

# radio silence

## Carmen Aristegui, a fight for free speech.

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a film by JULIANA FANJUL

RADIO SILENCE A film by Juliana Fanjul | Documentary, 52' | 78', Switzerland, Mexico

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# pitch

Mexico City, November 2014, Carmen Aristegui, incorruptible journalist known for her free speech, reveals a case of corruption seriously tarnishing the reputation of the newly elected Mexican president. Three months later, on March 2015, the sentence falls: Carmen is fired from the radio station where she had worked for years. Supported by more than 18 million listeners, Carmen continues her fight with a couple of colleagues and derisory means.

Her goal: raising awareness and fighting against misinformation. The film tells the story of this quest, difficult and dangerous, but essential to the health of democracy. A story in which resistance becomes a form of survival.



*"Utopia lies at the horizon. When I draw nearer by two steps, it retreats two steps. If I proceed ten steps forward, it swiftly slips ten steps ahead. No matter how far I go, I can never reach it. What, then, is the purpose of utopia? It is to cause us to advance."*

**Eduardo Galeano**

# synopsis

March 2015, due to political pressure and false pretenses, Carmen Aristegui, the main voice of independent journalism in Mexico, is fired with her team from MVS Radio station. The next day more, than 200,000 people demonstrate and sign a petition calling for her return on air and the end of censorship. Despite this exceptional mobilization, the station does not give way.

Who is this woman behind famous Mexican journalist? How did she become a popular figure of resistance and freedom of expression in Mexico? Who are her main enemies? Why is she still alive when dozens of her colleagues have been murdered in recent years and months? Does she find herself trapped in a role she did not want to endorse?

This documentary captures Carmen's enduring and dangerous fight to recreate a space of freedom of speech and keep informing her listeners. In some other country this might be an easier task, but in Mexico, where social and economic situation is dominated by drug traffickers and political corruption, Carmen and her team have an uphill battle. Through testimonials, archive footage and social networks excerpts, we follow Carmen and her team in a large ongoing investigation conducted alongside the construction of her new internet radio station.

RADIO SILENCE immerses us in the fight of Carmen Aristegui, a woman inhabited by an extraordinary courage. A fight against monopolistic concentration of the media, against an authoritarian and corrupt political system, all in a climate undermined by threats and constant intimidation of drug traffickers.

