

Six Films on DVD for

Law & Order in Mexico

Presumed Guilty

Directed by Roberto Hernandez & Geoffrey Smith



In December, 2005, Toño Zuniga was picked up off the street in Mexico City, Mexico, and sentenced to 20 years for a murder he knew nothing about. A friend of Toño's contacted two young lawyers, Roberto Hernández and Layda Negrete, who gained prominence in Mexico when they helped bring about the release of another innocent man from prison. Looking into Toño's case, Roberto and Layda managed to get a retrial—on camera—and enlisted the help of filmmaker Geoffrey Smith (*The English Surgeon*) to chronicle the saga. Shot over three years with unprecedented access to the Mexican courts and prisons, this dramatic story is a searing indictment of a justice system that presumes guilt.

"PRESUMED GUILTY is a terrific film—gripping, shocking and quite illuminating."—**Charles D. Weisselberg, Shannon C. Turner Professor of Law, University of California, Berkeley, School of Law**

"A rare—and chilling—glimpse of Mexico's dysfunctional legal system."—**David Luhnow, Wall Street Journal**

"Showing to the world in vivid detail the deep flaws in the system, undermining the most basic ideals of justice, this film has the potential to blow the lid on the Mexican criminal justice system."—**Jack Glaser, Associate Professor at Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley**



 **Best Mexican Documentary, 2010 Guadalajara International Film Festival**

 **Audience Choice Award, 2010 Los Angeles International Film Festival**

 **Premiere, 2009 Toronto International Film Festival**

88 minutes | color | 2009
Sale/DVD (Chaptered): \$398
Order # M101

From the Other Side

A Film by Chantal Akerman



Sometimes poor people, in an attempt to survive, risk their lives and leave everything behind to live elsewhere. But they're not wanted elsewhere. And if they are wanted it's for their labor, to do jobs that no one wants to do. Some will pay for others to do those jobs, but not much.

In FROM THE OTHER SIDE elsewhere is the United States, and the poor are mostly Mexicans. Renowned filmmaker Chantal Akerman shifts her focus between the border towns of Agua Prieta, Sonora, where people from all over Mexico wait in limbo before crossing over, and neighboring Douglas, Arizona, a town ringed by mountains and desert plains.

For years, immigrants passed through San Diego. But, using cutting edge technologies developed during the Vietnam War and perfected for the Gulf War, the INS (now ICE) managed to quell the flow of illegals there. That's left the mountains and deserts of Arizona for those desperate enough to try their luck: and as the deaths have mounted and the debate over immigration has centered on Arizona, it's clear that many still are.

"A spare, painterly and scrupulously unsentimental look at the plight of illegal Mexican immigrants massed at the United States border. Eerily beautiful, and filled with a quiet compassion."

—The New York Times

"Without pushing the agenda too hard, the filmmaker quietly uncovers the presiding desire for a better life, adequate housing and family support most of the subjects believe the move to America will facilitate."

"Stunning! As human testimony [it's] unforgettably forceful."

2003 Award of Merit in Film,
Latin American Studies
Association

2005 Film Festival,
National Women's Studies

99 minutes | color | 2002
Sale/DVD: \$449 ~~now~~ \$398
Order # M102



A Massacre Foretold

A Film by Nick Higgins



On December 22, 1997, in the Mexican province of Chiapas, 45 indigenous residents of Acteal, who had taken refuge in the village church, were massacred by paramilitary troops. Most of those killed were children and women (five of them pregnant).

The Acteal villagers were members of the pacifist group "Las Abejas" (The Bees), supporters of the newly emergent Zapatista Army of National Liberation, but who renounced that organization's violent methods. Although the murders of the unarmed peasants garnered worldwide news coverage, no serious government investigation of the atrocity was ever conducted.

A MASSACRE FORETOLD chronicles these historic events, including the 1994 emergence of the Zapatistas, the Mexican army's attacks on rural peasant communities—involving destruction of homes, forced displacement of entire communities, and "disappearances" and murders meant to terrorize the population—and government "negotiations" with the Zapatistas.

In addition to archival footage—including scenes of those seeking refuge in the church photographed just hours before they were killed—the film features moving interviews with massacre survivors and eyewitnesses, the Bishop of Chiapas, human rights activists, and a lawyer for Las Abejas.



"An excellent documentary... an urgent reminder of the need for justice and an end to paramilitary violence in Chiapas."

—Professor Neil Harvey,
Center for Latin American and
Border Studies, New Mexico
State University, author of
The Chiapas Rebellion

"Locates the Acteal massacre within the Mexican government's dual strategy toward the Zapatista conflict; observes the reality both in the light of the San Andres agreements, and also in the context of the paramilitary strategy of terror for which nobody has taken responsibility or yet faced justice."

—La Jornada Michoacan

2007 WACC/Signis Prize,
Best Human Rights
Documentary

2007 Festival International
du Film Des Droits de
l'Homme - Paris

2007 Edinburgh
International Film Festival

58 minutes | color | 2007
Sale/DVD (Chaptered): \$399 ~~now~~ \$348
Order # M103

Paulina

Directed by Vicky Funari

Produced by Vicky Funari & Jennifer Maytorena Taylor



In the 1950's, when Paulina was a child in a rural Mexican village, her parents traded her away for land rights. The villagers ostracized her and the town boss raped her, keeping her as his unwilling mistress throughout much of her adolescence. At 15, she took control of her destiny and escaped to Mexico City to begin a new life.

