

Sample Press Releases and Emails Documentary Film Series Tool Kit

Oak Park Coalition for Truth and Justice, www.opctj.org

Here are samples of press release emails we have used. Press releases need to be short and clear and include the all the necessary information: film title, location, date & time, sponsoring organization(s) and contact info.

Most local papers will have a calendar of local events and will be happy to post your announcement. Other organizations or congregations may also have calendars that will post the announcement for some or all of the documentaries.

The paper will want you to have the press release in final form and thoroughly proofed.

Be sure and send it well in advance. Know the cut-off date for submission. Some papers may only be willing to list the event one time.

It is a good idea to include your phone number and email (if dropping off or sending by mail) so the paper can contact you if necessary. Make the email as easy for the contact to recognize and use as possible.

Sample Email Press Releases

To: (Name of contact)
Oak Leaves

From: (Your name)
(Name or abbreviation of your group)
Film Series

Please include the following item in the *Oak Leaves* the weeks of May 1 and May 7:

There will be a free showing of the award-winning documentary *Books Not Bars*, which documents the youth-led movement pushing for community-Based juvenile justice and a focus on education, and on fighting the Upsurge in the growth of the prison industry, at 2:00 pm Saturday, May 13, 2006 at the Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake Street, Oak Park. The film is part of a series co-sponsored by the Oak Park Coalition for Truth and Justice and the Oak Park Public Library. A panel discussion with local Youth and civil law attorney Conni Miller will follow. For more information See www.opctj.org or call 708/668-7945.

Thanks,
(Your name)
(Your phone number)

Other Sample Press Releases:

Please include the following item in the *Oak Leaves* the weeks of October 16 and October 23:

There will be a free showing of the documentary *The Corporation*, winner of 23 international film awards, at 2:00 pm, Sunday, October 30 at the Oak Park Main Library, 834 Lake Street, Oak Park. The film is the first in a series co-sponsored by the Oak Park Coalition for Peace & Justice and the Oak Park Public Library. For more information, see www.opctj.org or call 708/668-7945.

Please include the following item in the Landmark/Wednesday Journal issues the weeks of November 14 and the week of November 21, 2005:

There will be a free showing of the blockbuster documentary *Walmart: the High Cost of Low Price* at 2:00 pm, Sunday November 27, 2005 at the Oak Park Main Library, 834 Lake Street, Oak Park. The film, currently premiering, is by Robert Greenwald, producer of *Outfoxed*. It is the second in a series sponsored by the Oak Park Coalition for Truth & Justice and the Oak Park Public Library. For more information, see www.opctj.org Or call 708/668-7945.

Please include the following item in the Wednesday Journal the weeks of January 15 and January 22:

There will be a free showing of two highly informative documentaries, *Life & Debt* and *Behind the Labels: Garment Workers on U.S. Saipan*, at 2:00 pm On Saturday, January 28, 2006 at the Oak Park Main Library, 834 Lake Street, Oak Park. The films are the 3rd part of a series co-sponsored by the Oak Park Coalition for Truth & Justice and the Oak Park Public Library. For more information, see www.opctj.org or call 708/668-7945.

Could you place the following item in the Peace Calendar for the weeks of February 12 and February 19:

There will be a free showing of the award-winning documentary, *A Long Night's Journey into Day: South Africa's Search for Truth and Reconciliation*, at 2:00 pm February 25, 2006 at the Oak Park Main Library, 834 Lake Street, Oak Park. The film is the 4th in a series co-sponsored by the Oak Park Coalition for Truth & Justice and the Oak Park Public Library. Q & A will follow. For more information, see www.opctj.org or call 708/668-7945.

I was given your name by _____. We are co-chairs of the film series co-sponsored by the Oak Park Coalition for truth & Justice and the Oak Park Public Library.

Could you forward information about the upcoming Saturday, March 25 showing of *Justice and the Generals* to the churches in the Community of Congregations? The documentary itself is very

powerful and, as one of our panelists actually appears in the film, many people will probably be especially interested in attending.

There will be a free showing of the documentary *Justice and the Generals*, Which documents the torture of U.S. nuns and laypersons and El Salvadorans And the subsequent lawsuit against those considered responsible, at 2:00 pm Saturday, March 25, 2006 at the Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake Street, Oak Park. The film is the 5th in a series co-sponsored by the Oak Park Coalition for Truth & Justice and the Oak Park Public Library. A panel Presentation will follow, featuring Neris Gonzales, who appears in the film, Jorge Montes, a student at the time of his encounter, and Fr. Bill Donnelly, A Maryknoll father with over 25 years experience with Central America. For More information, see www.opctj.org or call 708/668-7945.

