



# How a railroad helped make a movie

## “The Train of Salt and Sugar” premieres in Chicago on June 29

By Justin Franz | May 31, 2018

Video: [THE TRAIN OF SALT AND SUGAR TRAILER](#) from [Urucu Media](#) on [Vimeo](#)

CHICAGO — Henry Posner III has an extensive resume: former Conrail executive, founder and chairman of Railroad Development Corp., and instructor at Carnegie Mellon University, just to name a few of the highlights. But there’s one position Posner probably never expected to add to his exhaustive list of accomplishments: movie promoter.

Yet that’s exactly what Posner is doing this spring ahead of the American premiere of “The Train of Salt and Sugar,” a feature-length film about the railroad across Mozambique during the civil war in the 1980s. For years, the rail line connecting the Indian Ocean with the northwest corner of the country went right through a war zone and every train had to be prepared for the worst.

“Every train took food, fuel, weapons, and track supplies because they never knew what they might run into,” Posner tells Trains News Wire. “I cannot think of any railroad that has ever operated in such adverse and extreme conditions and that’s why I feel like this story must be told.”

Posner’s Railroad Development Corp. operated various sections of railroad in Mozambique between 1999 and 2008, including the Nacala Corridor that is the subject of the film. The film is based on a book of the same name by Licinio de Azevedo. Posner says he first discovered the book at the Maputo Airport and quickly read it cover to cover, adding that it’s the only book he’s ever read entirely in Portuguese. The railroader was so impressed by the story that he reached out to the author and offered to help finance the English translation. A South African publisher printed the English version in 2007.

The book is set in late summer 1987 in the northern Mozambican town of Nampula and focuses on three trains that are about to depart for Cuamba. The book documents life for the hundreds of troops and civilians that are aboard the train for a trip that should only take a day but drags on for weeks as the trains cross the war-torn landscape.

The book was turned into a full-length motion picture in 2016 and was filmed along parts of the railroad in Mozambique. Two years after it was first released overseas, Posner’s Railroad Development Corp. is helping fund its distribution in the United States. Posner says he believes it’s important to get in front of American audiences to share the fascinating story of Mozambique and the railroad.

“It’s a fabulous film and it’s so authentic,” Posner says.

“The Train of Salt and Sugar” will open at Chicago’s Facets Cinematheque on June 29 and will run through July 5.

<http://trn.trains.com/news/news-wire/2018/05/31-how-a-railroad-helped-make-a-movie>