

SOLITARY

AN ORIGINAL WEB SERIES

A THINK TEN MEDIA GROUP PRODUCTION

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SYNOPSIS

SOLITARY is a raw and authentic prison drama centered on Marcus Edwards, a man who has spent more than 20 years in solitary confinement. Moved by Marcus's story, Elsa, a young human rights lawyer looking to make a name for herself in her field, offers to represent him in his effort to be released from the SHU (Special Housing Unit) and serve out the remainder of his sentence among the general prison population.

As Marcus recounts his grueling experiences in solitary, Elsa begins to wonder if she is in over her head. Graphic tales of self-mutilation, frightful hallucinations, and extreme mental anguish overwhelm her.

Through vivid flashbacks, the harsh realities of solitary confinement and the surprising reasons individuals are placed in it will be brought to the forefront. As audience members follow Elsa on her journey to get to know Marcus and to fight for his release from solitary confinement, they will come to understand why the United Nations calls long-term solitary confinement torture. The mental, physical, and emotional toll it has taken on Marcus dominates the show.

Every aspect of ***SOLITARY*** will be based on real incidents. Only by humanizing Marcus, and the tens of thousands he represents, can we create empathy for him. As audience members empathize with Marcus, their understanding of solitary confinement will increase, particularly regarding its cruelty and ineffectiveness. Increased understanding is critical if we are to end the practice of long-term solitary confinement.

SOLITARY FAQ*

Who is in solitary confinement?

- More than 80,000 people are locked in solitary confinement or similar forms of extreme isolation on any given day in the United States. Many states and the federal government refuse to provide accurate information about who, how many, and why prisoners are in solitary confinement.
- They are sent to solitary solely on the word of prison officials, without the benefit of a judge or jury.
- Between 30% and 50% of them suffer from mental illness.
- The vast majority are not in isolation because of a violent offense.
- Many are in isolation because they: used profanity; did not stand for “count”; tested positive for marijuana use; have the “wrong” tattoos, posters and/or reading materials; have reported prison abuse; are gay, transgender, Muslim, Rastafarian—or otherwise different from their peers.

Are children held in solitary confinement?

- Yes, children are also held in solitary confinement, often “for their own protection.”
- Children have even been held in isolation while awaiting trial, while still presumed innocent by law.
- Suicide rates are 19 times higher among children held in isolation. Nationwide over half of all suicides for youth in juvenile facilities occur in isolation cells. Over 60% of these suicides are of children who spent time in solitary confinement prior to killing themselves.
- The effect on these juveniles is often extreme. For example, one 17-year-old “twice attempted to kill himself by biting through his wrist to puncture a vein.”

What does solitary confinement mean?

- People in solitary live in a small cell, about the size of a parking space, in complete isolation for 23 out of 24 hours each day.
- For many individuals in solitary, their only “recreation” or opportunity to exercise is one hour a few times a week by themselves in a bare cell or cage, sometimes called a “dog run.”
- Meals in solitary are delivered through a slot in the door and eaten alone in the same small cell where people sleep and use the bathroom.
- Individuals in solitary confinement typically get showers only two or three times a week for a few minutes.
- People are almost always shackled when they move from the cell to the “dog run” or to the shower.
- Those held in solitary are often not allowed to make phone calls or visit with their families. Some are also denied reading materials, art supplies, family photographs, and other personal items.



*Sources cited include Solitary Watch, ACLU, Mother Jones, and Justice Fellowship.

SOLITARY FAQ*

How long do most prisoners spend in solitary confinement?

- Average terms in solitary vary from state to state.
- In California, the average is 6.8 years; numerous individuals have been locked in solitary for more than 20 years.
- In New York, individuals have spent 5 years or more in solitary for combinations of nonviolent offenses that include things as minor as refusing food or having too many postage stamps.
- In Louisiana, a man convicted of killing a prison guard has been in solitary for 42 years; he is now 68 years old.

How does solitary confinement affect prisoners?

- People held in solitary often experience intense hallucinations, severe depression, paranoia, panic attacks, extreme anxiety, anger and nervousness, among other adverse affects.
- Self-mutilation is common among prisoners in solitary confinement.
- In many states, over half of all suicides occur in isolation.
- Once released, many survivors of solitary are unable adjust to the outside world.

Why is solitary used and is it effective?

