



A OneWorld Sustainable Investments film

**H**uman security—as opposed to military security—is defined as freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom from hazard impact. In tackling an issue that is coming under increasing scrutiny in developed countries’ approach to foreign policy, *Too Many Degrees* examines how climate can turn into an adversary, threatening people and their livelihoods. Few regions exist where this is more evident than Southern Africa.

Putting a human face to the issue, *Too Many Degrees* follows three groups of people, telling stories seldom heard. It illustrates how climate variability and extreme weather events threaten reliable access to water and sanitation services, and explores the domino effect such events have on people’s economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community

and political security.

- What does a two-year drought really mean for a subsistence farmer in Tanzania?
- What are the human costs of flooding in Zambia?
- And what added burden does climate instability place on the economically beleaguered in Zimbabwe?

And it asks the question: Is it good enough to achieve global commitment to keeping a mean temperature increase to within two degrees above pre-industrial levels? For the increase to average out at two degrees globally, Southern Africa is likely to see a much higher increase, in places. Some say as high as four degrees—even more. Can Southern Africa withstand this? Is it fair to expect it to?

The answer is chilling. The story will grip you.

**W**ater is at the crux of the climate change threat on the African continent. In Southern Africa, where 96 percent of farmers rely on rain, the threat of more droughts in some areas and greater frequency and intensity of floods in others have far-reaching implications. Distribution patterns of rains have already changed and farmers are becoming increasingly bewildered about what crops to plant and when to plant them. Experts say the region are harvesting less than half of what they should. And more and more farmers who should be producing food—not only for themselves, but for their fellow citizens—are relying on food aid.

Then, as urban populations grow, poverty grows apace. Today, 72 percent of Africa’s city dwellers live in slums. Already pressurised water supply and sanitation infrastructure simply

cannot cope. And as more people flood cities, peripheral settlements expands further and further beyond cities. The inevitable results are informal garbage disposal methods and sanitation, reliance on springs, groundwater, hand-dug wells and boreholes for water—more often than not that water is contaminated because of poor waste disposal practices.

This, of course, gives rise to infections such as cholera and bilharzia, not to mention compromised health for the masses living with HIV and AIDS.

In 2008/09, driven by cholera, mainly, scores of environmental refugees illegally crossed the border from Zimbabwe into South Africa. What followed in the months to come was an ugly display of violent xenophobia on the part of disgruntled South Africans.

One of the reasons for the outbreak of cholera was that the

cities of Harare and Bulawayo—both of which sit on a watershed divide—are located upstream of drinking water sources. Literally, sewers were draining into drinking water.

It is important for policymakers to take heed of what science is telling us about future climate patterns and make provision for both African farmers and city dwellers to reclaim their dignity—for farmers to be able to feed their countries, for city dwellers to have the means to make a living. *Too Many Degrees* tries to explore threats to human security posed by climate; it also tries to suggest ways to find solutions.



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# Too many stories: Notes from a filmmaker in Africa

*Produced by OneWorld Sustainable Investments, the British Foreign Office-funded documentary, Too Many Degrees: Climate Change and Human Security in Southern Africa, premiered in Copenhagen in December, 2009. Shortly thereafter, it was screened for the United Nations Security Council. Producer Leigh Page reflects on the experience of filming*

**F**ind stories, we were told. Human stories. Explain what people in Southern Africa are up against as climate change increasingly threatens human security in the region. Then tell that story by way of a documentary.

So, armed with a Sony EX 1, a few film lights and the heaviest tri-pod in history our intrepid crew of three set forth—director Bertrand Guillemot, cameraman Shaun Lee and yours truly steering the production bus. First stop—Tanzania. We were off to make *Too Many Degrees: Climate Change and Human Security in Southern Africa*, a doccic produced by Cape Town climate change consultants OneWorld Sustainable Investments and funded by the British Foreign Office.

One could, at this stage, segue into the story of how our film gear was confiscated on arrival at Julius Nyerere International; how the scurrilous clearing agent with gold teeth, pink sunglasses and black morals tried to sell us a “spare” camera—one just like ours; or how it was only the unsolicited goodwill and support of every other person in the customs department that prevented us from being shipped back to OR Tambo without our gear. But I won't.

