

PIETER VAN HUUSTEE FILM and EyesWideFilms PRESENT

# THE DICTATOR HUNTER

A film by Klaartje Quirijns



## Project Summary

Production company                      Pieter van Huystee Film and EyesWideFilms  
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Language:                                    French / English/ Arabic with English subtitles

Genre:                                        Documentary

Running time:                              75 minutes, 52 minutes TV hour upon request

Land of origine:                            The Netherlands

Director:                                    Klaartje Quirijns

Director of Photography: Melle van Essen

Sound:                                        Pieterjan Wouda

Editor:                                        Katharina Wartena

Producer:                                    Pieter van Huystee

Line producer:                             Sylvia Baan

Commissioning Editor:                  Margje de Koning (Ikon)  
Claire Aguilar (ITVS International)

World premiere:                          September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
Toronto International Film Festival

European premiere:                      November 2007  
International Documentary Festival Amsterdam

Dutch Theatrical release                November / December 2007

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## Synopsis

“If you kill one person, you go to jail. If you kill 40 people, they put you in an insane asylum. But if you kill 40, 000 people, you get a comfortable exile with a bank account in another country, and that’s what we want to change here,”

**Reed Brody**, Human Rights Watch

He hunts dictators for a living as a lawyer for Human Rights Watch. For seven years, Brody has been chasing one former dictator in particular: Hissène Habré, the former leader of Chad, who is charged with killing thousands of his own countrymen in the 1980s. Now Habré lives in Senegal where Brody is attempting to have him brought to trial or extradited.



Director Klaartje Quirijns has a keen instinct for exploring international politics through the eyes of memorable characters. Her previous film *The Brooklyn Connection* tells one man’s story of building a guerrilla army. He did it by buying high-powered sniper rifles weapons that are legally purchased in the US.

In *The Dictator Hunter* we follow Brody over the course of two suspenseful years as he travels through Africa, Europe and the United States. He conducts diplomacy like the chess games he plays with his son. But in his work, the chess pieces are politicians, journalists and judges that Brody positions against his opponent. *The Dictator Hunter* shows what it takes for one man to break the cycle of impunity...

## Director’s statement

### Why this film

A few years ago I was introduced to Reed Brody and Souleymane Guengueng. I met them at the office of Human Rights Watch in the Empire State building in New York. The two men were sitting under a world map in Brody’s office with black and white mug shots of dictators all over the map. They pointed at one and looked at me and said: “this is one of the most brutal dictators you have probably never heard of: Hissene Habré of Chad and we want to bring this man to justice”.

I saw a film in these two men and their quest to change the system in which dictators could kill and get away with it. Both are tremendously driven, the one believing in the law, and the other one in God.

I like to observe and explore where people come from, why they do what they do. In this case I wanted to know more about the backgrounds of Reed and Souleymane, I was moved by their friendship and curious about their mission. One is a survivor who lost his sight in the prisons in Chad and the other is an idealistic Jewish lawyer from Brooklyn, whose father survived the holocaust. Who is this man, why is he sacrificing money and his family, is he a Don Quixote, or is he vain, arrogant or just naive?

Why the film is relevant

I think 'International Justice', although an abstract concept, is the issue for the coming years. It is the hot potato for the US because they don't like to see former heads of state being sent to other countries to stand trial.

Everybody knows that at this moment innocent people are killed in Darfur. however, for the longest time, no one did anything, not the UN, not the Europeans, nor the United States, but there is 'international justice'. It is the ultimate hope to break the cycle of impunity. And the Habré case is the test case.

Themes I like to explore in films

I knew I wanted to explore the international political context in which their stories took place. It was crucial for me to show in this film that the stories were set against the backdrop of ambivalent American and Western foreign politics. Morality and justice are murky waters to swim in. The more I started to be involved, the more layers I saw in this story: religion, sacrifice and the miscommunication between people, countries and continents.

Three years of filming

In a way I understand Reed's drive: I was nearly as obsessed with the film as he was with the Habré case. I remembered waking up in the hospital after a surgery and was ordered to stay in bed for a week, but when I saw an email from Reed that Habré was arrested, I wanted to leave immediately. With no budget for the film yet, I decided to go to Dakar that same evening. I didn't know how the story would go, but somehow I felt the importance of the story and I wanted to make the film no matter what.

There were a lot of bumps in the road during the three years that I worked on the film. Every time we planned a trip to Chad, the rebels were on their way to D'Njamena, the capital from which Habré reigned and each time we had to cancel the trip. I knew I had no film without Chad, the country which was crucial, as it was the heart of the film, but finally we were able to go and film in all the necessary places.

