

FIFTH ESTATE: BLACK DAWN: THE NEXT PANDEMIC

FACTUAL



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DURATION
60 minutes



What would happen if the World Health Organization declared what has long been expected and feared: human-to-human transmission of the avian flu virus?

SYNOPSIS

BLACK DAWN takes you inside the nightmare scenario that governments and public health officials around the world are desperately preparing themselves for: a mass dying that might kill exponentially more than died at the height of the bubonic plague or the Spanish flu.

BLACK DAWN opens with the poignant story of a young boy in Thailand who has contracted avian flu. As he slips into death his doctor wonders whether this is the beginning of a world pandemic. She hurriedly contacts the local WHO authorities.

The scene shifts to Geneva a short time later, where a press conference is just getting under way. The world watches as the authorities confirm what has long been expected and feared: human to human transmission of the avian flu virus is now a certainty. And so the race is on to contain the spread before it engulfs the entire planet, and to develop a vaccine before too many die.

BLACK DAWN employs all the tools of documentary and drama to paint a starkly realistic picture of life during a pandemic.

The programme features leading epidemiologists, doctors and emergency planners who imagine in detail the impact of a disease like avian flu. Some predict the coming pandemic will be more lethal than all of the world's previous plagues - so virulent it will spread like wildfire and kill like a never-ending tsunami. All agree it will test all societies like never before.



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