

Never Been A Time: Outreach, Engagement and Impact

Documentary film/video projects have increasingly become core elements of social issue campaigns. Telling deep human stories about complex societal problems, they serve as catalysts for organizing, network-building and civic action. We want the documentary video *Never Been A Time* to be more than an independent artifact, but a component of a strategic campaign with specific goals for civic action.

The intention of film's campaign is to start and sustain the conversation about the non-representation of critical historical events in the history books of American curriculums. This invisibility or the non-existence of African Americans, Indigenous Americans, and/or the plight of underrepresented Americans creates alienation and a crisis in confidence for Youth.

What is upsetting the country is a sense of its own identity. If, for example, one managed to change the curriculum in all the schools so that Negroes learned more about themselves and their real contributions to this culture, you would be liberating not only Negroes, you'd be liberating white people who know nothing about their own history.... All this means that there are in this country tremendous reservoirs of bitterness which have never been able to find an outlet, but may find an outlet soon.

A Talk to Teachers, James, Baldwin (1963)

An inclusive curriculum could inspire student academic success and provide opportunities to develop critical thinking skills. Full disclosure of the conflicts, debates and setbacks that might reflect badly upon our national character and/or where our nation overcame challenges would be an inclusive American history. History curriculum could be springboards to ask questions that have direct relevance to our present society. Providing students with addendums to the facts through songs, poems, diaries, quotes from speeches and letters; history becomes an authentic collective ownership of knowledge. Changing the worldview of today's Youth in this way can possibly change the trajectory of our urban core and the nature of American citizenship.

Goals:

- To research and design a multiplatform strategic outreach campaign for the video documentary *Never Been A Time*. A campaign that includes the film being screened in traditional broadcast and/or film festival settings, as well as venues designed to engage the public and mobilize advocates.
- To prepare to apply for the 'Bertha BRITDOC: Connect Fund', a grant that will supply funding and mentorship for our outreach campaign. Their mission is to enable films to have positive social impact.
- Test various modes of non-traditional forms of film/video distribution. Possibilities include: educational curriculum packs, social media exploits, and multiple re-versioning of the video to be used on various platforms.
- This research will work in tandem with the production of the making of the video, *Never Been A Time*.

Approximately 20-miles and 100-years, separate the 1917 East St. Louis race riot, one of the worse in American history, and the 2014 nation-wide racial uprisings sparked in Ferguson, Missouri. The video documentary, *Never Been A Time* uncovers the common

links between these moments in history. A variety of ‘voices’ will tell the story of racial hatred, segregation and violence that has plagued our region for over one-hundred years: decedents of the 1917 East St. Louis Race Riot, re-enactments of the first-hand witness testimony from US Congressional Hearings, authors & historians, sociologists and poets & spoken word artists.

Behind the narrative of racial violence in *Never Been A Time* lies the assertion that rioting is status quo. We track incident after incident across the country from 1917 to 1960 to see whites attacking and killing blacks. That shifts with the invention of the TV, as in homes across America, everyone could see agitated confrontations, beatings and fire hoses sprayed on non-violent student activists. With the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. riots then became associated with black people as the aggressors. In 2016, we typically categorize riots as African-Americans looting stores, starting fires and running on a rampage - angry about a transgression to the dignity of the collective community. This has become an inappropriately normalized mindset.

In 2014, with the advent of cellphone video and social media, America is once again confronting the ‘similarities’ between repeated ‘random’ acts of violence toward blacks equivalent to lynching during the Jim Crow Era. *Never Been A Time* spotlights this cultural moment to create an awareness of sustained violence towards African Americans with the intention to facilitate positive social impact. Video/film in general is such a powerful impact medium – because it breeds empathy and because films can bring a new energy to an issue.

“Slavery wasn’t a crisis for British and American elites until abolitionism turned it into one. Racial discrimination wasn’t a crisis until the civil rights movement turned it into one. Sex discrimination wasn’t a crisis until feminism turned it into one. Apartheid wasn’t a crisis until the anti-apartheid movement turned it into one”

Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*

The research we are proposing starts with developing a strategic plan to figure out how the film’s outreach campaign can have impact. With the specified guidance from the ‘Bertha BRITDOC: Connect Fund’, we will we plan to make a ‘causal chain’ from the film to an intended impact vision. We will use the messages in the film to identify specific impact goals.

