



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE  
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA  
la Biennale di Venezia 2014  
Venezia 71 - Competition

FINAL CUT FOR REAL PRESENTS

tiff. toronto  
international  
film festival®

OFFICIAL SELECTION 2014



*Profound,  
visionary,  
stunning.*

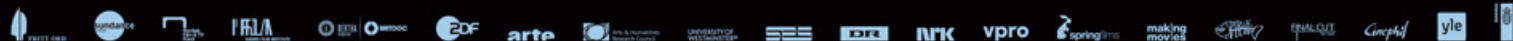
- WERNER HERZOG

# THE LOOK OF SILENCE

A FILM BY JOSHUA OPPENHEIMER  
(THE ACT OF KILLING)

DIRECTED BY JOSHUA OPPENHEIMER PRODUCED BY SIGNE BYRGE SØRENSEN CO-DIRECTOR ANONYMOUS DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY LARS SKREE  
EDITOR NIELS PAGH ANDERSEN SOUND EDITOR & MIXER HENRIK GARNOV EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS WERNER HERZOG ERROL MORRIS  
ANDRÉ SINGER ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS ANNE KOHNCKE MARIA KRISTENSEN HEIDI ELISE CHRISTENSEN JORAM TEN BRINK  
CO-PRODUCERS ANONYMOUS KAARLE AHO TORSTEIN GRUDE BJARTE MØRNER TVEIT LINE PRODUCERS ANONYMOUS ANONYMOUS  
COLORIST AND VISUAL EFFECTS TOM CHR. LILLETVEDT GRAPHICS NR2154 DEVELOPED WITH THE SUPPORT OF DANISH FILM INSTITUTE DANIDA  
PRODUCED WITH THE SUPPORT OF DANISH FILM INSTITUTE NORDISK FILM & TV FOND DANIDA BERTHA BRITDOC FUND FOR JOURNALISM  
THE FINNISH FILM FOUNDATION THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION FOUNDATION SUNDANCE INSTITUTE DOCUMENTARY FILM PROGRAM  
CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION IN ARTS AND MEDIA, UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER ARTS AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL, UK  
PRODUCED IN COLLABORATION WITH ZDF IN COLLABORATION WITH ARTE DR K NRK YLE VPRO VISION MACHINE FILM PROJECT  
PRODUCED BY FINAL CUT FOR REAL APS CO-PRODUCED BY ANONYMOUS MAKING MOVIES OY PIRAYA FILM IN ASSOCIATION WITH SPRING FILMS LTD  
INTERNATIONAL SALES AGENT CINEPHIL - PHILIPPA KOWARSKY WWW.CINEPHIL.CO.UK FESTIVAL DISTRIBUTION DANISH FILM INSTITUTE

WWW.THELOOKOFSILENCE.COM





# THE LOOK OF SILENCE

**A film by Joshua Oppenheimer**

*"The Look of Silence is profound, visionary, and stunning."*  
**Werner Herzog**

"One of the greatest and most powerful documentaries ever made.  
A profound comment on the human condition."  
**Errol Morris**

Running time: 99 min (25fsp), 103 min (24fsp)

Year: 2014

Language: Indonesian, Javanese

Countries of production: Denmark, Indonesia, Norway, Finland & UK

Principal Producer: Final Cut for Real, (Denmark)

Co-producers: Anonymous, (Indonesia) Piraya Film, (Norway), Making Movies  
(Finland) and Spring Films (UK)

## **Production Company**

Final Cut for Real  
Contact: Signe Byrge Sørensen  
Forbindelsesvej 7  
DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark  
www.final-cut.dk  
byrge@final-cut.dk  
T: +45 35 43 60 43  
M: +45 41 18 48 90

## **International Sales**

Contact: Philippa Kowarsky,  
T: + 972 54 496 1114  
philippa@cinephil.co.il

## **International Press (Venice)**

WOLF Consultants  
Gordon Spragg, Laurin Dietrich,  
Michael Arnon  
hello@wolf-con.com  
T: +49 157 7474 9724

## **Italian Press (Venice)**

Claudia Tomassini  
claudia@claudiatomassini.com  
M: +39 334 3075056  
Federica Ceraolo  
federica.ceraolo@gmail.com  
M: + 39 340 9172947

## **Press (Toronto)**

Susan Norget Film Promotion  
Contact: Susan Norget  
T: +1 917 833 3056  
E: susan@norget.com

Press Material available at: [www.wolf-con.com/download](http://www.wolf-con.com/download)

