



MAMA RWANDA

A FILM BY LAURA WATERS HINSON



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· mothers who mean business ·

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IMAGI BLANDE PICTURES PRESENTS
IN ASSOCIATION WITH MOVING PICTURE INSTITUTE A FILM BY LAURA WATERS HINSON
MAMA RWANDA PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY LAURA WATERS HINSON EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MICHELLE THORNTON
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JOHN PROBYT AND ED PROBYT PRODUCED BY ANDREA Mc DANIEL DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY KASIE KIRBY ART DIRECTOR AUSTIN BLASINSKI



MAMARWANDA.COM



SUMMARY

MAMA RWANDA examines a new generation of women in post-genocide Rwanda whose passion for entrepreneurship is transforming their nation into one of the ten fastest-growing economies in the world. This short documentary interweaves the stories of two women: Drocella, a village wife, and Christine, a city widow, as they trade subsistence living for a life in business, challenging Western stereotypes of the “African woman,” and highlighting the role of education in empowering women to overcome poverty. A universal, globally relevant tale, *Mama Rwanda* is a deeply cinematic portrait of two mothers on a journey to build peace through prosperity.



www.MamaRwanda.com

THE ENTREPRENEURS

Drocella

Mama Rwanda opens with Drocella, a mother of five who has founded an association of reconciled genocide survivors and ex-perpetrators in a bold plan to build an agricultural cooperative. In a village where saving money is an alien concept, will Drocella convince her peers to invest their meager incomes today for the promise of a better tomorrow? Or will old mindsets prevent her from building a business that could liberate her—and her village—from extreme poverty? The film follows Drocella as she rallies her peers to save 33 cents per person each week with the hope of obtaining the village's first-ever community loan. The goal? To buy a farm where former genocide enemies work side-by-side.



Christine

Christine is a banana wine executive. Her meteoric rise as a business leader not only helped lift her family out of poverty, but also created jobs for dozens of people in her community. Still grappling with her husband's death, Christine struggles to balance her newfound success as a rising entrepreneur with the demands of being a widow with five children. Can Christine bear her calling as a business leader and a single mother? The film tracks Christine as she navigates becoming a corporate CEO with her commitment to her children and her education—a life that defies global stereotypes of the “African woman.”





FILMMAKER BIOS

Laura Waters Hinson, Director

Laura Waters Hinson is the founder of Image Bearer Pictures, an award-winning documentary production company in Washington, D.C. Her film, *As We Forgive*, about Rwanda's reconciliation movement, won the 2008 student Academy Award for best documentary and the Cinema for Peace prize in Berlin. Narrated by Mia Farrow, the film was broadcast nationwide on PBS stations. Laura co-founded the As We Forgive Rwanda Initiative, a Rwandan-led organization that harnesses the power of film to promote healing after genocide, and has reached nearly 100,000 Rwandans. She just released *Many Beautiful Things*, a film about artist Lilius Trotter which premiered in February 2016 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. She also co-directed *Dog Days*, a feature doc about the American Dream set in the underworld of street vending in D.C., which had its national broadcast premiere on PBS WORLD channel's America Reframed series. *Mama Rwanda* is her fourth documentary. Laura received a MFA in filmmaking from American University and has worked in the past at the Discovery Health Channel and as a research assistant for MSNBC host Chris Matthews. She is also a long-time fellow of the nonprofit Moving Picture Institute.

