

**COME HELL <sup>or</sup>  
HIGH WATER**  
THE BATTLE FOR TURKEY CREEK

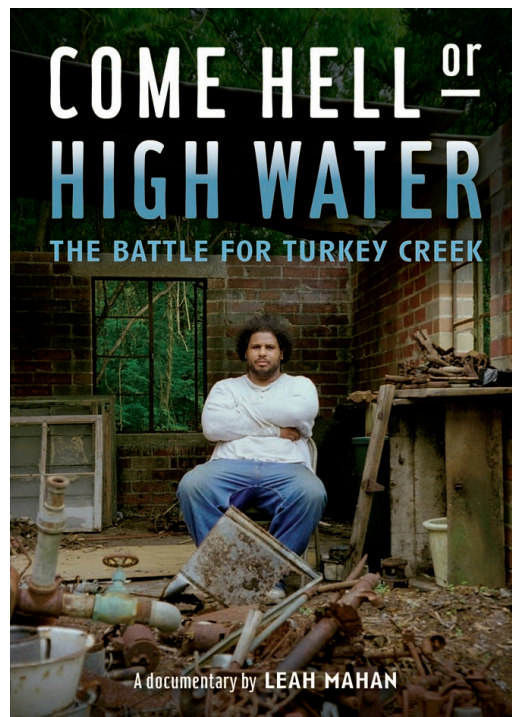
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***COME HELL OR HIGH WATER*, A DOCUMENTARY ON THE STRUGGLE  
TO SAVE A MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY SETTLED BY FORMER SLAVES,  
PREMIERE BROADCAST ON WORLD CHANNEL'S "AMERICA REFRAMED"  
WITH SIMULTANEOUS ONLINE PREMIERE AND LIVE CHAT**

**APRIL 29, 2014**

**8 p.m. Eastern / 7 p.m. Central / 5 p.m. Pacific**



*Come Hell or High Water: The Battle for Turkey Creek* follows the journey of teacher Derrick Evans, who moves home to Mississippi's Gulf Coast when the graves of his ancestors are bulldozed to make way for the sprawling city of Gulfport. The documentary will air on WORLD Channel's series *America Reframed* on April 29, 2014 (8 p.m. ET / 7 p.m. CT / 5 p.m. PT) and the broadcast will be followed by a half-hour discussion between the series host Natasha Del Toro, subject Derrick Evans and journalist Brentin Mock. The simulcast Online Premiere and Live Chat will also begin at 8 p.m. ET with filmmaker, Derrick Evans, Brentin Mock and Leslie Fields (director of Environmental Justice and Community Partnerships for the Sierra Club). This program is the culmination of the WORLD Channel's April exploration of "the resiliency of people and the planet." On April 29 viewers can find

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the broadcast of *Come Hell or High Water* on a local public TV station or join the live chat. Mississippi Public Broadcasting will air the documentary locally on April 30 the film will stream on PBS Video April 30 – May 2

On April 24, 2014 communities confronting challenges similar to those in Turkey Creek will hold special *Come Hell or High Water* preview events. Derrick Evans will participate with other Gulf Coast community leaders in a screening at the regional Justice Leadership Summit in Mobile, Alabama; filmmaker Leah Mahan will attend a screening hosted by East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice at the Art Theatre in Long Beach, California. Teresa Fox-Bettis, organizer of the Mobile event, describes the response of local residents at a preview screening: “We were moved to tears. You see, Africatown, much like Turkey Creek, was established by freed slaves, and the stories were eerily similar in so many ways. For us it was a painful reminder, but it was validation, it was hope. We need tangible evidence to show the community why it is so important to not give up, no matter what.”

*Come Hell or High Water: The Battle for Turkey Creek* follows the painful but inspiring journey of Derrick Evans, a Boston teacher who moves home to coastal Mississippi when the graves of his ancestors are bulldozed to make way for the sprawling city of Gulfport. Over the course of a decade, Derrick and his neighbors stand up to powerful corporate interests and politicians and face Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil disaster in their struggle for self-determination and environmental justice.