# CONTENTS

<b>SYNOPSIS</b>	<b>p. 3</b>
<b>DIRECTOR STATEMENT</b>	<b>p. 3</b>
<b>THE STORY OF THE PRODUCTION</b>	<b>p. 3</b>
<b>IMPACT OF <i>THE ACT OF KILLING</i></b>	<b>p. 7</b>
<b>POLITICAL SITUATION IN INDONESIA TODAY</b>	<b>p. 8</b>
<b>JOSHUA OPPENHEIMER</b> <b>Biography &amp; Filmography</b>	<b>p. 9</b>
<b>THE 1965 – 1966 MASSACRES IN INDONESIA</b> <b>Historical Context</b>	<b>p. 10</b>
<b><i>THE LOOK OF SILENCE</i> - CREDITS</b>	<b>p. 13</b>

## SYNOPSIS

Through Joshua Oppenheimer's work filming perpetrators of the Indonesian genocide, a family of survivors discovers how their son was murdered and the identity of the men who killed him. The youngest brother is determined to break the spell of silence and fear under which the survivors live, and so confronts the men responsible for his brother's murder – something unimaginable in a country where killers remain in power.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*The Act of Killing* exposed the consequences for all of us when we build our everyday reality on terror and lies. *The Look of Silence* explores what it is like to be a survivor in such a reality. Making any film about survivors of genocide is to walk into a minefield of clichés, most of which serve to create a heroic (if not saintly) protagonist with whom we can identify, thereby offering the false reassurance that, in the moral catastrophe of atrocity, we are nothing like perpetrators. But presenting survivors as saintly in order to reassure ourselves that we are good is to use survivors to deceive ourselves. It is an insult to survivors' experience, and does nothing to help us understand what it means to survive atrocity, what it means to live a life shattered by mass violence, and to be silenced by terror. To navigate this minefield of clichés, we have had to explore silence itself.

The result, *The Look of Silence*, is, I hope, a poem about a silence borne of terror – a poem about the necessity of breaking that silence, but also about the trauma that comes when silence is broken. Maybe the film is a monument to silence – a reminder that although we want to move on, look away and think of other things, nothing will make whole what has been broken. Nothing will wake the dead. We must stop, acknowledge the lives destroyed, strain to listen to the silence that follows.

## THE LOOK OF SILENCE – Story of the Production

I first went to Indonesia in 2001 to help oil palm plantation workers make a film documenting and dramatizing their struggle to organize a union, in the aftermath of the US-supported Suharto dictatorship – under which unions were illegal. In the remote plantation villages of North Sumatra, one could hardly perceive that military rule had officially ended three years earlier.

The conditions I encountered were deplorable. Women working on the plantation were forced to spray herbicide without protective clothing. The mist would enter their lungs and then their bloodstreams, destroying their liver tissue. The women would fall ill, and many would die in their forties. When they protested their conditions, the Belgian-owned company would hire paramilitary thugs to threaten them, and sometimes physically attack them.

Fear was their biggest obstacle they faced in organizing a union. The Belgian company could get away with poisoning its employees because the workers were afraid. I quickly learned the source of this fear: the plantation workers had a large and active union until 1965, when their parents and grandparents were accused of being “communist sympathizers” (simply for being in the

union), and put into concentration camps, exploited as slave labor, and ultimately murdered by the army and civilian death squads.

In 2001, the killers not only enjoyed complete impunity; they and their protégés still dominated all levels of government, from the plantation village to the parliament. Survivors lived in fear that the massacres could happen again at any time.

After we completed the film (*The Globalisation Tapes*, 2002), the survivors asked us to return as quickly as possible to make another film about the source of their fear – that is, a film about what it's like for survivors to live surrounded by the men who murdered their loved ones, men still in positions of power.

We returned almost immediately, in early 2003, and began investigating one 1965 murder that the plantation workers spoke of frequently. The victim's name was Ramli, and his name was used almost as a synonym for the killings in general.

I came to understand the reason this particular murder was so often discussed: there were witnesses. It was undeniable. Unlike the hundreds of thousands of victims who disappeared at night from concentration camps, Ramli's death was public. There were witnesses to his final moments, and the killers left his body in the oil palm plantation, less than two miles from his parents' home. Years later, the family was able to surreptitiously erect a gravestone, though they could only visit the grave in secret.

Survivors and ordinary Indonesians alike would talk about "Ramli," I think, because his fate was grim evidence of what had happened to all the others, and to the nation as a whole. Ramli was proof that the killings, no matter how taboo, had, in fact, occurred. His death verified for the villagers the horrors that the military regime threatened them into pretending had never occurred, yet threatened to unleash again. To speak of "Ramli" and his murder was to pinch oneself to make sure one is awake, a reminder of the truth, a commemoration of the past, a warning for the future. For survivors and the public on the plantation, remembering "Ramli" was to acknowledge the source of their fear – and thus a necessary first step to overcoming it.