Could you place the following item in the Peace Calendar for the weeks of April 9, 16 and 23, 2006:

There will be a free showing of the documentary *Votergate: Expose of Election Fraud in the USA*, which uncovers the truth about the new Computer voting systems and how they allow a few powerful Corporations to record our votes in secret, at 2:00 pm, Saturday April 29, 2006 at the Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake Street, Oak Park. The film is the 6th in a series co-sponsored by the Oak Park Coalition for Truth & Justice and the Oak Park Public Library. A talk by syndicated columnist and frequent Chicago Tribune contributor Bob Koehler will follow. Q & A. For more information, see www.opctj.org Or call 708/668-7945.

Could you place the following item in the Peace Calendar for the weeks of June 11 and June 18, 2006?:

There will be a free showing of the documentary *The End of Suburbia*, which explores the future crisis of our suburban lifestyle as global demand for fossil fuels begins to outstrip supply, 2:00 pm Sunday, June 25th at the Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake Street, Oak Park. The film is part of a series Co-sponsored by the Oak Park Coalition for Truth and Justice and the Oak Park Public Library. For more information see www.opctj.org or call 708/668-7945.

Could you place the following item in the Peace Calendar for the month of July?

There will be a free showing of the documentary *The Big Buy: Tom DeLay's Stolen Congress*, which documents how American democracy can be Hijacked by relentless ambition and corporate millions, at 2:00 pm Sunday, July 30, 2006 at the Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake Street, Oak Park. The film is part of a series co-sponsored by the Oak Park Coalition for Truth & Justice and the Oak Park Public Library. Open discussion will Follow. For more information, see www.opctj.org or call 708/668-7945.

Text about 10 films for use in publicity Documentary Film Series Toolkit

Oak Park Coalition for Truth and Justice, www.opctj.org

OutFoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism

- Why is it that 72% of Republican voters believe, even today, that WMD have been found in Iraq?
- Why is it that 75% of Republican voters believe, despite the evidence, that Saddam and Osama were allies?
- Why do the American people have such a radically different view of their government's policies than the view held by people overseas?
- Can we learn how to understand the news media and avoid manipulation?
Get smart about media!

OK, so we're all bummed out about the future of democracy in the USA. But you know the cliché "Don't mourn, organize!" One of the most important things progressives have to do now is take back the media. To do that, we must understand exactly how the media today is producing the kind of ignorance and misunderstanding that leads to election results like this past week's. Inform yourself! Understand how the bad guys manipulate what we "know." Democracy can only flourish when citizens know the truth about events. See exactly how the corporate media manipulates the news. Arm yourself with the tools you need to understand how to view media correctly.

<http://www.outfoxed.org>

77 minutes

The Corporation

Winner of 23 international film awards

"Visually arresting and very funny." –L.A. Weekly

"One of the must-see documentaries of the new century." –Seattle Times

"A cogent, compelling, powerful argument, and also... a terrific movie." –Premiere Magazine

One hundred and fifty years ago, the corporation was a relatively insignificant entity. Today, it is a vivid, dramatic and pervasive presence in all our lives. Like the Church, the Monarchy and the Communist Party in other times and places, the Corporation is today's dominant institution. This film features illuminating interviews with Noam Chomsky, Michael Moore, Howard Zinn and many others. Taking its legal status as a "person" to its logical conclusion, the film puts the corporation on the psychiatrist's couch to ask "What kind of person is it?" Provoking, witty, sweepingly informative, The Corporation includes forty interviews with corporate insiders and critics plus true confessions, case studies and strategies for change.

<http://www.thecorporation.com>

145 minutes

Walmart: The High Cost of Low Price

Blockbuster exposé of this corporate behemoth.

“Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price” is an engrossing, muckraking documentary about the retail giant that’s been called “the world’s largest, richest and probably meanest corporation.” But if you’re expecting an angry diatribe, you’re going to be disappointed.

— Kenneth Turan, Los Angeles Times

Have you ever wondered why Wal-Mart spends so much money trying to convince you it cares about your family, your community, and even its own employees? What is it hiding?

“Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price” takes you behind the glitz and into the real lives of workers and their families, business owners and their communities, in an extraordinary journey that will challenge the way you think, feel... and shop.

Robert Greenwald, producer of “Uncovered: The War in Iraq” and “OutFoxed” brings us a hard look at the social cost of squeezing out ever lower prices. Do you wonder why Wal Mart has launched a full scale “Swift Boat” attack on this film? Come see for yourself!

www.walmartmovie.com 95 minutes

Life & Debt: How globalization made Jamaica poorer

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Long Night’s Journey Into Day:
South Africa’s Search for Truth and Reconciliation

This film provides a dramatic inside look at one of the most innovative and ambitious attempts at dialogue and healing in human history – South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

“A beautiful and often disturbing reflection on the nature of truth and forgiveness.” –The New York Times

“This film raises fully as many questions as it answers. This makes it a thoughtful, provocative, and deeply moving film.” –Alice Walker

