



4K

RAISE THE RED FLAG

1 x 50 min.

Presented by **Aaron Gekoski**

4K, 5.1 and Stereo

Directed by **Chris Scarffe and Will Foster-Grundy**

Executive producers: **Susanne Lummer, Sabine Holzer**



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Wildlife Tourism is a \$250 billion per year industry. Yet these profits don't come without costs ...

It's a huge and lucrative global business. But who are the drivers behind it and how have social media trends created an industry that puts Instagrammable photos before the basic welfare of animals? We meet Aaron Gekoski, an environmental photojournalist who has spent the past year visiting and documenting cruel operators.

With their quirky characters and extreme intelligence, orangutans share 97% of their DNA with humans. These human characteristics make them hugely popular attractions at zoos worldwide. However, with limited space and resources, many zoos are failing to provide them with suitable homes, whilst others exploit their intelligence and train them to perform in grotesque routines.

Aaron visits Bali Zoo, where visitors eat breakfast in the presence of multiple orangutans. Unbeknown to the majority of tourists—keen to get a once-in-a-lifetime close-up picture with orangutans—practices like these can have a range of negative impacts. Orangutans are susceptible to human diseases and these interactions can also affect important natural behaviors.

The final call is Safari World, a large and glitzy operation on the outskirts of Bangkok. Aaron goes to watch Safari World's most infamous attraction. Twice a day, orangutans are forced to perform in boxing shows, much to the amusement of

large crowds. In the process, he speaks to tourists who have travelled from all over the world to see the show, as he attempts to understand the drivers behind this industry.

In an unexpected twist, Aaron learns of a major undercover bust taking place in Jakarta, headed up by an animal welfare organisation and a Special Unit run by the Indonesian police. These groups have been working for months on a sting, targeting orangutan smugglers. The Special Unit takes Aaron to meet a jailed orangutan smuggler who is willing to spill the beans on this shady and sinister industry. We learn how the syndicates operate, deep in the jungles, with mothers being killed to get to their babies.

Thankfully, there are groups working tirelessly to help orangutans. Aaron travels to a rescue centre at Nyaru Menteng, Indonesian Borneo, where orangutans have been saved from the Illegal Wildlife Trade. He meets the team from Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOS) who run the centre and hears some heart-breaking stories, told by the heroes that were involved in the orangutans' rescues.

Finally, Aaron travels by boat into the heart of Borneo's jungles. Framed by dense rainforest, orangutans line the riverbanks, foraging and caring for their young. Here, they are in their element; here, they are free.



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