And so, when I returned in early 2003, it was inevitable that Ramli's case would come up often. The plantation workers quickly sought out his family, introducing me to Ramli's dignified mother, Rohani, his ancient but playful father, Rukun, and his siblings – including the youngest, Adi, an optician, born after the killings.

Rohani thought of Adi as a replacement for Ramli. She had Adi so she could continue to live, and Adi has lived with that burden his whole life. Like children of survivors all across Indonesia, Adi grew up in a family officially designated "politically unclean," impoverished by decades of extortion by local military officials, and traumatized by the genocide.

Because Adi was born after the killings, he was not afraid to speak out, to demand answers. I believe he gravitated to my filmmaking as a way of understanding what his family had been through, a way of expressing and overcoming a terror everybody around him had been too afraid to acknowledge.

I befriended Adi at once and together we began gathering other survivors' families in the region. They would come together and tell stories, and we would film. For many, it was the first time they had publicly spoken about what happened. On one occasion, a survivor arrived at Ramli's parents' home, trembling with fear, terrified that if the police discovered what we were doing, she would be arrested and forced into slave labor, as she had throughout the years of dictatorship. Yet she came because she was determined to testify. Each time a motorcycle or car would pass, we would stop filming, hiding what equipment we could. Subject to decades of economic apartheid, survivors rarely could afford more than a bicycle so the sound of a motor meant an outsider was passing.

The Army, which is stationed in every village in Indonesia, quickly found out what we were doing and threatened the survivors, including Adi's siblings, not to participate in the film. The survivors urged me, "Before you give up and go home, try to film the perpetrators. They may tell you how they killed our relatives." I did not know if it was safe to approach the killers, but when I did I found all of them to be boastful, immediately recounting the grisly details of the killings, often with smiles on their faces, in front of their families, even their small grandchildren. In this contrast between survivors forced into silence, and perpetrators boastfully recounting stories far more incriminating than anything the survivors could have told, I felt I'd wandered into Germany 40 years after the Holocaust, only to find the Nazis still in power.

When I showed these testimonials to those survivors who wanted to see it, including to Adi and Ramli's other siblings, everybody said, more or less: "You are on to something terribly important. Keep filming the perpetrators, because anybody who sees this will be forced to acknowledge the rotten heart of the regime the killers have built." From that point on, I felt entrusted by the survivors and human rights community to do a work that they could not safely do themselves: filming the perpetrators. All of them would enthusiastically invite me to the places they killed, and launch into spontaneous demonstrations of how they killed. They would complain afterwards that they had not thought to bring along a machete to use as a prop, or a friend to play a victim. One day, early in this process, I met the leader of the death squad on the plantation where we had made *The Globalisation Tapes*. He and a fellow executioner invited me to a clearing on the banks of Snake River, a spot where he had helped murder 10,500 people. Suddenly, I realized he was telling me how he had killed Ramli. I had stumbled across one of Ramli's killers.

I told Adi about this encounter, and he and other family members asked to see the footage. That was how they learned the details of Ramli's death.

For the next two years, from 2003-2005, I filmed every perpetrator I could find across North Sumatra, working from death squad to death squad up the chain of command, from the countryside to the city. Anwar Congo, the man who would become the main character in *The Act of Killing*, was the 41st perpetrator I filmed.

I spent the next five years shooting *The Act of Killing*, and throughout the process Adi would ask to see material we were filming. He would watch as much as I could find time to show him. He was transfixed.

Perpetrators on film normally deny their atrocities (or apologize for them), because by the time filmmakers reach them they have been removed from power, and their actions condemned and expiated. Here I was filming

perpetrators of genocide who won, who built a regime of terror founded on the celebration of genocide, and who remain in power. They have not been forced to admit what they did was wrong. It is in this sense that *The Act of Killing* is not a documentary about a genocide 50 years ago. It is an exposé of a present-day regime of fear. The film is not a historical narrative. It is a film about history itself, about the lies victors tell to justify their actions, and the effects of those lies; about an unresolved traumatic past that continues to haunt the present.

I knew from the start of my journey that there was another, equally urgent film to make, also about the present. *The Act of Killing* is haunted by the absent victims – the dead. Almost every painful passage culminates abruptly in a haunted and silent tableau, an empty, often ruined landscape, inhabited by a single lost, lonely figure. Time stops. There is a rupture in the film's point of view, an abrupt shift to silence, a commemoration of the dead, and the lives pointlessly destroyed. I knew that I would make another film, one where we step into those haunted spaces and feel viscerally what it is like for the survivors forced to live there, forced to build lives under the watchful eyes of the men who murdered their loved ones, and remain powerful. That film is *The Look of Silence*.

Apart from the older footage from 2003-2005 that Adi watches, we shot *The Look of Silence* in 2012, after editing *The Act of Killing* but before releasing it – after which I knew I could no longer safely return to Indonesia. We worked closely with Adi and his parents, who had become, along with my anonymous Indonesian crew, like an extended family to me.