- Solitary is said to be used to reduce violence among the general prison population. It has never been shown to be effective in achieving this result.
- The rate of violent incidents in California prisons is nearly 20% higher now than it was when Pelican Bay, a notorious supermax prison, opened in 1989.
- The state of Mississippi reduced the number of people it holds in solitary and saw violence within its prisons drop significantly.
- Releasing people directly from solitary confinement to the outside world has been shown to significantly increase recidivism.
- For the small number of genuinely violent people who need to be separated from the general population, more humane alternatives exist; these include programming and treatment for underlying problems, and have been practiced successfully in other Western countries.

What is the monetary cost of solitary confinement?

- In some states, the average cost of holding someone in an all-solitary supermax prison for a year is \$75,000--three times the cost of holding them in the general population.
- According to one calculation, the total additional cost of holding people in solitary confinement in California, rather than in the general population, comes to \$175 million annually.



*Sources cited include Solitary Watch, ACLU, Mother Jones, and Justice Fellowship.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS*

TESTIMONIALS FROM PRISONERS IN SOLITARY

“I am filled with the sensation of drowning each and every day.”

“I was housed next to...guys who have eaten and drank their own body waste and who have thrown their own body waste in the cells that I and others were housed in.”

“I was not only isolated, but also disoriented...I wasn't allowed to have a wristwatch or clock...the bright, artificial lights remained on in the cell constantly, increasing my disorientation and making it difficult to sleep. Not only were they constantly illuminated, but those lights buzzed incessantly. The buzzing noise was maddening, as there often were no other sounds at all. This may sound like a small thing, but it was my entire world.”

“Living behind these walls is a nightmare that never goes away. Many prisoners behind these walls are going crazy in record numbers, and are becoming more violent than they have ever been in their lives.”

***Sources cited include Solitary Watch, ACLU, Mother Jones, and Justice Fellowship.**

WHY THIS APPROACH?

The Pelican Bay Prison Hunger Strikes brought the harsh realities of solitary confinement to our attention at Think Ten Media Group. As we learned more about solitary confinement, the increased privatization of prisons and corruption in the criminal justice system, we knew we had to act.

As filmmakers and film lovers, we know the power of the media to create change. We've seen it. Our partner, Dr. Arvind Singhal and his colleagues at the University of Texas-El Paso, have studied it. Many renowned international organizations recognize the value of narrative storytelling to change behaviors and engage audiences to act.

As a company committed to creating media that fosters change, we feel that it is not only our passion to tell the stories of the thousands of individuals in solitary confinement and the hundreds of thousands of family members affected by their isolation, but that it is actually our responsibility to do so.

We've spoken with key leaders in the U.S. seeking to end solitary confinement, such as the ACLU, Solitary Watch, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture and many others. Through these discussions, we've been told time and again that a narrative film/video project about this issue is invaluable and that this media project can play a key role in bringing an end to solitary confinement. The central goal of the web series is to reach the masses and illuminate this ineffective and inhumane practice.

Through the success of our micro-budget narrative film, SMUGGLED, we've demonstrated that we can create empathy for characters and can engage viewers in thoughtful dialogue around hotly-debated issues. We've shifted thought and have watched audience members gain a new understanding of immigration, specifically helping them see the real people affected by policy.

We know we can do the same thing with solitary confinement, but on an even wider scale. **By releasing the show as a Youtube series we will be able to reach a global audience, and with the support of our partners, our initial launch should reach more than 250,000 people.** Youtube has become an invaluable source for media consumption, and it reaches more U.S. adults aged 18-34 than any cable network. In 2010, Youtube reported that EVERY DAY it had "nearly double the prime-time audience of all three major U.S. television networks combined." Since then, YouTube's daily audience has doubled. By having the show free and accessible to all on Youtube, we can reach the widest audience possible.

Too many have already suffered too much. The time for change is now.

MEET THE TEAM

Jonathan Sanger

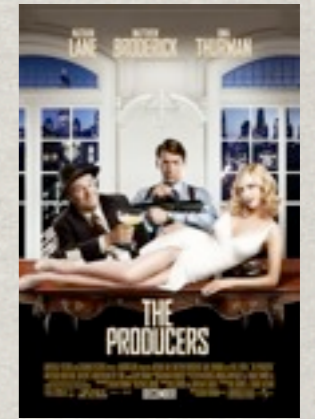
Executive Producer



Jonathan's films have received a total of 3 Academy Awards, 21 Academy Award nominations, the British Academy Award and the French Cesar (their equivalent).