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# director's note

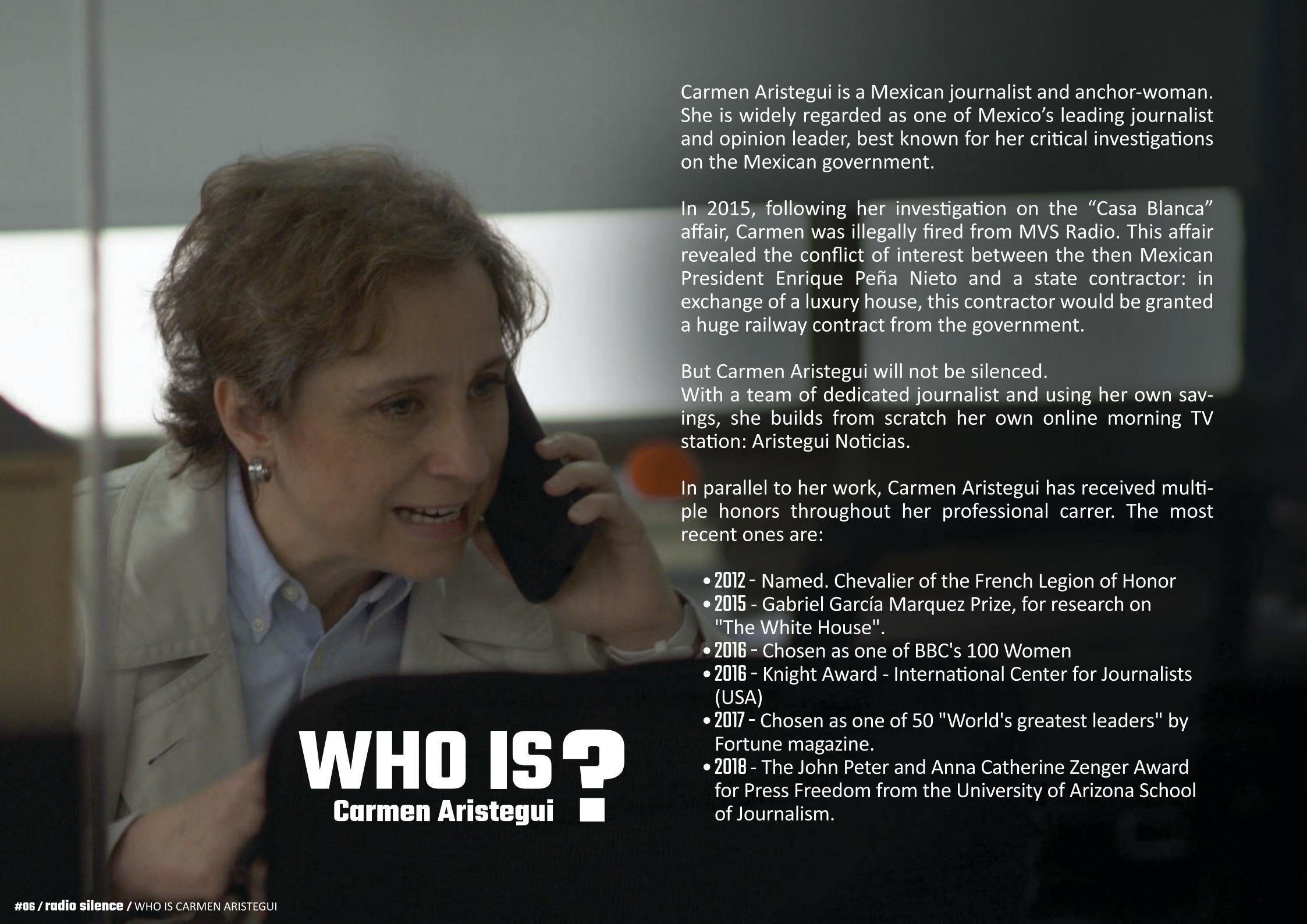
I came to Switzerland several years ago not only for my filmmaking studies, but also as an immigrant escaping the daily corruption and violence holding hostage my home country, Mexico. Although I was feeling safe in a peaceful Swiss socio-political reality, on the 13th of March 2015 I had a feeling that wave of injustice and violence crossed the Atlantic and overwhelmed my apartment in Geneva.

This news shocked me for two reasons. The voice of one of the last incorruptible journalists in my country was silenced, but I was also deprived of my right to unbiased and necessary information. A right I was sharing with an audience of over 18 millions of Mexican.

I was listening to Carmen on the radio for more than 20 years. Back when I was a teenager, Carmen already played an important role in shaping my identity as an independent woman and she opened my eyes for social injustice.

Once in Geneva, I continued to follow her daily broadcast, mainly to keep myself updated with the latest news from my country, but also as her speech questioned freedom in a broad sense. Her sudden silence first created a feeling of great loss, I was an orphan of truth. I was obsessively seeking answers to this arbitrary act.

During the following weeks I sank into a deep concern which went far beyond the Mexican context. Couple of months after finishing my first feature film, *Muchachas* (Visions du Réel, 2015), I transformed my anger into a creative impulse and decided to invest myself in writing this story.



Carmen Aristegui is a Mexican journalist and anchor-woman. She is widely regarded as one of Mexico's leading journalist and opinion leader, best known for her critical investigations on the Mexican government.

In 2015, following her investigation on the "Casa Blanca" affair, Carmen was illegally fired from MVS Radio. This affair revealed the conflict of interest between the then Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto and a state contractor: in exchange of a luxury house, this contractor would be granted a huge railway contract from the government.

But Carmen Aristegui will not be silenced. With a team of dedicated journalist and using her own savings, she builds from scratch her own online morning TV station: Aristegui Noticias.

In parallel to her work, Carmen Aristegui has received multiple honors throughout her professional career. The most recent ones are:

- **2012** - Named Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor
- **2015** - Gabriel García Marquez Prize, for research on "The White House".
- **2016** - Chosen as one of BBC's 100 Women
- **2016** - Knight Award - International Center for Journalists (USA)
- **2017** - Chosen as one of 50 "World's greatest leaders" by Fortune magazine.
- **2018** - The John Peter and Anna Catherine Zenger Award for Press Freedom from the University of Arizona School of Journalism.