Now middle-aged, Paulina returns to her village to confront her family about what happened and encounters a web of intrigue and denial. PAULINA interweaves documentary and fiction styles to explore the characters' radically different perspectives and memories, and those of this vital, resilient woman.

"PAULINA was ten years in the making, but its passion and energy are fresh...blending real-life and re-enactment footage with dazzling virtuosity...a favorite at the Sundance Film Festival, it has a magical glow."

—San Francisco Chronicle

"A remarkable documentary... simultaneously devastating and inspiring... assured, intelligent filmmaking... a testament to what the human spirit can endure and rise above."—New York Times

"PAULINA ranks as an important study of gender and class politics, and as a powerful reminder that even the most seemingly humdrum life is significant."

—Time Out New York

"A great visual invention... A chilling view of sexual expropriation and family betrayal, and one which we have never seen before."

—San Francisco Bay Guardian

🌟 2001 Award of Merit in Film, Latin American Studies Association

🌟 2001 Film Festival, National Women's Studies Association

🌟 Grand Jury Prize & Golden Spire Award, 1998 San Francisco Film Festival

90 minutes | color | 1997
Sale/DVD: \$398 ~~now~~ \$348
Order # M104

The Passion of María Elena

A Film by Mercedes Moncada Rodriguez



When María Elena's 3-year-old son Jorge is killed in a hit-and-run accident in Chihuahua, Mexico, she begins a quest for justice that brings her face to face with racism, corruption, and the traditional attitudes of her community.

María Elena is indigenous—a Rarámuri—and the driver who killed her son 'white.' So María Elena faces an official Mexican justice system that discriminates against her, and then when she turns to her community's traditional system, also the whispers of those who regard her with suspicion because she is divorced and moved to the city. Some even blame her for Jorge's death.

This story of justice systems and injustice, grief, healing and cultural identity is recounted through scenes with María Elena, her parents, family members and friends, plus her lawyer and a Human Rights Commission representative.

THE PASSION OF MARIA ELENA allows us to appreciate the clashes of opposing worldviews and the nature of Rarámuri beliefs. And we see that María Elena, despite so many disadvantages, has enormous spiritual resources to draw upon, even in the midst of such a great tragedy.

"Captivating footage of... gender dynamics [and] deft camerawork capture[s] the differences in pacing, sounds, and social geography of urban and rural life [to] offer an engaging starting point for a discussion about racism and sexism as well as the meanings of ethnic and gender identities."—The Americas: A Quarterly Journal of Inter-American Cultural History

"The film's strength comes from its sensitivity and luminous imagery. When justice finally arrives for María Elena, it is on terms that defy Western sensibilities."

—The Village Voice

"A bracing look at violence and justice."—New York Times

🌟 Best Mexican Documentary, 2003 Guadalajara International Film Festival

🌟 Best Documentary, 2003 São Paulo Film Festival

76 minutes | color | 2003
Sale/DVD (Chaptered): \$440 ~~now~~ \$398
Order # M105



Tracing Aleida


A Film by Christiane Burkhard



"Seeks to give face, name and voice to one of the hundreds of cases of missing persons in Mexico in the seventies."

—La Jornada Jalisco

 **Best Mexican Documentary, 2008 Guadalajara International Film Festival**

 **Best Feature-Length Mexican Documentary, 2008 Morelia Film Festival**

88 minutes | color | 2007
Sale/DVD (Chaptered): \$398
Order # M106

During the 1970s, the Mexican government waged a "dirty war" against left-wing dissidents and suspected "subversives," resulting in the arrest and "disappearance" of hundreds of its own citizens. In many instances the children of the "disappeared" were adopted by other families. Since 2000, long-secret documents about these events have become public, revealing the story of the "dirty war," and of the missing victims.


Aleida Gallangos discovered her true identity only in 2001. TRACING ALEIDA interweaves the personal and political history of her parents and the times they lived in, with Aleida's efforts to find and meet her long-lost brother, from whom she was separated at the age of two when their parents were arrested. The film also shows that while the siblings may learn to reconcile two separate personal and family histories, Mexico faces perhaps an even more problematic effort, to acknowledge the atrocities committed against its own people, and the possibility of indictments against previous government officials responsible for them.



Stolen Land

A Film by Margarita Martinez & Miguel Salazar



 Caught between rebel guerrillas and the Colombian army, the indigenous Nasa people fight to reclaim the ancestral land that was stolen from them while also fending off new threats of violence encroaching on their community.

In a country where the people have known little but war, the Nasa leader Lucho Acosta knows that violence will only breed more of the same. He must fight for the rights of his people in a peaceful manner. STOLEN LAND is a sensitive and empathetic documentary that follows Acosta as he takes the Nasa's fight from the streets of their villages to the halls of government, giving us an intimate look inside this peaceful and caring traditional community. Facing nearly insurmountable odds, Acosta and his beliefs are tested to their core. The last time an agreement was reached, nearly 20 years ago, the result was a massacre. The stakes are high and the future of the Nasa hangs in the balance.

 **2010 Guadalajara International Film Festival**

 **2010 Hot Docs Documentary Film Festival**

73 minutes | color | 2010
Sale/DVD (Chaptered): \$398
Order # M109/Colombia!



Ordering Information

Please refer to order numbers on all orders.

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Ordering: Submit all orders by purchase order, on official institutional letterhead, or pay in advance of shipping.



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