



Concerning Violence

A film by Göran Hugo Olsson

Based on Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*

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A Story, Louverture Films, Final Cut for Real, and Helsinki Filmi co-production.

Concerning Violence

Nine Scenes from the Anti-Imperialistic Self-Defense

A film by Göran Hugo Olsson

Based on Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*

Narrated by Ms. Lauryn Hill

Preface by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

Including appearances by

Thomas Sankara

Amílcar Cabral

Tonderai Makoni

Robert Mugabe

FRELIMO

MPLA

Credits

Director.....	Göran Hugo Olsson
Producers.....	Annika Rogell & Tobias Janson/Story AB
Co-producers.....	Joslyn Barnes & Danny Glover/Louverture Films Monica Hellström/Final Cut for Real Miia Haavisto/Helsinki Filmi Otto Fagerstedt & Ingemar Persson/Sveriges Television
Associate Producers.....	Corey Smyth/Blacksmith Corp. Susan Rockefeller & Matthew Palevsky
Editors.....	Michael Aaglund Dino Jonsäter Göran Hugo Olsson Sophie Vukovic
Art Director.....	Stefania Malmsten
Assistant Director.....	Sophie Vukovic
Sound Design.....	Micke Nyström
Music.....	Neo Muyanga

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About the film

Logline:

From the director of *The Black Power Mixtape* comes a bold and fresh visual narrative on Africa, based on newly discovered archive material covering the struggle for liberation from colonial rule in the late '60s and '70s, accompanied by text from Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Synopsis:

Concerning Violence is both an archive-driven documentary covering the most daring moments in the struggle for liberation in the Third World, as well as an exploration into the mechanisms of decolonization through text from Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon's landmark book, written over 50 years ago, is still a major tool for understanding and illuminating the neocolonialism happening today, as well as the violence and reactions against it.

In the middle of the Cold War, radical Swedish filmmakers set out to capture the anti-imperialist liberation movements in Africa first hand. With their 16mm footage, found in the Swedish Television archives, filmmaker Göran Hugo Olsson draws on his experience making *The Black Power Mixtape* (2011) to create a visual narrative from Africa - images of the pursuit of freedom, the Cold War and Sweden. Swedish filmmakers, with their sense of solidarity with anti-imperial and socialist struggles around the world at the time, created images and stories which still resonate today, and can change and deepen our impression of the globalized world we live in.

The people captured by these filmmakers fought with their lives at stake, for their and others' freedom. The unique archival footage features a nighttime raid with the MPLA in Angola, interviews with the guerrilla soldiers of FRELIMO in Mozambique, as well as with Thomas Sankara, Amílcar Cabral and other African revolutionaries. The imagery is fantastic: clear, crisp and unique films that convey a sense of urgency and dedication that was at the heart of the decolonization movements.

"National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon."

In pictures and interviews, as well as with a narrating voice guiding the audience through the material with the words of Frantz Fanon, *Concerning Violence* tells the story of the people and ideas behind one of the most urgent struggles for freedom and change in the 20th century. The organization of the film into nine chapters connects quite abstract ideas with concrete images and real people who embody and carry the story.

Crafting a form that is unique in its blend of cinematic essay and archival footage documentary, *Concerning Violence* re-introduces Fanon's humanist, post-colonial vision through a cinematic journey that brings us face to face with the people for whom Fanon's writings on decolonization were not just rhetoric, but a reality.

In layering Fanon's text with archive footage, graphic design and music in a contemporary tone, filmmaker Göran Hugo Olsson presents a new generation of audiences with a re-examination of the machinery of colonialism that is at the root of much of the violence we see breaking out in parts of the world today.



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About the story and production

Concerning Violence combines incredible footage from a pivotal time with an iconic text by Frantz Fanon, first published in 1961. A psychiatrist from Martinique who played an active role in the Algerian struggle for liberation, Fanon was a major intellectual voice in support of the decolonization struggles taking place after the Second World War. Fanon's writings were central to the formation of African thought, which was being crafted during this period of upheaval in the continent by the visionaries of the new African nations - some of whom appear in the featured archive material in the film.



