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CONTACT

Voleine Amilcar 415-356-8383 x 244
Mary Lugo 770-623-8190
Cara White 843-881-1480

voleine_amilcar@itvs.org
lugo@negia.net
cara.white@mac.com

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***THE HOUSE I LIVE IN PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS
ON MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2013***

“I’d hate to imply that it’s your civic duty to see The House I Live In, but guess what — it is.”
— Ty Burr, *The Boston Globe*

(San Francisco, CA) — Winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival, Eugene Jarecki’s *The House I Live In* builds a compelling case for the complete failure of America’s war on drugs. For the past forty years, the war on drugs has resulted in more than 45 million arrests, one trillion dollars in government spending, and America’s role as the world’s largest jailer. Yet for all that, drugs are cheaper, purer, and more available than ever. Filmed in more than twenty states, *The House I Live In* captures heart-wrenching stories from those on the front lines — from the dealer to the grieving mother, the narcotics officer to the senator, the inmate to the federal judge — and offers a penetrating look at the profound human rights implications of America’s longest war. *The House I Live In* premieres on *Independent Lens*, hosted by Stanley Tucci, on Monday, April 8, 2013 at 10 PM on PBS (check local listings).

The film recognizes drug abuse as a matter of public health, and investigates the tragic errors and shortcomings that have resulted from framing it as an issue for law enforcement. Beyond simple misguided policy, the film examines how political and financial corruption has fueled the war on drugs, despite persistent evidence of its moral, economic, and practical failures. The drug war in America has helped establish the largest prison-industrial system in the world, contributing to the incarceration of 2.3 million men and women — more than Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran combined — and is responsible for untold collateral damage to the lives of countless individuals and families. Instead of questioning a campaign of such epic cost and failure, those in public office generally advocate for harsher penalties for drug offenses, lest they be perceived as soft on crime.

But there’s a growing recognition among those on all sides that the war on drugs is a failure. At a time of heightened fiscal instability, the drug war is also seen as economically unsustainable. Beyond its human cost at home, the unprecedented violence in Mexico provides a daily reminder of the war’s immense impact abroad, and America has at last begun to take the first meaningful steps toward reform. At this pivotal moment, the film promotes public awareness of the problem while encouraging new and innovative pathways to domestic drug policy reform.

The House I Live In is written and directed by Eugene Jarecki, with Jarecki and Melinda Shopsin as producers. Executive producers are David Alcaro, Joslyn Barnes, Sally Jo Fifer, Nick Fraser, Danny Glover, John Legend, Brad Pitt, and Russell Simmons. Music is by Robert Miller and the editor is Paul Frost. Directors of photography are Sam Cullman and Derek Hallquist.

To learn more about the film, visit the *The House I Live in* companion website (<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/house-i-live-in>), which features information about the film, including an interview with the filmmaker and links and resources pertaining to the film's subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.

Participants:

Michelle Alexander is a civil rights litigator and the author of *The New Jim Crow*.

Shanequa Benitez lives in Cromwell Towers, a housing project in Yonkers, New York.

The Honorable Mark Bennett is a U.S. District Court Judge in Sioux City, Iowa.

Charles Bowden is a journalist covering drug war violence on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Mike Carpenter is Chief of Security at Lexington Corrections Center in Lexington, Oklahoma.

Larry Cearly is the Marshall of Magdalena, New Mexico.

Eric Franklin is Warden of Lexington Corrections Center in Lexington, Oklahoma.

Maurice Haltiwanger was sentenced to 20 years for crack cocaine distribution.

Dr. Carl Hart is a tenured professor of clinical neuroscience at Columbia University.

Nannie Jeter lives in New Haven, Connecticut, where she first met the film's director when he was a child.

Anthony Johnson is a former, small-time drug dealer from Yonkers, New York.

Gabor Maté is a Hungarian-born physician specializing in the treatment of addiction.

Mark Mauer is director of the Sentencing Project and one of the country's leading criminal justice experts.

Richard Lawrence Miller is an American historian and expert on the history of drug laws.

Charles Ogletree is the Jesse Climenko Professor of Law at Harvard Law School and a former academic advisor to Barack and Michelle Obama.

Kevin Ott is currently serving life without parole on drug charges at the Lexington Correctional

Center in Lexington, Oklahoma.

Susan Randall has worked as a private investigator in Vermont for over a decade.

David Simon is creator of the acclaimed HBO series *The Wire*.

Julie Stewart is president and founder of Families Against Mandatory Minimums, a national organization working to change mandatory sentencing laws.

Dennis Whidbee is a former drug dealer, and the father of Anthony Johnson.

About the Filmmakers

Eugene Jarecki (Director/Writer/Producer) is an award-winning filmmaker, public thinker, and author. His recent film *Reagan*, which examines the life and legacy of the 40th president, received wide critical acclaim after premiering at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and on HBO for the occasion of Reagan's 100th birthday. In 2010, Jarecki worked alongside Morgan Spurlock and Alex Gibney as director of a documentary film inspired by the bestselling book *Freakonomics*. Earlier that year, he directed *Move Your Money*, a short online film encouraging Americans to move their money from "too big to fail" banks to well-rated community banks and credit unions. The film went viral, becoming an online sensation with over 7 million hits in just its first three weeks online. Jarecki's 2005 film, *Why We Fight*, winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and a Peabody Award, has been broadcast in over 40 countries and released theatrically in over 250 U.S. cities. In 2009, Simon & Schuster published Jarecki's acclaimed book, *The American Way of War: Guided Missiles, Misguided Men, and a Republic in Peril*, which explores how militarism disfigures America's foreign and defense policies as well as broader national priorities.

Jarecki's *The Trials of Henry Kissinger* was released in over 130 U.S. cities, won the 2002 Amnesty International Award, was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award, and has been broadcast in over 30 countries. In 2002, *Trials* was selected to launch BBC's prestigious digital channel BBC4 and the Sundance Channel's documentary division. In addition to his work in film, Jarecki is also a thinker on international affairs, and has appeared on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, *Charlie Rose*, *The Colbert Report*, FOX News, CNN, PBS NOW, BBC World, NPR, MTV, *The Tavis Smiley Show*, Current TV, Clear Channel, Pacifica Radio, and Sirius Radio, as well as having been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Financial Times*, the *Daily News*, the *Village Voice*, *The New Yorker*, the *New York Observer*, *Vanity Fair*, *GQ*, and *Newsday*.

Melinda Shopsin (Producer) began her production experience working at Radical Media in London. She served as production coordinator for *The Trials of Henry Kissinger* (2002) and as head of development for the 2005 film *Why We Fight* (winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and a Peabody Award). She co-produced *Reagan* (2011), as well as *Freakonomics* (2010), and currently serves as executive in charge of production at Charlotte Street Films.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the MacArthur Foundation. The senior series producer is Lois Vossen. More information can be found at www.pbs.org/independentlens. Join *Independent Lens* on Facebook at www.facebook.com/independentlens.

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