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Written by **Milind Ghatwai** | [Bhopal/new Delhi](#) | Posted: December 7, 2013 2:40 am

Nearly 20 years after a Catholic nun was brutally stabbed to death by a Right-wing activist in Madhya Pradesh, a documentary on the killer, Heart of a Murderer, is winning hearts with its tale of forgiveness and redemption.

Made by Australian-Italian filmmaker Catherine McGilvray, the film was a joint-winner of the Best International Feature Documentary at the World Interfaith Harmony Festival held in Los Angeles in February.

It has since travelled to another festival in Italy and McGilvray is securing the rights for a screening in Rome in March as well as a

worldwide DVD release in Hindi, Spanish, Italian, French, Italian and English.

Heart of a Murderer also competed at the Asiatica Film Mediale, Rome, in October and won an award at the International Film Festival for Spirituality, Religion and Visionary in Jakarta.

McGilvray now plans to screen the film in jails and schools across Italy.

The film revolves around Samundar Singh, who killed Sister Rani Maria in 1995 while she was on a bus from Indore to Udainagar. Then 22, he stabbed her more than 50 times and left her to die by the roadside.

Singh was convicted and sentenced to serve life imprisonment but was freed in 2006 due to good conduct.

When Singh was in jail, the murdered nuns' family forgave him publicly. Her younger sister Selmy even tied Singh a rakhi in 2002 and the relationship that began in prison is still going strong.

I was misled by some people and I committed the act out of childishness, Singh said, admitting that he had come to repent his actions and was moved by Selmy's gesture of tying a rakhi. I have had a change of heart, added Singh, who now works as a farmer near Indore.

It was this single act that really moved me and I wanted to know more about this man and the story behind what happened, McGilvray said. When I first heard this story, I was captivated by the idea of love, forgiveness and compassion. I thought the world really needed this story to be told and so I wanted this story to go to the largest audience possible.

McGilvray heard of the story from a missionary from Pulluvazhi village in Kerala, Marias hometown. The film was shot between 2010 and 2013 in Udainagar and Pulluvazhi.

The film opens with Singh travelling by train to Kerala where he meets Marias mother. This was his second meeting since he was released from prison in 2006. It was totally unscripted and forms the highlight of the film.



It was a mystical experience for both the mother and Samundar and is a very powerful moment, said McGilvray, who visited India on three occasions for the filming.

But it took time for Singh to open up and speak freely about the murder.

It took a long time to make him feel confident. In the three years that we met, it was only in the last few months that he was really working with us because he realised it was important. What is important is that Samundar never converted to Catholicism. His conversion is that of the heart and not of religion. He

continued...

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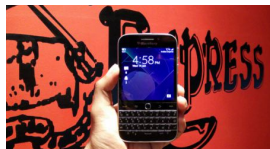
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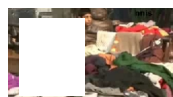
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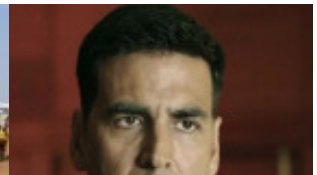
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