



THE HUNT FOR GADDAFI'S BILLIONS

A DOCUMENTARY BY GEBRUEDER BEETZ FILMPRODUCTION AND BROOK LAPPING
IN CO-PRODUKTION WITH VPRO, BBC, NPO AND ZDF
1X90MIN, HD, 2021

IN THIS GRIPPING FEATURE-LENGTH DOCUMENTARY WE FOLLOW THE GOLD RUSH, THE RELENTLESS HUNT FOR THE MONEY. ON THE TRAIL OF BOUNTY HUNTERS, CORRUPT POLITICIANS AND SPIES, WE GO FROM CLANDESTINE MEETINGS TO SQUEEZING OUT ANSWERS TO THREATENING AND DECEIVING THE OTHER TEAM; BOTH GROUPS ARE WILLING TO DO ANYTHING TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THE LOOT. THE LINES OF TRUTH WILL BE BLURRED AS ALL MASKS COME OFF AND TRUE MOTIVES ARE REVEALED. A STORY OF GREED, CORRUPTION AND DECEIT, UP TO THE HIGHEST CIRCLES.

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THE HUNT FOR GADDAFI'S BILLIONS

SYNOPSIS

For over forty years Colonel Muammar 'Mad Dog' Gaddafi ruled Libya with an iron fist. Dissidents were killed, critics tortured, rumors circulated that the man himself was behind several airline disasters, including Lockerbie. The bloodshed stretched into the thousands. Gaddafi also sponsored freedom fighters and terrorist groups, such as IRA, the Spanish ETA and FARC in Columbia.

During his four decade-long reign, the Libyan oil made him the richest dictator in Africa, amassing a wealth of \$150 billion. After his violent death in 2011, nobody quite seemed to know what had happened to his bloody bounty though. It seemed as if it had all just disappeared; vanished into thin air. But in fact, most of the money had been secretly smuggled out of the country. Through shady bank transactions, arms deals or boxes full of cash. To Europe, to the Emirates and to South Africa, the country of Gaddafi's old friend Nelson Mandela.

With strong rumors emerging that a part of Gaddafi's billion dollar treasure is hidden in South Africa, two teams of bounty hunters are in a race to track down the cash and bring it back to the Libyan people. Each team claims to be working under a mandate handed down by the Libyan authorities, and each say they want the money brought back to where it rightfully belongs. But nothing is as simple as it seems – especially in the fraudulent underworld. There are false agendas, good guys turn out to be crooks and vice versa.

PRESSKIT

THE HUNT

Johannesburg, 2010.

In the dead of night, several planes land at O.R. Tambo airport just outside the South African city, according to an eye-witness, They've come from Libya, through Zimbabwe and under the shroud of darkness pallets of gold, weapons and jewelry emerge. As do stacks of banknotes. Millions and millions of them – quite possibly billions. By the morning, the secret haul is on its way to various vaults, military bases and safe houses around the country; the exact locations known only by a select few.

Word soon begins to spread that a lot of Gaddafi's money has ended up in South Africa. Unsurprisingly, the news that there is a huge pot of gold waiting to be found sparks off a gold rush on a continent known for its militias, mercenaries and private contractors. Various questionable characters emerge from the shadows, determined to hunt down the loot and ready to use any means possible.

2018.

While some of the gold hunters have given up, two groups remain. They've outmuscled the opposition and are resolute as ever that they will be the ones to find Mad Dog's billions. And each side is willing to do whatever it takes to make sure their rivals don't get there first.

It all started with the eye-witness George Darmanovic, once a feared member of one of Apartheid's most notorious killing squads, later on a senior agent in the South African intelligence service and confidant of President Zuma. His nickname The Butcher is description enough. Darmanovic said he was part of the moving of the money from the airport to the vault of the National Treasury in 2011. He said he saw over a 100 pallets filled with dollar bills and loaded the loot into trucks himself. He entrusted some of his confidants with his information. Darmanovic was shot and killed in Belgrade in May of 2018. Even though he was deeply involved in various shady businesses, many people believe he was murdered because he knew too much about the Libyan money.

Six weeks before his death, director Thomas Blom visited him in Belgrade and audio-recorded their conversations. Darmanovic told him everything he knew.



PRESSKIT

THE MONEY HUNTER

ERIK GOAIED



One of the people Darmanovic closely worked with in tracing the money, is Tunisian Erik Goaid. Goaid was trusted as a dealmaker by Mad Dog himself and now has the support of the remaining Gaddafi backbone. Military officials, family members, tribal leaders and hard-core loyalists to the old Libyan regime.

Goaid first got wind of the cash when Libya's Tobruk government asked him to arrange for South Africa to supply weapons to Libya. They were to be paid for with the money already in South Africa. It gave Goaid the chance to find out more about this hidden money and now he wants to get all of it back to its rightful owners. He claims to have the parliament, army, House of Representatives and even the Supreme Council behind him and thinks anyone else going for the haul is a crook. He even organized the arrest of one of his big rivals in the hunt for the money, Taha Buishi.

But Goaid himself is far from altruistic; there's a 10% stake in it for him.

JOHAN ERASMUS

Initially joining forces with him and Darmanovic was arms dealer and intelligence specialist, Johan Erasmus. He's a man with a very shady history; during Apartheid he infiltrated black freedom fighters and he was once a close adviser to the Congo's feared dictator, Mubutu. So it's hardly surprising that he always arms himself with a Taser, knife and pistol –there are plenty of people who want to see him dead. But his dark past means he's got a wealth of contacts and with the help of his friend Fanie Fondse (Afrikaner and ex-Special Forces), he can get to the mercenaries who were part of Gaddafi's last convoy and the very people who flew the money out of Libya. Because Erasmus has had some major financial setbacks in the past years and has invested a lot of money in this hunt, the stakes are extremely high for him to find the cash. But when he does 'then I, and only I will decided how it will be divided'.



