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# Shock Waves

A film by Pierre Mignault and H el ene Magny  
produced by Nathalie Barton



In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a country whose record of human rights violations is among the highest in the world, the journalists at Radio Okapi constantly risk their lives in order to denounce the extreme abuses of power to which the civilian population is subjected. Shot under dangerous conditions, with the rebellion as backdrop, the documentary *Shock Waves* follows these reporters' investigations. In a land where silence is imposed at gunpoint, *Shock Waves* provides eloquent testimony to the struggle for freedom of expression and democracy in a war-torn nation.

## PRESS KIT

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## Credits

**Quebec – Canada, 2007, HD Digital Video, Color, Dolby Surround, 52 min.**

<b>Researched and Written by</b>	H�el�ene Magny and Pierre Mignault
<b>Texts and Interviews</b>	H�el�ene Magny
<b>Directed by</b>	Pierre Mignault
<b>Photography</b>	Richard Laferri�ere Pierre Mignault
<b>Sound Recording</b>	H�el�ene Magny
<b>Edited by</b>	St�ephanie Gr�egoire
<b>Sound Design and Sound Editing</b>	Soli Gagn�e-Pag�e
<b>Sound Mix</b>	�Eric Leboeuf
<b>Production Manager</b>	Ian Quenneville
<b>Produced by</b>	Nathalie Barton

*Produced by*  
**InformAction**

*with the participation of*

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RDI

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## Main characters

### Jos e Menga



Jos e Menga received death threats from the chief of police after airing a report about divisions within Kisangani police force. Death squads tried to assassinate him. The Congolese government only intervened to protect him as a result of pressure from Reporters without Borders and the international media.

Today, Menga has a single goal in life: to defend the powerless. *“Journalism must speak for those who have no voice, for people without power who cannot speak out, but who can only whisper. You start with that and take it further”*. His anger against injustice, war and suffering annoys the authorities.

### Andr e Kitenge



Andr e Kitenge has an insatiable thirst for social justice. His poised, calm discrete but affirmative demeanour turn to fury when he denounces the abuses the population suffers at the hands of the army.

Andr e knows exactly why he practices his profession. He is convinced that the freedom he experiences at Radio Okapi keeps him proactive in the Congo. The direct impact of his daily reports on the fate of the people motivates him to continue his work. *«Now the Congolese people are able to speak out, they express their thoughts, they denounce things. They’ve gotten rid of their fear. So I don’t feel alone in this fight to bring about change »*.

## Jules Ngala



When fighting breaks out, the newsroom springs into action and the staff works cohesively as a team. Jules Ngala, radio host and ace reporter, is at the center of it all.

As a senior journalist from Goma, Jules suffers deeply from the many conflicts that are destroying the country, his own region in particular. This strong man with a tender heart is highly subjective when preparing a piece, if subjectivity signifies having feelings, empathy and emotions. But he also has an amazing gift for objectivity when delivering a journalistic analysis of the events he covers. *« When the people spontaneously come to us to denounce crimes such as violence or rape, we are revolted. We consider our weapon is our microphone. We are not a radio of denunciation, but, when necessary, we denounce and refuse to hide our heads in the sand».*

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## About Radio Okapi



Radio Okapi first went on the air on February 25th 2002, the very day that the Inter-Congolese Dialogue began in Sun City, South Africa, triggering a process that eventually brought about the transition to peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is the first national radio in the history of this huge Central African country. Eight regional stations

cover the entire territory, and newscasts are broadcast in five languages to the 450 ethnic groups that make up the nation. The station was created by the UN, under whose protection it operates, and the Hirondelle Foundation, a Swiss NGO composed of journalists who set up radio stations in zones of conflict. Radio Okapi is a free radio operating in a conflict zone, and its existence is often threatened.

After thirty years of dictatorship under Mobutu, during which freedom of the press was totally banned, followed by five years of civil war that is responsible for 4 million deaths to date, journalists still risk their lives to denounce the chaos that continues to dominate the country.

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## Directors note

When we first set foot in the Democratic Republic of Congo, we were struck by the destruction of war and the extreme poverty of this giant land in Central Africa. With no national infrastructure for road transport, the country survives on a day-to-day basis. Gradually, we began to discover a people who are devastated yet strong, who continue to resist, despite countless suffering, and who command our greatest admiration. We dedicate this film to them.

We worked as regional bureau chiefs at Radio Okapi in the Congo over several months in 2004. We were impressed by the impact this radio has had on the reconstruction of the country and on the population in general. Each Okapi investigation and reportage carried out in the field was the occasion for large crowds to gather, full of authentic moments where people would speak openly to the Congolese journalists about their problems, and the abuses they suffer on a daily basis. We were moved by the will of the Congolese people to regain their rights. Their collective determination to speak out and break the silence is aired on this free radio, a voice that speaks out against all those who want to turn back the clock, when confronted. This newfound freedom of expression constitutes an intrinsic step in the Congolese people's march towards democracy, and its impact can be felt in concrete, effective ways. We believe Radio Okapi is a precedent that can serve as an example for all countries that are zones of conflict.

*H el ene Magny and Pierre Mignault*

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## Filmmaker biographies

For 30 years, from 1975 to 2005, **Pierre Mignault** was a career journalist with Radio-Canada, first in Toronto, next covering the Qu ebec Assembl e Nationale, and then in Montr eal, where he worked for *Le T el journal / Le Point* news program. As a videographer, he has directed several feature reportages and short Canadian and international documentaries, which allowed him to develop his documentary approach.

For ten years, Pierre Mignault also taught ethics and techniques of journalism at Radio-Canada, here in Canada. Since 2004, he's been doing training workshops and editorial supervision in developing democracies, specifically in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti.

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**H el ene Magny** was editor, researcher and interviewer at Radio-Canada for 17 years. She also worked on public affairs programs for radio and television such as *Pr esent National*, *Sans Fronti eres*, *Le Point* and *Les Grands Reportages*.

In 1990, after receiving an award from the Quebec Federation of Professional Journalists (Federation Professionnelle des Journalistes du Qu ebec), she went to the Amazon in north-eastern Brazil to direct a feature radio documentary about the assassination of landless peasants, for the Radio-Canada program *Dimanche Magazine*.

For seven months in 2003-2004, H el ene Magny directed two United Nations regional Radio Okapi stations in the Democratic Republic of Congo. As editor-in-chief, she accompanied Congolese journalists in their work and was able to see for her eyes the enormous impact this radio has on the Congolese population. This marked the start of the documentary *Shock Waves*, released in 2007.

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In 2005, **Pierre Mignault** and **H el ene Magny** established CIN EDIT Productions, their Montreal-based documentary production company.



In 1999, the two filmmakers directed their first documentary, *Le Sentier du Milieu*, which describes the quest of a man from Quebec who became a Buddhist monk in Burma. Following his progress along the middle path, we discover the role Buddhism plays in maintaining the social and political order in Burma, a country inaccessible to most foreigners.

*Shock Waves*, their second documentary, is produced by InformAction.