

National Geographic premieres miniseries, Dian Fossey: Secrets in the Mist

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National Geographic's three-part global miniseries, *Dian Fossey: Secrets in the Mist*, offers an intimate account of the life and legacy of the iconic primatologist, 32 years after her violent murder. The series premieres on National Geographic 6 December 2017, 20h05, and will air globally in 171 countries and in 45 languages.



Dian Fossey left the United States for Africa in December 1966 and began her gorilla studies soon after. While in the central African nation of Rwanda, Fossey fell in love with the species and dedicated her life to ensuring their survival. She became an international icon and renowned primatologist, all while fighting an endless battle against encroaching gorilla poachers. The fight likely cost Fossey her life, though her murder was never definitively solved.

The series is filled with Fossey's own observations, recorded in her writings and brought to life by **Sigourney Weaver**, who has a special connection to Fossey. Weaver won a Golden Globe, and was nominated for an Oscar, for her portrayal of Fossey in the 1988 film "Gorillas in the Mist." Weaver is uniquely placed to recount Fossey's firsthand thoughts and feelings. Acclaimed film director, producer and writer **James Marsh** serves as executive producer on the miniseries. Marsh directed 2008's "Man on Wire," the Academy Award-winning documentary about Philippe Petit's high wire walk between New York's Twin Towers. Marsh also helmed 2015's "The Theory of Everything," the Academy Award- and Golden Globe-nominated film about physicist Stephen Hawking and his relationship with his wife.

Dian Fossey: Secrets in the Mist presents exclusive access to rare and unseen footage of Fossey in her daily habituations and up-close studies of gorillas. Also featured are in-depth interviews with her close colleagues and friends, including gorilla researcher and doctoral student **Wayne McGuire** and friend **Sir David Attenborough**.

Dian Fossey: Secrets in the Mist tells Fossey's life story from her lonely childhood to her work in Rwanda, where she founded the Karisoke Research Center in September 1967 and spent 18 years studying and protecting the mountain gorilla population there. The series details her close friendship with the young gorilla **Digit**, whose merciless mutilation and decapitation by poachers would deeply affect Fossey, as well as the people who worked by her side, including National Geographic photographer **Bob Campbell**, with whom she fell in love but who would leave her heartbroken when he returned to civilisation and his wife.

Fossey was brutally slain in her remote mountain cabin in 1985. The series explores the investigation around her murder and the subsequent trial of **McGuire**, who was found guilty in absentia by Rwandan courts. McGuire's conviction has long been questioned by those familiar with the circumstances, and now — with exclusive access to Fossey's belongings and personal effects, including objects from the scene of her murder as well as a rare interview with McGuire himself — his claims of innocence are given new credence.

Checking in on the legacy of Fossey's work, **Dian Fossey: Secrets in the Mist** features footage of the Pablo troop of gorillas, descendants of the very gorillas Fossey studied. Thanks to her work in protecting Rwanda's mountain gorilla population, the group was able to survive the worst years of poaching and threats to their habitat.

Premiere Episodes include:

“GORILLA GIRL”

6 December 2017, 20h05

On an isolated mountainside in Rwanda, cries of horror cut through the early morning mist. As day broke on December 27, 1985, wildlife legend Dian Fossey was found dead, murdered in a brutal machete attack. The world-famous icon fought to save mountain gorillas from extinction but made dangerous enemies who may have taken her life.

“DARK SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN”

13 December 2017, 20h05

After Dian Fossey’s favourite gorilla was slaughtered and her health began to fail, Sir David Attenborough travelled to Rwanda to film the gorillas. The result was one of television’s most treasured experiences with animals in the wild. However, due to battles with the Rwandan government, Fossey was forced to return to the United States. During this period Fossey wrote “Gorillas in the Mist” and became a global celebrity.

“MURDER ON THE MOUNTAIN”

20 December 2017, 20h05

Gorilla researcher Wayne McGuire was found guilty of Dian Fossey’s murder after an unskilled investigation by the Rwandan police provided few clues to the mystery. McGuire fled the country before he could be arrested. At the murder trial, a death sentence was passed on Wayne McGuire. He has lived with consequences of his conviction ever since. Did he really kill her or has he been the victim of a 32-year injustice? If not him, then who?

Academy Award-winning Executive Producer **James Marsh** and Tigress Productions tracked down extensive archival footage and, in a collaboration with the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, located thousands of still photos and hundreds of Fossey’s letters and personal correspondence. Tigress Productions interviewed the people who knew her best to accurately tell her story. Along the way, the series highlights the startling findings Fossey uncovered about the intimate lives of gorillas and their social structures.

Dian Fossey: Secrets in the Mist is produced by Tigress Productions, part of Endemol Shine Group, for National Geographic. For Tigress Productions, the director is Zara Hayes, showrunner is Sarah Peat and executive producer is Dick Colthurst.

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