# WHO IS?

Carmen Aristegui





## a few statistics

Since 1980, more than 300 journalists were killed in Mexico

2017

84 journalist killed in the world

11 journalist killed in Mexico

2018

84 journalist killed in the world

8 journalist killed in Mexico

2019

38 journalist killed in the world

10 journalist killed in Mexico



## cast & crew

Director **Juliana Fanjul**

Camera **Jérôme Colin**

Sound **Carlos Ibanez-Díaz**

Editing **Yael Bitton**

Produced by **Philippe Coeytaux and Nicolas Wadimoff –**

**Akka Films and Jose Cohen Ovadia – Cactus Docs**

In association with **RTS Radio Télévision Suisse**

# director

## JULIANA FANJUL

Born in Mexico in 1981. Received BA in Visual Communication. Attended EICTV (International Cinema and TV School of San Antonio de los Baños), documentary department. Worked as a director's assistant. 2011 Exchange programme to live in Switzerland. 2012-14 Masters in Cinema Studies, a joint programme between ECAL (École Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne) and HEAD (Haute École d'Art et Design) in Geneva.



JULIANA FANJUL

# filmography

## **Muchachas DOC/HD/64' (HEAD/ECAL)**

**2015** Visions du Réel, Riviera Maya Film Festival, Dok Fest Munich, Guanajuato International Film Festival, États Généraux du film documentaire – Lussas, Festival de Cine Latinoamericano y del Caribe Margarita Venezuela (Feisal Award), Documenta Querétaro, 7<sup>a</sup> Muestra de Cine Iberoamericano de Nicaragua, Filmar en América Latina Switzerland, Festival Zanate México, Festival Icaro Guatemala (Mention).

**2016** 51 Journées de Soleure, Filmer le Travail, Doc au Féminin Comptoir du Doc, Festival Internacional de Cine de Guadalajara, Reel Doc San Miguel Allende Mexico, Festival International de Films de Droits de l'Homme Paris (Documentary Grand Prix ), Femcine Chile, MIDOC Guatemala, Visions du Réel (School Days), Festival de Málaga, China Women's Film Festival, FIFDH Guadeloupe...

## **Dottor Clown (TV) DOC/HD/52' (Storie, RSI/SSR)**

**2014** Cuba Calling (TV)DOC/HD/25' (Al Jazeera English Viewfinder Latin America.) Aired by RSI.

## **Hilda e Helena DOC/HD/22' (HEAD/ECAL)**

**2013** Indie Lisboa 2013

## **Si seguimos vivos DOC/HD/24' (EICTV)**

**2010** Awards and mentions: Best University Documentary. FENAVID 2011. (Bolivia). Special Mention Human Rights Office, 18 Festival Latinoamericano de video y artes audiovisuales. (Argentina). Best Editing, 18 Festival Latinoamericano de video y artes audiovisuales (Argentina). Jury Award.

Best short Documentary. 14th Cine las Americas International Film Festival (Austin Texas, US). Best Documentary in «La mirada del otro». Muestra de Jóvenes Realizadores (Havana, Cuba)

## **Sustento DOC/HDV/13'**

**2009** Award: Best short Documentary. Festival de Artes Audiovisuales de La Plata (Argentina). Claque de la Televisión Camagüey. El Almacen de la Imagen. (CUBA)

## **La plaga de la cereza DOC/ HDV / 10'**

**2009** Selection: Festival Santiago Álvarez, 2010 (Cuba). Festival de Cine Internacional de Ourense 2010 (Spain). Certamen Internacional de Cortos. Ciudad de Soria (Spain). XIII Festival Internacional de Cortometrajes, La Boca del Lobo (Spain). IV Muestra de Cine Latinoamericano en Punta Arenas (Chili)

producers

akka  
AKKA FILMS

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## PHILIPPE COEYTAUX

Born in 1965 in Geneva, Philippe Coeytaux has successively held numerous positions in television and film production since 1998. Since spring of 2015, he is a member of **Akka Films**' management as senior producer.



