

## Media Release: Uhuru Productions

Thursday 14 November, 2019

For immediate release

### HOW TO STEAL A COUNTRY PRE-RELEASE NOTICE

New feature documentary, **How to Steal a Country**, will premiere at IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam, 20 November – 1 December 2019).

Directed by Rehad Desai (**Miners Shot Down, Everything Must Fall**) and co-directed by Mark Kaplan, the film is a cautionary tale of state capture, and the threat this poses to democracy and social justice. Taking us through the story are the journalists who sat at the centre of breaking the biggest data leak in South African history, the #GuptaLeaks.

From Rehad Desai:

*“We have been encouraged to ignore the facts and indeed the truth, some have called this the post truth era. The propagandistic power of social media is now being actively exploited by the political and economic elites to influence public opinion like never before. In the telling of the Gupta story I wanted to show how journalists have become protagonists in the fight for truth and democracy, a reality of our times that I feel truly privileged to be able bring to the screen.”*

In the film, journalists Susan Comrie, Thanduxolo Jika and Ferial Haffajee, unpack the Gupta/Zuma network’s political project, where *radical economic transformation* became Orwellian ‘newspeak’ for diverting public funds away from social needs and into the pockets of the politically connected elite.

Read the synopsis:

When a group of investigative journalists discover far-reaching corruption involving Jacob Zuma, then President of South Africa, a pernicious disinformation campaign is mounted against the integrity of the newsroom. Then one day the journalists receive the smoking gun - a huge data leak that lays bare the entire modus operandi behind the capture of the South African state by private individuals with the help of politicians.

Thanks to their good friend Zuma, members of the Indian Gupta family were able to use the proceeds of an entire nation for their own gain, acquiring holdings in coal mines, media and IT companies, and even government positions. When finally a Judicial Commission of Inquiry is installed, Zuma also comes to testify. His defense: it’s all lies and fake news.

In interviews, investigative journalists express their concerns about the global drift towards ever-increasing entanglement between business and government, and the polarization it brings: presidents and multinationals live unassailably in their own bubble. As a journalist, all you can do is make life in the bubble a little less comfortable. Is there still room for justice in South Africa's hard-won fledgling democracy?

For telephonic interviews contact:

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Rehad will be available for live interviews in January 2020.