Adi spent years studying footage of perpetrators. He would react with shock, sadness and outrage. He wanted to make sense of that experience. Meanwhile, his children were in school, being taught that what had happened to them – enslavement, torture, murder, decades of political apartheid – all of this was their fault, instilling them and other survivors' children with shame. Adi was deeply affected – and angered – by the boasting of the perpetrators, his parents' trauma and fear and the brainwashing of his children. Rather than pick up where we left off in 2003, gathering survivors together to recount their experiences, Adi wanted to meet the men involved with his brother's murder. By introducing himself to them as the brother of their victim, he hoped they would be forced to acknowledge that they killed human beings.

For a victim to confront a perpetrator in Indonesia is all but unimaginable – as one can see from *The Act of Killing*. I set out to do something unprecedented: make a film where victims confront perpetrators while the perpetrators still hold power. The confrontations were dangerous. When we'd meet more powerful perpetrators, we would bring only Adi and my Danish crew, cinematographer Lars Skree and producer Signe Byrge Sørensen. Adi would come with no ID card. We would empty all numbers from our telephones and bring a second car we could switch to minutes after leaving, making it harder for the perpetrators to send police or thugs to follow us. But none of the confrontations ended violently, largely due to Adi's patience and empathy, and the fact that the perpetrators were not quite sure how to react to us because they'd known me from years before.

Still, the confrontations were tense. Again and again, Adi says the unsayable, leaving the audience to feel what it is like to live as a survivor, and to perceive the contours of an oppressive silence borne of fear.

## IMPACT OF *THE ACT OF KILLING*

*The Act of Killing* had the impact the survivors hoped for when they first encouraged me to film the perpetrators. It has been screened thousands of times in Indonesia, and is available for free online to anyone in the country. This has helped catalyze a transformation in how Indonesia understands its past. The media and public alike are now able, for the first time without fear, to investigate the genocide as a genocide – and to debate the links between the moral catastrophe of the killings and the moral catastrophe of the present-day regime built, and still presided over, by the killers.

In October 2012, Indonesia's most important news publication, Tempo Magazine, published a special double edition dedicated to *The Act of Killing*, including 75 pages of boastful perpetrators' testimony from across Indonesia. The magazine's editors gathered this testimony to show that the film could have been made anywhere in Indonesia, that there are thousands of feared perpetrators enjoying impunity around the country, and that the problems of corruption and gangsterism are systemic. This special edition broke a 47-year silence about the genocide in the mainstream media.

Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights issued its statement about the film: "If we are to transform Indonesia into the democracy it claims to be, citizens must recognize the terror and repression on which our contemporary history has been built. No film, or any other work of art for that matter, has done this more effectively than *The Act of Killing*. [It] is essential viewing for us all."

For a long time, the Indonesian government ignored *The Act of Killing*, hoping it would go away. When the film was nominated for an Academy award, the Indonesian president's spokesman acknowledged that the 1965 genocide was a crime against humanity, and that Indonesia needs reconciliation – but in its own time. While this was not an embrace of the film, it was incredible, because it represents an about-face for the government: until then, it had maintained that the killings were heroic and glorious.

There is a scene in *The Act of Killing* in which I accuse one of the perpetrators of committing war crimes, and he responds by accusing the West of hypocrisy, noting that the US slaughtered the native Americans. More to the point, the US and the UK helped engineer the Indonesian genocide and for decades enthusiastically supported the military dictatorship that came to power through the slaughter.

When *The Act of Killing* was awarded a BAFTA, I used my acceptance speech to note that neither the UK nor the US can have an ethical relationship with Indonesia (or so many other countries across the global south) until we acknowledge the crimes of the past, and our collective role in supporting, participating in, and – ultimately – ignoring those crimes.

A film cannot change a country's political landscape. Like the child in the Emperor's New Clothes, it can only create a space for the people who see it to discuss the nation's most painful and important problems without fear, and for the first time.

Into this space comes *The Look of Silence*.



## POLITICAL SITUATION IN INDONESIA TODAY

In July 2014, Indonesia elected its first president who doesn't come from an elite background, is not an oligarch who enriched himself through corruption or the plunder of the nation's resources, and isn't a military general who rose to power through the military dictatorship.

President-elect Joko Widodo, commonly referred to as "Jokowi," has shown a real concern for the plight of ordinary Indonesians and has been outspoken on the need to acknowledge the human rights violations committed by the military. Nevertheless, his supporters include army generals surrounded by killers and their cronies, including retired army generals Hendropriyono and Wiranto, both of whom are responsible for some of the worst massacres in the history of the New Order military dictatorship. Moreover, Jokowi selected for his running mate Jusuf Kalla, the vice president who, in *The Act of Killing*, gives a speech at a paramilitary rally in which he says, essentially, we need our gangsters to beat people up and get things done.

