

# SAVING SOWETO WINS BRONZE AT NEW YORK FESTIVAL



**S**AVING Soweto, directed by Shareen Anderson of Fort Greene Filmworks and Lisa Henry of Left Hand Films, received a Bronze at the New York Festival's International Television and Film Awards, held in New York on 3 May 2010.

Produced for Al Jazeera English (DSTV channel 406), the documentary series is an eight-part look at Chris Hanani Baragwanath Hospital, the largest hospital in the world.

At the International Television and Film Awards, *Saving Soweto* trumped thousands of entries from over 30 countries.

Lisa and Shareen met through a mutual friend in 2007 and talked about working together on the project, developing the idea from

there. "We wanted to walk in the shoes of the doctors and staff at the hospital and try to understand what motivates them to work at Bara when they can choose to work anywhere in the world. The people who work there do so under difficult conditions – the hospital is under-staffed, under-resourced and overwhelmed by the number of patients seeking treatment on a daily basis – but many struggle on in spite of this, doing their best to save human lives with what they've got," says Lisa.

The directors then took the idea to the next level, "We approached Al Jazeera English with the idea. Through a series of conversations and a meeting with the commissioning editor from the channel, we agreed to produce

the series for them."

They took a risk by not pre-determining the story but rather letting it tell itself. Lisa says they went into the project with no agenda and no script but with a desire to discover and reflect what's going on in the world's largest hospital.

"What we show in our series is, we feel, a fair and honest account of life inside Chris Hanani Baragwanath," says Lisa. "This approach allowed us to let the people we followed lead the storytelling and let us capture moments 'on the fly.' It also meant we had no beginning, middle, end to our episodes so although our first episode, *24 hours of Trauma*, was shot in 24 hours, our last episodes took three months to wrap,

because that's the way that particular story panned out."

The directors say that they had to become 'jacks of all trades' because the budget for the project was small. "We organised the access, found the people we wanted to follow, put together the production schedule, drove the crew around, made sure they were fed and watered, collected equipment as and when we needed it..."

Being this hands on had its advantages. "We were on every single shoot so we had a strong grasp of what we had on tape from the outset, which made post-production easier in terms of putting the episodes together," says Lisa.

Having two directors on one production also meant that they

didn't miss a thing on set and built meaningful relationships with doctors and patients at Bara.

For the eight-month shoot, Lisa and Shareen had to call in favours from colleagues to get the best rates to keep in line with the budget.

Shooting the series also came with its pitfalls. According to Shareen and Lisa, there were occasions where people didn't know that they were filming there and stopped them mid-shoot.

Another big concern was shooting in very infectious conditions for long periods, with the fear that these two mothers would come home with infections.

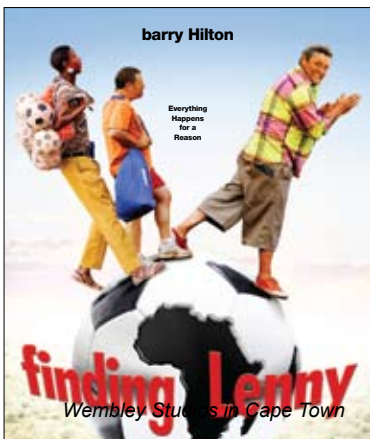
"At one stage, Lisa had to go onto antibiotics for blood poisoning but apart from that we were physically okay. Emotionally it was hard too. We are not medically trained and watching people die was not easy for us," says Shareen.

The directors are now wrapping up a documentary on crime in South Africa.

Watch the trailer for the series on <http://www.thecallsheet.co.za> or see the series online at <http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes>.

**Siyamukelwa Ngcobo**

## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS



### Finding Lenny wins first international award

NEAL Sundstrom's 2009 film *Finding Lenny*, which stars funnyman Barry Hilton in the lead, wowed audiences and jurors alike at the Pan African Film Festival in Cannes recently. The heart-warming, soccer-themed comedy beat 50 other films from around the globe to be awarded the "Dikalo" for best feature film.

