

Petition

After a routine medical checkup, Qi's husband died suddenly and was cremated without her consent. Local village authorities have refused her request for an investigation. For 10 years, she and her daughter have camped in Petition Village, a shantytown behind Beijing's South Railway Station.

The dysfunctional Chinese court system allows citizens with grievances against their local governments to petition the court to clear or correct their record. The petitioners, most of which are impoverished villagers from outside Beijing must travel to the capital to

file paperwork. They wait an indefinite period to plead their case unaware of the inevitable futility of their mission. The idea of petitioning is an ancient one, dating back to the times when emperors ruled China.

Taking 12 years to complete the film and shot right up to the start of the Olympics, Director Liang's film is harrowing and revelatory. It shows the contradictions faced by China in the midst of economic expansion and unfolds like a Dickensian tale.

Unwilling to accept defeat with no solution in sight, the petitioners gradually lose touch with family and friends back home. They are stranded in a Kafkaesque nightmare.

“PETITION IS A TOUR-DE-FORCE, NOT TO BE MISSED AND THE WORK OF REMARKABLE NEW TALENT FROM CHINA.”

Alex Lee, Documentary Edge



AUSTRALASIAN PREMIERE

SCREENING TIMES

AUCKLAND

Wed 3/3 8.45pm

Mon 8/3 8.45pm

Sun 14/3 8.45pm

WELLINGTON

Wed 17/3 8.45pm

Mon 22/3 8.40pm

Sun 28/3 8.50pm

China, France | 2009 | 124mins | Mandarin | Dir. Zhao Liang

Festivals: Festival de Cannes, Beijing FF, Vancouver IFF, Sheffield Docfest, IDFA Amsterdam, RIDM Montreal, DOCLisboa and more