

## People &amp; Places

## Cannes

## 'Lee's signature'

## Mandela's comrades take spotlight in docu

CANNES, France, May 14, (AFP): Half a century after the historic trial at which Nelson Mandela escaped the gallows, one of his fellow prisoners will walk Cannes' red carpet Monday for the premiere of a documentary about those who stood with him in the dock.

Andrew Mlangeni is one of the last two surviving defendants of the 1963-1964 Rivonia trial of Mandela and nine others who faced a death sentence on charges of plotting guerrilla warfare and carrying out acts of sabotage against South Africa's apartheid regime.

Mandela's impassioned three-hour address to the court, during which he declared that a democratic South Africa was an ideal "for which I am prepared to die" was the most significant of his career, conferring on him a demi-god status that overshadowed the sacrifices of his co-accused.



Mandela

"The State Against Mandela and the Others", a French-produced documentary based on the recently released audio recordings of the proceedings, attempts to redress the balance by giving centre stage to his fellow travellers.

Using animation, interviews and archival footage it shows how the defendants turned a trial aimed at dealing a knock-out blow to the anti-apartheid movement into a searing indictment of white supremacist rule.

"We decided we had to conduct this not as a criminal trial but a political trial," says Ahmed Kathrada, one of three former prisoners — one black (Mlangeni), one white (Denis Goldberg) and one of Asian origin (Kathrada) — interviewed for the feature.

## Recreate

Kathrada, who died last year, is one of the heroes of the documentary by former Radio France Internationale journalist Nicolas Champeaux and filmmaker Gilles Porte, which uses stark black-and-white animation to recreate the courtroom clashes.

Born into a family of Indian Muslim immigrants, he refused, like his comrades, to appeal his sabotage conviction to avoid the indignity of being seen to beg for clemency.

The film also shows how the preening prosecutor, depicted by Franco-Dutch artist Oerd van Cuijlenborg as a vulture figure in flapping black robes, underestimated the "semi-barbarous blacks" as they were described by the state.

Powerful testimony from Mlangeni, who watched his parents work for whites "for peanuts", and Mandela's mentor Walter Sisulu, who complained of constant harassment of his family by the police, moved the world — and the judge.

At the end of the eight-month trial, which was condemned by the UN Security Council, the judge decided to spare the men the noose.

Mandela, Kathrada, Mlangeni, Goldberg and four others were sentenced to life in prison, a verdict 85-year-old Goldberg greeted with immense relief.

"It's life! And life is wonderful!", he recalls shouting across the courtroom to his mother.

But Mandela's ex-wife Winnie was already steeling herself for the long road ahead, with two young children in tow.

"That's when my 'Amandla' (Power) started," she says in one of her last interviews before her death last month, uttering the rallying cry of the anti-apartheid movement with a clenched-fist salute.

For Champeaux, a former South Africa correspondent who gained access to the 256 hours of digitised recordings, the trial had the makings of an epic tale that needed to be shared with an international audience.

"There's the bad guy, the traitor, the love story, the suspense, the inscrutable judge, the families trembling in the gallery," he told AFP.

But it is also a reminder, he said, "that when you are wedded to a cause, those close to you suffer."

Explaining the decision to use 45 minutes of animation — about a third of the film — Porte said the drawings allowed a film bursting with historical information "to breathe a bit".

"Animation also lends a bit of poetry," the co-director of the award-winning 2004 French-Belgian comedy "When the Sea Rises" said.

Above all, the documentary shows that South Africa's tortured path to democratic elections in 1994, four years after Mandela's release from prison, was the work of a single-minded, multi-racial group, not a single superhero.

For Porte, it is a reminder "that all great things that happen in this world are achieved collectively."

## Also:

**NEW YORK:** Spike Lee, whose new film "BlackkKlansman" will premiere in Cannes on Monday, has captivated audiences for more than 30 years with his depictions of life in black America, infused with his signature mix of entertainment, activism and rage.

Lee first grabbed attention at the festival with his breakout feature, "She's Gotta Have It" — shot in two weeks in black and white during the hot summer of 1985, in part thanks to his grandmother's savings.

With that film, which won a youth prize at Cannes, Lee "broke the glass ceiling" for black filmmakers and "opened the doors for everybody who's come after him," says Michael Genet, an actor and screenwriter who penned the script for "She Hate Me."

African-American director Ryan Coogler "couldn't be who he is today with 'Black Panther' without Spike Lee doing what he did," he adds. "It's impossible."