Instead, I'll think of Mama Seif and the villagers of Laikala, a small, tightly-knit community in the Dodoma region of central Tanzania that has not seen rain for four years.

As in most other villages in Africa, it's the women of Laikala who do the physical work. From sunrise to sunset, they collect water, till fields and tend children. The men of the village considerably stay out of their way by congregating under trees in the diminishing shade—diminishing because more trees are cut down for charcoal to make charcoal than are planted.

The villagers welcomed us with warmth and generosity, sharing with us their cassava and beans. They opened the schoolroom at night so that Shaun and Bertrand could stay overnight and thus be in the village to catch the all-important light of sunrise.

The light—a most crucial aspect of filmmaking. A little known fact is just how unyielding the daylight hours is from about 10 in the morning to 5 in the afternoon. If you're a filmmaker, that is. Filming in the glaring sun is harsh and cruel to both skin tone and scenery, so most film crews are up before dawn and the day's work ends only after sunset.

Next stop, Zambia. Here, we focused on the slums of Lusaka. This meant shooting permits. No sooner would our camera be set up for a shoot than someone would appear demanding proof of our permission to be there. We'd confidently show our Foreign Office-arranged press cards, which officially permitted us to shoot anywhere in Zambia, only to be met with: “But who gave you permission to shoot outside this house/in this street/at this market?”

Soon enough we realised that all the official documentation in the world would not guarantee an

invitation into a community. For that, you need the support of the community leaders. Basing our approach on our newfound understanding, the way forward was smoother as we enjoyed support from locals.

English being the official language in Zambia, communication was much easier than it had been in Tanzania. But that didn't mean nothing got lost in translation, the director's name being a regular point of confusion. With his strong French, accent Bertrand would introduce himself by saying, “Allo, I am Bertrau”. What would follow was a splendid range of interpretations, among them “Button”,



*A uniform can go a long way—producer Leigh Page saves the day at the eleventh hour, securing military escort in lieu of a permit to film in Lusaka, Zambia*





*Chasing the light at sunset—director Bertrand Guillemot and cameraman Shaun Lee face the dangers that lurk in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania*

“Bhutto”, “Boetie” and “Betty”. Laconic Shaun the cameraman settled for “Burton”.

Going from Zambia to Musina was a huge leap. Musina, the landing pad for Zimbabwean border jumpers is an old enclave of conservative white South Africans. And while there is a strong presence of international aid organisations, the feeling of a divided community is palpable.

Filming in the tented camps just inside the South African border was one of the most emotionally challenging aspects of the production. On arrival at the camps, travellers are given a meal and a lecture. It is made clear to them that crossing the border illegally would have been the easiest part of their journey—the chances of being robbed or raped by *Mgumangumas* are very high.

*Mgumangumas* (or *Malaishas*) are opportunistic perpetrators of acts of violence, specifically against illegal border jumpers—the most vulnerable of all. Because of the unequal power relations between the perpetrators and the victims, many migrants are unable to defend themselves or seek retribution. These crimes are committed with impunity and little or no fear of punishment.

From Musina we travelled to Johannesburg to film migrants at the Central Methodist Church. During our three days there, Bishop Paul Verryn, who runs the establishment despite resistance from his fellows of the cloth as well as the South African government, was there every morning when we arrived and every night when we left. He works about sixteen hours a day.

The man is an enigma. His boundless energy and limitless patience just don’t seem humanly possible. He has had to master the skill of dispassionate sympathy—you can’t hear the stories he hears every day without the ability to harness your feelings.

During a meeting in his office, we were interrupted twice. Once by a brother and sister needing protection because

the boy had been severely injured by his stepfather while trying to pull him off his naked 11-year-old sister. The other interruption was when the bishop excused himself briefly to make a phone call after receiving a text message.

The phone call was to find a lawyer to get an emergency interdict against a security company who had just stormed a safe house for blind migrants and forced them onto a busy street in Joubert Park. That done, he turned back to me and said: “Now where were we?” as if he’d ordered a cup of tea. Just another day at the office.