Michael Fairbanks, Executive Producer

Michael Fairbanks co-founded the SEVEN Fund, a philanthropic foundation based in Cambridge, Massachusetts run by entrepreneurs, whose strategy is to produce films, books and original research to markedly increase the rate of diffusion of enterprise solutions to global poverty. He is the founder and chairman emeritus of the OTF Group, a strategy-consulting firm based in Boston, and the first venture-backed U.S. firm to focus on developing nations. He was a U.S. Peace Corps teacher in Kenya and helped launch Akagera Pharmaceuticals, which will focus on solutions to infectious disease. He co-authored Harvard Business School's landmark book on business strategy in emerging markets, *Plowing the Sea: Nurturing the Hidden Sources of Advantage in Developing Nations*. His most recent book, which he edited, is titled *In the River They Swim: Essays from Around the World on Enterprise Solutions to Poverty*. He has authored numerous popular articles in the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Huffington Post* and *Washington Post*. He has over 500,000 subscribers to his writing and spent the 2011-12 academic year as a fellow at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. He has been a senior advisor since 2001 to President Paul Kagame of Rwanda on private-sector development and export competitiveness.

John Priddy, Executive Producer

John Priddy is an Emmy-nominated producer of such documentaries as *To Die in Jerusalem*, *After the Storm*, *51 Birch Street*, *As We Forgive* and *39 Pounds of Love*. He has won a Peabody award, and his numerous documentaries have been broadcast on HBO, Showtime, MTV, and PBS. John is the chairman and co-founder of Full Circle Exchange, an innovative social enterprise dedicated to empowering women by focusing on poverty reduction through job creation, improved incomes and access to global markets. A successful entrepreneur, John is founder of the Priddy Group, the Windrider Institute, and Priddy Brothers Films.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I first traveled to Rwanda to shoot this documentary, it was to create an NGO-style film about enterprise solutions to poverty in post-genocide Rwanda. When I arrived, what I saw there wasn't the generic story of a country's economic recovery. Instead, I was floored by the role of Rwandan women in transforming their nation through the power of entrepreneurship, all while raising their families and carrying the heavy emotional weight of the recent genocide. When I began learning about the astonishing contributions of women to the country, and how Rwanda now has one of the fastest growing economies in the world, I knew I had to focus on their stories.

Because so many men died in 1994, women made up 70% of the Rwandan population post-genocide. Rwandan women had already been through so much—surviving genocide, losing their husbands and children, leading the Parliament, rebuilding the country, and more—the fact that they were taking on economic development and starting new businesses was unbelievable to me. Being a new mom myself, and trying to figure out how to work and have a baby at the same time, I was so inspired by the Rwandan women I met. Like me, they were struggling to balance work and life, but with much higher stakes and much more arduous circumstances. I couldn't imagine being a widow with five children and expecting myself to start a business at the same time.

I sought to make a documentary that would break down stereotypes of African women, to show the complexity of their lives, and to convey their personal struggles to love their children well while also becoming entrepreneurs. Every working mom I know wrestles with guilt and self-doubt over "having it all." These women had very similar struggles but with the pressure of literal survival—they were working to save their lives and their children's lives by starting businesses. Their stories bring new meaning to the idea of work/life balance, and I wanted to explore that theme through film.

The women in the film could not have been more different from one another. Drocella, who lived in a very rural area, was incredibly stoic and hard to read, which was a struggle for me as a director. Many Rwandans have not been educated to think critically about their feelings or to analyze their lives as we have in the Western talk-therapy culture, so it was difficult to get Drocella to really dive deeply into her feelings, which is imperative for a film of this nature. Christine, the mother from the city, however, was highly emotional and vulnerable on and off camera, which I think comes through in the film.

For so many reasons, filming in Rwanda was one of the most memorable experiences of my life. Once, our team nearly got arrested for setting up a rig atop a bus to film the local marketplace. And I watched my son—12 months old at the time—take his first steps there. But it is the unbreakable spirit of the mothers of Rwanda that has had the most enduring impact on me personally. Their strength in the midst of suffering and their determination to do whatever it takes to provide for their families—without the help of their spouses—is a profoundly inspiring story, the likes of which the world desperately needs to hear today.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT *MAMA RWANDA*

"Mama Rwanda paints a vivid picture of the power of entrepreneurship and education for women as means of empowering them and the country. The film documents the positive influence of empowered women in healing the country from genocide."