One of the most important and satisfying moments was the day when I filmed the widows in the desert. Their cry for justice made a deep imprint on me: at least they didn't have to keep their stories for themselves, finally their stories were heard and hopefully will be heard by a lot of people who have no idea who Hissène Habré is.

## Bringing a Dictator to Justice - The Case of Hissène Habré

The most brutal U.S.-backed dictator you've never heard of—Hissène Habré of Chad—is slated to stand trial in Senegal on charges of mass murder and torture. His trial will mark the culmination of years of effort by a Chadian torture victim who did not give up and a New York "dictator hunter."

Souleymane Guengueng, a modest and deeply religious civil servant who watched hundreds of his cellmates perish from torture and disease during two years in Habré's prisons, took an oath before God that if he ever got out of jail alive, he would bring his tormentors to justice. When Habré fell in 1990 and fled to Senegal, Guengueng used his considerable charm to persuade still-frightened victims to seek the trial of the former dictator. However, the government that's been in power ever since has brought on many of Habré's henchmen, while the former tyrant has lived in quiet luxury in Senegal.

Then, after former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet was arrested in London, Reed Brody of Human Rights Watch took an interest in the Habré case. Brody, whose legal brief helped persuade the House of Lords to strip Pinochet of his immunity, was looking to extend the "Pinochet precedent" to other abusive tyrants. Brody sent two secret missions to Chad to meet Guengueng and gather evidence. In a surprise operation, Brody and Guengueng—together with other activists—filed charges against Habré in Senegal in January 2000. Within a week, Habré was under house arrest, charged with crimes against humanity.

Back in 1981, Ronald Reagan saw Habré, then a local warlord, as a man who could be used to help contain the ambitions of Muammar el-Qaddafi of Libya, Chad's expansionist northern neighbor. The United States helped Habré take power and then provided him with tens of millions of dollars in military aid each year and gave financial and logistical support to his secret police, the feared "DDS," while it engaged in torture and other atrocities.

To build the case against Habré, Brody made frequent trips to Chad. Once, he stumbled onto the abandoned archives of the DDS. Tens of thousands of documents strewn on the floor detailed how Habré's regime attacked rival ethnic groups and organized the repression of political opponents. They also describe U.S. training programs for DDS agents, including a course outside of Washington that was attended by some of the DDS' most feared torturers.

Habré used some of the millions he had stolen from Chad's treasury to get the case in Senegal dismissed. But by then, Brody, Guengueng and their colleagues had already filed charges against Habré in Belgium, whose anti-atrocity law allowed its courts to hear cases from all over the world.

A Belgian judge took up the case and visited Chad, inspecting Habré's prisons and mass graves together with Guengueng and other former detainees.

After four years of investigation, the Belgian judge indicted Habré on charges of crimes against humanity, and asked Senegal for his extradition. Under the influence of Habré's money, Senegal again balked, passing the case to the African Union. In July 2006, the African Union, constrained by the opinion of its

legal experts, ordered Senegal to try Habré in “the name of Africa,” and Senegal’s president finally agreed to do so. In July 2007, Senegal presented a plan and a budget for the investigation and trial to the African Union and the donor community. France, Switzerland and Belgium have already announced that they will provide financial and technical support to the trial. Investigating judges are expected to be named shortly.

Habré’s trial will be a wake-up call to dictators in Africa and elsewhere, warning them that if they commit similar atrocities, they could also be brought to justice one day. As well as serving as another feather in Brody’s dictator-hunting cap, bringing Habré to trial will allow Souleymane Guengueng to fulfill his oath.

More information on the case can be found at <http://www.hrw.org/justice/habre/>

## Filmography Klaartje Quirijns Director

Klaartje Quirijns, the acclaimed director of *THE BROOKLYN CONNECTION* ([www.thebrooklynconnection.net](http://www.thebrooklynconnection.net)), winner of the Golden Eagle Trophy and the Special Jury Prize at the Human Rights Festival Paris 2005 - ‘*Pungent and pointed...THE BROOKLYN CONNECTION foreshadows the role the US may play in the next great international conflict - whether it knows it or not.*’ Elliott Larkfield, Tribeca Film Festival - is working on her new film *The Dictator Hunter*.

Klaartje Quirijns grew up in the Netherlands and has worked as a director and producer, for the leading public television stations in the Netherlands (VPRO, IKON and NPS).