Frantz Fanon

Reading *The Wretched of the Earth* today is an amazing yet unsettling experience, because of how accurate it was in predicting the world today. This text explains the destructive dynamics between the rich and the Third World (a term first coined in the English translation of this book), like nothing else. With absolute precision, Fanon paints an image of an abstract mechanism in the relation between two worlds and sometimes two persons, the colonizer and the 'native', but also in relation to international corporations and people living off land containing the natural resources that such corporations seek to exploit - a situation that clearly has contemporary resonance. Fanon also made the critical point that decolonization is something that has to happen in both directions - both the colonized and the colonizer need to be decolonized. As a psychiatrist, he recognized the deep implications of this, as well as the enormous adjustments this would require. He also saw that this would not happen without a tremendous struggle that could take many forms, including what he referred to very controversially as "therapeutic violence".



Ms. Lauryn Hill

This text explores what poverty and oppression does to a mind, and why a human being exposed to such exploitation and violence eventually erupts in what to us at a remove may seem like an irrational reaction. In a time of globalization, it is very interesting to explore the extraordinary violence of colonization both ideologically and in practice, and to see that in the context of that legacy, many of the tensions of our time were mapped out long ago. The explosion of violence and contemporary conflict situations in Africa and elsewhere were perhaps entirely predictable.

Fanon's text is narrated in the film by Ms. Lauryn Hill - a respected and socially engaged musical contemporary with an ability to speak to a new generation living in a postcolonial world.

In a nod to Jean-Paul Sartre's 1961 preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, the film is placed within a contemporary social and historical context in a cinematic preface by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, one of the world's most renowned philosophers and a central theorist of postcolonial consciousness that Fanon helped set into motion - and which is today shaped by developments that he, in his short lifetime, did not witness.

In its essence, *Concerning Violence* is a film about how deeply twisted the relationship is between "Third World" Africa and Europe - in its modern form of neo-imperialism this includes the USA, China, and the Gulf States - and how much harm and injustice this is causing. It is an attempt to understand the profound hypocrisy at the centre of the Western values that underpin our current world order.



Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

Concerning Violence

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Director's note

Three years ago, my film *The Black Power Mixtape* premiered at a festival at a ski resort in Utah. Since then I have done hundreds of Q&As, about 500 interviews, travelled 200 days and slept 27 nights on planes. *The Black Power Mixtape* has had a theatrical release in 18 countries and 42 cities in the US; I've taken part in an endless string of film festivals - having met thousands of people in a discussion around images of yesterday, and the significance of this time period for the present situation, not least in northern Africa after the events of the Arab Spring.



A recurring question I get is why *the Mixtape* ends in 1975? The answer is, partly, because the Swedish attention was directed elsewhere in the mid 70s. And that was partly due to the liberation struggle in Africa and the fight against apartheid in South Africa. From roughly 1975 on, to the fall of the apartheid system in the early 90s, Swedish filmmakers and journalists were traveling the African continent and got some remarkable footage. We wanted to use this for two reasons. Firstly, this is too good to be lying in the basement of Swedish Television vaults. These films are an important part in understanding our history. Secondly, the material carries a cinematic beauty and wisdom that makes sense today. It's hard to explain, but it seems that if you travel very far with a heavy 16 mm camera, you will make sure to get some good footage. It was important to me that my next film should have the same qualities as *the Mixtape*: an openness and simplicity that allows the viewer to make sense of complex issues in a contemporary and inviting way. I think I learned a lot about how to make a film - and especially a film based on archive footage - meet an audience. One of the elements is that it should be about the material itself, and be clear on this - without being a pure meta film. In *Concerning Violence* we want to take a step further in working with archive material.

Sweden's unique position, as being officially neutral but also materially supportive of the ANC, made it possible for filmmakers and journalists to create unique and stunning images from this time when history was at a pivotal point. When you see these films today you are struck by how biased they were, and how the filmmakers were totally lost in their political views. The use of older archival material reveals perspectives and prejudices that are clear, enabling viewers to see beyond them. Precisely because the footage is from an earlier time period, it opens provocative discussions about current issues without pushing everyone's buttons. The films in the Swedish Archive might have been part of a patronizing perspective at the time, but thirty years later, we think they reveal something important about this time to Europeans, Americans and Africans - as well as others across the world who have been on either side of colonization, or are experiencing it now.