Lee — born Shelton Jackson Lee in Georgia on March 20, 1957 — was raised in Brooklyn's Fort Greene neighborhood, where he filmed "She's Gotta Have It" and which is still home to his production company 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks.

A small man with a piercing gaze from behind his round glasses, Lee acted in that first film, taking the supporting role of motor-mouthed Mars Blackmon, one of the main character's three suitors.

John Canada Terrell, one of his co-stars in the movie, described Lee as a "very strange, cerebral kind of cat."

"Spike was always quiet. He kept to himself but I called him the idea man," recalls Herbert Eichelberger, an associate professor of film at Clark Atlanta University whom Lee calls his mentor.

"He would come with all kinds of ideas about doing films and making certain kinds of approaches to a situation."

"From the start, he was a good storyteller," says Eichelberger, who thought Lee's career would be focused on documentaries, given his keen powers of observation of society around him.

But Lee would embrace that format only once, in 1997 with "4 Little Girls" — the Oscar-nominated story of the racially motivated bombing of an African-American church during the US civil rights movement.



From left: Japanese actresses Mayu Matsuoka, Jyo Kairi, Kirin Kiki, Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-Eda, Japanese actresses Sakura Ando, Miyu Sasaki and Japanese writer and actor Lily Franky pose as they arrive on May 13, for the screening of the film 'Shoplifters (Manbiki Kazoku)' at the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. (AFP)

## Cannes

## Fearless pontiff's message 'we are all equal'

## Film shows pope taking on church

CANNES, France, May 14, (Agencies): There is a killer moment in the new film "Pope Francis — A Man of His Word" when you realise what he is up against.

The Argentine is dressing down the cardinals and bejewelled princes of the Curia who run the Catholic Church, lacerating them for their greed, backstabbing and lust for power.

The scandal-hit, Italian-dominated body is full of people leading immoral double lives who "possess a heart of stone and a stiff neck", he tells them in German director Wim Wenders' remarkable insight into the leader of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics.

"Pay a visit to the cemeteries" and look at those "who thought they were immortal, immune and indispensable," Francis urges them in the feature, which premiered late Sunday at the Cannes film festival.

"You see the sharp faces of some of these cardinals who are rich and ambitious," said Wenders, who interviewed the reforming pontiff over several months for the portrait.

"But you can also see other archbishops thinking, 'Yes, this is why we elected you.' As Francis said, you cannot combat the diseases of the world without examining yourself first."

The picture that emerges of Francis from Wenders' unprecedented access is of a man determined to radically transform the vast wealthy institution into "a poor church for poor people".

And Wenders, the maker of such classics as "Wings of Desire", "Paris, Texas" and "The Buena Vista Social Club", believes this pontiff has the steeliness to do it.

Many in the Curia "think he is going too fast and too far," according to Wenders, and have been digging in with traditionalists to resist him.

"But I think the opposite," said the filmmaker. "I think Francis is stepping on the brakes in order to take them all along."

## Push

"Yet also he is fearless. He knows what has to be done and he wants to push it as far as he can knowing that he

is not young anymore."

For Wenders, a lapsed Catholic who rediscovered his faith after the death of his doctor father, the 81-year-old is a revolutionary.

"When you look him in the eye you see this is a very loving man who really likes people. He is as honest as a man can be and you see the courage in his eyes.

"His message — that we are equal and we have to treat each other as equals — is why people say he is a communist. We cannot leave people behind in the dust. It is a tough message and he doesn't hesitate with it."

"St Francis of Assisi was also the first ecologist," said Wenders, who was "amazed" by the depth of the pope's understanding of climate change and his warning that the global "mania for growth" is threatening mankind.

"That growth is coming at the expense of the poor majority... who are suffering first and worst from climate change," said Wenders.

The director said the Vatican contacted him out of the blue asking whether he would be interested in talking to the pope.

"I was given carte blanche," he told AFP, and access to the Vatican's video archives. "There was no interference whatsoever," he insisted, despite the film being co-produced by Vatican television.

Wenders said he was also touched by the pope's deep tolerance of other religions and lifestyles.

"He says don't try to convert anybody, just try to convince them to be of goodwill and to accept each other. His firm belief is there is no difference between people. That is revolutionary — communists don't have that message."

But despite trying to lead by example by living modestly, the pope knows his power is limited. "All he has are his words," Wenders said.

"Each time he left us after the shoot, he would look into our eyes and ask each of us, 'Please pray for me.'"

"There are a lot of people praying for him, praying that he can do it," Wenders said.

