

# THEY KILLED SISTER DOROTHY

A JUST-MEDIA FILM

DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Discussion Questions - Personal Response

1. What emotions did you experience as you viewed the film?
2. Were there any surprises for you?
3. Which scenes touched you most deeply?
4. Did you identify with any of the persons in the film?
5. If you had been on the jury, would you have convicted Bida? Why or why not?
6. What more do you want to know about Dorothy's story?

## Discussion Questions - Impact

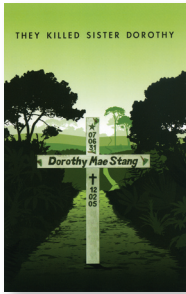
1. Sister Dorothy often wore a tee shirt printed with, "The death of the forest is the end of our life." What role does the Amazon Forest play in maintaining the health of our planet? What would we lose if the forest were destroyed?
2. Sister Dorothy asked the question, "How can we share this magnificent planet so that more people can have a sustainable way of life?" What are our answers to that question?
3. Dorothy wanted to bring awareness of what is happening in the Amazon "so that there will be a tomorrow." She gave the PDS at Lot 55 the name of Esperança, place of hope. How do we envision our planet's tomorrow? What is our hope?
4. Sister Dorothy became involved in the struggle to save the Amazon rainforest because that is where she lived. What in our own back yards needs attention so that the planet can survive?
5. Sister Dorothy worked with the local, regional and national governments to hold them accountable to their promises to protect the rainforest. Who are the government officials where we live whom we could contact to ensure that our environment is protected?
6. Comment on this statement: "In the film, Dorothy didn't speak as much about God as about human dignity and the future of the planet. On the contrary, the ranchers and lawyers talked about God frequently!"
7. Will this film make a difference in your life?

For more information, write to [DotEdAids@sndden.org](mailto:DotEdAids@sndden.org)  
or visit the website [www.theykilledsisterdorothy.com](http://www.theykilledsisterdorothy.com)



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**They Killed Sister Dorothy** is a narrative documentary. At stake is whether illegal loggers and cattle ranchers in the State of Pará, Brazil, can continue to clear cut the Amazon rainforest, kill peasant farmers and take their land without fear of prosecution.

## Background Information

Most of this drama takes place between February 2005 and May 2007 in the State of Pará in northeast Brazil, a place often compared to North America's "wild west," due to rampant lawlessness and corruption.

The events take place in Belem, capital of Pará. Sister Dorothy Stang, an American Sister of Notre Dame de Namur, lived and worked in Anapú, a new town deep in the Amazon Forest. A short segment is filmed in Brasilia, capital of Brazil.

Previous to Dorothy's death, more than 772 peasant farmers had been murdered in land conflicts in Pará over the past 30 years. Only nine cases had come to trial. No one who ordered and paid for a murder had been convicted and jailed.

One fifth of the Amazon rainforest has been destroyed. It is likely that an additional twenty percent of the forest will be lost over the next two decades. In August 2004, 2,500 acres of forest in the Anapú area were cut and burned. Dorothy traveled 1,000 miles to Brasilia to testify before a congressional committee investigating the destruction of the forest. Lot 55, where Dorothy was murdered, is made up of 10 square miles of virgin rainforest; it is central to the Project for Sustainable Development (PDS), initiated by the Brazilian government as a conservation project and developed by Dorothy.

The Brazilian legal system has no law against perjury.

## Short Cast of Characters

There are no actors or actresses in this film.

**Sister Dorothy Stang:** an American Sister of Notre Dame de Namur who began her service in Brazil in 1966.

**David Stang:** Dorothy's brother.

**Sister Becky Spires:** a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur and Dorothy's friend and co-worker, now working among the indigenous people of Brazil.

**Sister Julia (JoAnn) Depweg:** a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur and Dorothy's friend stationed in Belem, Brazil.

**Sister Jane Dwyer:** a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur and Dorothy's friend and co-worker working among the people of Anapú, Brazil.

**Felicio Pontes:** Federal Prosecutor.

**Edson Cardoso:** Prosecutor for the State of Pará.

**Americo Leal:** lawyer for the accused.

**Raifran das Neves Sales:** confessed gunman.

**Clodoaldo Carlos Batista:** confessed accomplice.

**Vitalmiro Bastos de Moura (Bida):** landowner charged with ordering and paying for the murder.

**Regivaldo Pereira Galvão, Taradão (Sleazy):** landowner also charged with ordering and paying for the murder.