

Main Features.

- > South Africa
- > Africa
- > World
- > Politics
- > Economy
- > Science
- > Sport
- > Entertainment
- > Environment
- > Technology
- > Features

News Programmes

- > Fokus
- > Kids News
- > Special Assignment
- > SABC News International

Additional Features

- > Audio Bulletins
- > Video Bulletins
- > Personalise
- > Caught On-Camera
- > FAQ
- > Podcasts

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Movie highlights Bob Kennedy's contribution to fight against apartheid

September 19 2009 ,
8:28:00

Sherwin Bryce-Pease, New York

A Ripple of Hope is a film that tells the relatively unknown story of Senator Robert Kennedy's visit to South Africa in 1966. Most notably during that trip he addressed students at the University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Wits, but to everyone's surprise also went to Soweto and made a helicopter trip to the banned ANC President Chief Albert Luthuli in the hills of Natal.

The film tells of a speech given by US Senator Robert F Kennedy on Affirmation Day of the University of Cape Town in 1966. He arrived in a country firmly in the grips of Hendrik Verwoerd's Government - at the invitation of the National Union of South African Students.

Ripple of Hope's producer and director Larry Shore says: "I began to research it and visited SA and people who were old enough across the spectrum, black and white, remembered the visit and spoke about it. People over here said they knew about it but they had no details - so as a filmmaker you're looking for things that people have never told about".

Honest broker

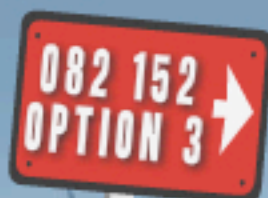
The brother of the assassinated US President visited South Africa at the height of the civil rights movement in his own country. Shore says Kennedy was an honest broker. Kennedy also visited Anti-Apartheid activist Chief Albert Luthuli in Groutville, in the province of Natal. Shore says he was always drawn to the story of Luthuli.

"I'd always admired Chief Luthuli, it was hard to find information about him because he was banned, but stuff trickled through and of course Luthuli being the first African to win the Nobel Peace Prize. When I read about his meeting with Luthuli, I was always just amazed by that and the visit stayed with me. I hope in a small way it contributes to people's understanding of this important moment in history, and about America's relationship with South Africa and the connections between the civil rights movement and the anti-apartheid movement," says Shore.

The producer has spoken to an array of South Africans who share their memories of the visit - among them Peter Magubane, Allister Sparks, the late Helen Suzman and Aggrey Klaaste . South Africa's younger generation probably knows less about Robert F Kennedy than his brother, the assassinated US President JFK or his younger brother Teddy Kennedy who died recently. But in this film you'll be moved by the power of this individual, the boldness he displayed as he confronted the tyranny of old and embraced those fighting for freedom.



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