We can say, however, that Jokowi's opponent, oligarch and former commander of Indonesia's notorious special forces, Prabowo Subianto, embodied the darkest side of Indonesian politics. Prabowo is infamous for masterminding the disappearance, torture and execution of student activists in 1998, pogroms against the ethnic Chinese in 1998, and massacres in East Timor. During the election campaign, his campaign team threatened critical journalists with arrest, he fanned the flames of religious extremism, and he said Indonesia is not ready for electoral democracy. His defeat, however narrow, is an enormous relief for survivors of human rights abuse, religious and ethnic minorities, and everybody struggling for genuine democracy in Indonesia.

Joko Widodo's strong track record as Governor of Jakarta, as well as the electorate's rejection of the old regime, is, finally, cause for hope.

## JOSHUA OPPENHEIMER

### Biography

Born in 1974, USA, Joshua Oppenheimer is based in Copenhagen, Denmark, where he is a partner at the production company Final Cut for Real. Oppenheimer has worked for over a decade with militias, death squads and their victims to explore the relationship between political violence and the public imagination. Educated at Harvard and Central Saint Martins, his debut feature-length film is *The Act of Killing* (2012). His earlier works include *The Globalisation Tapes* (2002, produced with Christine Cynn), *The Entire History of the Louisiana Purchase* (1998), *These Places We've Learned to Call Home* (1996), and other shorts. Oppenheimer is artistic director of the International Centre for Documentary and Experimental Film, University of Westminster.

### Filmography

- *The Act of Killing* (159 min, 117 min, 95 min - winner of 72 international awards, including the European Film Award 2013, BAFTA 2014, Asia Pacific Screen Award 2013, Berlinale Panorama Audience Award 2013, Guardian Film Award 2014 for Best Film; nominated for the 2014 Academy Award® for Best Documentary; released theatrically in 30 countries; screened in countless film festivals, including the Telluride Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, New Directors/New Films, and Berlin International Film Festival.
- *The Globalisation Tapes* (documentary, produced with Christine Cynn, 2002)
- *The Entire History of the Louisiana Purchase* (50 min, 1997; Gold Hugo, Chicago, 1998; Telluride Film Festival, 1997)
- *These Places We Learned to Call Home* (short, 1997; Gold Spire, San Francisco, 1997)

## Historical Context: THE 1965 – 1966 MASSACRES IN INDONESIA

*Edited from observations on the massacres, their aftermath and implications, by Historian John Roosa (Professor of History, University of British Columbia; Author of "Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup D'Etat in Indonesia"). Additional opening and closing notes by Joshua Oppenheimer.*

In 1965, the Indonesian government was overthrown by the military. Sukarno, Indonesia's first president, founder of the non-aligned movement, and leader of the national revolution against Dutch colonialism, was deposed and replaced by right-wing General Suharto. The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which had been a core constituency in the struggle against Dutch colonialism, and which had firmly supported President Sukarno (who was not a communist), was immediately banned.

On the eve of the coup, the PKI was the largest communist party in the world, outside of a communist country. It was officially committed to winning power through elections, and its affiliates included all of Indonesia's trade unions and cooperatives for landless farmers. Its major campaign issues included land reform, as well as nationalizing foreign-owned mining, oil, and plantation companies. In this, they sought to mobilize Indonesia's vast natural resources for the benefit of the Indonesian people, who, in the aftermath of three hundred years of colonial exploitation, were, on the whole, extremely poor.

After the 1965 military coup, anybody opposed to the new military dictatorship could be accused of being a communist. This included union members, landless farmers, intellectuals, and the ethnic Chinese, as well as anybody who struggled for a redistribution of wealth in the aftermath of colonialism. In less than a year, and with the direct aid of western governments, over one million of these "communists" were murdered. In America, the massacre was regarded as a major "victory over communism," and generally celebrated as good news. Time Magazine reported "the West's best news for years in Asia," while The New York Times ran the headline, "A Gleam of Light in Asia," and praised Washington for keeping its hand in the killings well hidden. (The scapegoating of the ethnic Chinese, who had come to Indonesia in the 18th and 19th centuries, was done at the incitement of the US intelligence services, which sought to drive a wedge between the new Indonesian regime and the People's Republic of China. The slaughter of village-level members of the PKI and its affiliate unions and cooperatives was also encouraged by the US, who was worried that without a "scorched earth" approach, the new Indonesian regime might eventually accommodate the PKI base.)

