



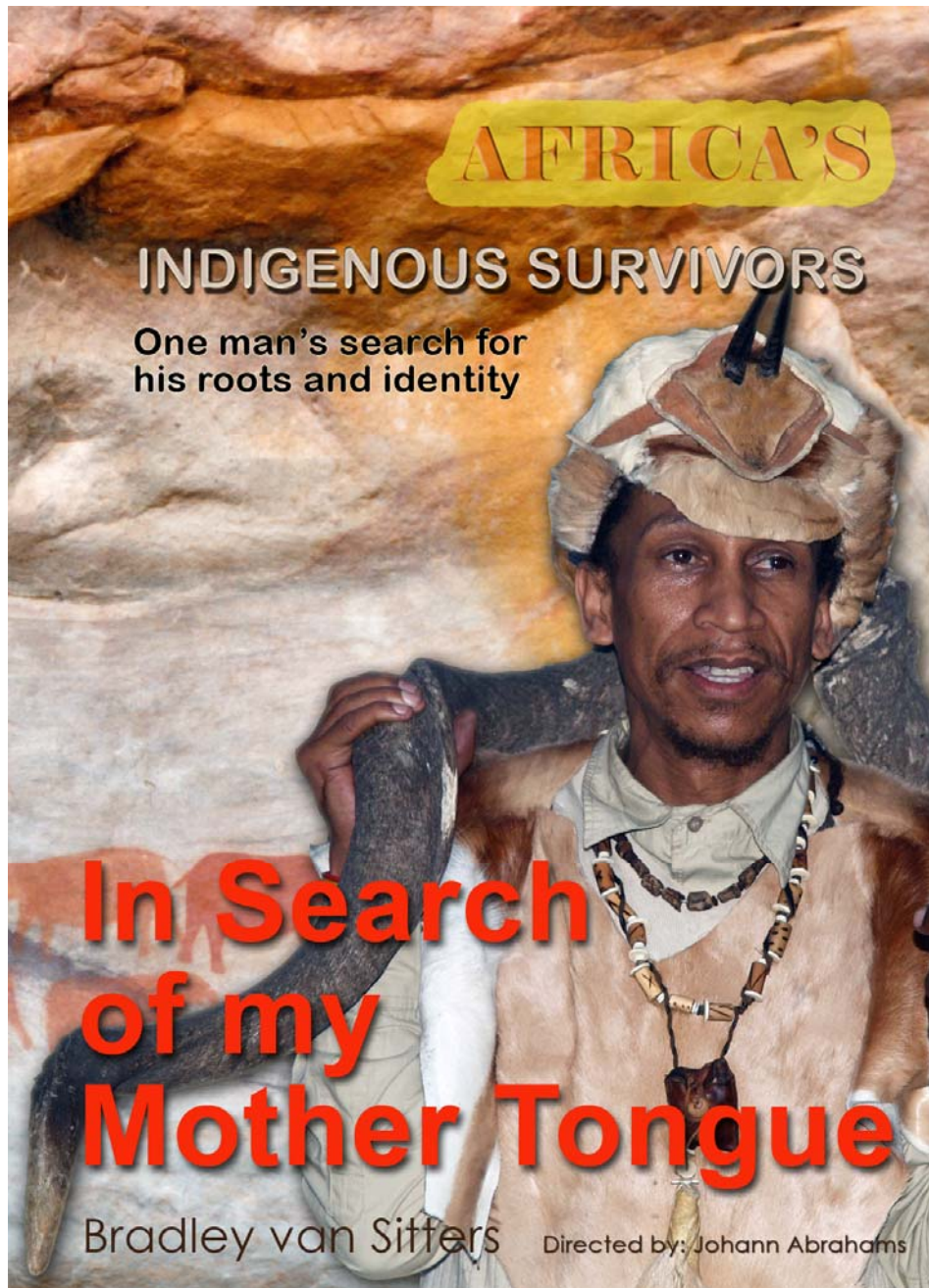
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**Documentary Series      13 x 24 minutes**

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*Rudolf Rieger*  
*Johann Abrahams*

**Working Title**

**In Search of my Mother Tongue**

**Writer  
Director**



Johann Abrahams

**Genre**

Feature Documentary, 90 Minutes

**Tag Line**

One man's search for his roots and identity

**Log Line**

The personal and epic journey of a young man's quest to revisit the ancient memories of his ancestors and re-claiming his true mother tongue

**Synopsis**

Bradley van Sitters, aka Bradlox, is a Khoekhoe heritage activist from Lavender Hill, a notorious township plagued by gang violence, on the outskirts of Cape Town.

His cultural name is //Hui !Gaeb di !Hunib !Gûkhoeb meaning... "The Yellow walker where the clouds gather"

He sets on a journey to rediscover the Khoekhoe language and to revive one of the oldest languages spoken on the planet. Despite the disappearing numbers of first language of Khoekhoe mother tongue speakers, Bradlox is intent on raising up a new generation of speakers who will keep the language alive.

This feature documentary captures the personal and epic journey of a young man's quest to revisit the ancient memories of his ancestors and relearning his true mother tongue.