When I left, a woman with a young baby on her hip was waiting to talk to me. “Please take my baby,” she said simply. I suddenly understood what people mean when they say that time stood still. I was aware that I was saying nothing, my heart was in my throat and a thousand thoughts raced through my mind.

“She’s healthy and I love her,” continued the mother with calm rationality. “I just can’t give her a good life. Please take her.”

Even if I’d had that moment over a thousand times I doubt I’d have found the right words. I found myself babbling something like, “she’s a beautiful baby—she belongs with her mother,” before beating a hasty retreat. That mother and baby still move in my thoughts.

While filming, we met people who had nothing except hope, yet they were so good at sharing it that in bidding them farewell, we felt more optimistic and hopeful than we had at the onset. Producing *Too Many Degrees* has been one of the most humbling yet inspiring experiences of my life. Anne Frank was absolutely right when she said people were essentially good. I, for one, intend to get better.



**Producer**  
**Director**  
**Cinematographer**  
**Concept/Script**  
**Post-production Supervisor**  
**Original Art Design and Titles**  
**Musical Supervisor**  
**Original Score**  
**Production Secretary**  
**Production Assistant (Tanzania)**  
**Production Assistant (Zambia)**  
**Production Assistant (Zambia)**

Leigh Page  
 Bertrand Guillemot  
 Shaun Lee  
 Linda Cilliers  
 Daniel Mitchell  
 Floyd George  
 James Matthes  
 Matthee & Matthes  
 Monica Schlottau  
 Daod Kiango  
 Chipateni Nyirenda  
 Frances Mpanza



## Dodoma, Tanzania

Dawn breaks over the red sand and so begins another scorching day for Mwaijabu Seif, a subsistence farmer in the district of Sagaa in Dodoma. But nothing can be accomplished without water, so Mwaijabu sets out to fetch water for the family.

When she returns two hours later, breakfast must be prepared and household chores finished. It is nearly

midday before she is ready to begin working the field. For all the good that is doing—it's been two years since the region has seen rain and harvests are failing season after season, the yield singed beyond rescue by the sun. Of course, this has left the community short of food, with families frequently going hungry. Help is not forthcoming from the government, so this little farming

community have to rely on remittances from their children and other family members who work in towns to survive. This is the story of the African farmer



## Lusaka, Zambia

Kanyama wasn't always home for David and Mary. They used to farm in rural Singani Shabalala. Now they live in a slum.

With no formal job, David leaves early for Soweto Market, named for the South African township. With no formal job all he can do is offer help to traders. At the market, traders seem to outnumber shoppers and you can buy pretty much the same thing everywhere - as you can at every other market in Lusaka.

Mary does small cleaning jobs for those better off than she is. People who can pay her 1,000 kwacha a day—roughly 22 cents in dollar terms. This buys food and fuel for the one daily meal they can afford.

They came to the city two years ago after a flood washed away their home and their entire crop. Unlucky for them, the rain that was supposed to bring nourishment, turned on them and became, instead, the harvester, taking with it everything they had—their home,

their livelihood—forcing them off the land and into a city that doesn't really want them.



## Downtown Joburg, South Africa

Ambrose Mampiravana lives in a church in one off the busiest, hippest cities on the African continent. The streets of Joburg are not for the



faint of heart. If you come from a farm, village, or even a big town elsewhere in Africa, your chances of holding on to your possessions are pretty slim. Most crucially, you may be relieved of your treasured temporary asylum-seeker's permit issued at Musina, where you illegally crossed the border from Zimbabwe.

More than 3,000 people live in Joburg's Central Methodist Church. Your space may comprise a square metre,

just enough for some bedding and maybe a television set.

Previously a small-scale farmer in Zimbabwe who knew his stuff when it came to growing vegetables, Ambrose is now one of thousands of economic refugees in South Africa. Not only do they have to contend with the hardships inherent in their status as refugees, they also face hostility that may any minute spiral into violent xenophobic attacks, as it did in 2008/09.



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