

## **BLACK CHRISTMAS SCREENING**

LABIA CINEMA 14 APRIL 2016, 6PM

FEEDBACK COLLECTED FROM AUDIENCE VIA IJR GMAIL ACCOUNT

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Hi Friederike. Both rick and I are so pleased we saw the movie and have already passed it on to my daughter . Also it lead to some interesting discussion between my husband and I . He feels we should get on with it and look foreward I feel stories such as this need to be told

With my own staff when I told them the story they came up with their own experiences of the apartheid era shocking stories but they said it was long gone and its forgotten !!

I did do a bank payment deposit but to the foundation . You perhaps should mention on the yellow card it's a savings not current acc as it did not accept the number when putting in current.

Thank you for your good work and giving us an opportunity to share the movie .id be interested to know how the project develops

Regards. Ulli haw

Hi Friederike,

My wife and I were both deeply touched by the film.

I work a lot in the areas of forgiveness – knowing that we free ourselves from captivity when we free others.

I also work in the schools in disadvantaged areas – where there is a great need for building bridges.

I wept at the moments when the folk actually decided to forgive – they were well presented in the movie.

The movie seemed to end abruptly. Not sure if this was meant to be. What might have added value at the end would be a short insert about way forward for the community. Or asking some of the participants how they see the way forward. Or– “What two things give you hope moving forward?”

Thanks again for the opportunity to see the film.

All the best

David Ramsay

Hi Friederike

Thank you for including me.

I'm from CT but have lived in U.S. Since 1976 and was not aware of this or other similar acts.

I was interest to learn but unfortunately I could not stay for the whole movie and discussion which was frustrating.

So, I do not know how it all turned out.

Stefaan despite his heinous act(s) was quite erudite and as mentioned in the movie, brutally honest about his feelings.

I was repulsed by him and the other members of his group and AWB and am always astounded at the Ubuntu displayed, exemplified by I believe Rosa.

In prison, he seems to have made a complete turn around, which I presume was genuine and not a facade.

Given Mark Kaplan's initial comments that the movie is ultimately uplifting, I am presuming that Stefaan in some way contributed to the community?

We saw signs of the yearly communal meal (although not all tables appeared integrated).

I'm afraid I can only speculate beyond that and am sorry to have missed the end and the discussion.

Is there a way to view the movie?

Was the discussion recorded or is there a transcript of it that I could review.

Thank you for including me.

Warm regards

Selig Leyser, MD

It's a complex and thought provoking film, offering no easy solutions – but hinting at the difficult and long road we must all walk to make forgiveness and restitution a reality in this excruciating country of ours.

Congratulations to Pumla and Mark. Awesome work!

**Prof. Sharlene Swartz, PhD**

**Director, Human and Social Development, Human Sciences Research Council**

**Adjunct Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Cape Town**

Black Christmas is the kind of reconciliation which should of being done and encouraged by SA government a long time ago. We would not of had this racism throughout the country at the moment.

Black Christmas only shows us-SA-that reconciliation was a success in that town.

Roland

Samwu

I thought it an amazing work and it should be shown on National TV. Also it might be good if it were shown in all schools as part of Life Orientation and followed by a discussion on forgiveness. I bought a copy to share with others.

Ms Sue Kuyper  
Executive Assistant  
Animal Demography Unit  
Department of Biological Sciences  
University of Cape Town

Here's what I took away:

1. The film and the discussion afterwards really did deconstruct what we think about reconciliation. In that it was totally successful.
2. I was irritated by the comparisons to the TRC which I thought was rather gratuitous. The focus was understanding reconciliation and what it means, not nitpicking the many faults of the TRC, which is becoming totally customary these days and tiresome. I would defend some aspects of the TRC whilst strongly criticising others but this was not the place to do so.
3. I was a bit concerned that the discussion about the hard life of the main character (his traumatic upbringing) was discussed as an explanation for his trauma and actions. I don't think the movie meant to do that though it may have been ambivalent on that point. The reason why Stefanus deserved acknowledgement (and perhaps forgiveness) was not because we understand why he did it or because he had a brutal upbringing (i.e. who he was) but because he reflected and owned up to what he did (i.e. what he did).
4. Strangely enough, no one seemed to comment on the obvious point that Stefanus had a lot to offer the 'victims' – none of which was material. He could offer his honesty in apologising and the 'victims' were able to make of that what they wanted. If it helped them heal, then he offered them more than what money might have done, for example.
5. There is always a tension between the agency of survivors and their victimhood. It is usually people who are not the victims themselves who rail against victimhood portrayals in the media, when the survivors might feel quite agentic in what they are doing. That is the sense I got from the response from the two Worcester residents who spoke.
6. I could not believe how difficult it was to find the white box to make a donation!!! Please send me the bank details for the project
7. My foreign visitor (a professor of human rights law at Maastricht) was deeply moved (as I was) but also commented that this was a story no-one outside South Africa knows or could easily understand. He really appreciated it.  
(He was also flabbergasted at how cheap the DVD was!)