Producer Terry Vallet says, "We are thrilled at the wonderful response we have been receiving from foreign audiences."

*Finding Lenny* is currently being dubbed into French for channel Canal Plus.

### Jo Kastaras is Cyprus' woman of the year

SOUTHAFRICAN costume designer Jo Kastaras has won the Woman of the Year award in Cyprus, the country of her birth. Jo was nominated for an Emmy Award and a Costume Designer's Guild Award for her work on *No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency*.

### David Newton awarded in Los Angeles

ACTOR and comedian, David Newton recently came second at H2F Comedy Productions' comedy contest, held at Ice House in Pasadena, one of the longest running comedy clubs in America, with alumni such as Tim Allen, Jerry Seinfeld, Adam Sandler, George Lopez, Jay Leno, Steve Martin and Chris Rock. Dave was in Los Angeles pursuing his acting and comedy career.

### CFC changes

LAURENCE Mitchell has finished his tenure as The Cape Film Commissioner. He will be spending more time focusing on his role at Net#work BBDO, where he is a partner and shareholder. "In addition I will also be involved from a business point of view within the broader film industry from a production and business development point of view," says

Laurence. "Furthermore I will continue to be involved in the training and development of young filmmakers particularly within the new media and animation sectors."

Both the City of Cape Town and the Provincial Government of the Western Cape have requested that the appointment of a new CEO be put on hold until the Cape Film Commission's (CFC) AGM in September 2010, but which time they will have concluded discussions on the future role of all public entities in the Province.

Vuyokazi Matu, a director and shareholder at Okuhle Media, has been appointed as executive chairperson and will assist the current CFC management team during this transitional phase.

### My TV set to challenge the African Pay TV market

THE latest report from Balancing-Act Africa, titled *African Pay TV: A growing competitive market*, was released on 30 April 2010. The 23-page report, including five quantitative tables, looks at the continued growth of the pay-TV market in Africa despite the closure of continental player GTV in February 2009.

The briefing paper, costing US\$250, reviews the variety of An-

glophone, Francophone and Lusophone markets on the African continent to see who has marketshare where and why. The report closes with strategic recommendations and best practices for success.

It includes a mix of qualitative analysis, quantitative data and best practices.

Competition in Sub-Saharan Africa has bought about a steady increase in the number of subscribers. Competition is shortly to start in South Africa with the arrival of On Digital Media's Top TV and this will also undoubtedly spur further growth, according to the report.

Some of the fastest growth has been in Nigeria where there is three-way competition between DSTV, HiTV and MyTV.

For more information visit <http://www.afridigital.net>.

### SABC to broadcast 100% local music for World Cup

THE South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has announced its intention to broadcast 100% local music from May-July 2010. The corporation's Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) division's 15 radio stations will, from the beginning of May, play 85% local South African music, while 15% will be dedicated to music from

around the African continent.

"During this time, we will be having a variety of foreign guests on our soil in the build-up and indeed during the course of the 2010 FIFA World Cup and it is important that they are exposed to our culture, musically and otherwise," said SABC GCEO Solly Mokoetle.

South Africa's three commercial radio stations will continue playing a mix of local and international music.

### Spectrum brings 3D to SA

LOCAL digital media company Spectrum recently acquired a DVS Fuze System, developed by Digital Video Systems (DVS), leaders in the production of high-end video technology and based in Germany.

Ronald Henry, Spectrum's CEO, says, "We have received numerous enquiries from local filmmakers and producers about this groundbreaking 3D technology, and we realised that now is the time to bring a Fuze system to South Africa. The demand was growing rapidly, but acquiring the system earlier would have involved significantly higher costs for Spectrum's clients. Keeping the local film and TV industry at the cutting-edge of technology, while providing cost-effective solutions, we are already transferring a 3D advert set to

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