

# Another Emmy for SA - A Lion's Trail roars

NEW YORK: South African documentary A Lion's Trail walked off with the Emmy for "the most outstanding cultural and artistic programming", one of the most prestigious awards given by the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences at the 27th Annual News & Documentary Emmy Awards held towards the end of September 2006 in New York - the first time a South African film has won in this category.



Director Francois Verster with his Emmy

The film's director, Francois Verster, producer Mark Kaplan and US associate producer Brian Wengrofsky were on hand to receive the award.

## Redress injustices

Produced by Verster, Dan Jawitz and Mark Kaplan, A Lion's Trail tells the story of how Solomon Linda's "Mbube" was transformed into "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" and follows attempts to redress injustices around the song's copyright. Earlier this year, Linda's heirs scored a major victory when Abilene Music, which administers the copyright to "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" in the US, agreed to settle out of court for an undisclosed sum.

The Emmy nomination was put forward by PBS's "Independent Lens", the series on which it was broadcast last year in the US. The film was funded by the IDC, the South African National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), the SABC, RTBF (Belgium), NOS (Netherlands) and the BBC, and has been broadcast in 17 countries. Undercurrent Film and Television, ICE Media and Rapid Blue produced it.

Francois Verster concluded his acceptance speech by saying, "The fact that a film with this topic has won an award on American soil is significant in that it reflects a growing acknowledgement of broader global injustice - and that Africa is in various ways beginning to reclaim its rightful place in the world."

## Not a once-off fluke

Eddie Mbalo, CEO of the NFVF, commented: "There are those who say that Tsotsi's Oscar win was a one-off fluke, but this award proves that the South African industry is capable of sustaining its achievements at the highest levels. We congratulate Francois, Dan and Mark and all their team for reaping this accolade."

Moses Silinda, head of the IDC's Media and Motion Pictures Strategic Business Unit, congratulated the filmmakers for reaching this milestone, saying that "the fact that it beat three other US networks to win, means that the quality of the film speaks for itself."

Dan Jawitz, on behalf of the producers, thanked the IDC, SABC and NFVF for their vision and confidence in the project, and said, "This was a tough film to make - financially, creatively and physically - but clearly it has universal appeal."

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