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## Family Business: Foreign Correspondent

Airs Tuesday September 13 at 9.30pm on ABC & iview

When Oscar-nominated Australian filmmaker Bob Connolly reunites with the characters of his acclaimed PNG Highlands trilogy (*First Contact*, *Joe Leahy's Neighbours*, *Black Harvest*), he is shocked at how their fortunes have changed.

To mark this special report by one of Australia's finest filmmakers, [ABC iview](#) is now showing the original Highlands Trilogy films by Connolly and his partner the late Robin Anderson, as well as two of their other classics.

Interviews with Bob Connolly are available.

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The last time filmmaker Bob Connolly was in PNG's Highlands he was caught up in one of the bloodiest and most destructive tribal wars in the region's recorded history.

Now, 25 years on, Connolly returns to the Highlands for *Foreign Correspondent* to catch up with key characters from the masterful trilogy of documentaries he made with his late partner Robin Anderson – Academy Award-nominated *First Contact* (1983), *Joe Leahy's Neighbours* (1989) and *Black Harvest* (1992).

At the heart of it all is Joe Leahy, the son of an Aussie gold prospector who was the first European to make contact with the local Ganiga tribe, and a Highlands woman. As Connolly puts it: "Western-oriented, mixed race coffee millionaire surrounded by tribal subsistence farmers – fertile ground for a clash of values."

Joe Leahy had big dreams for his coffee plantations. So too did the Ganiga people who wanted to grow rich from them. That was until the coffee price suddenly tanked and a tribal war exploded, scenes dramatically captured in *Black Harvest*, the last film in the trilogy.

Fast forward to 2016. Coffee prices have recovered and a quarter century has passed. So by now, surely, war will be a distant memory, and Joe Leahy and the Ganiga finally will be reaping their shared riches? That is the rough scenario Bob Connolly hopes he will find as he drives into the Highlands to pick up with Joe Leahy and Ganiga leaders.

But from day one the signs are bad. It's harvest time. There are 60,000 coffee trees but only two pickers.

"Why do I have to give them money and all these things?" Joe is railing against the Ganiga. "I'm sick of it now."

But Joe, now 77, can't bring himself to leave the plantation, despite pleas from his son Jim. In turn Jim is resisting pressure from Joe - to take over when Joe dies.

“I don’t want to be Joe Leahy when I turn 80,” says Jim. “He’s angry all the time and I don’t want to be like that.”

Wrangling over the succession is imperilling the Leahy coffee dynasty - but what’s left anyway? As Connolly digs deeper it becomes clear that the old tribal war is still playing itself out, with insidious effect, long after the last arrow flew.

***Family Business*, shot by Stephen Dupont airs on *Foreign Correspondent* at 9.30pm on Tuesday September 13 on ABC & iview.**

**It will be replayed at 10.30am Thursday September 15 on ABC; 6.30pm AEST Saturday September 17 on ABC News 24. Stream it LIVE or watch it later on [iview](#).**

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***First Contact (1983)***

Three Australian gold prospectors - brothers Michael, Dan and James Leahy – encounter thousands of highlanders seeing white men for the first time. This Oscar-nominated documentary includes remarkable footage shot by Michael Leahy in the 1930s and interviews with the surviving brothers and highlanders 50 years later.

***Joe Leahy’s Neighbours (1989)***

Sequel to *First Contact* illustrates the conflict between old ways and new. Michael Leahy’s mixed race son Joe buys tribal land to establish a coffee plantation and grows rich while all around him his tribal neighbours maintain their subsistence lifestyle.

***Black Harvest (1992)***

Joe Leahy’s Ganiga tribal neighbours are finally about to share in the wealth of the coffee plantation – but the golden opportunity is let slip when the price of coffee collapses and tribal warfare explodes.

***Rats in the Ranks (1996)***

A fly on the wall expose of the machinations behind Leichardt mayor Larry Hand’s bid for a fourth term, and the “rats” in the Labor Party caucus who want to bring him down but can’t agree how to do it.

***Facing the Music (2001)***

Sydney University music professor Anne Boyd strives to bring the best out of her talented students. But years of funding cuts make it a struggle to maintain standards, forcing the composer/teacher into unfamiliar territory as she scraps for every dollar and makes some unpleasant decisions

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