DEVIN THORPE, *Forbes* and author of *Crowdfunding for Social Good*

"Mama Rwanda is a must see for anyone who hopes to help the people of Rwanda continue their amazing progress into tomorrow's high tech world. Through their indomitable spirit, the women of Rwanda have created an economic success story out of the ashes of genocide."

JOANN WEINER, *Washington Post*

"Christine is a true representation of thousands of women in Rwanda who've decided to move on and keep on keeping on... Instead of planting seeds of hatred in their children from the past, they focus on their future, a better future."

DAVID MALINGHA DOYA, Africa-based journalist





GET MOVING CAMPAIGN

The *Mama Rwanda* team has partnered with the nonprofit Moving Picture Institute and the Akilah Institute for Women, Rwanda's only women's college, to build a social impact "Get Moving" campaign. This action campaign aims to:

- Help Rwandan women entrepreneurs get a quality education;
- Educate the public about how entrepreneurship can sow peace and prosperity;
- Enable audiences to engage with the film on another level and take action.

The infamous Rwandan genocide turned countless wives into widows without resources to feed their families. *Mama Rwanda* follows two mothers who are using entrepreneurship to pull their families out of poverty and rebuild their country. Help educate and encourage thousands more: Join the filmmakers and participate in our Get Moving campaign.

The Akilah Institute for Women is an accredited women's college in East Africa that provides a holistic model of market-relevant education, which enables young women to achieve economic independence and obtain leadership roles in the workplace and in society. Akilah currently serves 350 students on its Kigali, Rwanda campus and offers diploma programs in several high-growth sectors in East Africa, including Entrepreneurship. To find out more about how the Akilah Institute is helping empower women in East Africa, visit <http://www.akilahinstitute.org/mama-rwanda>.

Get Moving campaigns are powered by the **Moving Picture Institute**, a nonprofit organization with over a decade of experience supporting independent films and filmmakers from concept development through distribution. MPI has in-house experts in storytelling and scripting, producing, marketing and distribution strategy, and more. Its films and filmmakers have won awards, have been featured in top media outlets, and have screened in festivals, theaters, and on television around the world. You can learn more about MPI's projects here: <http://www.thempi.org/films>.

FAQS

1. Why do you want to make this film?

After making my previous films *As We Forgive* and *Dog Days*, I was moved by the power of entrepreneurship to shape people's lives and affect communities for the better. I initially went to Rwanda to film an NGO-style informational documentary, but I was so inspired by the stories of the Rwandan working mothers who were starting businesses while caring for their families and rebuilding their nation. It blew me away, and I knew this film had to be about them. I wanted to make a documentary that would break down stereotypes of these women, to show the complexity of their lives, and to convey their personal struggles to love their children well while also becoming entrepreneurs.

2. Was it difficult to shoot in Rwanda? How long were you there?

I've shot quite a bit in Rwanda in the past, so all the difficulties were not a surprise! Shooting in remote areas without access to electricity is always a challenge, but I enjoy setting up interviews using only available light. The shoot for *Mama Rwanda* was one month, with another follow-up shoot three years later that lasted about four days. I love Rwanda so much—the people, the beauty, the weather—it doesn't feel hard to shoot there. More like a really fun challenge.

3. Do you still keep in contact with Christine and Drocella?

I do still keep up with Christine and Drocella, every now and then, mostly through our translator and fixer whose name is Benjamin. Also, Christine is now on email, so I can email her—and her English has profoundly improved in the last five years, so we can communicate directly to each other! I am excited to go back and show them the film one day soon.

4. What's your favorite part of this film? What did you find most inspiring?

Some of my favorite parts of the film are the intimate moments of Christine with her children, late at night after she's come home from a long day at work. These scenes evoke the underlying tension she feels over her work/life balance, and it takes such an emotional toll on her. Working moms in the West think a lot about "having it all" but it's often from a position of privilege. For women like Christine, it's about survival. As a widow with five children, she has no choice but to work as hard as she can to build her business and provide for her family. I really hoped those scenes would resonate with working parents in the West by building empathy in viewers because of the common ground we share over the challenge of balancing family with a professional life.

