among others. Desai has also screened the film in townships and churches around South Africa in order to make it more

accessible. Significantly, he has incorporated an activist component to his role as filmmaker by encouraging viewers to pass resolutions in support of the miners within trade unions, raise funds to support the families of the slain miners, and organize screening parties to raise awareness about the massacre.

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Roy T. Anderson, director. *Akwantu: The Journey*. 2012. 87 minutes. English with English subtitles. United States. Art 4 Reel Filmworks, LLC. \$23.99.

Akwantu: The Journey is a documentary that marks Roy T. Anderson's feature-length directorial debut, and tells the story of the Maroons of Accompong, in Jamaica. Anderson, a veteran stuntman in several box office Hollywood films, addresses the origins, history, and culture of Maroons with virtuosity and imagination, especially since this documentary marks the filmmaker's personal effort to discover his own roots (<http://akwantuthemovie.com/>). The film was made by Anderson's own production company, Art 4 Reel Filmworks, LLC, and was an official selection in the Africa in the Picture Film Festival (2012) and the Pan African film festival (FESPACO, 2013), and received the Special Jury Award in the Belize International Film Festival (2012).

From New Jersey in the United States, to Canada, Jamaica, and Ghana, and back to Jamaica, the filmmaker undertakes a personal journey in search of his ancestral origins, and takes the viewer along, as if giving glimpses of his family photo albums, personal travelogues, and testimonials. The filmmaker's voice-over narration gives emphasis to the feeling of openness and sharing as we encounter his home videos, birth certificates, conversations, reunions, and celebrations with family members. This personal dimension does not trivialize the historical and cultural significance and depth of the documentary, but actually adds a sense of connectivity with the camera, the man behind it, and the viewer, especially as these personal stories get to be told by Maroons themselves.

The Maroons of Accompong Town in modern-day Jamaica constitute a closed independent community with lineages traced back to escaped slaves from Ghana. Today the Maroons constitute a nation within a nation, and have their own governing laws. They are genealogically linked to Asante people and to Akwamu, the dominant Ghanaian coast state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that also had a key role in the trade agreement that governed the flow of slaves between Africa and the Americas. Tracing the footsteps of the slaves, from the dungeon and the door of no return to slave ships and the New World, Anderson takes the