

## SELECTED STORIES FROM THE MEDIA THAT MATTERS FILM FESTIVAL

**Iraq, Independently:** With the number of soldiers killed in Iraq now approaching 3000, filmmakers Gabe Cheifetz, Glenn Scott, and Shakademic, went undercover to find out where our next recruits might be coming from. Using hidden cameras and an irreverent interview style, their film **No Child** finds a scary connection between the No Child Left Behind Act and the presence of military recruiters on high school campuses. These same filmmakers won the Media That Matters Jury Award in 2005 with their rap exploration of partisan politics **Battleground Minnesota**. This year's festival includes another film on Iraq called **Night Visions** which looks at the changed life of a soldier just returned from the war.

**Brown v. Board of Education Revisited:** In the short documentary **A Girl Like Me** seventeen-year-old Kiri Davis set out to recreate Kenneth Clark's landmark "Doll Choice Experiment" – a test that was used as a key piece of evidence in Brown vs. Board of Education. The Doll Choice Experiment looked at how a group of African-American children assessed the relative "goodness" of white dolls and black dolls. During the course of Clark's study the children were asked a series of questions: Which doll is the good doll? Which doll is the bad doll? Which doll is the pretty doll? Which doll is the ugly doll? Nearly every African-American child in the study chose the white doll for all things positive, and identified the black doll with those which were negative. What's shocking is that a half century later, Kiri Davis' 2005 Doll Choice Experiment produced nearly the same results as Clark's 1951 study. With the move last month to try to create "racially identifiable" school districts in the city of Omaha, Brown v. Board of Education is back in the news. Davis's film forces us to look back at what led us to desegregate our schools in the first place. Also of note: Davis was mentored on this project by Shola Lynch, maker of the Sundance Festival selection **Chisholm '72**.

**The Next Michael Moores?:** Wal-Mart cooks the books and drives a mega-store into the heart of Haslett. The water company goes private and turns off the taps in Highland Park. The Asparagus capital of Michigan goes bust when free trade ruins crop prices. These are the true-life **Michigan stories** that three different teams of young filmmakers tell in three powerful documentaries in this year's Media That Matters Film Festival.

Following in the footsteps of Michael Moore whose Flint, Michigan portrait in **Roger and Me** helped propel social issue documentary into the mainstream, these young filmmakers have each chosen to focus on local struggles that have national implications. With Moore-ian humor the four young makers of **How Wal-Mart Came to Haslett** examine the behind the scenes actions of businessmen and local politicians, revealing the dubious circumstances under which a Wal-Mart appeared on a wetland in their small town. In **Water Warriors** documentarian Liz Miller brings a full on class war to public attention by showing what happens when the water in the African-American community of Highland Park becomes literally too expensive to drink. And in **Asparagus! (A Stalk-umentary)** Michigan natives Kirsten Kelly and Anne de Mare get at the root of why America's farms are failing in the decontrolled world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.

**Slip of the Tongue**: This year's Festival Jury Prize Winner, **Slip of the Tongue** was made when youth filmmaker Karen Lum was just 16 years old. In addition to directing and producing this film Lum also stars in it and seems clearly destined for a career in moviemaking. A strong statement against the small mindedness of racial stereotyping, **Slip of the Tongue** was overwhelmingly popular with the 2006 jury whose members included editors from Vogue and the New Yorker Magazine, bestselling author Steven Johnson, and many others from the filmmaking and education community. **Slip of the Tongue** is being recognized with an award from **Adobe Systems**, which is funding a major international youth media initiative in the coming year.

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