As both a fiction filmmaker and a documentarian, Wenders has always

been more concerned with the journeys of individuals than the systems and institutions in which those journeys are made. In his Palme d'Or winner "Paris, Texas," Wenders tackled themes ranging from urbanization to the breakdown of the Western family, but his focus remained trained on one highly specific road-trip. His 1999 documentary "The Buena Vista Social Club" offered an invaluable glimpse at Cuba during the embargo, but only through the lens of individual musicians. That tendency provides for both the greatest strengths and the greatest weaknesses in his Cannes premiere, "Pope Francis: A Man of His Word." Beautifully shot and edited, Wenders' latest nonetheless features his highest-profile documentary subject yet, and the film should attract substantial worldwide attention, especially in Latin America.

Granted access to the pontiff in several sit-down interview segments — staged Errol Morris-style, with Francis staring directly into the camera and largely speaking in his native Spanish — as well as some up-close coverage of his trips to everything from a Brazilian street mass to a Central African Republic children's hospital, a Philadelphia prison, a Greek migrant camp, the UN, a joint session of Congress, "Pope Francis: A Man of His Word." Beautifully shot and edited, Wenders' latest nonetheless features his highest-profile documentary subject yet, and the film should attract substantial worldwide attention, especially in Latin America.

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German director Wim Wenders poses on May 13, during a photocall for the film 'Pope Francis — A Man of His Word' at the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. (AFP)



Salah



Diesel

## Variety

**TOKYO:** Snoopy may be joining Sony. Japanese electronics maker Sony Corp.'s music unit said Monday that it is buying a stake in Peanut Holdings, the company behind Snoopy and Charlie Brown.

Sony Music Entertainment signed a deal with DHX Media, based in Nova Scotia, Canada, to acquire 49 percent of the 80 percent stake DHX holds in Peanuts.

Under the deal, Sony Music will own 39 percent and DHX 41 percent. The family members of Charles Schulz, the creator of Peanuts, will continue to own 20 percent of Peanuts. The parties hope to complete the acquisition on or about June 30, according to Tokyo-based Sony.

DHX is a leading children's content and brand company, known for Strawberry Shortcake as well as producing children's shows, in addition to Peanuts. (AP)

**CANNES, France:** Real Madrid goalkeeper Keylor Navas said Sunday that he was more scared of walking the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival than facing Liverpool's lethal striker Mohamed Salah.

The Costa Rican said he found showing a film about his life at the festival more stressful than a Champions League final.

"It's a delicate question," he told reporters which recounts his rise from humble origins to become one of Real's millionaire galactics.

"The Champions League final I know. The red carpet tonight is new... it's a bit stressful," he admitted.

The 31-year-old was part of the all-conquering Madrid side that won the European title in 2016 and 2017, and will face the English team in two weeks' time in this year's decider. (AFP)

**LOS ANGELES:** The H Collective and Vin Diesel's One Race Films have acquired rights from Revolution Studios to the "xXx" film franchise and plan to begin shooting the fourth film in December.

Revolution Studios retains its rights to the first three films. D.J. Caruso, who directed "xXx: Return of Xander Cage," will return to direct "xXx 4" with Diesel reprising his role as Xander Cage. Joe Roth and Jeff Kirschenbaum will produce with Diesel, Samantha Vincent for One Race

Films and the H Collective.

The companies made the announcement Tuesday. Diesel had said in early 2017 at the "Return of Xander Cage" premiere

in London that Paramount execs had expressed interest in the fourth movie, but those plans were never solidified. (RTRS)



Iranian actress Behnaz Jafari poses on May 13, during a photocall for the film '3 Faces (Se Rokh)' at the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. (AFP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Fall Out Boy's Pete Wentz had a special Mother's Day announcement.

The 38-year-old took to Instagram on Sunday to announce the birth of his daughter with partner Meagan Camper. He wrote he's grateful Marvel Jane Wentz is here and she's "ready to take-over the world."

Marvel is Wentz's third child and first daughter. The couple has a son, and Wentz had a boy with his ex, Ashlee Simpson. (AP)

**OSLO:** Norwegian songwriters, composers and music publishers on Monday said they had lodged a complaint against Jay Z's music platform Tidal after a media report said its streaming statistics had been manipulated.

The financial daily Dagens Naeringsliv (DN) claimed last week that the streaming numbers for Kanye West's "The Life of Pablo" and Beyonce's "Lemonade" were inflated through manipulated user play counts on Tidal, allowing the stars excessive royalty payouts.

Rap mogul Jay Z bought Tidal, which has its roots and significant activities in Oslo, through his holding Project Panther for \$56 million in March 2015. (AFP)