## **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The Khoekhoe people were the original inhabitants of much of Southern Africa, but were displaced from their land and experienced erosion of their identity by acts of genocide inflicted by European settlers. Viewed and treated with such disrepute; they became the subject of scientific and anthropological curiosity, together with the SAN becoming the most researched people on Earth.

But where did they come from? What stories do they have and who were their heroes and how old is their language? And how does this culture manifest itself today?

Many scholars believe that they migrated from Northern Botswana about 2000 years ago and ended up in the South-western and Eastern Cape. Today their descendants are scattered across Southern Africa.

During South Africa's apartheid era, indigenous identities and languages were discouraged and Afrikaans, a creolized version of Dutch, became the dominant language spoken by Khoekhoe descendants. This has led to the slow disappearance of the Khoekhoe language with many South Africans not even knowing that the language of their ancestors still exists in the remote corners of Southern Africa.

## **MOTIVATION**

In many communities across South Africa young people are still deeply disconnected with their ancestry in relation to the indigenous peoples of Southern Africa.

Even the term "Coloured" is problematic as it over simplifies a rich and diverse community of people with an even richer but tragic history. The tragedy of the cultural genocide and enslavement inflicted on the Khoekhoe people can perhaps only begin to be remedied when and if the current and future generations are able to take pride and have ownership of their ancestral cultural knowledge. This can be aided through the sharing and production of stories that show, teach and give instruction in Khoekhoe culture and history.

These stories should be told from the lives, homes and hearts of the current generation of self-identified Khoekhoe descendants who still carry the legacy and culture of their predecessors. As the urbanised Bradlox takes this journey together with presenter and a township criminal, the audience will have a chance to journey with them too; leaving behind an old way of thinking of identity and perhaps embracing a new and richer reality and legacy.

## **TREATMENT**

Bradley van Sitters is teaching young students at the Castle of Good Hope. Ironically, this is the oldest structure of colonialism and symbolic of the destruction and enslavement of Khoekhoe people. He is teaching basic Nama – a dialect spoken by the “First Nation” people, in an effort to revive the language and to raise awareness around Khoekhoe identity. Most people classified as coloured are direct descendants of the Khoekhoe or the abolished name of Hottentots and San or Bushmen.

On camera Bradlox explains his reasons for doing this and where it all started, conflicted by Tania and Max.

We follow them to Lavender Hill a township on the Cape Flats. These townships were built after forcible removals of many families from the city as a result of the Group Areas Act of the sixties. Lavender Hill is a community plagued by extreme levels of gang violence and drug abuse.

We are listening to the social ills of Bradlox’ people and attribute it to cultural genocide of the people, leaving them with no identity and no real roots. He is inspired by the speeches by Malcolm X: “...what is your history, what is your name, what is your language...”

As he grapples with his search for identity, it drives him into the mountains. Here he meditates and comes to the conclusion that he will have to take the journey – to search for his mother tongue.

It’s a journey that takes us two thousand kilometres to the home of the !Nharo people in Northern Botswana. Here he feels at home amongst the original Khoekhoe tribe. He observes the remaining cultural practices. He learns to make traditional musical instruments and joins other musicians in song and dance.

Tribal members take him in search of edible roots and berries, and he joins a hunt for a porcupine. This is cooked in traditional fashion around the campfire.

Around the campfire we hear the old stories and the heroics of the past. He learns the language at the feet of the elders –not so different from Nama – one of many Khoekhoe dialects.

Bradlox continues his journey to far flung Khoekhoe communities, in Namibia where we recall about thirteen tribes represented by the Rehoboth Bastards; the Damaras and the Topnaars. The Namas he visits in the South of Namibia and in the North of South Africa where they reside in Namaqualand.

Emerging from this is a story of a forgotten people and history. A story of heroes that never received the recognition it deserves. The heroics of Hendrik Witbooi, the daring Jonker Afrikaner, the negotiator Krotoa, Autshumato who were the first man to escape from Robben Island, Klaas Stuurman, Jan Parel and others.

Back at Ratelgat he joins the Griquas. As people dance around the fire, we hear the rhythmic drum and the gorah accompanied by the narrator/poet singing praises of the Khoekhoe as indigenous survivors despite the odds.

# AFRICA's Indigenous Survivors

## In Search of my Mother Tongue



Bradlox will return to Lavender Hill and continue his teachings, enriched by his experience, and at peace. He will tell the children of his township about the Khoekhoe history, its leaders and its stories.

Max, after this journey, leaves his criminal association behind and becomes a preacher of the ancient language.

Presenter Tania channels most of her energy into nation building, preparing herself for the future of a united nation but still sovereign tribes.

**AFRICA's Indigenous Survivors**  
**In Search of my Mother Tongue**







## **BIOGRAPHY**

April 2015

**Rudolf Rieger** is the CEO/Producer of On Set Film Productions and On Set Images.

Cultural Projects, Visual and Performing Arts are his interests. Rudolf is dedicated to Photography, Film Production, Branding, Marketing and Cultural Tourism.

