



Call Me Kuchu Discussion Guide

Directors: Katherine Fairfax Wright, Malika Zouhali-Worrall

Year: 2012

Time: 87 min

You might know this director from:

CALL ME KUCHU is the first feature-length documentary film from these directors.

FILM SUMMARY

Set in modern-day Uganda, CALL ME KUCHU harkens back to an era of out-dated discrimination and injustice against homosexuals. The fairness and equality strived for in the Western world, and the founding principles of international organizations such as the United Nations, are entirely negated in this gut-wrenching tale of extreme anti-homosexuality and institutionalized discrimination in current Uganda.

Through interviews with gay activists, prejudiced newspaper publishers, and preachers hell-bent on making the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) suffer for their anti-Christian lifestyles, CALL ME KUCHU tells a murky tale of this severely side-lined group of Ugandans. Take Stosh Mugisha, impregnated and infected with the HIV virus when she endured “curative rape” at the hands of a friend. Or Long Jones, who after years of taunting and anti-gay bigotry, attempted to take his own life on multiple occasions. And David Kato, whose brutal murder silenced the leading voice in the Ugandan LGBT movement, an essential facet of any contemporary society considering itself a complete member of the international community.

The film reveals footage of Christian fundamentalists pioneering a detrimental campaign of hate and violence, and it asks anti-gay Rolling Stone editor, Giles Muhame, to expand on his print policy. With cutting honesty, Muhame and Pastor Maale declare to destroy all homosexuals and shed a cold light on the plight of Ugandan LGBTs faced with the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Parliament. CALL ME KUCHU presents a desperate picture of a country in a hysterical state of borderline genocide, with an active Anti-Homosexuality Bill in place.

FILM THEMES

Anti-homosexuality arrived in Africa via Western missionaries who preached God-fearing, save-our-children, hate-infested lessons. While the West has moved on, the ex-colonists hold fast to the orders they were given, and as the international community watches the insanity unfold, Ugandan LGBTs band together in a fight for justice.

GOD IS APPARENTLY WATCHING

With the arrival of Western missionaries in the 1870s, Ugandans were taught the Christian notion of natural order, with homosexuality having no place on the righteous path. The West has since modernized, but abandoned LGBTs in a perilous state to fight their battle beneath the scornful eye of God. American evangelists frequently return to stoke the fire of hatred and injustice, providing the Ugandan God-fearing masses with propaganda from which to compose the Anti-Homosexuality Act, all in the name of a God whose voice remains unheard.

COMMUNITY AS STRENGTH

The activists speak of the constant fear that colors their existences. With their intimate lives exposed in front-page news, with relatives curatively raping lesbians, family and friends threatened with imprisonment if they fail to report homosexuality, and the government impeding their daily movements with institutionalized discrimination, the battle to simply be alive is an uphill climb. Suicide and closeting one's sexuality are two of the safest life choices mentioned in the film. The hope, strength, and support offered by the LGBT community is indispensable. The only unguarded honesty and true celebration of life takes place communally.

FALSE ALLEGATIONS

The Ugandan anti-gay movement, colossal in its reach and fatal in its force, treats alternative lifestyles as ammunition to wage an unbarred war. The accusations are endless. The LGBT community is charged with infecting people with HIV, wanting to overthrow the government, enacting terror attacks, recruiting unwilling minors into homosexuality, and sodomizing children. In the name of a supposed gay crusade, the Christian majority - urged on by American evangelists - go to great lengths to eradicate this perceived evil from Ugandan society.

GLOBAL PROTECTION

There is no legal action LGBTs can take when they are evicted from their homes, beaten in the street, or fired from their jobs. The international community becomes their voice and recourse. In the global world we live, with peacekeeping forces and the internet offering information on all corners of the globe, nothing can be concealed anymore. Global citizens, with knowledge at their fingertips, owe one another. And the modern-day martyrs fighting for fairness in Uganda require the international community's help in the face of the dilapidated state of human rights under the Anti-Homosexuality Act.

“Some people have to die so that there is freedom. There is a need to have some sacrifice here for these issues to get out there.”

Ugandan activist to the UN

“I’ve always encouraged myself, but accepting yourself is another thing.”

John Abdallah Wambere

FILM FACTS:

- CALL ME KUCHU won 13 awards, including Best Documentary at the 2012 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, and was nominated for an additional 7 awards, including an Open Eyes Jury Award at the Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival.
- Directors Fairfax-Wright and Zouhali-Worrall met at a mutual friend's birthday party in New York City and quickly discovered they shared a similar worldview and had both lived, worked and traveled in Eastern and Central Africa. 18 months later, they boarded a plane together on their self-funded filming adventure to document the LGBT community in Uganda.
- David Kato Kisule had a twin brother.
- British explorers searching for the source of the Nile arrived in Uganda in the 1860s, followed by Christian missionaries in the 1870s. Uganda was declared a British protectorate in 1894, then eventually gained its independence in 1962. Military dictator, Idi Amin, took over as the head of government from 1971 to 1979.
- The Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Act was signed into law on February 24th 2014. This law broadens the criminalization of same-sex relations, and penalizes individuals, companies, media organizations, and non-governmental organizations that know of gay people or support LGBT rights. The Constitutional Court of Uganda ruled the law invalid on August 1st 2014.
- Homosexuality may be punishable by death in Yemen, Iran, Iraq, Mauritania, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates. In Mauritania, for example, Muslim men engaging in homosexual sex can be stoned to death, while women face prison.
- Same-sex marriage is legal in Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, the U.K., and Uruguay, and same-sex marriage is allowed in parts of Mexico and the U.S. Luxembourg will legalize same-sex marriage in January 2015.
- The term "homophobia" was first coined in the 1960s by American psychologist George Weinberg, and first appeared in print in an article in American pornographic magazine Screw, in which the word was used to refer to heterosexual men's fear that others might think they are gay.
- Kuchu, a Swahili word, is used by homosexual Ugandans when describing themselves.
- Scott Lively, a conservative Christian activist from the U.S., went to Uganda along with evangelical activists Don Schmierer and Caleb Lee Brundidge in early 2009 to give a series of talks on "the gay agenda...and the threat homosexuals posed to Bible-based values and the traditional African family." These talks inspired the development of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in the Ugandan Parliament.

WAYS TO INFLUENCE

1. Share this film. Give others the chance to be affected by its powerful story, .
2. Consider donating to the [David Kato Vision and Voice Award](#), an international prize that recognizes leaders who work to uphold the sexual rights of LGBT people in challenging environments around the world.
3. Sign the [ALL OUT](#) petition against the Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Law.
4. Support the activists featured in CALL ME KUCHU, that continue fighting, despite the vicious threats against them. Consider donating to the [Call Me Kuchu Support Fund](#) to aid them in their struggle.
5. Become involved with [Amnesty International](#), which campaigns to end abuses to human rights.

We believe a good documentary is just the beginning...

In a world of sound-bites, documentaries provide an opportunity to think, understand, share, and connect with the world.

They are controversial, divisive, fascinating, unexpected, and surprising. They can be thrillers, dramas, comedies, romance, tear-jerkers, and horror films.

Documentaries provide the perfect topic for meaningful conversations. If you want to talk about the things that matter with people that matter then pick a film, invite your friends, and watch & discuss together. It's as easy as that.

Influence Film Club – We are the conversation after the film.