In many regions of Indonesia, the army recruited civilians to carry out the killings. They were organized into paramilitary groups, given basic training (and significant military back up). In the province of North Sumatra and elsewhere, the paramilitaries were recruited largely from the ranks of gangsters, or "preman." Ever since the massacres, the Indonesian government has celebrated the "extermination of the communists" as a patriotic struggle, and celebrated the paramilitaries and gangsters as its heroes, rewarding them with power and privilege. These men and their protégés have occupied key positions of power – and persecuted their opponents – ever since. The pretext for the 1965-66 genocide was the assassination of six army generals on the night of October 1, 1965.

1.10.1965: The Thirtieth of September Movement (Gerakan 30 September, or G30S), made up of disaffected junior Indonesian Armed Forces Officers, assassinated six Indonesian Army Generals in an abortive coup and dumped their bodies down a well south of the city. At the same time, the Movement's troops took over the national radio station and announced that they intended to protect President Sukarno from a cabal of right-wing army generals plotting a seizure of power. The Movement was defeated before most Indonesians knew it existed. The senior surviving army commander, Major General Suharto, launched a quick counter-attack and drove the Movement's troops from Jakarta within one day.

Suharto accused the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) of masterminding the Movement and then orchestrated an extermination of persons affiliated with the party. Suharto's military rounded up over a million and a half people, accusing all of them of being involved in the Movement. In one of the worst bloodbaths of the 20th century, hundreds of thousands of individuals were massacred by the army and its affiliated militias, largely in Central Java, East Java, Bali, and North Sumatra from late 1965 to mid-1966. In a climate of national emergency, Suharto gradually usurped President Sukarno's authority and established himself as the *de facto* president (with the power to dismiss and appoint ministers) by March 1966.

The massacres were out of all proportion to their ostensible cause. The Movement was a small-scale conspiratorial action organized by a handful of people. In total, it killed twelve people. Suharto exaggerated its magnitude until it assumed the shape of an ongoing, nation-wide conspiracy to commit mass murder. All the millions of people associated with the PKI, even illiterate peasants in remote villages, were presented as murderers collectively responsible for the Movement.

Indonesian government and military officials, to the very end of the Suharto regime in 1998, invoked the specter of the PKI in response to any disturbance or sign of dissent. The key phrase in the regime's argument was "the latent danger of communism." The unfinished eradication of the PKI was, in a very real sense, the *raison d'être* of the Suharto regime. The original legal act under which the regime ruled Indonesia for over thirty years was Sukarno's presidential order of 3rd October 1965, authorizing Suharto to "restore order." That was an emergency order. But for Suharto, the emergency never ended.

In constructing a legitimating ideology for his dictatorship, Suharto presented himself as the savior of the nation for having defeated the Movement. His regime incessantly drilled the event into the minds of the populace by every method of state propaganda: textbooks, monuments, street names, films, museums, commemorative rituals and national holidays. The Suharto regime justified its existence by placing the Movement at the center of its historical narrative and depicting the PKI as ineffably evil. Under Suharto, anti-communism became the state religion, complete with sacred sites, rituals, and dates.

It is remarkable that the anti-PKI violence, as such a large-scale event, has been so badly misunderstood. No doubt, the fact that both military personnel and civilians committed the killings has blurred the issue of responsibility. Nonetheless, from what little is already known, it is clear that the military bears the largest share of responsibility and that the killings represented bureaucratic, planned violence more than popular, spontaneous violence. The Suharto clique of officers, by inventing false stories about the Movement and strictly controlling the media, created a sense among civilians that the PKI

was on the warpath. If there had not been this deliberate provocation from the military, the populace would not have believed the PKI was a mortal threat since the party was passive in the aftermath of the Movement. (The military worked hard to whip up popular anger against the PKI from early October 1965 onwards; and the US Government actively encouraged the Indonesian military to pursue rank and file communists). It prodded civilian militias into acting, gave them assurances of impunity, and arranged logistical support.

Contrary to common belief, frenzied violence by villagers was virtually unheard of. Suharto's army usually opted for mysterious disappearances rather than exemplary public executions. The army and its militias tended to commit its large-scale massacres in secret: they took captives out of prison at night, trucked them to remote locations, executed them, and then buried the corpses in unmarked mass graves or threw them into rivers.

The tragedy of modern Indonesian history lies not just in the army-organized mass killings of 1965-66 but also in the rise to power of the killers, of persons who viewed massacres and psychological warfare operations as legitimate and normal modes of governance. A regime that legitimated itself by pointing to a mass grave at the site of the well, vowing "never again," left countless mass graves from one end of the country to the other, from Aceh on the western edge to Papua on the eastern edge. The occupation of East Timor from 1975 to 1999 similarly left tens, if not hundreds, of thousands dead, many anonymously buried. Each mass grave in the archipelago marks an arbitrary, unavowed, secretive exercise of state power.

