

Grenada: Colonialism and Conflict



A documentary, directed by Valerie Scoon

A True Visions Production

Grenada: Colonialism and Conflict

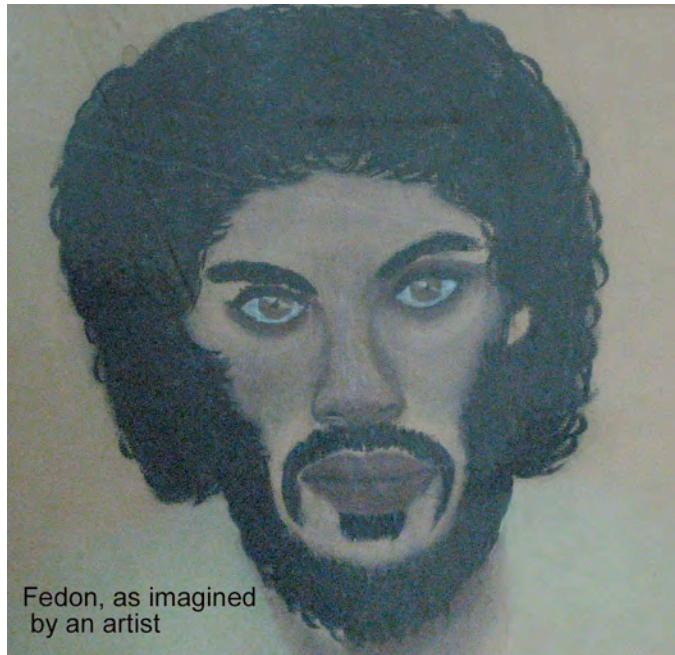
Grenada, nestled in blue and aquamarine waters, is known for its spices and rain forests, picture perfect white sand beaches and exquisite mountain views. It is part of the lower chain of Caribbean islands and on clear days one can almost see its sister island of Trinidad and Tobago or its southern neighbor, Venezuela.



Lounging in a beach chair on a beautiful Grenadian beach at Grande Anse, sipping on a sweet rum punch, it is hard to imagine the turmoil and violent struggles for control of the island between the native Indians, the French and English. Yet, the signs of old colonial conflicts are there to see, hear and decipher as you listen to the people talk.

The names of some of the food, such as maricou, reflect the lasting language of the first Amerindian inhabitants, the warlike Caribs and the more peaceful, Arawaks. The language is mostly English but some of the old French words still appear, reflecting the century that the French owned and controlled the island. The site where the remaining Caribs threw themselves off the cliff to their deaths as they ran from the French soldiers is aptly named Sauteurs, sadness.

The French and other European countries determined to extract the wealth from the sugar cane fields turned to the slave trade and thereby brought thousands of Africans to Grenada. In 1795, a mixed race French plantation owner, Julian Fedon led a rebellion to fight against the British for 'Liberte', 'Fraternite' and 'Egalite'. In order to lead this near successful insurrection against the British, Fedon freed his near 100 slaves who fought alongside him. His fight was courageous, outrageous, bloody -- and in the end unsuccessful. It is believed he escaped from the island never to be seen again.



Following the suppression of the Fedon rebellion, Britain would remain the ruler of Grenada for nearly 200 more years. Even after slavery was abolished in 1834, life in Grenada was similar to how it had been during slavery. The European and mixed-race plantocracy ruled, and the blacks labored. The leading plantocracy vowed to keep things as they were. This was not to be. The challenge came from a young man born of the people, Eric Matthew Gairy. In 1951, Eric Gairy struck a blow at the colonial status quo when he led the people in massive strike. His reign of power brought many improvements to the lot of the poorest people. Gairy himself rose to the position of Prime Minister.

Overtime, however, Gairy resorted to using some of the familiar oppressive tools of the colonial powers to silence critics and others. His once beloved people rose against him under the leadership of Grenadian-born, London-trained Attorney, Maurice Bishop.



Maurice Bishop

Bishop led a successful coup against Gairy in 1979. Bishop also wanted to better the lot of the people and took up concepts from the Communist Cuba and Russia to help build his island up with education being a centerpiece of their efforts. Again, ironically like Gairy, Bishop and his comrades resorted to using some of the tools of their former colonial masters to silence dissent. In addition, severe philosophical differences existed in Bishop's party.