This documentary takes you inside post-apartheid South Africa to give you an intimate look at a country’s attempts to heal itself with truth as the balm. Long Night’s Journey Into Day reveals a South Africa trying to forge a lasting peace after 40 years of government by the most notorious system of racial segregation since Nazi Germany. The documentary studies South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), set up by the post-apartheid, democratic government to consider amnesty for perpetrators of crimes committed under apartheid’s reign. In 2000 the film won the Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary. The directors are award-winning Bay area filmmakers Frances Reid and Deborah Hoffmann.

www.irisfilms.org/longnight/ 94 minutes

Justice and the Generals: Murder and humans rights in El Salvador

At a time of civil war in El Salvador — when 75,000 people were disappeared or killed — four American churchwomen were abducted, raped, and murdered. Many Salvadorans were tortured,

and some lived to tell their tales. Who was responsible for such atrocities? In separate but related cases, two Salvadoran generals face trial in American civil court. "Justice and the Generals" investigates these human-rights cases.

This film offers unique insight into international human rights law. The film maps the confusion, barbarism, and tragic heart of a conflict whose wounds two decades later are far from healed. In late 1980 in El Salvadore three Catholic nuns and a lay missionary were abducted, raped, and murdered. Five Salvadoran National Guardsmen were convicted but the victims' families believed the orders came from high up. They had enough circumstantial evidence to take two Salvadoran generals living in the USA to trial.

www.pbs.org/wnet/justice/ 90 minutes

VoterGate: Exposé of Election Fraud in the USA

This film uncovers the truth about new computer voting systems, which allow a few powerful corporations to record our votes in secret. View stunning evidence of serious problems revealed by whistle blowers and the inspiring individuals who are working now to take back our democracy. Although the original film came out in 2004, it is still highly relevant.

This is a unique non-partisan issue, a new revolution for American democracy, that can wake up and unite The People, whether they're Democrats or Republicans, Libertarians, Greens, or Independents — who believe Democracy means that every vote should count. The producers of VoterGate have always seen the problems with electronic voting as the latest example of an election system that needs a full return to transparency and accountability.

www.votergate.tv 30 minutes

Books Not Bars: Alternatives for Youth Campaign

A film about a youth-led campaign against violence, abuse and neglect in California's juvenile prisons

The "Alternatives for Youth" Campaign aims to close the California Youth Authority (CYA)'s abusive and costly youth prisons and replace them with rehabilitation centers and community-based programs. The CYA is the most abusive – and largest – youth prison system in the nation. At a cost of 400 million dollars per year, California youth experience outrageous levels of violence, abuse, and neglect. These young people leave CYA damaged and unprepared — 75 percent are rearrested within three years after CYA.

Youth in trouble need counselors, teachers, and specialists, not dangerous prisons run by prison guards. Other states have made the change — and seen a drop in both recidivism and cost. The film tells the story of a campaign lead by youth to educate California's politicians and public about wasting money on a system that damages youth and the urgent necessity to start helping youth out. It's the only way to save young people's lives and build true community safety.

<http://ellabakercenter.org/page.php?pageid=152> 20 minutes

The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream

Since World War II North Americans have invested much of their newfound wealth in suburbia. It has promised a sense of space, affordability, family life and upward mobility. As the population of suburban sprawl has exploded in the past 50 years, so too has the suburban way of life become embedded in the American consciousness. Suburbia, and all it promises, has become the American Dream.

But as we enter the 21st century, serious questions are beginning to emerge about the sustainability of this way of life. With brutal honesty and a touch of irony, this film explores the suburban American way of life and its prospects as the planet approaches a critical era, as global demand for fossil fuels begins to outstrip supply.

World Oil Peak and the inevitable decline of fossil fuels are upon us now, some scientists and policy makers argue in this documentary. The consequences of inaction in the face of this global crisis are enormous. As energy prices skyrocket in the coming years, how will the populations of suburbia react to the collapse of their dream? Are today's suburbs destined to become the slums of tomorrow? And what can be done now, individually and collectively, to avoid the crisis?

www.endofsuburbia.com 78 minutes

The Big Buy: Tom DeLay's Stolen Congress

"By the time we finish this poker game, there may not be a federal government left! Which would suit me just fine." —Tom DeLay, 1994

The Big Buy is a feature length documentary that connects the dots between big money and big government. It's not a pretty picture. In a stunning 1994 interview, shortly after the now infamous Republican revolution, Tom DeLay sat down and laid out his vision for America: to destroy the Department of Education, HUD, OSHA, the NEH, the NEA, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy. His self-stated goal was to "completely redesign government." The Big Buy: Tom DeLay's Stolen Congress is the story of how he did just that. It's the story of one of the most blatant power grabs in American history, and how a District Attorney in Texas turned out to be the biggest threat to the national DeLay Machine. The film is a warning about how easy it is for American democracy to be hijacked by a combination of relentless ambition and corporate millions. It makes the case that DeLay built a "custom-made Congress" that is still providing votes for his agenda.

www.tomdelaymovie.com 90 minutes