The obsession with a relatively minor event (the Movement) and the erasure of a world-historical event (the mass killings of 1965-66) has blocked empathy for the victims, such as the relatives of those men and women who disappeared. While a monument stands next to the well in which the Movement's troops dumped the bodies of the six army generals on October 1, 1965, there is no monument to be found at the mass graves that hold the hundreds of thousands of persons killed in the name of suppressing the Movement.

Focus on who killed the army generals on September 30, 1965 has functioned as a fetish, displacing all attention from the murder of over one million alleged communists in the months that followed. Suharto's regime produced endless propaganda about the brutal communists behind the killing of the generals, and still today most discussion of the genocide has been displaced by this focus. And this is true even in most English-language sources. To me, participating in the debate around "who killed the generals" feels grotesque, which is why it does not feature in *The Act of Killing*. The Rwandan genocide was triggered when Rwandan president Juvénal Habyarimana (a Hutu) died after his airplane was shot down on its approach to Kigali. To focus on who shot down the plane (was it Tutsi extremists? was it Hutu extremists acting as provocateurs?) rather than the murder of 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates over the next 100 days would be unconscionable.

Similarly, who started the Reichstag fire is irrelevant to an understanding of the Holocaust. Whether or not the disgruntled army officers behind the killing of the six generals had the support of the head of the PKI is much more than beside the point: it plays the pernicious role of deflecting attention from a mass murder of world-historical importance. Imagine if, in Rwanda, the fundamental question about what happened in 1994 was "who shot down the president's plane?" This would only be thinkable if the killers remained in power.



## ***THE LOOK OF SILENCE - CREDITS***

Director	Joshua Oppenheimer
Co-director	Anonymous
Produced by	Signe Byrge Sørensen
Executive Producers	Werner Herzog Errol Morris André Singer
Associate producers	Anne Köhncke Maria Kristensen Heidi Elise Christensen Joram Ten Brink
Co-producers	Anonymous Kaarle Aho Torstein Grude Bjarte Mørner Tveit
Director of Photography	Lars Skree
Additional Camera	Anonymous Joshua Oppenheimer Christine Cynn
Editor	Niels Pagh Andersen
Assistant Editor	Mariko Montpetit
Sound Editor and Mix	Henrik Garnov
Line Producers	Anonymous Anonymous
Production Managers	Maria Kristensen Heidi Elise Christensen Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous
Assistant Directors	Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous
Production Assistants	Anonymous Anonymous
Camera assistant	Anonymous
Gaffer	Anonymous

Drivers	Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous
Indonesian Research and Outreach	Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous
Editing Assistant	Virgil Kastrup
Post Production Managers	Maria Kristensen Lina Wichmann
Post Production Services	Hinterland AS Duckling Nordisk Film Shortcut Dicentia Studios
Colorist and Visual Effects	Tom Chr. Lilletvedt
Assistant Colourist	Joakim Hauge
Special Effects	Nordisk Film Shortcut
Office Manager (Norway)	Oddleiv Vik
Graphics	NR2154
Motion Graphics Artist	Emil Thorbjørnsson
Lawyers	Katrine Schlüther Schierbeck Else Helland
Accounting	Korthe Barfod Vassdal & Eriksen AS, Christian Eide Hanna Pärkkä
Auditing	Tore Kristian Tjemsland Pauli Aaltonen Beierholm, Jan Arildslund and Morten Staghøj
Insurance	Jens-Georg Hansen Lyberg & Partnere
Archive material	Courtesy of NBC Universal Archives
Music	Seri Banang (traditional) Mana Tahan (traditional)  Lukisan Malam Composer: E. Sambayon Lyrics: Sakti Alamsyah Performed by Sam Saimun Courtesy of Irama Record

Music (cont'd)

Rege Rege (traditional)

