

Introducing “Shaking Hands With The Devil”

Independent film shares first-hand experience of stigmatization, persecution of people with Parkinson's in Kenya & the brutal consequences of having the disease

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, UNITED KINGDOM, September 1, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The

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Dr. Natasha Fothergill-Misbah, Producer of "Shaking Hands With The Devil"

creative team of Dr. Natasha Fothergill-Misbah (producer), Olz McCoy (director) and David Plummer (presenter) are pleased to announce the release of their independent documentary film [Shaking Hands With The Devil](#), exploring the stigmatization and persecution of people with Parkinson's Disease in Kenya. This short (15-minute) documentary explores the first-hand experience of presenter Plummer – noted wildlife photographer, conservationist, best-selling author and inspirational speaker – on his deeply personal journey during a recent visit to Kenya – a visit made infinitely more challenging by the physical symptoms and conditions he faced as a result of his Parkinson's disease diagnosis more than a decade ago.

During his journey to Kenya, Plummer not only had to navigate his own Parkinson's neurological symptoms, but experience the stigma and scrutiny of his movement challenges in a nation with limited Parkinson's awareness and access to medical care. Compounding his challenges, the film shares the widespread belief in Africa, where resources are limited, that Parkinson's is often associated with witchcraft or supernatural forces. If someone is suspected to be a witch, they are at risk of violent oppression, greatly impacting the ability of people with Parkinson's to access medical care they desperately need.

“As we documented David's experiences during his travel to Kenya, it became even more deeply emotional for all three of us as we witnessed and heard firsthand what people go through living with Parkinson's in Kenya,” Dr. Fothergill-Misbah, Research Associate at Newcastle University, UK, said. “In the moment, you feel helpless and great sadness for them. Parkinson's is not witchcraft or caused by curses, it is an ordinary medical disease.”

“Having the opportunity to produce this short film, our desire is to make people aware of the challenges Parkinson's patients have accessing treatment, care and life-saving medication,” Dr. Fothergill-Misbah added. “Medicines and therapies need to be available and affordable to

everyone, no matter where in the world they are.”

The prevalence of Parkinson’s globally has doubled in the last 25 years and is expected to affect 12.9 million people by 2040, posing a growing public health challenge. As a condition associated with aging, improvements in life expectancy are contributing to the disease becoming the fastest growing neurological disorder in the world.

The three creative minds behind “Shaking Hands With The Devil” connected shortly after Plummer traveled to Sri Lanka in early 2023, experiencing misunderstanding and stigma during the course of his work trip. Because of his movement disorder, Plummer was subjected to the airline calling the police, being detained during his travels, and experiencing constant scrutiny. The mistreatment he received and misinformation he experienced on this trip pushed him to start looking into Parkinson’s in less developed countries, and he was put in touch with Dr. Fothergill-Misbah, an expert on Parkinson’s in Africa. Dr. Fothergill-Misbah primarily works in Kenya and, coincidentally, that was Plummer’s next work trip, so they decided to collaborate and produce a documentary. Plummer brought Olz McCoy to the team, having worked together previously on a film, and McCoy was immediately interested in directing this important documentary.

“What I saw and captured in the film – what David experienced firsthand – will continue to both haunt me and inspire me to facilitate change,” said McCoy. “David’s journey and his willingness to forge forward, overcome the stigma, and live his life was an inspiration, and I am certain will be not only an inspiration to film viewers, but hopefully a clarion call for change in how the medical community understands and treats Parkinson’s patients in Africa.”

Plummer added, “I cannot thank Natasha and Olz enough for leading with their hearts in capturing and sharing my story and the story of Parkinson’s patients in Kenya. I am forever grateful for their efforts, and even more optimistic that this film will draw attention to a vastly overlooked problem with Parkinson’s acknowledgement and treatment in Africa and facilitate changes in treatment protocols moving forward.”

Parkinson’s therapy and treatment professionals are already taking notice of the film from pre-release “buzz” within the industry, and are hopeful that the awareness the documentary creates will lead to improved therapy and treatment opportunities in Kenya and across the African continent.

Cynthia Fox, PhD, CEO and co-founder of [LSVT Global](#), is optimistic that the film can lead to awareness and action in improving not only the understanding of Parkinson’s Disease, but more equitable access to basic therapies and care globally.

“LSVT Global eagerly anticipates the full release of this impactful film, which courageously exposes the depths of stigmatization faced by individuals living with Parkinson’s in Kenya,” said Fox. “We feel privileged to have played a role in supporting this project—an endeavor masterfully

and passionately brought to life by David Plummer, Dr. Natasha Fothergill-Misbah, and Olz McCoy.”

LSVT Global has pioneered innovative, scientifically validated therapies that work to restore and maintain voice (LSVT LOUD) and movement (LSVT BIG) in people with Parkinson’s and other neurological conditions. LSVT Global was proud to support this project, recognizing the power of documentary film to inspire change.

To learn more about the film or to view the trailer, please visit www.ShakingHandsFilm.com.

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