## NICOLAS WADIMOFF

Nicolas Wadimoff was born in 1964 in Geneva and is a Swiss director, documentary filmmaker and producer. In 1988 he graduated from UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal) in communications with a specialization in cinema.

Nicolas made his first documentary in 1990. He worked as a film director at Radio Télévision Suisse (RTS) and in 2003 founded **Akka Films**, devoted to the development of fiction films and production of documentaries.

He has directed more than 20 films, both fiction and documentaries, among them the multi awarded CLANDESTINS (1997), AISHEEN, STILL ALIVE IN GAZA (2010), OPERATION LIBERTAD (2012), SPARTIATES (2014), JEAN ZIEGLER, THE OPTIMISM OF WILLPOWER (2016) and THE APOLLO OF GAZA (2018) which have been shown at major international film festivals such as Berlinale, Festival del film Locarno, Canne's Director's Fortnight.

# selected filmography



## 2019

“Radio Silence” by Juliana Fanjul, feature length documentary  
“Paléo, beyond utopia” by Marco Delamulla, 4x45’ documentary series (editing)  
“Hors Saison” TV serie, 6x52 minutes written by Sarah Farkas, Marine Ruimi and Claire Kanny. Coproduced with Gaumont Television. Directed by Jean-Laurent Chautems (in writing) Commissionned by RTS and France 2  
“Railway Men” by Erige Sehiri, in co-production with Les Films de Zayna and Nomadis Images. World Premiere at Vision du Réel 2018, in Burning Lights competition

## 2018

“The Apollo of Gaza” by Nicolas Wadimoff, feature length documentary, World Premier at the Semaine de la Critique, Locarno  
“L’Alerte” by Moïra Pitteloud, TV fiction film, RTS (aired on the 13th december 2018).

“Beyond Bolex” by Alyssa Bolsey, in co-production with Dschoint Ventschr, feature length documentary.

## 2017

“Ghost Hunting” by Raed Andoni, in co-production with Les Films de Zayna and Rouge International. (EP), feature length documentay. Price of the best feature length documentary at the Berlinale 2017

## 2015 – 2016

“La Nef Citoyenne” by Frédéric Choffat, ARTE reportage, Akka Films (EP)

“Non Assistance” by Frédéric Choffat, Akka Films, RTS, (EP) selected in the official competition at the FIFDH

## 2014 – 2015

“Spartiates” by Nicolas Wadimoff. documentary - 80’ and 62’.

Prices :

- 2015 Robert Drew Verite Award 2015
- Prix de Soleure 2015 PRIX DE SOLEURE 2015
- Meilleur film francophone 2015 / TV5 Monde
- Mention spéciale du Jury à MAKEDOX, Skopje.

Sélectionné au Wisconsin Film Festival, BAFICI (Buenos Aires), Docs Barcelona, Visions du Réel (Nyon, Suisse)...