subtitle Consultant

Dansk Videotekst  
Shusaku Harada

### Very Special Thanks

Taman '65, Sharad Agrawal, Benedict Anderson, Anonymous, Anonymous, Anonymous, Anonymous, Anonymous, Sumyi Khong Antonson, Michael Arnon, Haris Azhar, Ori Bader, Orlando Bagwell, Aaron Balick, Charlotte Munch Bengtsen, Evan Berland, Heather Berland, Russell Berland, Sarah Berland, Dola Bonfils, Theodore Braun, Tom Brookes, Carmel Budiardjo, Manneke Budiman, Brady Case, Christina Chelsia Chan, Carol Chase, Elliot Chase, Stephen Chase, Angel Cheng, Charlie Clements, Catherine Corman, Christine Cynn, David Cynn, Jhin Cynn, Won Cynn, Mark Danner, Lucy Davis, Laurin Dietrich, Nia Dinata, Tony Dowmunt, Edwin, Gareth Evans, Hilmar Farid, Catherine Feinen, Charles Ferguson, Sidsel Filipsen, Beadie Finzi, Tine Fischer, Forum Buruh Lintas Pabrik, Kim Foss, Maxyne Franklin, Anna Godas, Amy Goodman, Peter Goodwin, Maja Giese, Aaron Glimme, Lotte Grauballe, Alfred Guzzetti, Usman Hamid, Taufiq Hanafi, Sidsel Hansen, Shouichi Harada, Shusaku Harada, Toyomi Harada, Oli Harbottle, Muhammad Harits, Andreas Harsono, Brittani Head, Georgia Leigh Hearn, Monica Hellström, Hendrayana, Olivia Herman, Ariel Heryanto, Lena Herzog, Lone Hey, Papang Hidayat, Annette Hill, Telse Hübertz, Evan Husney, Felencia Hutabarat, Adin Hysteria, Arine Kirstein Høgel, Jakob Kirstein Høgel, Maman Imanulhaq, May Adadol Ingawanij, Jemi Irwansyah, Janus Billeskov Jansen, Raharja Waluya Jati, Lars Johansson, Søren Henrik Jørgensen, Simon Kilmer, Claire Kessie, Laura Kim, Elinor Kowarsky, Anne Marie Kurstein, Nurlaela Lamasitudju, Max Lane, Nikolai Lang, Katrine Larney, Brith Larsen, Tim League, Liga Mahasiswa Untuk Demokrasi, Todung Mulya Lubis, Lena Lundt, Irene Lusztig, Olga Lydia, Elise McCave, Bojana Makavejev, Dusan Makavejev, Valentin Manz, Soe Tjen Marching, Faiza Mardzoeki, James Marsh, Marsinha FM, Richard Melman, Josephine Michau, Aase Mikkelsen, Jodi Miller, Robb Moss, Elisabeth Ida Mulyani, Suciwati Munir, Nobodycopr, International Unlimited, Susan Norget, Bitang Nusantara, David Nuzum, Dede Oetomo, Barbara Oppenheimer, Carol Oppenheimer, Joe Oppenheimer, Sarah Oppenheimer, Mikael Opstrup, Edwin Partogi Pasaribu, Tunggal Pawestri, Geoff Petts, Iwan Meulia, Yosep Adi Prasetyo, Pirous, R. Puspitasari, Karen Ranucci, Ene Katrine Rasmussen, Marlene Schiött Rasmussen, Ayu Ratih, Michael Ratner, B. Ruby Rich, Benoit, Roland, Andrea Romeo, John Roosa, Satyajit Sakar, Sanna Salmenkallio, Omer Sami, Jess Search, Peter Sellars, Steve Pillar Setiabudi, Arash Setoodeh, Noga Shalev, James Shapiro, John Sidel, Adinda Simandjuntak, Morton Simon, Samuel Simon, Bradley Simpson, Ronen Skaletzky, Stephen Smith, Arief Adityawan Sosrojudo, Gordon Spragg, Gabby Stein, Thomas Stenderup, Budiman Sudjatmiko, Stephen Suleeman, Hasto Atmojo Suroyo, Per Byrge Sørensen, Ida Byrge Sørensen, Søren Tarp, Meiske Taurisia, Rosie Thomas, Sheila Timothy, Toko Buku Buruh Membaca, Dian Septi Trisnanti, Bilven Ultimus, Bedjo Untung, Ayu Utami, Michael Uwemedimo, Baskara T. Wardaya, Diane Wyermann, Sandra Whipham, Andy Whittaker, Jeffrey Winters, Philip Yampolsky, Andrea Zimmerman, Daniel Ziv, Slavoj Zizek, Arief Zulkifli, Slavoj Zizek.

Developed with support of

The Danish Film Institute  
Danida

Produced with the support of

Danish Film Institute - Film Commissioner Helle Hansen  
Nordisk Film & TV Fond - Film consultant Karolina Lidin  
Danida  
Bertha BRITDOC  
The Finnish Film Foundation - Film Commissioner Elina Kivihalme  
The Freedom of Expression Foundation  
Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program  
Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media, University of  
Westminster  
Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK

Produced in collaboration with  
ZDF in collaboration with ARTE - Sabine Bubeck-Paaz  
DR K - Flemming Hedegaard Larsen  
NRK - Tore Tomter  
YLE - Iikka Vehkalahti  
VPRO - Nathalie Windhorst  
Vision Machine Film Project

Produced by  
Final Cut for Real ApS

Co-produced by  
Anonymous  
Making Movies Oy  
Piraya Film

In association with  
Spring Films Ltd

International Sales Agent  
Cinephil - Philippa Kowarsky

Festival Distribution  
Danish Film Institute

© Final Cut for Real ApS, Anonymous, Piraya Film AS,  
and Making Movies Oy 2014

WWW.THELOOKOFSILENCE.COM