5. Do you feel like there are misconceptions about Rwanda?

The biggest misconception about Rwanda—and I think about Africa in general—is that the people who live there are somehow different from us. What I realized when filming there and interacting with the amazing women who are featured in *Mama Rwanda* is that these working moms are going through similar struggles we are in the United States—often with much higher stakes and fewer resources.

6. What can women in the US learn from Mama Rwanda?

Rwandan women have already been through so much—surviving genocide, losing their husbands and children, leading the parliament, rebuilding their country—the fact that they took on economic development and starting new businesses was incredible to me. Being a new mom myself when I was filming in Rwanda, and trying to figure out how to work and have a baby at the same time, I was so inspired by the Rwandan women I met. Like me, they were struggling to balance work and life, but with much more difficult circumstances. I couldn't imagine being a widow with five children and expecting myself to start a business at the same time. I think Rwandan women prove that women everywhere are capable of things they never thought possible, and that incredible strength can be born out of hardship. These women did not let their circumstances define them. They sought to take control of their lives by creating a business out of scant resources. In my opinion, if they can do it, anyone can do it.

7. What is a Get Moving campaign?

Get Moving campaigns are social-action campaigns that accompany films about important topics. Get Moving social action campaigns take you from audience member to activist, helping you make a difference in your community and beyond. Our Get Moving campaign is powered by the Moving Picture Institute, a nonprofit organization with over a decade of experience supporting independent films and filmmakers from concept development through distribution. And we've partnered with the Akilah Institute for Women, the only women's college in Rwanda, to help empower, train, and bring awareness to female entrepreneurs in East Africa. Audiences can find out more by going to www.getmovingfilms.com.

8. What do you hope people take away?

I hope that, after watching *Mama Rwanda*, people recognize the potential of women's entrepreneurship to solve global poverty. In this film, we see people who were literally at war with one another a short time ago coming together in reconciliation to better their lives and communities through the power of a common economic goal. Female entrepreneurship has helped fundamentally change Rwanda from a country in ruin to one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. My hope is that *Mama Rwanda* inspires viewers to take action by promoting women entrepreneurs as a primary key to overcoming poverty worldwide.



PRODUCTION STILLS





CREDITS

Director/Producer: Laura Waters Hinson

Executive Producers: Michael & Marylee Fairbanks; John & Ed Priddy;
Rob Pfaltzgraff; Erin O'Connor; Maurice Black

Written by: Laura Waters Hinson; Ryan Patch

Produced in Association with: The Moving Picture Institute

Producer: Andrea McDaniel Smith

Cinematography: Kasey Kirby

Editor: Ryan Patch

Composer: Andy Zipf

Art Director: Austin Blasingame

Sound Recordist: Barry Neely

Associate Producers: Thomas R. Hinson; Ryan Patch; Mary Beth Minnis;
Elizabeth Hooper; Lana Link

