

Lee Shapiro

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Lee Shapiro (1949–1987) was an American documentary filmmaker. His one feature-length film, *Nicaragua Was Our Home*, was released in 1986. It was filmed in Nicaragua among the Miskito Indians who were then fighting against Nicaraguan government forces.^[1] It features interviews with Miskito Indian people and some non-Miskito clergy who lived among them concerning actions of the government against them, including bombing of villages, shootings, and forced removal of people from their homes.^[1] It has been reported that the evacuations occurred after "attacks on communities and Sandinista border posts by Miskitus and ex-National Guardsmen operating out of Honduras"^[2] and that Miskito groups had formed anti-government guerrillas in the 1980s.^[3] The film was shown on some PBS stations^{[2][4]} and at the 1986 Sundance Film Festival.^[5]

In 1987, Shapiro and fellow filmmaker Jim Lindelof were killed in Afghanistan during the Soviet war in Afghanistan.^{[6][7]} The armed group they were traveling with reported that they had been ambushed by military forces of the Soviet Union or the Afghan government. However, the details have been questioned, partly because of the poor reputation of the group's leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.^{[8][9]}

Shapiro was a member of the Unification Church and a graduate of its Unification Theological Seminary, as well as the London Film School and the University of Colorado. He also attended medical school at the University of Oklahoma. His filmmaking was supported by CAUSA International, a church-related anticommunist organization.^[10]

In 2006 the documentary film *Shadow of Afghanistan*, by Suzanne Bauman and Jim Burroughs, was released. It incorporated footage originally shot by Shapiro.^{[11][12][13][14]}

References

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- How to Read the Reagan Administration: The Miskito Case (<http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/3245>)
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- Sundance Film Festival: 1986 (http://www.imdb.com/Sections/Awards/Sundance_Film_Festival/1986), IMDB
- Afghanistan: eight years of Soviet occupation (http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1079/is_n2132_v88/ai_6536321/pg_29), United States Department of State, March 1988, The campaign to target foreign journalists had more tragic results. Two American filmmakers, Lee Shapiro and Jim Lindelof, were apparently killed by a regime attack while traveling with the mujahidin. In 1986, Lindelof had been named paramedic of the year for his efforts training Afghan medical workers. In response to protests, Kabul stated it could not "guarantee the security of foreign subjects" who enter illegally, whose presence it views as "evidence" of "external interference."
- 2 Americans killed in ambush (http://www.newspaperarchive.com/LandingPage.aspx?type=glp&search=lee%20shapiro%20afghanistan&img=\na0041\6800035\56050638_clean.html), *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, October 29, 1987
- Two US journalists reported killed in Afghanistan; details murky (<http://www.csmonitor.com/1987/1028/oed.html>), *Christian Science Monitor*, October 28, 1987 "Two American journalists are believed dead in northwest Afghanistan, diplomatic and resistance forces say here. Filmmaker Lee Shapiro and his soundman, Jim Lindalos, both of New York, were killed Oct. 11, reportedly in a Soviet or Afghan government ambush, according to United States consular officials. However, the resistance group that accompanied the film team has a poor reputation among most informed observers, and doubts have arisen over whether the two Americans did indeed die in an Afghan government or Soviet attack."
- Kaplan, Robert, *Soldiers of God : With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan*, New York : Vintage

Departures, 2001, p.170

10. 2 Americans Reported Killed In an Ambush in Afghanistan (<http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F40717F738590C7B8EDDA90994DF484D81>) New York Times 1987-10-28
11. Shadow of Afghanistan (<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/348220/Shadow-of-Afghanistan/overview>), *New York Times*
12. In Honor of The Annapolis, Md. Middle East Peace Talks: A Short Viewing/Reading List (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paige-donner/in-honor-of-the-annapolis_b_75142.html), Huffington Post, December 3, 2008, "A wonderful documentary, 20 years in the making, is Shadow of Afghanistan. Lee Shapiro began shooting in 1986 and the film has some of the most startling yet intimate footage ever seen of a country at war. Shapiro and his soundman Jim Lindelof disappeared while filming. The footage was obtained by another filmmaking team who saw it to completion by a skeleton crew's labor of love, not least of whom is editor Mary Ann Skweres' contribution to the entire film cut. Shadow of Afghanistan has already had an Academy qualifying run and is also vying for an Independent Spirit Award nomination."
13. Doc warriors: Suzanne Bauman sheds light on Afghanistan (<http://www.nypress.com/article-13401-doc-warriors.html>), *New York Press*, May 3, 2006
14. Shadow of Afghanistan - Suzanne Bauman and Jim Burroughs (http://www.moviecitynews.com/awards/2007/critic_awards/awfj.html), Alliance of Women Film Journalists, "It took 20 years to complete this documentary chronicling developments in Afghanistan, from Eisenhower's 1959 friendly visit, through Soviet invasion and expulsion, the ensuing civil war, to post-9/11 American bombing and occupation. The film uses extraordinary footage, some shot by slain journalist Lee Shapiro, to present the lives of a beleaguered people. (Seen at Tribeca Film Festival)"

External links

- Lee Shapiro (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1302328/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- *Nicaragua Was Our Home* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0347654/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- *Shadow of Afghanistan* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1521052/>) at the Internet Movie Database

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