

**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT ON "EARTH MADE OF GLASS"
FILM BY DEBORAH SCRANTON**

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“The Truth will pass through the fire, but will not burn.”

- Rwandan proverb

When you start a film, the journey that awaits you can never be fully imagined.

After five years of working on two acclaimed films about the war in Iraq (The War Tapes, Bad Voodoo's War), my mind was beset by some unanswered questions. What remains after war ends? How can anyone forgive the murderers of a loved one? How do you break the cycle of violence? Is forgiveness enough to release a country from its past? What constitutes such forgiveness?

Contemplating telling the story of what happens after genocide ends, I had some trepidation. The horror narratives coming out of Rwanda had been so bleak, the violence so appalling, the hatred so chilling.

On May 1, 2008 I found myself seated next to the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame at a small dinner in his honor. As we spoke for several hours, he revealed himself to be warm, patient and determined to bring his country out from its nightmare. He told me that Rwanda is choosing a different path, between the justice of accountability and reconciliation. It brought to mind all the other areas of conflict around the world mired in endless cycles of violence and retribution without end. And my trepidation turned into resolve.

Once President Kagame agreed to grant us unprecedented access and become one of the main characters of the film, there was no turning back. I had to make this film. As it turned out, I had no expectation how prescient the timing would be...

Our production team (Cinematographer P.H. O'Brien, Producer Reid Carolin and I) arrived in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, and over the next year returned there two more times.

On August 6th, 2008, against the backdrop of the world's deadliest war in neighboring Eastern Congo, President Kagame released a report detailing the French government's hidden complicity in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Three months later France arrested his closest aide, Rose Kabuye, on charges of terrorism. As filmmakers we suddenly found ourselves immersed in one of the greatest political thrillers of the time.

As President Kagame fought to free Rose from France and expose the truth about what really happened in Rwanda fifteen years ago, we also wanted to contrast what life was like for ordinary Rwandans who searched for a better future. Jean Pierre Sagahutu, a

genocide survivor haunted by his father's unsolved murder, has roamed the countryside on a fifteen-year-search for clues. We accompanied him on the journey as he tracked down and confronted one of his father's killers.

As President Kagame and Jean Pierre each pursue the truth - with the fate of a family and a country hanging in the balance - they find themselves confronted with the same choice: to enact vengeance or turn the other cheek...

Though they never met, the President and an ordinary man become inextricably linked in our film. We learn that above all else, the need for truth becomes paramount. Without truth, there can be no forgiveness. As Jean Pierre defines forgiveness, 'the hatred and violence stops with me, I will not pass it down to my children'. For him, forgiveness doesn't mean forgiving the killers. It means stopping the cycle of hate.

There is a conscious, disciplined approach to stop the hate in their own generation, now, not over time. Now. This is an internal choice that need not involve anyone else. The process demands great sacrifice if only for our children's sake. This is a lesson Rwanda can teach the world.

Former President Bill Clinton has discussed how Israel and Palestine could draw lessons from Rwanda. The survivors, he said, sought reconciliation, not vengeance. They do this work of reconciliation "with people who killed them and their loved ones because they couldn't get away from each other; it's a little place, and they decided to begin again."

This small country in Africa could lead the way to peace by providing a model for ending hatred and violence throughout the world. Because the world itself has become a small place, we all have the choice to begin anew. Not later, not over time. Now.

Deborah Scranton,
Goshen, New Hampshire, March 2010