As Europeans, we have enormous concerns about making a film on what happens to people living in sub-Saharan Africa. Even attempting to make films about Africa can be an imperialist and patronizing exercise: the European media's contemporary description of the lives of hundreds of millions of people in the fastest growing economic region in the world is symptomatic of just this. The approach of our project is different.

What is unique about the archival images in *Concerning Violence* is how they display this crucial period in a new way that we hope will illuminate how dedicated so many people were in the struggle for freedom. And how that work must and will continue. This is a film with a goal: to motivate people to work for liberation; told with cinematic style that enables people to think for themselves.

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Key personnel biography

Director, Göran Hugo Olsson

Born 1965 in Lund, Sweden. Göran Hugo Olsson was educated at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm and is one of Sweden's leading filmmakers internationally. He is a documentary filmmaker, cinematographer and manufacturer of his own innovation - the A-Cam, a Super-16 film camera. He was editor and co-founder of the short documentary television program "Ikon" (SVT). His previous film *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975* (2011) became a huge hit in festivals, theatres and TV broadcasts worldwide. Olsson has since 1999 been a member of the Editorial board of Ikon South Africa - a platform for creative documentary in South Africa by township filmmakers in cooperation with South African national broadcaster SABC.

Filmography in selection:

The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975/ 100 min/2011/ supported by the Swedish Arts Grants Committee, the Swedish Film Institute, Swedish Television, Nordisk Film & Tv Fond, Media Programme of the European Union, ZDF/ARTE, NRK, YLE, RTS and ERT. (2011 World Documentary Editing Award, Sundance, Best Editing, Best Music, Swedish Film Awards)

Am I Black Enough For You/ 87/ 58min/2008/ supported by the Swedish Film Institute, the Danish Film Institute, the Nordic Film & TV Fond, the Finnish Film Foundation, the Arts Grants Committee in co-production with SVT also in collaboration with YLE, DR, NRK and ETV. In collaboration with TVF International and Drakes Avenue Pictures.

Producers, Annika Rogell & Tobias Janson, Story (Sweden)

Annika Rogell and Tobias Janson form the producer team of *Concerning Violence*. Rogell is a graduate from the leading Film School in Sweden, the Dramatic Institute, with a BA in Film Production. She was the producer of *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975*, which sold to 30 territories, including a 42-city theatrical release in the USA. Rogell has also worked at other leading film production companies in Sweden and has produced several award winning shorts.

Tobias Janson has been the CEO and producer at Story since January 2009. His recent films include *Belleville Baby* (2013, International Premiere at Berlinale Panorama, Tempo Documentary Award 2013 for Best Swedish Documentary and the International Documentary Award at the 2013 DocuFest in Kosovo), *After You* (2013, Awarded for Best Nordic Documentary at the 2013 Copenhagen DOX), *At Night I Fly*, (2011, Best Documentary, Swedish Film Awards, Special Jury Award nomination, Sheffield Doc/Fest), *Love During Wartime* (2010, World Documentary Competition, Tribeca), *Facing Genocide* (2010) and *The Black Power Mixtape* (2011).

Co-Producer, Joslyn Barnes, Louverture Films (US)

Joslyn Barnes is a writer and producer. Among the films Barnes has executive produced or produced since co-founding Louverture Films are the César-nominated *Bamako*, Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner and Oscar® and Emmy® nominated *Trouble the Water*, Bollywood thriller *Dum Maaro Dum*, the award-winning *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975*, and the Oscar® shortlisted, 2012 Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner *The House I Live In*. She associate produced Elia Suleiman's *The Time That Remains*, and the 2010 Cannes Palme d'Or winner *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* by Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

Editor, Michael Aaglund

Michael Aaglund was educated at the National Film and Television School. Prior credits include the Camera d'Or nominated *For Those in Peril* (Paul Wright, 2013) and Berlinale Peace Prize winner *A World Not Ours* (Mahdi Fleifel, 2012).