Impact Producer: Claudia Murray

Original Score: Andy Zipf; The Cowards Choir

Art Direction: Austin Blasingame

Additional Photography: Thomas R. Hinson

Sound Recordist: Barry Neely

Sound Design: Cheryl Ottenritter; Richard Rush

Re-Recording Mixer: Cheryl Ottenritter

Color Correction: Robbie Carman

Additional Editing: Jennifer Thompson Brown

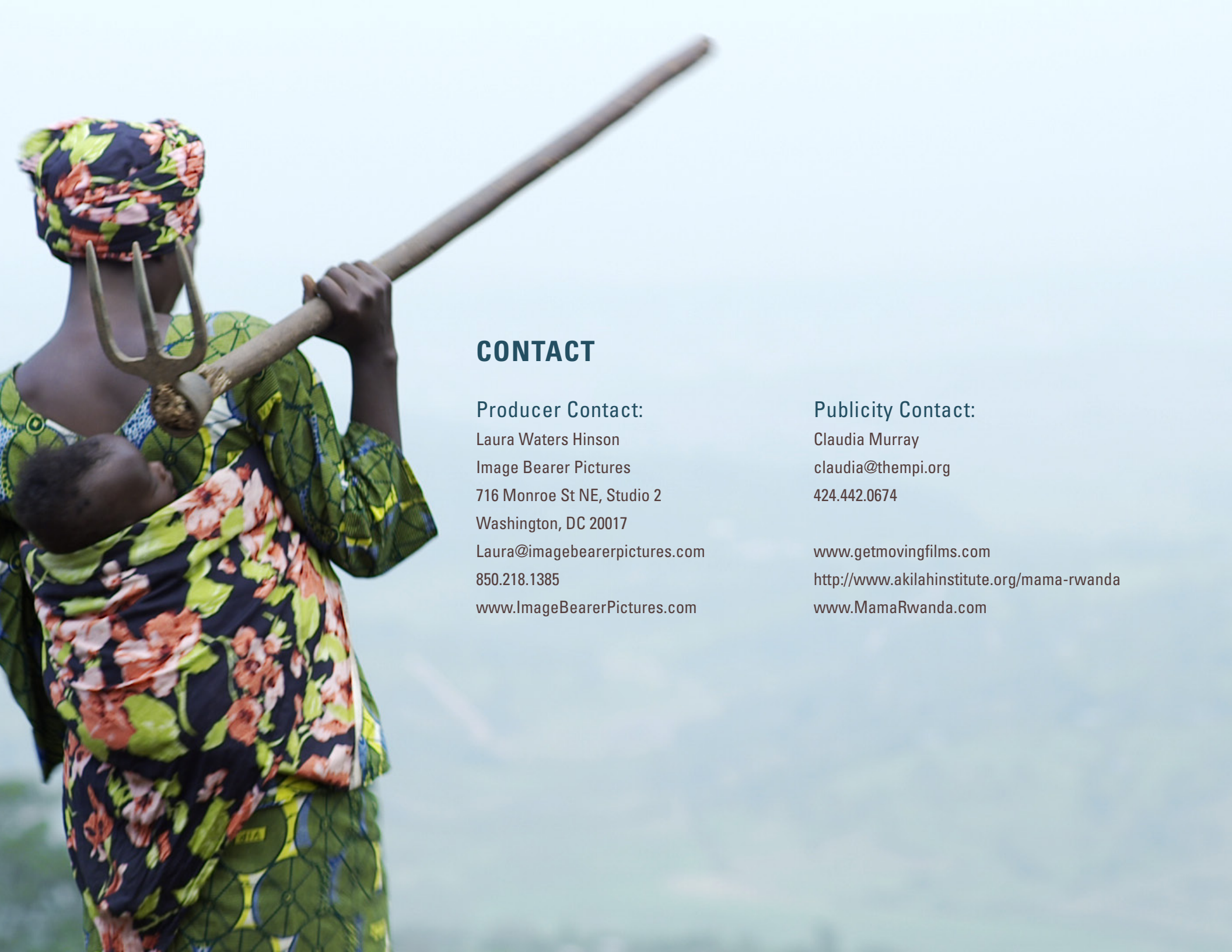
Production Assistants: Meg McElroy; Drew Masterson; Mary Cieslak;
Richard Hertzberg; Hannah Ricks

Translators: Benjamin Ndizeye; Denis Bisangwa; Bernadette Kabango

Translation & Transcription: Christine Murangirwa; Glorieuse Uwizeye;
Emmanuel Mutangana; Béatrice Uwamahoro

Publicity: Susan Self

Additional Footage Provided By: Andrew Michael Ellis; Juliet Hutchings



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