

The inside story of Zimbabwe

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Tonight POLIS will be launching 'Denied – this bit of truth', the new documentary by LSE alumnus [Shrenik Rao](#). In this guest blog, Shrenik Rao sets the scene:

"Once upon a time, in Africa, in a land called Rhodesia, there was a man. He was a humble teacher. He seemed to be full of ideas and ideals. He seemed to have dedicated to his life for a cause – a cause larger than his own – that of liberation, freedom and Independence from an oppressive regime which denied them their denied them their basic dignity, freedom and rights. And so, he was respected and revered by one and many as an able, honest leader who would liberate them from oppression, and restore their dignity and rights. The man was none other than Robert Gabriel Mugabe.

Twenty-seven years after independence, we hear a similar story. But, this time, the stories of oppression and humiliation are about the same person –Robert Mugabe. Perceptions had changed considerably. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, the President of Zimbabwe, was once the darling of the world is now being considered a despot. A man who was once called a 'Liberator' is now being called a 'Dictator'. A man who is the 'President' of a country is being called a 'Tyrant'. He who claims to be the 'sovereign' is being called a 'surrogate' and has emerged to be one of the most controversial African leaders in the world.

The enigmatic French philosopher Michel Foucault once famously articulated that 'Power produces resistance to itself'. In Robert Mugabe's case, has Power produced resistance to itself? I wondered.

As a filmmaker and an academic who spent time researching and teaching about 'Information and Politics', I was intrigued by the way in which power manifests itself. From what I had read and from what I had heard from the people I met – both good and bad, Zimbabwe seemed to me to be the right place to test Michel Foucault's hypothesis. And so, I embarked on this long journey of seeking to know the real story.

This story has been said many a times earlier. But still, I wanted to say it again. And do I said it again – not like the way I saw it, but rather, the way I heard it from many who were apparently the ones who were at the helm of affairs. And so, this is a story, which attempts to present the multifaceted truth as it 'Denied' itself in its journey through time, especially in the realm of power and politics.

Don't ask me what motivated me or what inspired me. That is a question, which haunts me with a menacing consistency and so, it is perhaps something that I cannot answer with coherent eloquence. And also what motivated me is of far less importance than what sustained my motivation. May be I draw my inspiration from the life and from people who carry on with life despite all odds. May be it's the fascination with the way power manifested itself. May be it was just one of destiny's decisions. May be! May be?

But here it is 'DENIED-This Bit of Truth', as it has denied itself in the realm of power and politics."

Come and see the documentary for yourself this evening, 6.30pm, in U8, Tower 1, LSE. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion on media and human rights in Zimbabwe, with [Sandra Nyaira](#) and [George Shire](#).

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