In 1978, Jonathan made his solo debut as a producer by interesting Mel Brooks' new production company, Brooksfilm, Ltd., in a small film to be directed by David Lynch in England. **THE ELEPHANT MAN**, an emotionally wrenching story photographed in black and white and starring John Hurt and Anthony Hopkins, made a strong impact on critics and audiences alike, and was rewarded with eight Academy Award nominations in 1980 including Best Picture, as well as the British Academy Award for Best Motion Picture and the French Cesar Award. Jonathan Sanger's next project as producer was the equally passionate story of actress Frances Farmer. **FRANCES**, starring Jessica Lange, Kim Stanley and Sam Shepard, resulted in two Oscar nominations, for Lange as Best Actress and Stanley as Best Supporting Actress.

In 1985, he made his directorial debut with **CODE NAME: EMERALD**, a World War II spy drama filmed in Paris for NBC's feature film division starring Ed Harris, Max Von Sydow and Eric Stoltz. That same year, Jonathan Sanger produced **THE DOCTORS AND THE DEVILS**, a 20th Century Fox film starring Jonathan Price, Timothy Dalton and Twiggy. In 1986, he executive produced **FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATOR** for Walt Disney Productions. The film received the Best Picture Award from the Academy of Family Films and Television.



In 1987, Sanger formed Chanticleer Films and created The Discovery Program. This non-profit program gave industry professionals opportunities to cross over into directing. Forty-two short films were made, including the Academy Award winning and internationally acclaimed **RAY'S MALE HETEROSEXUAL DANCE HALL** and the 1992 Academy Award winner, **SESSION MAN**.

Additionally, Chanticleer received seven more Academy Award nominations for the program, and all of the Discovery Program shorts have won awards at international film festivals. Discovery Program films have aired on PBS and Showtime, as well as in many international markets.

Jonathan Sanger has directed more than 15 episodic television shows, including **TWIN PEAKS**, **WISEGUY**, and **L.A. LAW**. He also wrote and directed the short film **PEACEMAKER** with Lucas Haas for PBS' American Playhouse, which won the Houston International Film Festival's First Prize for Best Short Subject in 1989.

MEET THE TEAM

Jonathan Sanger (Cont.)

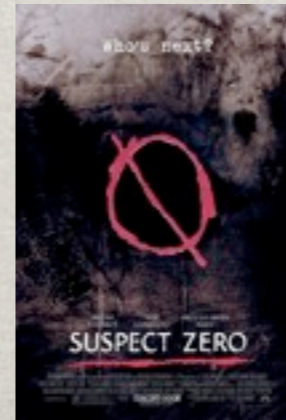
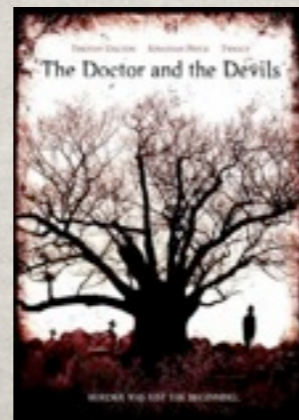
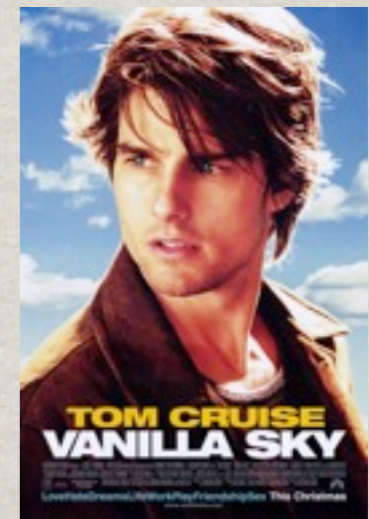
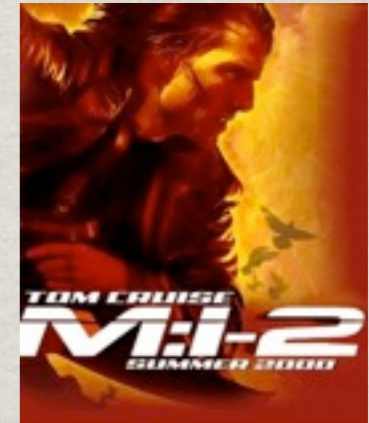
Executive Producer