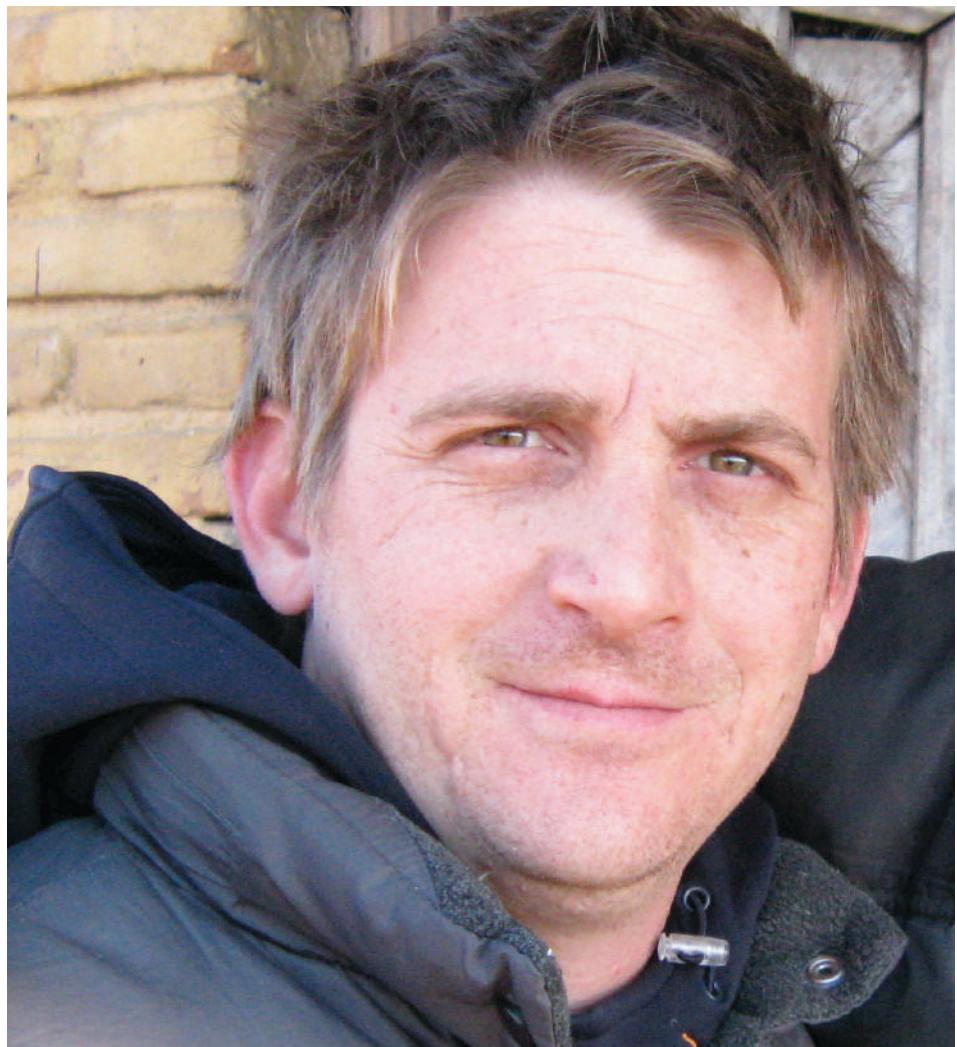
“Les coulisses de l’événement – Terminus Brig” by Frédéric Choffat , Akka Films, RTS, (EP). Winner of the Price Louise Weiss 2016

“Capitaine Thomas Sankara” by Christophe Cupelin. Documentary - 90’ et 52’. In association with RTS and Laïka Films

# CO-PRODUCER (MX)



CACTUSDOCS



## JOSE COHEN OVADIA

Jose Cohen is a journalist turned documentary producer. He first left Mexico City, his hometown, at the age of 16 to study at an alternative arts school. He graduated from the Cambridge School of Weston, Massachusetts in 1988. In 1993 Jose started his career in the international news business. Initially a soundman for NBC, some of his assignments included: the war in Chechnya; the assassination of Pablo Escobar in Colombia; and the assassination of Cardenal Posadas Ocampo in Guadalajara / the first capture of Joaquin "el Chapo" Guzman in Guatemala.

By 1997 Jose had founded his own production house Cactus Film and Video which to date is one of Mexico's key providers of production services for international media and independent production companies.

# filmography



## 2017

**"Rush Hour"** Director: Luciana Kaplan. Best Feature Documentary Award at Morelia Film Festival (2017). The international premiere was in 2018 at the SXSW Film Festival in Austin, Texas where it was nominated for the Chicken and Egg Award.

## 2016

**"Tempestad"** Director: Tatiana Huezo. Goya Award for Best Ibero-American Film (2018). Ariel de Plata for Best Feature Documentary (2017). UNESCO Award from the Sofia International Film Festival for Best Documentary (2017). Silver Goddess Prize from the Mexican Cinema Journalist Association for Best Feature Documentary (2017).

# film data

Genre: **Documentary**  
Duration: **78' & 52'**  
Countries of Production: **Switzerland, Mexico**  
Language: **Spanish**  
Subtitles: **English, French**  
Shooting locations: **Mexico, Washington**  
Shooting format: **2K**  
Screening format: **DCP**  
Sound: **5.1**

## INQUIRIES

World Sales:

ANNA BERTHOLLET  
**Sweet Spot Docs**

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A collage of three images. On the left, a man in a dark suit and tie is looking down. In the center, a woman in a red dress is looking towards the right. On the right, a woman in a blue dress is looking towards the left. The images are slightly faded and have a grainy texture.

**THANK YOU!**