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‘The Justice Hunter’: A Quiet Hero’s Battle for the Oppressed

A combination of legal expertise and investigative rigor makes David Matas a force to be reckoned with as he battles human rights abuses.

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Canadian human rights lawyer and investigator David Matas discusses how organ transplants can be scheduled in advance at Chinese medical centers, in “The Justice Hunter.” GJW+



By Ian Kane

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Heroes don't always command headlines or appear on podcasts. Sometimes, they are quiet warriors, fighting battles of justice in courtrooms, at the negotiating table, or through tireless advocacy. "The Justice Hunter" is a poignant documentary that shines a spotlight on one such hero: David Matas, a real-life crusader for human rights.

Directed by Yolanda Papini-Pollock, the 2023 film expands on Matas's extraordinary legacy, delving deep into his global efforts to combat human rights abuses. This film is not merely biographical; it is a galvanizing battle cry to action. As Matas's story unfolds, viewers are introduced to the tireless work he has done to protect the oppressed, often in the face of immense adversity.

Papini-Pollock's personal connection to "The Justice Hunter" brings emotional depth and authenticity to the film. As the daughter of a Jewish Holocaust survivor, she frames Matas's work as a universal fight against injustice, drawing poignant parallels to her own family's experiences.





David Matas standing with Falun Gong practitioners in "The Justice Hunter." GJW+

Through interviews, archival footage, and Matas's reflections, Papini-Pollock's heartfelt storytelling inspires viewers to reflect on their own roles in defending human rights.

Leah Ross, a former lawyer and one of Matas's students, narrates the film and includes personal reflections. Her memories are interwoven with touching moments, such as a gathering of friends celebrating Matas's 80th birthday, providing glimpses into the humanity behind the hero.

Matas also knows a thing or two about the Holocaust. As we learn in the film, he derives much of his resolve from the lessons of his formative years when he addressed various Holocaust issues. Since then, Matas has achieved worldwide recognition for his lifelong work advocating on behalf of repressed minorities across the globe.

The film delves deeply into the Chinese regime's appalling record of persecution, particularly under the control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It examines the systematic oppression and, often, execution of Falun Gong practitioners, a peaceful spiritual community founded in 1992 by Li Hongzhi.



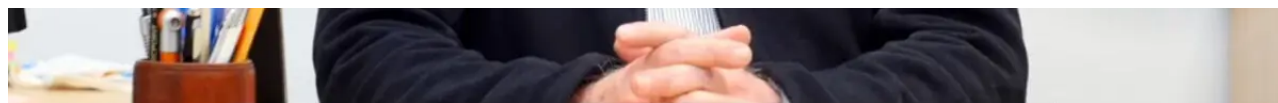
Falun Gong practitioners, with images of their loved ones who have fallen victim to the CCP, in "The Justice Hunter." GJW+

One interviewee, Joel Chipkar, a spokesperson for Falun Gong in Canada, states: "Virtually overnight, thousands of Falun Gong members were either disappeared into the night or imprisoned and sent to forced labor camps. Many suffered far worse fates, such as torture and, as the film makes a strong case for, forced organ harvesting."

As I covered in previous reviews of films on this subject, including "[Finding Courage](#)" (2020) and "[State Organs](#)" (2024), the spiritual practice emphasizing truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance spread rapidly due to its healthful practices—perhaps too rapidly for the CCP's comfort. The communist regime, and its paramount leader at the time, viewed any independent movement such as Falun Gong as a threat to its iron grip on power, and thus initiated a brutal campaign of suppression that continues to this day.

At just 53 minutes, the film maintains a brisk and engaging pace, interspersing brief yet impactful interviews with individuals whose lives have become intertwined with Matas's over the years. Notable figures, such as Irwin Cotler, a lawyer and former minister of justice and attorney general of Canada, provide valuable perspectives on Matas's work and legacy. Matas himself offers key observations about his career and the tireless fight for justice that has defined his life.





Dr. Jay Lavee in "The Justice Hunter." GJW+

The documentary doesn't shy away from exposing the dark realities of the Chinese regime's persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. One of the more unsettling segments delves into the global industry fueled by organs harvested from executed practitioners.

Dr. Jacob (Jay) Lavee, founder and former director of the heart transplant unit at Israel's Sheba Medical Center, recounts a chilling story involving one of his patients. This patient, placed high on the transplant list, was told by his insurance company that he could receive a new heart within just two weeks if he traveled to China, a claim that defied logic.

As Dr. Lavee points out, organ transplants always happen the same day a donor dies. Yet when the patient traveled to China, the operation went ahead as promised. The dissonance between the logistics and the procedure led Dr. Lavee to question, "How can someone promise you a heart transplant ahead of time?"

Matas confirms the chilling reality, revealing how the communist regime has advertised globally for people to travel to China and secure organ transplants, with dates scheduled months in advance. The revelation of this systematic, state-run operation of organ harvesting shows the brutal measures the CCP is willing to employ.

As Cotler aptly states, Matas is not only an exceptional litigator and legal scholar, but also possesses a "unique investigative capacity," which has been integral to his success in exposing some of the world's most egregious human rights violations. This combination of legal expertise and investigative rigor makes Matas a force to be reckoned with.

With "The Justice Hunter" continuing to receive positive responses, it is incredibly heartening to witness the far-reaching influence of a

tireless champion for human rights. For anyone committed to standing up for truth and justice, and to exposing the darkness that lingers in the shadows of the CCP, this documentary is an absolute must-see.

“The Justice Hunter” is available to watch on [GanJing World](#)

‘The Justice Hunter’

Director: Yolanda Papini-Pollock

Running time: 53 minutes

Release Date: Jan. 10, 2023

Rated: 4 1/2 stars out of 5

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Ian Kane is an U.S. Army veteran, author, filmmaker, and actor. He is dedicated to the development and production of innovative, thought-provoking, character-driven films and books of the highest quality.



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