Thanks

Leslie London

Hi Friederike,

It was really an incredible film. It deeply touched me, and you know NICRO's work with inmates for a century..it was important for people to understand that crime does not happen in a vacuum outside from people's deep victimization scars over generations.

We are also about the power of RESTORATIVE JUSTICE, and this work needs to be promoted on a large scale.

At present NICRO is looking at setting up a RJ Practitioner Network.

It was also great to network.

On a personal level I was deeply touched, being affected personally by apartheid myself...how can we hate one another made me tear..a deep wound..

I think this film and restorative justice, where spaces are created on a large scale to listen to one another and just speak face to face will change our society and make us better and more healed human beings.

Thank you!

VENESSA PADAYACHEE • NATIONAL ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING MANAGER

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CRIME PREVENTION AND THE REINTEGRATION OF OFFENDERS

Thank you for the screening.

My only piece of feedback would be that the Q& A wasn't well handled. The filmmaker had to be up there from the word go and taking a set of questions in one go, is never a good idea as some of the answers get lost and there were some really good questions. Most of them never got addressed / answered.

Thanks for a wonderful evening though and I think Mark did a great, great job. Was also VERY special to have had some members of the Worcester community there.

Best Wishes from the Cape of Good Hope.

Uga Carlini - President Towerkop Creations

Specializing in female driven heroine stories.

Dear Friederike and the IJR team,

Thank you for asking us for our reactions to "Black Christmas". It was a great event, and we were very glad to have been present. We were very moved by the film, and hoped it might open the possibility of similar processes being picked up in towns and villages all over South Africa, which as one of the panellists said, was so lacking in our very incomplete journey towards reconciliation. There was the sense of it addressing a terrible gap in our nation's continuing state of woundedness. The intimate, personal scale of the filming, portraying individual positions and differences, gave it an authenticity that, as Steven Robins said, made the possibility of forgiveness somehow "substantial" - and therefore truly healing. So we found it really inspiring in an area where there is so much despair. It was great too, to feel the level of leadership that exists in this country, from the Worcester community, from the panellists, speakers from the floor, and chairperson. If only it could be expressed on a national level!

However we did have some sympathy with one of the speakers from the floor who felt the film focused too much on the "white boy's" journey, and felt that perhaps exploring someone like Olga's journey in similar depth, would have brought a better balance to the film. And we were also a bit uncomfortable with Harris' portrayal, and thought some editing could reveal the pivotal role he played more effectively.

That said, it was a great South African experience, and thank you for your generating of the project.

Regards,

Judy and Julian Cooke.

Hello! And thank you so much for the screening! What a powerful film!!! Very moving. To tears when Stefaans reads the poem. By his radical honesty, which sounds brutal when he speaks about how he was and what he used to think, and which is so healing now that he realises his own and others' humanity... Because I think that is what it ultimately is about!

I resonated with what he said that he thought at times that white people are slagats, compared to black people. I have often thought that, especially about black women: they seem to endure and carry so much... I often feel a complete sissy when I compare (although one really can't hey, I know that!).

What moved me a lot as well, and invoked deep respect, is how so many people from the community forgave him. Especially Olga (I believe her name is), when she asked herself what she would have done had he been her sister's son...

After the screening I was not impressed, to put it mildly, with one of the speakers: I forgot his name, the white guy. He merely spoke from his mind and in general. He didn't even speak from the I, but for others instead, which no one can: "We learnt..." etc. Which in my mind was an insult after that heartfelt film, all the people in it, and especially having them present! I would have loved to hear from them instead of a panel!!

I was very moved again when that woman from the community spoke, especially when she shared how so many people are still traumatised... And then the fact that these people were never helped or compensated and whatever... Outrageous!!! And that Shoprite made them come to work the following day, and they had to

clean up the blood etc!!! HORRENDOUS.

All in all a very powerful documentary! Thank you so much and well done to the makers and all the people in it!! I sincerely hope that the community will receive proper help, maybe because of the awareness created by this film!? Even though it is so many years later, it would still help a lot I believe.