In the end, the divisions became too severe. Political assassination of Bishop and many of his closest followers in 1983 left the island in strife and despair. In this chaos, the United States sent troops and removed the revolutionary government. Some called this an invasion and some referred to it as a welcome intervention. The island has since largely recovered, but the memories of the philosophical and sometimes bloody struggles against colonial rule, and its long-lasting influences for physical, psychological and mental freedom remain today.



TO BE SOLD & LET

BY PUBLIC AUCTION,

On MONDAY the 18th of MAY, 1829

UNDER THE TREES.

FOR SALE,

THE THREE FOLLOWING

SLAVES,

VIZ.

HANNIBAL, about 30 Years old, an excellent House Servant, of Good Character.

WILLIAM, about 35 Years old, a Labourer.

NANCY, an excellent House Servant and Nurse.

The MEN Belonging to "LEECH'S" Estate, and the WOMAN to Mrs. D. SMITH

TO BE LET,

the usual conditions of the Hirer finding them in Food, Clo^t in^s, and Medical

THE FOLLOWING

MALE and FEMALE

SLAVES,

OF GOOD CHARACTER.

ROBERT BAGLEY, about 20 Years old, a good House Servant.

WILLIAM BAGLEY, about 18 Years old, a Labourer.

JOHN ARMS, about 18 Years old.

JACK ANTONIA, about 40 Years old, a Labourer.

PHILIP, an Excellent Fisherman.

HARRY, about 27 Years old, a good House Servant.

LUCY, a Young Woman of good Character, used to House Work and the Nursery.

ELIZA, an Excellent Washerwoman.

CLARA, an Excellent Washerwoman.

FANNY, about 14 Years old, House Servant.

SARAH, about 14 Years old, House Servant.

Also for Sale, at Eleven o'Clock,

Fine Rice, Gram, Paddy, Books, Muslins,
Needles, Pins, Ribbons, &c. &c.

