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***SCARRED JUSTICE: THE ORANGEBURG MASSACRE 1968***  
**REVEALS THE MOST UNKNOWN TRAGEDY IN THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS  
MOVEMENT**

*"This masterful film tells a story previously known by too few.*

*The film is powerful and will cast a brilliant light on events shamefully obscured for decades."—Julian  
Bond, Chair, NAACP*

*To Premiere on Public Television During Black History Month*

(San Francisco, CA)—On February 8, 1968, eight seconds of police gunfire left three young men dying and at least 28 wounded on the campus of South Carolina State College at Orangeburg. All of the police were white, all of the students African American. Almost all of the victims were shot from behind as they fled the gunfire that erupted without warning. The shootings were the culmination of four days of student protests over the desegregation of the city's only bowling alley, located just minutes from the campus. It was the first time ever that police opened fire on students on a U.S. campus, yet it remains an almost unknown event in the history of the American civil rights movement.

Two years later, the killings of four white students at Kent State University would rock the nation. Unlike the Kent State killings, the Orangeburg Massacre did not make national headlines nor has there ever been an official, public report about what occurred that night. In **SCARRED JUSTICE: The Orangeburg Massacre 1968**, filmmakers Judy Richardson and Bestor Cram present a chilling story about the abuse of power during a period of tumultuous social upheaval and the veil of secrecy that continues to shroud the Massacre and raises questions that are relevant in America's continuing struggle for racial justice today. **SCARRED JUSTICE: The Orangeburg Massacre 1968** will broadcast in February during Black History Month on public television stations nationwide (Check local listings.)

**SCARRED JUSTICE: The Orangeburg Massacre 1968** features interviews with the most important participants on both sides of the tragedy. These include Dr. Cleveland Sellers; Robert McNair, then governor; two officers present during the event; and student witnesses, some of these speak publicly for the first time about the Massacre. Also interviewed are Jack Bass and Jack Nelson, two prominent Southern white journalists and authors of *The Orangeburg Massacre*, a revealing investigation of the event. In 1968, Orangeburg was a typical Southern town still clinging to its Jim Crow traditions. The town was home to two black colleges — Claflin and S.C. State — and a majority black population.

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However, economic and political power remained exclusively in the hands of the white community. Minutes from campus sat an all-white bowling alley. After negotiations failed, demonstrations were mounted, during which police beat two female students. The incensed students then smashed the windows of white-owned businesses along the route back to campus. With scenes of the riots in Detroit and Newark fresh in their minds, Orangeburg's residents, white businessmen, and city officials feared urban terrorists were now in Orangeburg. The Governor sent in the state police and National Guard.

By late evening of February 8<sup>th</sup>, army tanks and over 100 heavily armed law enforcement officers had cordoned off the campus; 450 more were stationed downtown. Shortly after a fire truck extinguished the students' bonfire, police suddenly began firing. When the shooting was over, at least 28 students lay on State's campus with multiple buckshot wounds; three others had been killed. South Carolina claimed police had fired in self-defense, and most of the media believed the state's version. The U.S. Attorney General suspected an abuse of power and ordered an FBI investigation, which found no evidence of weapons on the State College campus.

An annual commemoration has been held at South Carolina State every year since the Massacre, attended by the families of the slain, the survivors, and many others, in order to ensure that the tragedy is not forgotten and to continue the demand for an investigation of the event. **SCARRED JUSTICE: The Orangeburg Massacre 1968** is a scrupulously researched documentary that investigates the continued cover-up of the tragedy and follows ongoing efforts to seek justice. With a resonance that carries us far beyond the tragedy itself, the film is a powerful antidote to historical amnesia.

### **About the Filmmaker**

**Judy Richardson (director/producer)** is a senior producer with Northern Light Productions in Boston, where she produced two History Channel documentaries (including the two-hour *Slave Catchers, Slave Resisters*) as well as various other films. Previously she worked on Blackside's Academy Award®-nominated, 14-hour PBS series *Eyes On The Prize* from its first incarnation in 1978 and was education director for the series. She was also co-producer of Blackside's PBS/American Experience biography, *Malcolm X: Make It Plain*. She brings a long-time involvement with social justice issues to her filmmaking: She was a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) staffer in the early 1960's for its projects in Mississippi (during 1964's "Freedom Summer"), Alabama, and Southwest Georgia; an office manager for Julian Bond (then SNCC's Communications Director; now chair of the NAACP) during his successful first campaign for the Georgia House of Representatives; founder of the largest African American bookstore in the late 1960's; and director of information for the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, as well as other work. She lectures nationally, and conducts professional development workshops for teachers, all focused on the civil rights movement and its relevance to the issues we face today. She has been published in several academic journals and is also one of six editors of *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Testimonies of Women in SNCC*. The anthology, to be published by University of Illinois Press in the fall, reveals the courageous civil rights activism of over 50 women in the southern freedom movement during the early 1960's.

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**Bestor Cram (director/producer)** has over 20 years of experience as a director, producer, and cinematographer. He founded Northern Light in 1982 and has built it into one of the premiere documentary production companies, producing works ranging from broadcast documentaries to historical, dramatic, and educational media. His most recent documentary, *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison*, premiered on PBS last year. His independent film, *Unfinished Symphony*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in the Documentary Competition in 2001 and has won top honors at film festivals around the world. His most recent independent project, *The Special*, about the song “The Orange Blossom Special,” premiered at the Nashville Independent Film Festival and was selected to screen at AFI’s SilverDocs Festival. As a cinematographer, Bestor’s credits include the theatrically released feature documentaries *After Innocence*, *Wrestling with Angels: Playwright Tony Kushner*, the Emmy®-nominated Discovery Channel special, *Mysteries of the Sea: Freak Waves*, the HBO special, *Mumia Abu-Jamal: A Case For Reasonable Doubt?*, the PBS/BBC series, *China in the Red*, the 1995 Documentary Academy Award®-winner, *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*, and the PBS *American Experience* on Eleanor Roosevelt. Bestor holds a B.A. in economics from Denison University, pursued graduate studies at the West Surrey College of Art and Design in Guildford, England, and has taught film at MIT and the Maine Film & Television Workshops. He is a Vietnam Veteran.

#### **About The Independent Television Service (ITVS)**

ITVS funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy® Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens*, which airs Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens, and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue, and provide for underserved audiences. Since ITVS’s inception in 1991, its programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing television audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. ITVS is funded by the CPB, a private corporation funded by the American people. For more information about ITVS, visit [itvs.org](http://itvs.org).

#### **About American Public Television (APT)**

American Public Television (APT) has been a leading distributor of high-quality, top-rated programming to America’s public television stations since 1961. In 2009, APT distributed 56 of the top 100 highest-rated public television titles. Among its 300 new program titles per year are prominent documentaries, dramatic series, how-to programs, children’s series and classic movies, including *Spain...on the road Again*, *Rick Steves' Europe*, *Worldfocus*, *Globe Trekker*, *Simply Ming*, *America's Test Kitchen From Cook's Illustrated*, *Lidia's Italy*, *P. Allen Smith's Garden Home*, *Murdoch Mysteries*, *Doc Martin*, *Rosemary and Thyme*, *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison*, *Liza's at the Palace....* and *John Denver: The Wildlife Concert*. APT also licenses programs internationally through its APT Worldwide service. In 2006, APT launched Create™, the TV channel featuring the best of public television's lifestyle programming. For more information about APT’s programs and services, visit [APTonline.org](http://APTonline.org).

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