I am part of Consciousness Café, where we facilitate No-Name Initiative dialogues. If the community is interested, I would like to offer our services, which are all for free. It might assist in their healing process. You can find us on

Facebook:<http://www.facebook.com/NNlignite/> and <http://www.facebook.com/consciousnesscafe.co.za/>.

Then a request/question: please share info about other screenings, in other parts of SA and even the world! If there are any planned? I have been spreading the word, but want to know if I can make it more concrete...

Many thanks once again, with warm regards,

Karen Verburgh

Helping you to connect through Process & Learning Facilitation & Coaching

Morning Friederike

I thought that the film was excellent, but I found it deeply disturbing. I had a brief discussion in a Grade 9 class with my colleague and two of the learners who had attended. My colleague, who is a young teacher, and I were profoundly affected by the film. The most disturbing thing for me was the hatred of Stefanus. I just don't understand, I have never understood, that level of hatred. The other issue which I found challenging and thought provoking was the idea of a 'qualified' forgiveness. Or restitution in order to obtain forgiveness.

The learners were affected by different issues. The learners needed to be back in boarding so we couldn't stay to the end of the discussion consequently we only heard the 'first round' of comments.

I will ask the other learners who attended for comments and feed them back to you.

Have a great day - and thank you so much for always running such brilliant programmes.

Kind regards

Gill

Dear Friederike,

Thanks for your mail and I apologize for the delayed response.

Firstly, thanks for having accommodated me despite my late response - much appreciated, and a real special bonus to see you and your family again!

I thoroughly enjoyed the evening: the film brought some real realities to my mind and memory, and following the most interesting discussion afterwards, I came to the conclusion that no "general apology or amnesty" made by someone on behalf of everybody in SA is possible, but that this is a very personal matter whereby each individual, especially after having seen a movie, such as "Black Christmas", has to look into his or her own, personal conscience and take the necessary steps of expressing an apology to someone appropriate in close proximity and/or "making good" by his or her involvement in underprivileged communities.

I bought the DVD and have shared this with friends and family and hope to encourage more discussion around this topic.

We don't all fall into the category of "extremist racists" that have committed "crimes against humanity", but by default we were part of the system. I do believe that each one of us that lived in that era needs to scrutinize his/her own conscience.

Once again, many thanks for this great opportunity, also to have been able to meet some of the main "actors" in this film personally.

Best wishes and warm regards

Horst

Horst W. Frehse  
36 Moss Str  
Newlands/Fernwood  
7700  
South Africa

Thank you for screening it. I really enjoyed the screening. It was heart-wrenching to see the long-term impact of the bombing on the survivors, but also incredibly inspiring to witness the survivors engage with Coetzee with such forgiveness- based on experiencing transformation in Coetzee- not just reading it or hearing it on T.V. but experiencing it human-to-human in real-time. This distinction feels critical to me. It was also amazing to hear about Coetzee's path to transformation in his own words.

The thought-provoking commentary both from panelists and audience members was invaluable. Part of what brings a film alive for me is to engage with it with others. Thank you for including that in the screening.

The following are some thoughts I'm sitting with...thank you for asking : )

It feels to me that a powerful role that Coetzee can play in South Africa (if he feels moved to) is to share his story with other white South Africans around the country (in person). And perhaps IJR can help him come together with other white people who have traveled a similar path of growing up and out of a racist worldview. So the focus isn't on him as the exception to the rule, but on a movement of white people taking to the streets and to communities to share their journey of inner transformation in the open and honest way he has. Taking full responsibility, not just for past actions and thoughts, but for current actions and thoughts that still live through them and through all of us. In my experience, racism is not something you can get rid of since we live in a racist society that constantly reinforces white dominance in visible and invisible ways. So for me this grassroots movement would acknowledge and engage with that fact in generative ways.

For me the message of this film was less about Black people forgiving and more about white people deciding to stop forgetting and taking responsibility to engage directly with their racist past and present.

On a related note, another thing that stands out strongly for me is that it took Coetzee 20 years in prison to get to the place he is today. And he admitted that a big part of what changed him was being thrown into an environment he couldn't escape where he was forced to see that black people were just like him. It reminded me of the fact that in the U.S. one of the biggest contributors to racial integration after Jim Crow was that men of all races were serving in the military together and experiencing harsh, traumatic, life-or-death experiences with each other. How can we create such connecting experiences outside of prison and the military: in our lives more broadly, in communities, in everyday life?

Also, I was wondering if the film will be put on the internet so more people can see it. I know a doctor who worked with some of the bomb survivors who would appreciate seeing it. Or is there a way to order a hard copy?

cheers,  
Tana Paddock