*“This intimate film tells a gigantic story — about race, about power, about so-called development. But it is also a saga of community, resilience, resistance, and hope. It’s about everything that matters in our society.”*

– Bill Bigelow, Rethinking Schools

In October 2013 the film won the *Audience Award for Documentary Feature* when it premiered at the New Orleans Film Festival and a sneak preview was featured at Power Shift, a national gathering of 8,000 youth leaders held in Pittsburgh. On March 30, the film screened to a packed theater with special guests at the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital. The film will be included in the 2014 American Film Showcase, a cultural diplomacy program sponsored by the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered by the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts. The program “highlights the value of film in fostering understanding and cooperation, dialogue and debate.”

*"This powerful documentary illustrates a classic case of environmental injustice and exposes raw in-your-face Mississippi racial politics. Come Hell or High Water is a perfect lesson that we are not living in a post-racial era."*

– Dr. Robert Bullard, "father of environmental justice," Dean of the Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs at Texas Southern University

Filmmaker Leah Mahan worked on the documentary for a dozen years and was invited to collaborate with world-class creative advisors as a fellow at the Sundance Institute Documentary Editing and Story Lab. While producing the film, Mahan worked with Derrick Evans and the Gulf Coast Fund for Community Renewal and Ecological Health to create a community media project titled Bridge the Gulf that lifts up the voices of Gulf Coast communities working towards justice and sustainability.

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*“Turkey Creek is emblematic of so much of what is going on in the world right now, and that part of our country. These communities are not supposed to be considered resilient. These communities were not supposed to survive, but they’ve survived. And the solutions that they’re coming up with are the solutions that we all really need to pay attention to and lift up.”*

– Leslie Fields, Director of Environmental Justice and Community Partnerships, Sierra Club

*Come Hell or High Water* is part of Reel Power, a collaborative of award-winning documentary filmmakers, individual leaders and organizations working to address climate change and the long-term impact of destructive resource extraction. Through targeted and public screening events, strategy convenings, and hands-on trainings coordinated by Working Films and supported by Chicken and Egg Pictures, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, and the Putnam Foundation, Reel Power is positioning *Come Hell or High Water* and other high impact films to promote and advance new energy solutions and a clean and just energy future.

*Come Hell or High Water: The Battle for Turkey Creek* is a co-production of Zamler Productions, LLC and the Independent Television Service (ITVS), produced in association with Mississippi Public Broadcasting, with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). The film was also supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Sundance Institute Documentary Fund, Chicken & Egg Pictures, Berkeley Film Foundation, Just Media Fund, Winograd-Hutner Family Fund, Nu Lambda Trust, LEF Moving Image Fund, Fleishhacker Foundation and individual donors.

## **About the filmmaker**

Leah Mahan is an independent documentary filmmaker whose work has been nominated by the Directors Guild of America for Outstanding Directorial Achievement. Mahan’s film *Sweet Old Song* (2002) was featured on the PBS series *P.O.V.* and was selected by film critic Roger Ebert to be screened at his Overlooked Film Festival (“Ebertfest”). Mahan began her career as a research assistant for filmmaker Henry Hampton on the groundbreaking PBS series on the civil rights movement *Eyes on the Prize*. A sequel to her first film, *Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street* (1996), was completed in 2013. The films tell the story of a vibrant community organization that transforms a devastated Boston neighborhood through grassroots organizing.

## **Production Credits**

*Producer, Director, Cinematographer*  
Leah Mahan

*Producer and Editor*  
Jane Greenberg

*Co-Editors*  
William A. Anderson  
Dawn Logsdon

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*Composer*

Derrick Hodge

**For more information**

- Email [leahmahan@gmail.com](mailto:leahmahan@gmail.com)
- Visit [ComeHellorHighWaterFilm.com](http://ComeHellorHighWaterFilm.com)
- Visit [facebook.com/turkeycreekfilm](https://facebook.com/turkeycreekfilm)

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