Johan Erasmus and Erik Goaid had a big fallout last year when Erasmus accused Goaid of withholding information and putting his Taser on Goaid's head.

PRESSKIT

TAHA BUISHI

In the other camp, Libyan Taha Buishi oversees a seemingly better organized outfit. Buishi is the charming and somewhat naive owner of a Libyan consultant company; he also claims to have a mandate from the current regime. He set the hunt off on the other side, when he stormed up to the head of security at the African National Congress, accused the ANC of stealing and demanded his country's money back. Since then he's turned to good old-fashioned negotiations, meeting with Jacob Zuma, former finance minister Pravin Gordhan and other ANC leaders, but so far his charm has failed. Buishi also found out the hard way that business isn't always clean; last year he was kidnapped in Tripoli (or arrested for fraud, according to Erik Goaiied) and held captive for months.

JACKIE MPHAFUDIE

Buishi is relying on flamboyant Jackie Mphafudie to set up the secret meetings with the high ranked ANC-politicians and government officials. Mphafudie used to be the personal doctor of the Mandela-family, including Winnie Mandela and Gaddafi Mandela (the grandson who was named after Muammar Gaddafi.) He now owns a railway construction company and looks for various infrastructure contracts in Libya for his help in getting the money returned.

**BRIAN CROOCK**

Also backing Buishi, is businessman Brian Croock. From his office in glitzy Sandton, he's been busy trying to persuade the finance ministers of South Africa and Libya to come to an agreement and return the money – fairly. But this no-frills entrepreneur still has a motive – his bank account is also going to profit rather substantially.

„ROBBEN“

The group's most important source of information is only known by his codename, Robben – after his time imprisoned on Robben Island with his friend Nelson Mandela. Robben is the ANC's former head of security.



For safety reasons, here is no photograph or any footage available of him. He revealed his identity and his secret position within the ANC for the first time during the interview for this film. When Robben started to ask questions within the ANC about Gaddafi's billions, he was thrown out by Zuma. Robben knows more about the inner workings of the ANC and its share of the missing money than anyone else. He's the team's secret weapon – and claims he doesn't want a cent of the money for himself. But he won't refuse a financial reward if Libya insists on it.

THE JOURNALISTS AND FILMMAKERS

MISHA WESSEL

After her Dutch language studies, Misha Wessel obtained a master's in Journalism at the University of Amsterdam. After that, she worked as a researcher and composer for various documentaries of NOS Sport, Andere Tijden Sport, and Holland Sport. In 2013 she introduced a new tradition of political biographies for the public service broadcaster: the prime minister's portrait. Together with Thomas Blom, she conceived and directed the documentary 'Het geheim van Lubbers', followed in 2015 by the diptych 'De strijd van Kok'. Together, they also did 'De wetten van Cees Priem', in which, for the first time in sixteen years, they revealed who was behind the doping transport in 1998 that landed captain Cees Priem in prison in France. 'De wetten van Cees Priem' was nominated for the Tegel journalism award, in the research category. In 2018 she made with Blom the documentary „The World of Thinking“, The film was nominated as best European science documentary at the Silbersalz film festival.

THOMAS BLOM

Thomas Blom graduated cum laude from the Audio-Visual Department of the St. Joost Academy. As a freelance director, he made films including Moscow Stadium Disaster for ESPN, exposing the biggest football disaster in history, and two documentaries for the 'Deported' series on deported refugee children, which was awarded the Clara Meijer-Wichmann medal. Blom also directed for programmes such as Andere Tijden (history), Zembla (current affairs) and Andere Tijden Sport (sports history), broadcasts that often had a major impact in the Netherlands. Besides numerous nominations, Blom won the investigative journalism prize De Loep for Gijzeling in Almelo ('Hostage-taking in Almelo') and the Herman Kuiphof award for Het mysterie Foekje Dillema, (The Foekje Dillema Mystery), in which a DNA test proved that runner Foekje Dillema really is a woman. In 2019 the four-part series Inside Saudi-Arabia was broadcasted (nominated for the highest television award in the Netherlands and De Tegel). For his productions, he travelled to countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya. His documentaries are regularly broadcast by foreign broadcasting stations.



TEAM

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|------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| DIRECTOR: | MISHA WESSEL, THOMAS BLOM | EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: | REINHARDT BEETZ (GBF) BARBARE TRUYEN (VPRO) |
| RESEARCHER: | STEPHAN HOFSTATTER NASREDDIE DJEBBI AHMED ABU SHAWAIREB | PRODUCTION MANAGERS: | KAREN EDWARDS (BL) GREG SANDERSON (BL) RITA RIBAS (BL) EMMA SCOTT (BL) |
| DOP: | LARS SKREE | | KATHARINA KROHMANN (ZDF) REBECCA ZAUBEL (GBF) |
| SOUND RECORDIST: | TIM VAN PEPPEN BOUWE MULDER | PRODUCER: | JESSICA VAN BEEK NADINE NEUMANN JULIANE HRIBAR |
| FILM EDITORS: | MATTHIEU HES KATE SPANKIE RINZE SCHURRMAN | COMMISSIONING EDITORS: | MARTIN PIEPER (ZDF ARTE) MIRIAM CARBE (ZDF ARTE) MANDY CHANG (BBC) HAILEY REYNOLDS (BBC) |
| COMPOER: | ROB MANNING | | AXEL ARNO (SVT) |
| COLOURIST: | LAURENT FLUTTER | | ANDREAS BRUUS (DR) |
| DUBBING MIXER: | JAIM SAHULEKA PIERRE BRANDT | | |
| NARRATOR: | SANDRA KOB | | |

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