Her first film was about life in a maximum-security prison in Rotterdam. Since then, she produced and directed numerous documentaries with various subjects, e.g. about a famous Dutch case of the death of a student in the context of an initiation ritual; about a doctor who was part of the resistance during the second world war and who was appointed as the doctor for the three war criminals, known as “The Breda Three” who was entrusted with assessing whether their health merited their continued imprisonment (the film is now subject of a dissertation in the Netherlands).

The leading Dutch newspaper NRC Handelsblad described Quirijns as “one of the few documentary filmmakers who has managed to create cinematic pearls out of the television tap.”

Quirijns moved to New York City in 1999 and has continued to work for Dutch radio and television. She was the first Dutch journalist on Dutch national television and radio to report on September 11.

She produced a documentary about the Brooklyn Dodgers and was creator of a video installation about street kids entitled “Homeless World,” which was exhibited in the modern art museum ‘De Kunsthal’ in Rotterdam.

She is currently working on a feature length documentary about psycho-therapy in New York called “On the Couch” under the aegis of her production company, EyesWideFilms ([eyeswidefilms.com](http://eyeswidefilms.com)).

## Filmography Pieter van Huystee Film

In 1995 Pieter van Huystee started his own production company. Since then he has produced documentaries, feature films and single plays with well-known Dutch directors like Johan van der Keuken, Heddy Honigmann and Peter Delpout. Besides, several young filmmakers got the opportunity to realise their plans in cooperation with Pieter van Huystee Film. Currently, six people work for the company in the historical centre of Amsterdam.

By combining daring with decisiveness, Pieter van Huystee Film has nowadays become one of the leading Dutch independent production companies, highly esteemed for the quality and wide range of its projects. In 1999 the distribution department Public Film was added, which sets out to release 'Dutch Docs' in local cinemas. Moreover, many van Huystee documentaries and features are screened at festivals all over the world and have been awarded many times.

Filmography CARMEN MEETS BORAT Mercedes Stalenhoef, THE DICTATOR HUNTER Klaartje Quirijns, THE NEW RIJKSMUSEUM Oeke Hoogendijk, CRIPS Joost van der Valk, FAREWELL Ditteke Mensink, TRAINER John Appel, AYA SOFIA Jack Janssen, WOMEN OF CARNIVAL Anne Marie Borsboom, MY FRIENDS Lidija Zelovic, FORGOTTEN FOOLS Frans van Erkel, FATHER'S ISLE Carin Goeijers, DRIVING DREAMS Boris Gerrets, THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE Ramón Gieling, GOD IS MY DJ Carin Goeijers, THE RED YEARS Leo de Boer, RACHID BEN ALI Frank Vellenga and Boris Gerrets, THE GENCO FAMILY Hans Pool and Maaik Krijgsman, A MONKEY'S RAINCOAT Mani Kaul, HAVEN Marjoleine Boonstra, THE CRIME OF ABRAHAM PRINS Marcel Prins, THE SECRET SERVICE Chris Vos and André van der Hout, DREAMING OF HOLLAND Peter Delpout, MISS CHARME Christel van der Meer, MIXED SALADE Huib Stam, CRISTINA BRANCO - A MINHA CASA Leendert Pot and Michel Schöpping, GARDEN STORIES Boris Gerrets, JOHAN CRUIJFF EN UN MOMENTO DADO Ramón Gieling, DAME LA MANO Heddy Honigmann, ARNA'S CHILDREN Juliano Mer Khamis and Danniël Danniël, PUTIN'S MAMA Ineke Smits, LAGONDA Robin van Erven Dorens, FAIRUZ WE LOVED EACH OTHER SO MUCH Jack Janssen, THE FIGHT OF THE DYKES Linda Lyklema, JUGERNAUT Rob Das, GO WEST YOUNG MAN Peter Delpout and Mart Dominicus, LAGOS / KOOLHAAS Bregtje van der Haak, MÁXIMA'S MIRACLE Paul Ruven, I AM NO OTHER Manu Kaul, WELCOME TO HADASSAH HOSPITAL Ramón Gieling, THERE AINT NO EASY ROAD Huib Stam, THE VOS AFFAIR Leo de Boer, FOR THE TIME BEING Johan van der Keuken, CINE AMBULANTE Ramón Gieling, FILM FOR SALVADOR Ramón Gieling, SONS OF SURINAM René Roelofs, KID DYNAMITE Hans Hylkema, ZIJKANAAL B Huib Stam, LE NORD PERDU Kees Vlaanderen, BELA BELA WHAT KEEPS MANKIND ALIVE Marjoleine Boonstra, DUTCH APPROACH René Roelofs, DESI Maria Ramos, YO SOI ASÍ Sonia Herman Dolz, THE LAST YUGOSLAVIAN FOOTBALL TEAM Vuk Janic, THE LONG HOLIDAY Johan van der Keuken, BUÑUELS PRISONER'S Ramón Gieling, THE RED STUFF Leo de Boer, CRAZY Heddy Honigmann, THE UNDERGROUND ORCHESTRA Heddy Honigmann, FELICE FELICE Peter Delpout, LAST WORDS MY SISTER YOKA Johan van der Keuken, ANGELS OF DEATH Leo de Boer, O AMOR NATURAL Heddy Honigmann, DIVORCED Frans Bromet, AMSTERDAM GLOBAL VILLAGE Johan van der Keuken.