The questions we will ask to create our strategic plan are: What is the film’s primary message and what impact goal does this campaign desire? What are the other messages and appropriate impact goals? What audiences can we speak to and mobilize through the film or the campaign around it? What platforms do we use beyond the video? How do we maximize social media to make change? Are we only speaking to the choir? How do we get beyond the choir? Who can make this happen? What kind of impact could this be? What do we need to do with the film or within the film to deliver on our impact goals? How do we assess our impact? What are our impact indicators?

Team Members: Denise Ward-Brown, Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts and Karla Scott, Saint Louis University. **Invited participant:** Dennis Riggs, HEC-TV.

Karla Scott, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor, Department of Communication and the Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion at Saint Louis University. With her

certification in Cross Cultural Dialogue Facilitation and expertise teaching communication across racial divisions, we intend to make this campaign for curriculum inclusion as inclusive as possible. Ms. Scott was born and raised in East St Louis and is a member of the ‘1917 Centennial Commission: East ST Louis Race Riot’ that is sponsoring a week of events that will commemorate and honor the African Americans who perished and suffered.

Dennis Riggs, HEC-TV Director and Executive Director of the St. Louis County Commission for Educational Media, has pledged to air *Never Been A Time* to HEC-TV’s 622,000 cable TV subscribers (with a potential 3-million viewers) and to assist in creating curricular materials for the K-12 schools. As we work with HEC-TV, we can be confident that our educational outreach has begun.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baldwin, J., “A Talk to Teachers”, Lecture delivered October 16, 1963, as “The Negro Child – His Self-Image”; originally published in *The Saturday Review*, December 21, 1963, reprinted in *The Price of the Ticket, Collected Non-Fiction 1948-1985*, Saint Martins, 1985.

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Holmes, T, Blackmore, E., Hawkins, R., Wakefield, T., Ph.D., *Common Cause Handbook*, Public Interest Research Centre, United Kingdom, 2011.

Klein, N., *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, Simon & Schuster, NY, NY, 2014.

BUDGET

Services		
Book Designer		\$500
Printing for prototypes		\$250
Website	One-year subscription	\$100
Web designer		\$1,800
Social Media Designer	Twitter, Facebook, etc.	\$2,500
Books		
"The Light of Truth: Writings of an Anti-Lynching Crusader," by Ida B. Wells (Author), Bay & Gates (Editors)	2 copies	\$30
"Sundown Towns" by James Loewen	1 copy	\$20
"Made in USA: East St. Louis" by Andrew Theising	2 copies	\$50
Salary		
Denise Ward-Brown	Principal investigator	\$1,500
Karla Scott		\$1,500
TOTAL		\$8,250

Ferguson Academic Seed Fund
Grant Application Project Member & Invited Scholar Bio Sketch Form

Please complete an electronic copy of this for each member of your project team and for each invited scholar. You will be required to upload completed bio sketch forms on the grant application page. You may collate forms into a single document for ease of submission.

Invited Scholar: Team Member: Both:

Team Member count: 1.00 of 2.00

TITLE: Associate Professor

FIRST NAME: Denise

LAST NAME: Ward-Brown

E-MAIL ADDRESS: Ward-Brown@wustl.edu

WEBPAGE: <http://www.jimcrowtobarackobama.com/>

AFFILIATE INSTITUTION (S):

Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, Washington University in St. Louis

SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH (200 WORDS OR LESS):

Denise Ward-Brown is an Associate Professor of Art at the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, WUSTL. In 2015, she received three grants: 1] an 'Artists Fellowship' from The Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis (RAC). 2] A 'Faculty Creative Activity Research Grant' for travel to the 2015 Creative Time Summit In Venice, Italy. Ms. Ward-Brown designed a new course entitled "Tale of Two Cities: Documenting Our Divides" with the funds from 3] 'The Divided City Initiative'. This faculty-collaborative grant allowed students to film social justice organizations throughout St. Louis.