Sanger's first television movie was CBS's CHILDREN OF THE BRIDE starring Rue McClanahan, Patrick Duffy and Kristy McNichol. From 1991 to 1993, Jonathan Sanger directed three more television movies: NBC's CHANCE OF A LIFETIME, starring Betty White and Leslie Nielsen, NBC's JUST MY IMAGINATION, starring Jean Smart and Tom Wopat and ABC's OBSESSED starring Shannen Doherty and William Devane. He also Executive Produced LUSH LIFE, a movie for Showtime starring Jeff Goldblum and Forest Whitaker and directed DOWN CAME A BLACKBIRD, starring Laura Dern, Raul Julia and Vanessa Redgrave for Showtime Networks, which was nominated for three Cable Ace Awards.

During the winter and spring of 1996, Jonathan Sanger produced MR. AND MRS. SMITH, a television pilot, for Warner Brothers and CBS. Immediately following, Jonathan was hired by Tom Cruise and Paula Wagner (C/W Productions) to Executive Produce the Warner Brothers feature, WITHOUT LIMITS, starring Billy Crudup and Donald Sutherland, written and directed by Robert Towne.

Subsequently, Jonathan joined C/W Productions where he supervised all of their productions through 2003 including SUSPECT ZERO and VANILLA SKY, starring Tom Cruise and Penelope Cruz, written and directed by Cameron Crowe. Other notable credits for Sanger include: THE PRODUCERS, PARAISO TRAVEL and EAST OF EDEN (forthcoming).

Jonathan received a Bachelor of Arts and Masters in Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. He spent three years in the Peace Corps in South America and speaks fluent Spanish. He is married to Carla Sanger, founder and head of "LA's BEST," the nation's largest after-school program and has two sons. They live in Los Angeles.



MEET THE TEAM

Jennifer Fischer & Ramon Hamilton

Producers



Ramon Hamilton and Jennifer Fischer have been a producing duo for over 10 years. Their most recent film as producers, *SMUGGLED*'s successful film festival run in 2012 included 5 "Best Of" Awards and 15 official selections. Through these festivals and its subsequent release in 2013, the film has garnered impressive media coverage (NBC Latino, ABC, Univision, Fusion, etc.) and has screened for thousands throughout the U.S. and world, through various university campus screenings, film society events, community organization outreach efforts and much more.

SMUGGLED tells the moving story of 9 year-old Miguel Rodriguez and his mother, Hilaria Rodriguez, as the pair are smuggled into the U.S. in the small, hidden compartment of a tourist bus. Most of the film takes place in the tiny compartment, but the film completely engages audiences with moments of laughter and tears, ultimately creating empathy and love for the lead characters.

In 2005, Jennifer and Ramon made their producing debut with their short film, *ROGER*. In 2007, they followed this film with *RACHEL'S FORTUNE*, an award-winning short recognized as the Best Film for Youth at Toronto's COMMFest (Community Film Festival). The film was accepted to several other film festivals as well.

RACHEL'S FORTUNE led Ramon Hamilton and Jennifer Fischer to their first feature-length film as producers in 2009. With this film, *THE HIDING*, they worked with the award-winning cinematographer Yasu Tanida, named one of the Top Ten Cinematographers to Watch by Variety Magazine in 2008. *THE HIDING* received DVD distribution and was recognized by the Independent Film Channel as one of their top DVDs to look for in 2009.

In 2009, Ramon also produced *GRANDMA'S HOUSE*, an intriguing short film from award-winning European filmmaker Arend Steenbergen. *GRANDMA'S HOUSE* received acclaim at several film festivals in the U.S. and Europe winning the award for Most Disturbing Film at the Chicago International REEL Shorts Fest. Additionally, Ramon served as a Project Facilitator for the Discovery Channel show *DOING DAVINCI* in 2009 as well.

Ramon received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst where his first student film, *WHY 2K*, was an official selection to the school's Italian Film Studies Film Festival. He has served on the American Federation of Television and Radio Actor's (AFTRA) Equal Employment Opportunity Committee. He has also produced and shot promotional and/or educational videos for The Broad Stage, City of Santa Clarita, Newhall Elementary School District and AFTRA.

Jennifer Fischer received her Masters of Arts from Harvard University and her Bachelor of Arts from Sarah Lawrence College. Her article, "Coffee Can Change," about her commitment to social justice, was published in *It's Not All About You: Young Adults Seeking Justice*. She writes regularly for SCVNews and The Good Long Road, her blog about mindful parenting and literacy.