Editor, Dino Jonsäter

Dino Jonsäter, is one of Sweden's most prominent film editors with credits that include BAFTA-nominated *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* and *Let the Right One In*.

Art Director, Stefania Malmsten

Stefania Malmsten is an art director and a graphic designer with clients in the fields of art, fashion and film. Prior films include director Göran Hugo Olsson's *The Black Power Mixtape* and *Am I Black Enough For You*. She was one of the founders of Pop and Bibel magazines in Sweden and is a former art director at Vogue Hommes International in Paris. Stefania Malmsten received The Berling Prize, Sweden's most prestigious graphic design-prize, in 2006. Her most recent collaboration was with Wolfgang Tillmans and The Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm.

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About the production companies

Story AB

Founded in 1998, Story produces creative documentary films for television and cinema. The company is today one of the leading production companies focused on documentaries in Sweden and the Nordic countries. We have on average 4-6 full-length films in production at any given time. The company has great ambition to produce both personal and inventive films. The most recent releases include *Belleville Baby* (2013, International Premiere at Berlinale Panorama, Tempo Documentary Award 2013 for Best Swedish Documentary and the International Documentary Award at the 2013 DocuFest in Kosovo), *Eating Lunch* (International Premiere at Berlinale Generation 14plus Competition) the 2011 Sundance Best Editing winner and 2012 Swedish Film Awards winner for Best Music and Best Editing *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975*, 2012 Swedish Film Awards Best Documentary Winner *At Night I Fly*, and 2011 Tribeca World Competition release *Love During Wartime*. Other prize-winning Story films include the pioneering animated documentaries *Hidden* that won Best Short at Hot Docs in 2004 and *Slaves* that won Best Short at IDFA in 2008. Our objective is to produce internationally with a global distribution. Our projects have something important to say to audiences, and our long-term drive is to reach new audiences by combining captivating and critical themes with innovative forms.

Louverture Films is dedicated to the development and production of films of historical relevance, social purpose, commercial value and artistic integrity. Taking its name and inspiration from the great leader of the Haitian Revolution, Toussaint Louverture - famous for always creating an "opening" in the face of enormous obstacles - Louverture Films partners with progressive filmmakers and producers around the world and particularly from the global South, and pro-actively supports the employment and training of cast and crew from communities of color in the United States. The company was co-founded in 2005 by Danny Glover and Joslyn Barnes and operates in partnership with Susan Rockefeller and Matthew Palevsky.

Final Cut for Real is dedicated to high-end creative documentaries for the international market. The core staff consists of three producers Signe Byrge Sørensen, Anne Köhncke and Monica Hellström and production manager Maria Kristensen. Together we cover a wide range of development and production expertise and work with younger talent as well as established filmmakers to create a productive mixture of experience and new approaches to documentary filmmaking. Recent productions include *Chikara - The Sumo Wrestler's Son* (Simon Lereng Wilmont, 2013), *The Act of Killing* (Joshua Oppenheimer, 2012), *Traveling with Mr. T* (Simon Lereng Wilmont & Andreas Dalsgaard, 2012), and *The Human Scale* (Andreas Dalsgaard, 2012), *TPBAFK: The Pirate Bay Away from Keyboard* (Simon Klose, 2013), *The Kid and the Clown* (Ida Grøn, 2011).

Helsinki-filmi is one of the biggest production companies in Finland. It focuses on both feature length fiction based on original ideas and on high end documentaries.

Helsinki-filmi is known for both its steady flow of domestic box office hits, such as *Heart of a Lion* by Dome Karukoski in 2013 and for its ambitious and acclaimed features with international appeal, such as *The Visitor* by Jukka Pekka Valkeapää. Recent productions include *Gloriously Wasted* (Lauri Maijala, 2012), *Hush* (Jyri Kähönen, 2012), *Where We Once Walked* (Peter Lindholm, 2011) and the Toronto Film Festival release *Lapland Odyssey* (Dome Karukoski, 2010).