Ms. Ward-Brown received a BFA from Tyler School of Art, Temple University and an MFA, from Howard University. Ward-Brown began making documentary videos in West Africa as a Fulbright Senior Scholar in 1997-98. Her first video subjects include numerous traditional celebrations in Ghana for which she received the Second-Place Documentary: Abuja International Film Festival, Nigeria (2004) and the 'Project Series '03-'04 Grant': The Contemporary Art Museum Saint Louis (2003). Ward-Brown received production grants for her award-winning video Jim Crow to Barack Obama: a CALOP grant, a Kresge Arts in St. Louis Grant and a Faculty Research Grant. In 2013, she received an 'Artists Support Grant' from RAC.

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Invited Scholar: Team Member: Both:

Team Member count: 2.00 of 2.00

TITLE: Associate Professor, Department of Communication and the Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion

FIRST NAME: Karla

LAST NAME: Scott

E-MAIL ADDRESS: scottkd@slu.edu

WEBPAGE:

AFFILIATE INSTITUTION (S):

Saint Louis University

SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH (200 WORDS OR LESS):

Karla D. Scott, Ph.D. is a native of East St. Louis, Illinois and earned her B.A. in Communication from Saint Louis University in the department where she is now an Associate Professor. After completing her undergraduate studies at SLU, she worked several years in the journalism and public relations fields before returning to graduate school and earning a Ph.D. with a focus on intercultural communication from the University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign. Dr. Scott joined the SLU communication faculty in 1994 and also holds an appointment as Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion in the College of Arts and Sciences. She was the inaugural recipient of the Donald G. Brennan Humanitarian Award presented in 2013 for her work for diversity and inclusion at Saint Louis University and in that same year also received the Ernest Calloway Excellence in Teaching Award presented by the Society of African American Studies for her diversity and inclusion work in the classroom and curriculum. She is a member of the first cohort of the Stirfry Seminars Mindful Facilitation Certificate Program, completing the training and graduating in October 2015.

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Invited Scholar: _____ Team Member: _____ Both: _____

Team Member count: _____ of _____

TITLE: HEC-TV Director and Executive Director of the St. Louis County Commission for Educational Media

FIRST NAME: Dennis

LAST NAME: Riggs

E-MAIL ADDRESS: director@hectv.org

WEBPAGE: http://hectv.org

AFFILIATE INSTITUTION (S):

HEC-TV and St. Louis County Commission for Educational Media

SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH (200 WORDS OR LESS):

HEC-TV Director, and Executive Director of the St. Louis County Commission for Educational Media, Dennis Riggs, a 50-year veteran of the broadcast industry has been recognized with 46 Emmy awards from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, 15 International Aurora Awards, and 45 National Telly awards, in addition to numerous state and local award honors.

Mr. Riggs' career has taken him from local television stations to national networks and international syndication. His work has been featured locally on KMOX-TV, KTVI, KETC, and nationally on ABC, CBS, PBS and internationally in Canada, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Under his leadership, HEC-TV has received the "Station Excellence" Emmy Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences a record setting three times and has become the leading producer of educational, arts, and cultural programming in the St. Louis metropolitan area. The exclusive interactive broadcast/webcast HEC-TV Live! is a world leader in creating distance learning opportunities.

HEC-TV and the Cable Commission are creating a new national media industry model for distance learning and civic engagement.

Mr. Riggs also serves on many civic, educational, social, and development boards and commissions.

Without social media, social, ethical, environmental and political ills would have minimal visibility. Increased visibility of issues has shifted the balance of power from the hands of a few to the masses. The flipside: Social media is slowly killing real activism and replacing it with "slacktivism". While social media activism brings an increased awareness about societal issues, questions remain as to whether this awareness is translating into real change. Interestingly, although the use of social sharing has become the norm rather than the exception in business, some companies, after experiencing first-hand some negative effects of social media, have decided to go against the grain and remove the social sharing buttons from their websites.