

# IN THE LINE OF FIRE

## *Personal Memories of a Documentary Filmmaker*

**Antony Thomas**

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*“Antony Thomas’s sureness of touch and power of evocation is unparalleled among documentary film-makers.”*

*– The Sunday Times*

*“Thomas knows how to ask deep-felt, piercing questions without being hostile, and he knows how to keep the footage tense and dramatic.”*

*– New Yorker*

*In the Line of Fire* is the personal memoir of Antony Thomas, a documentary filmmaker whose work has won international acclaim and many prestigious awards.

From the full range of documentaries made over a fifty-two-year career, Thomas focuses on subjects that affected him deeply and remain relevant to this day; the pernicious effects of racism, the ‘seamless border’ between intelligence and crime, the last colonial wars in Africa, the conflicts in the Middle East, the rise of Islamic extremism, the politicisation of Evangelical Christians in the United States and the origins of fake news – to mention just a few.

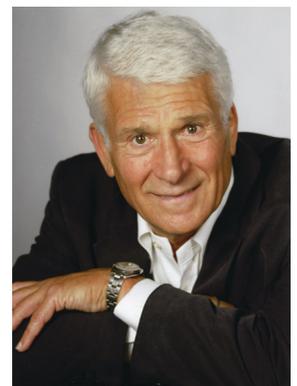
Thomas brings these disparate experiences together by taking a very personal approach and using every opportunity to take the reader ‘behind the camera’ where he shares the difficulties, the moral problems and the dangers that he and his colleagues sometimes faced, including the moment when the entire team was condemned to death in a military camp in Zambia.

Eleven years later, Thomas was back in the line of fire, coping with vicious attacks from MPs and sectors of the press, following the broadcast of his controversial docudrama *Death of a Princess*.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Antony Thomas** was born in India in 1940 and taken to South Africa when he was six years old. At the age of 22, he was commissioned by the government there to make his first documentary. His experiences on that film changed the course of his life.

Banned from further filmmaking in South Africa, he moved to England in 1966, where his documentaries have received outstanding reviews and multiple awards, including the most prestigious; the British Academy Award, the US Emmy Award and the Grierson Award (twice). He is also author of the acclaimed biography, *Rhodes, the Race for Africa*. Thomas retired from filmmaking in 2016. [www.antonythomas.co.uk](http://www.antonythomas.co.uk)



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*“Antony Thomas asks questions, he listens, he documents. It is the quality of his attention that shapes the character of his work. He lets a story tell itself – the finest technique of all.”*

– Today

*“Like Dickens, Thomas is a Briton who represents two of the best traditions in British journalism; a fearless sort of aggressiveness and a freewheeling personal involvement, tempered by sympathy for others ... His visual style is rich in portraiture and detail.”*

– San Francisco Chronicle

*“A shining example of creative film-making ... Not a frame is wasted. Subtle twists abound. [Thomas] makes us watch the television screen differently; he treats us as grown-ups ... Films such as Thomas’s – works of probity and creative intelligence – will one day be looked back on as one of the high-water marks of achievement in 20th century analogue television.”*

– The Sunday Times

*“Antony Thomas is one of the finest film-makers working in television.”*

– The Telegraph

*“In interviews with the rich, the poor, the powerful and the exploited, Thomas has a way with nuance. His questions are excellent and his cameras are attentive to the ever-revealing unconscious mannerisms ... Film-making not to be missed.”*

– Newsday

*“Documentaries of the highest standard, equalled only by the films of Costa Gravas. Thomas’s deeply felt, unsentimental approach”*

– Gerald Gilbert, The Independent

#### **Praise for Rhodes: *The Race for Africa* (BBC Publication & Penguin Books):**

*“This is a true story of our times, and all times, splendidly told. For even one who has no interest either in Africa or Cecil Rhodes will find this book a remarkable achievement, because its theme is no less than universal: a mystery of the human personality ... Antony Thomas explores the man’s amazing life with lively intelligence, scrupulously fair and informed insight, and a deep understanding of the influences on the subsequent history of Southern Africa this rogue-adventurer, romantic mining Midas, statesman, racist, hero of imperialism has had.”*

– Nadine Gordimer, Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature

*“A book of substance, which ought to be widely read.”*

– Ronald Segal, The Observer

*“Intelligent, detailed, well-researched and credibly nuanced ... adult and historically sensitive ... The picture that persuasively emerges ... [is] of a man of immense charm and demonic single-mindedness ... But Thomas does not allow his animosity towards Rhodes to stand in the way of his admiration for the empire-builder’s remarkable, occasionally heroic, achievements.”*

– John Carlin, The Independent

*“A biography I really would recommend.”*

– Tony Palmer, BBC Radio Three

*“Informative, lively ... fascinating.”*

– James Smethurst, Chicago Tribune