## Reed Brody

Reed Brody has been an activist for social justice since his high school days when he was an organizer of anti-Vietnam war demonstrations. At university, he was student government president and a youth leader in the 1972 George McGovern presidential campaign. He always knew he wanted to make a difference. "I feel lucky to have grown up when more people believed in their ability to change the world."

Brody chose a career in law because he felt it would offer more opportunities to effect social change. He graduated from Columbia University Law School, and traveled through Europe and Latin America before beginning his career as an Assistant Attorney General for New York State.

In 1984, he left his position for the war zones of northern Nicaragua, where he uncovered a pattern of atrocities against civilians by US-funded "contras." His ensuing report received national front-page coverage and led to US Congressional hearings and a temporary halt to "contra" funding.

In 1987 Brody joined the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva. His lobbying pushed the UN toward a tougher stance against abusive governments in Haiti, Iraq and Indonesia. He also assisted the government of Mongolia with the drafting of its constitution. "This was one of my most rewarding experiences. The Mongolians were earnest about creating democratic structures and were receptive to our suggestions. They adopted a very good constitution, which is proving effective in upholding human rights."

From 1992 to 1994 he was executive director of the International Human Rights Law Group in Washington, D.C. where he began a program to train front-line activists. "The long-term solution is to empower local people to stand up for themselves and challenge power." The pilot project was in Cambodia where Brody's organization helped train four new human rights groups.

The United Nations then asked Brody to direct the Human Rights Division of its peacekeeping mission in El Salvador. With a staff of 32, he was responsible for verifying respect for human rights and coordinating programs to support El Salvador's democratic institutions.

Joining Human Rights Watch as Advocacy Director in 1998, Brody led a number of high-profile campaigns, including against secret US prisons and the mistreatment of detainees in the "war on terror." When Chile's ex-dictator Augusto Pinochet was arrested in 1998, Brody went to London where his brief helped persuade the House of Lords to strip Pinochet of his immunity. He then sought to extend that precedent to other cases.

For years now, Brody has poured his heart into the prosecution of former dictator Hissène Habré of Chad. Habré's regime (1992-200) is accused of killing 40,000 political opponents and torturing and imprisoning countless others.

## **A 'Bounty Hunter' in Search of Human Justice**

By CHRIS HEDGES October 3, 2002

**New York Times**

REED BRODY has a world map on the wall of his small office in the Empire State Building. It has about 50 tiny black and white photos of various dictators, warlords, generals and former heads of state tacked unceremoniously to their respective countries or places of self-imposed exile. Many of the most notorious killers on the planet are there, a kind of rogues' gallery, and this slightly rumpled lawyer is at the forefront of the effort to bring them to trial. Mr. Brody, 49, does not think the United States, as in the case of Osama bin Laden or Saddam Hussein, should try to administer frontier justice. It is better, he insists, to work through world consensus and support the new International Criminal Court and the establishment of war-crimes tribunals. Mr. Brody oversees investigations at Human Rights Watch, many started by domestic rights groups, seeking to bring a score of former strongmen to trial. He initiated the case against Chad's former dictator, Hissène Habré, who ruled from 1982 to 1990 and was arrested in Senegal in 2000, accused of 40,000 murders and systematic torture. Mr. Brody also helped spearhead the effort to extradite Gen. Augusto Pinochet, the former Chilean dictator, from Great Britain to stand trial in Spain. When, in 1998, Britain's Law Lords ruled there was no immunity from prosecution on charges of torture, Mr. Brody was ecstatic, he said. Suddenly, although Mr. Pinochet was allowed to go back to Chile, victims' groups around the globe began to organize and hope for justice. "The Pinochet case showed us that if the circumstances were right, victims could go after their former tormentors in other countries," he said. "It was the first modern case to put this into practice." Mr. Brody's "awakening" to the injustices and repression that color so many lives on the planet took place two decades ago in Latin America. He made a five-month trip after he graduated from Columbia Law School and passed the bar exam, hitchhiking with his Argentine girlfriend. He stayed for a while in the tin mines of Bolivia, outraged when he matched the price of tin on the world market against the working conditions and pitiful wages of Bolivian miners. And he embraced the social activism in the catholic Church. "I try to gravitate to situations where the lines are clear, where there is a good guy and a bad guy," he said. He was a young lawyer in the New York State attorney general's office in the early 1980's when he quit his job, took his \$1,000 in savings, and went to Nicaragua, spending four months taking affidavits of those who witnessed atrocities carried out by the contra rebels, which were backed by the United States. His detailed report in 1984 earned him a personal attack from President Ronald Reagan but received wide publicity. It helped lead to a brief suspension in aid by Congress to the Nicaraguan rebels. From there he tumbled head first into the world of advocacy, working in places like Haiti, El