Rudolf was born in Krasnystaw, Poland and educated in Germany and Switzerland.

His journey took him from Kernforschungszentrum Karlsruhe via IBM, a business analyst for Swissair and Credit Suisse to South Africa, where he arrived with his family in February 1976.

Parallel to his work he attended visual art studies in Zurich at the "Freie Kunstschule Zürich" under the tutorage of Walter Grob.

In Johannesburg he serviced NCR as Head of System Development & Programming, responsible for both domestic and international projects, reporting to NCR HQ in Dayton, Ohio.

In January 1979 he moved to Hout Bay. During the same year the Association of Arts presented his artwork at three occasions. Today, his photographic work is appreciated by international clientele.

As the founder of Diamond Computer Software Systems in 1980, Rudolf developed security and back office system software. He, intermittently, spent a further 15 years living abroad in Namibia, Switzerland, Germany, Taiwan, Canada and the USA.

Since 2004 Rudolf is working on and experiencing various skills in the field of: Media, Photography (behind the scenes), Location Scouting, Graphic Art, Branding, Web-Based Design & Marketing and as a Mentor to business entrepreneurs.

His company, On Set Images, is accredited service provider to the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and to Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), providing services to start-up and established businesses.

# AFRICA's Indigenous Survivors In Search of my Mother Tongue



As a producer of documentaries, reflecting Southern Africa's indigenous culture he signs responsible under the umbrella of On Set Film Productions.

Rudolf, further is the CEO and on the Board of Directors of Indigenous Peoples Society of South Africa (INDISSA) a non-profit company, member of the Cape Film Commission, member of the Documentary Filmmakers Association, the Writers' Guild of South Africa and member of Performing Arts Network of South Africa (PANSAs), where he has been for close to two years, until September 2012, General Secretary on the Steering Committee of PANSAs.

He serves the Korana Tribe in the Western Cape, is active member of the Gorachouqua Council, and is on the council of the WCITL (Western Cape Integrated Indigenous and Traditional Leaders) responsible for Media Relations and Logistics.

He has been a Trustee at the Hout Bay Museum for five years until end 2012. He also was Founder Member of the Rotary Club of Hout Bay in February 1986, which club he served for 15 years.



## **BIOGRAPHY**

April 2015

**Johann Abrahams** is an award-winning journalist and filmmaker whose current affairs stories have made local and international headlines.

He is the former Executive producer of an investigative journalism programme, *Special Assignment* which airs on SABC 3.

He has a broadcasting and film degree from the University of Kansas in the USA, and has a Masters degree from UCT in Media Theory and Practice. After working for KSNT in Topeka, Kansas as a video journalist (1993 -1994) he came back to South Africa.

He joined the SABC's, Cape Town office in 1994 where he worked as a cameraman and reporter. During this time he has covered a variety of stories in the Western Cape especially giving voice to the rural poor communities.

Johann has also travelled extensively covering conflict and stories in Rwanda, Malawi, Russia, Brazil, Namibia, Bali, Angola, Tunisia and Nigeria.

He joined *Special Assignment*, the SABC's flagship and multi-award winning investigative program, in May 2004, and took over as the Executive Producer in March 2008. Over the years he has produced a wide range of news documentaries and has won several awards.

In 2005 he has won a Vodacom North region award for "**Tik-tik express**" a story which exposed the dangers of crystal meth addiction amongst children in Cape Town.

In 2006 he was SABC Journalist of the year award for his story ***Eye on the Child***, about child rape.

In 2008 he won another SABC award for his program on the ***Battle of Cuito Cuanavale***.

In 2009 he won several international awards for a program called ***Hell Hole*** exposing the horrific conditions inside Zimbabwean prisons:

- The Lorenzo Natalie award given by the European Commission
- Common Wealth Broadcasters Award given by Amnesty International

## RECENTLY

After leaving SABC in 2011 he became a freelancer and briefly worked as Head of News and Current Affairs at the regional Cape Town TV channel where he trained and mentored many of the young journalists. He also wrote feature film scripts. He has written two scripts for Ekasi our stories on ETV.

Recently: 2012 – 2014

- Produced ***Tik...tik... timebomb***, a news documentary on pregnant women addicted to crystal meth for Health e-News which aired on Special Assignment.
- Produced a 3 part documentary series on rural poverty.
- He is involved in media training and teaches news and current affairs at Cityvarsity, Big Fish and Afda Film Schools.
- Directing 24 minute episodes for SABC 2 series – The Golden Years.
- Directing and producing a 24 minute documentary on the crisis in psychiatric health care in South Africa for Health-e News (to be aired in Special Assignment)
- Training video journalists for government's Working on Fire Project.
- Directed and produced a series of corporate videos for "Working on Fire" and Department of Environmental Affairs.
- Producing 24 minute documentary on Tik and gender violence for Health-e soon to be aired on SABC.
- Directed a short documentary on corruption and illegal deductions from social grants for the Human Rights Organisation, Black Sash and to be aired on Special Assignment.
- Produced a corporate video for ATKV (Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuurvereniging).
- Currently producing docudramas for Fox crime channel on headline murders in South Africa.