AT ONE O'CLOCK, THAT CELEBRATED ENGLISH HORSE

BLUCHER,



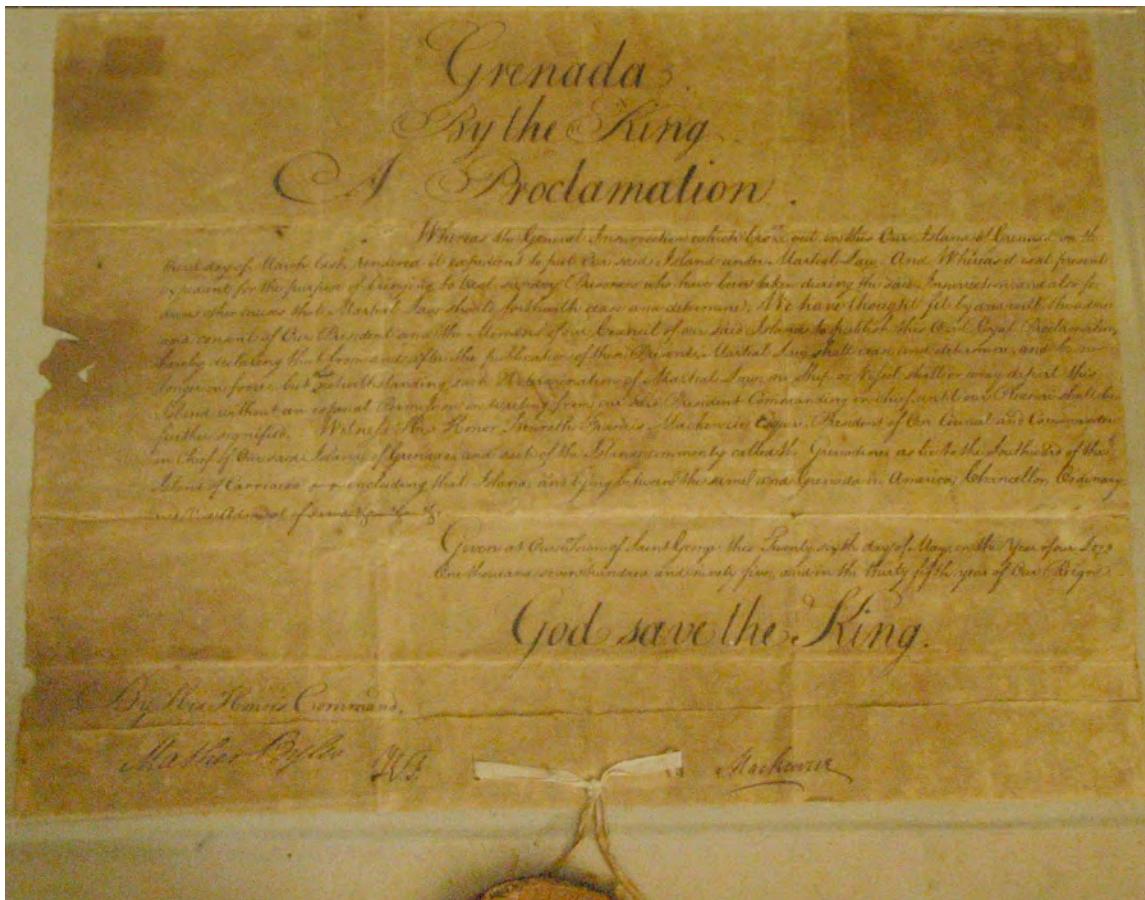
25-Word Synopsis

This documentary chronicles the philosophical and sometimes bloody struggles Grenadians have waged against colonialism and its long-lasting psychological influences.



50-Word Synopsis

This documentary chronicles the philosophical and sometimes bloody struggles Grenadians have waged against colonialism and its long-lasting psychological influences. History tells the tale: even as Grenadian leaders have struck blows at colonialism, they have at times employed the tools of oppression taught to them by their colonial masters.



100-Word Synopsis

This documentary chronicles the philosophical and sometimes bloody struggles Grenadians have waged against colonialism and its long lasting psychological influences.

Grenadian leaders fought against colonialism in different ways. Julian Fedon freed 100 slaves to fight the British. Eric Gairy led the poor people in massive strike and obtained many improvements for them. Maurice Bishop led a successful coup against Eric Gairy in 1979, promising education and societal reform.

History tells the tale, however, that even as Grenadian leaders have struck blows at colonialism, they have at times employed the tools of oppression taught to them by their colonial masters.





VALERIE SCOON Director/Producer

Because her father is Grenadian and mother American, Valerie Scoon grew up in both the Caribbean and the US. As a child Ms. Scoon was fascinated with story and storytelling. At Harvard Ms. Scoon was able to explore the relationship between history and story with her degree in American History and Literature. This concentration has stood Ms. Scoon in good stead in her filmmaking career. She is a noted film producer whose credits include *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and *The Wedding*—both starring Halle Berry—as well as *The Great Debaters*, starring Denzel Washington. In addition, Ms. Scoon was a studio executive at Warner Bros. and oversaw such films as *Malcolm X* and *The Secret Garden*. She has also been an Associate Director in News and Public Affairs at PBS, where she assessed work in progress documentaries for possible national distribution. Currently, Ms. Scoon is a Professor at Florida State University Film School and has her own film company, True Visions.

CAST OF SUBJECTS INTERVIEWED

(In Alphabetical Order)

Mrs. Gloria Payne Banfield, worked for Grenadian Government for 33 years. During that time Mrs. Banfield worked closely with Prime Ministers Eric Gairy and Maurice Bishop.

Mr. George Brizan is a former Prime Minister of Grenada and leading economist and historian. Grenada Isle of Conflicts is one of his many books.

Dr. DeVere Pitt was Vice Principal of Academic Affairs at MarryshowCommunity College.

Mr. Claude Douglas is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at MarryshowCommunity College and St. Georges University.

Mr. Richard Peters works in the Department of Agriculture in Grenada and was a member of the New Jewel Movement under Maurice Bishop.

Mr. Leslie Pierre is Publisher and Managing Editor of "The Grenadian Voice" newspaper. He was jailed for 2 years during the revolution.

Dr. Nicole Phillip is the Associate Dean in the School of Arts and Sciences and Professional Studies at Marryshow Community College. Dr. Phillip has written extensively on the 1979 revolution.

Mr. Lester Redhead a member of the New Jewel Movement was recently released from a 30 year sentence for the coup against Maurice Bishop.

Sir Paul Scoon was Governor General of Grenada from 1978 to 1992. Sir Scoon was in office during the revolution and the American intervention/invasion and authored the book Survival for Service.

Glen St. Louis is Manager of Fedon Bookstore in Grenada and was a member of the New Jewel Movement under Maurice Bishop.

Beverley Steele is a Senior Lecturer and historian at The University of the West Indies. Mrs. Steele is the author of Grenada A History of Its People.

Mr. John Anthony Ventour an early member of the New Jewel Movement was recently released from a 30 year prison sentence for the coup against Maurice Bishop.

