



MRS. GOUNDO'S DAUGHTER

A new documentary by BARBARA ATTIE and JANET GOLDWATER

An African mother fights to protect
her daughter from female genital cutting.

WORLD PREMIERE

Silverdocs AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival

Screening Wed, June 17 @ AFI Silver Theater 2

Screening Sat, June 20 @ Discovery HD Theater

WMM

WOMEN MAKE MOVIES
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Mrs. Goundo's Daughter

A FILM BY BARBARA ATTIE AND JANET GOLDWATER

SYNOPSIS



Photo Courtesy of Sandeep Bathala

Mrs. Goundo is fighting to remain in the United States. But it's not just because of the ethnic conflict and drought that has plagued her native Mali. Threatened with deportation, her two-year-old daughter Djenabou could be forced to undergo female genital cutting, a controversial rite of passage that dates back thousands of years and has been outlawed in 16 countries.

Using rarely cited grounds for political asylum, Goundo must convince an immigration judge that in Mali—where more than 85 percent of women and girls experience genital cutting—she will be unable to protect her daughter from well-intentioned relatives who believe all girls must have their external genitalia surgically removed.

Sensitive and moving, with insight from survivors of genital cutting as well as its defenders, *Mrs. Goundo's Daughter* traces the practice from its cultural associations with chastity and femininity to its potentially devastating health consequences. Filmmakers Barbara Attie and Janet Goldwater travel between an excision ceremony in a Malian village involving dozens of girls to the expatriate community of Philadelphia, where Mrs. Goundo challenges traditional beliefs and battles the American legal system for her daughter's future.

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CREDITS

2009, 60 minutes, Color
English, French and Bambara

PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY

Barbara Attie and Janet Goldwater

CO-PRODUCER AND EDITOR

Sabrina Schmidt Gordon

EDITOR

Sharon Mulally

CAMERA

Peter Brownscombe

ORIGINAL SCORE

Sumi Tonooka

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

Shannon Kane-Meddock
Moussa Traoré
Mountaga Touré

SOUND RECORDISTS

Johnny Hagen
Mike Attie
Mathieu Gendrieu
Paul Alfe

ADDITIONAL CAMERA

Christopher Landy

EDITING CONSULTANT

Flavia Fontes

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Flux Labs

COURTROOM ART

Martin Arcenio Campos

ANIMATION

Mike Attie

TRANSLATION

Ousmane Diallo
Boua Koné
Cheickné Soumaré

FESTIVALS & SCREENINGS

SILVERDOCS AFI/Discovery Channel
Documentary Festival

Human Rights Watch International Film Festival



Photo Courtesy of Sandeep Bathala

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CREDITS

BARBARA ATTIE AND JANET GOLDWATER, EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS AND DIRECTORS,

have worked collaboratively since 1990 making widely acclaimed documentaries that have been broadcast nationally and internationally. In 2005 they were awarded the prestigious Pew Fellowship in the Arts. Their most recent collaboration, *ROSITA* (2005), is the story of a 9-year-old Nicaraguan girl who was raped and made pregnant, and her parents' struggle with the medical establishment, the government and the church to end her pregnancy

Broadcast in Latin America on HBO/Cinemax as well as in Europe and Asia, *ROSITA* was selected to screen at INPUT 2007 and has been shown at film festivals worldwide, including the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival and Silverdocs. Attie and Goldwater's 2002 ITVS production, *MAGGIE GROWLS*, a whimsical biography of Gray Panther founder Maggie Kuhn, was selected to be the premiere program on PBS's *Independent Lens* documentary series. Other Attie and Goldwater documentaries broadcast nationally on PBS include *DARING TO RESIST: THREE WOMEN FACE THE HOLOCAUST* (2000) and *LANDOWSKA: UNCOMMON VISIONARY* (1999). Attie earned an MFA in Film from Temple University, and Goldwater earned an MFA in Photography and Design from Boston University.



Photo Courtesy of JJ Tiziou

SABRINA SCHMIDT GORDON, CO-PRODUCER, EDITOR, made her editing debut with an Emmy-winning episode of WGBH's Greater Boston Arts series. She is the co-producer and editor of *HIP-HOP: BEYOND BEATS AND RHYMES*, a documentary about manhood and gender politics in mainstream Hip-Hop that premiered at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival and was broadcast nationally on PBS' *Independent Lens*. She recently worked as a producer/editor on *The Masculinity Project*—a web-based initiative of ITVS and the National Black Programming Consortium. Schmidt Gordon works with non-profit and grassroots organizations on video programs, among them *Witness*; *Agricultural Missions*; and the *Center for Constitutional Rights*. She is an honors graduate in film from New York University

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WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT MRS. GOUNDO'S DAUGHTER

"Heart-wrenching testament to the integrity and solidarity of women in the face of staggering adversity.... humanist filmmakers Barbara Attie and Janet Goldwater demonstrate a nerve-shredding talent for cinematic juxtaposition—throughout, they intercut Goundo's legal nightmare with the lead-up to a mass female circumcision in Mali—that avoids feeling trivial."

Ed Gonzalez

The Village Voice

"*Mrs. Goundo's Daughter* packs a sharp punch equal to that of films twice its length.... The filmmakers seamlessly weave together parallel storylines, contrasting the cold and blustery Philadelphia streets where Goundo makes her case to the court to the beautifully sun-dappled villages of her homeland. For the arguments over traditional culture vs. women's independence, it's the soul-sickening footage of anxious-eyed little Malian girls post-excision that makes Mrs. Goundo's point more succinctly than words ever could."

Chris Barsanti

Filmcritic.com

"Gracefully depicted and painstakingly observed, *Mrs. Goundo's Daughter* uncovers the roots of excision and the ideas that have informed female Malian identity, and shows a woman who finds her voice while she challenges an age-old tradition so she can offer her daughter a better life."

SILVERDOCS AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Film Festival

"Barbara Attie and Janet Goldwater chronicle an unprecedented plea for asylum made by a Malian woman on behalf of her daughter.... The filmmakers skillfully interweave the legal case, interviews with 'excisers' in Mali, and candid discussions with Mrs. Goundo and her Malian girlfriends."

Maria Garcia

Film Journal International

MORE INFO

For press and exhibition booking requests please contact:

Julie Whang, Sales & Marketing Manager

jwhang@wmm.com | 212.925.0606 x320

Hi-res photos are available for download on this film's web catalog page at www.wmm.com.

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Truth and Tragedy at “Human Rights Watch 2009” Festival

By Ed Gonzalez

June 9, 2009

Bombs fall from the skies above Lebanon like metallic raindrops, tearing people to pieces and families apart. In Afghanistan, music fills the air for the first time since shoulder pads were in fashion, but not without risk to those singing it. Malian girls struggle to walk, let alone breathe, after genital mutilation. Activist pranksters goose their way onto the cable news channels by posing as corporate agents of manmade disasters. And this year's Human Rights Watch International Film Festival is as fervent as ever, trying to awaken us to seldom seen or heard atrocities and illuminate the efforts of those looking for a better way....

Another heart-wrenching testament to the integrity and solidarity of women in the face of staggering adversity, *Mrs. Goundo's Daughter* follows the efforts of a West African woman living in Philadelphia to secure the asylum she thinks will save her two-year-old daughter from the senseless barbarism of genital mutilation. As evinced by their previous film *Rosita* (HRW '06), humanist filmmakers Barbara Attie and Janet Goldwater demonstrate a nerve-shredding talent for cinematic juxtaposition—throughout, they intercut Goundo's legal nightmare with the lead-up to a mass female circumcision in Mali—that avoids feeling trivial.

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