Salvador, Zaire, Tibet and Cambodia. He ended up as a kind of human rights bounty hunter — the first such position at Human Rights Watch. But he acknowledges that the world is not, as much as he would like it to be, divided between the forces of light and darkness. His father, who as a Hungarian Jew spent time in German labor camps and later joined the Red Army, tried to temper his son's exuberance. "As someone who had lived through the heralding of so many new dawns, my father was skeptical," he said. "My father saw that I was starry-eyed." "'Reedy,' " he said, imitating his father's Hungarian accent, " 'when you went to Nicaragua, I was afraid you were going to come back a Communist, but a Catholic I never expected.' " (No, he did not convert.)

He grew up in Fort Greene in Brooklyn with his mother, an art teacher. His childhood bedroom was papered with maps that inspired a wanderlust. His father, who separated from his mother, taught Russian literature. Mr. Brody still lives in Brooklyn with his Brazilian partner, Myriam Marques; Rhavi, her son from a previous marriage; and Zachary, their 2-year-old son. Mr. Brody speaks in a sleepy voice and his sentences cascade off at times into a whisper. But start him on his pet subjects, the atrocities of Idi Amin in Uganda, Jean-Claude Duvalier in Haiti or Alfredo Stroessner in Paraguay, and the words pour out. "If you kill one person, you end up in jail," he said. "If you kill 20 people, you end up in an insane asylum. If you kill 20,000 people, you get an amnesty. With this kind of record it is hard to build a new ethic." He said he had not given up on a new ethic, one in which the United States would not only back the effort to bring the world's worst killers to justice but look inward at what he sees as its own crimes. Tacked to his map is a small picture of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, a man who he said "is responsible for enormous human suffering" because of United States foreign policy in East Timor, Vietnam and Chile in the 1970's. (Mr. Kissinger has vigorously rejected such accusations.) "To bring to justice the perpetrators of atrocity is to restore the dignity of the victims," he said, "to reaffirm that they have rights and they, too, count."

## Credits

# The Dictator Hunter

In memory of all victims of the regime of Hissène Habré  
ex-president of Chad

Scenario	<b>Klaartje Quirijns</b>
Directed By	<b>Klaartje Quirijns</b>
	New York <b>Melle van Essen</b> <b>Martina Radwan</b> <b>Jonathan Furmanski</b> <b>Klaartje Quirijns</b>
<b>Huisman</b>	Belgium <b>Pieter</b>
	Paris <b>Jacko van 't Hof</b> Washington <b>Tom Hurwitz</b> Chad <b>Melle van Essen</b> Dakar <b>Martijn 't Hart</b> <b>Klaartje Quirijns</b>
	The Gambia <b>Klaartje Quirijns</b>
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Voice Over News Item	<b>Neil Pepe</b>
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Producer	<b>Pieter van Huystee</b> <b>Jeroen Arnolds</b>
Commissioning editor	<b>Margje de Koning</b>
Executive Producer for ITVS International	<b>Sally Jo Fifer</b>
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Fatimé Godi  
Zeneba Silé Galyam  
Ginette Ngarbaye  
Zeneba Borgoto  
Seidé Hassan  
Hadj Bassou  
Rousine Dounai Modéné

Association des Victimes des  
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au Chad / AVCRP

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**American University**

Reed Brody's Class at Washington  
College of Law.

**Chad**

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