Jennifer and Ramon's production company, Think Ten Media Group's Digital Arts education division, Generation Arts, teaches filmmaking, photography, photoshop, graphic design and other digital arts to youth throughout Los Angeles County.

MEET THE TEAM

Ramon Hamilton

Writer/Director



SMUGGLED (2013)

- Winner, Best Dramatic Feature, Mexico International Film Festival, 2012
- Winner, Best Feature, Reel Rasquache Art & Film Festival, 2012
- Winner, Founders Award, Riverside International Film Festival, 2012
- Winner, Best Narrative Feature, Third World Indie Film Festival, 2012
- Winner, Best Narrative Feature, Great Lakes Film Festival, 2012
- 15 Official Film Festival Selections

THE HIDING (2009)

Top DVD's of 2009, Independent Film Channel (IFC)

RACHEL'S FORTUNE (2007)

- Winner, Best Film For Youth, Commfest, 2007
- Official Selection, Los Angeles International Children's Film Festival, Danville Children's Film Festival, Brooklyn International Children's Film Festival, San Diego International Children's Film Festival, Reel Wagon Film Festival, San Francisco International Children's Film Festival, 2007

ROGER (2005)

- Official Selection, New England Film Festival, ACME Film Series, Scary Stories Film Festival 2005



MEET THE TEAM

Five Mualimmak

Co-Producer



Five Mualimmak was released from New York State prison in 2012. While there, he spent 5 years in solitary confinement. Since his release, he has become a vocal advocate for ending solitary confinement. He works with the Incarcerated Nation Campaign, which focuses on assisting individuals with reentry following their incarceration and also monitors those people who are in prison, including those in solitary confinement.

Mualimmak is a core member of the New York Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement, a statewide coalition of organizations, activists, lawyers and family members working together to end to use of long-term solitary confinement.



Additionally, he is a member of the Campaign to End the New Jim Crow and Jails Action Coalition (JAC). JAC monitors the NYC jail system. His role with the New Jim Crow (NJC) includes serving as a community organizer and as part of their network speakers bureau. NJC is dedicated to challenging the culture of racism and repression that sustains mass incarceration and seeks human rights for every member of society and humanity for all.

Mualimmak often travels to colleges and universities to speak about the issues of solitary confinement, mass incarceration, and the prison industrial complex.

MEET THE TEAM

Dr. Arvind Singhal

Entertainment Education Specialist



Dr. Arvind Singhal is the Samuel Shirley and Edna Holt Marston Endowed Professor of Communication at the University of Texas-El Paso, and the Director of the Social Justice Initiative in UTEP's Department of Communication. He is a leader in the field of Entertainment Education having won numerous honors, awards and secured various academic appointments for his work.

Singhal is the co-author or editor of 12 books, and his research has been supported by the National Institutes of Health, The Dutch Health Research Council, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, The National Science Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, the U.S. Department of State; U.S.A.I.D., Family Health International, PATH, Save the Children, the BBC World Service Trust, International Rice Research Institute, Voice for Humanity, and private corporations such as Procter & Gamble (U.S.A and Thailand), Telenor AS (Norway), SpareBank (Norway), and others.

Singhal has taught previously at Ohio University, the University of Southern California, the University of California - Los Angeles, and has held visiting professorships at the USC Annenberg School; the Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University; Royal Roads University, Canada; Kumamoto (National) University, Japan; Chemnitz University of Technology in Germany; Institut Teknologi (Malaysia), and Bangkok University (Thailand). He has visited and lectured in some 70 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Australia, Europe, and North America.

MEET THE TEAM

Jean Casella

Consulting Producer: Solitary Watch



Jean Casella is co-director of Solitary Watch, a web-based project aimed at bringing the use of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons out of the shadows and into the light of the public square. She is a writer, editor, researcher, and nonprofit administrator with more than 25 years of experience managing mission-driven book publishers and print and web publications. Her work has appeared in *The Nation*, *The Guardian*, *Mother Jones*, *Al Jazeera*, and other media outlets, and she is editor of two nonfiction anthologies. In 2012, Jean Casella was named a Soros Justice Media Fellow for her work on solitary confinement.

James Ridgeway

Consulting Producer: Solitary Watch



James Ridgeway, founder and co-director of Solitary Watch, has been an investigative reporter for close to 50 years. Most recently, he served as Senior Washington Correspondent for *Mother Jones*. Previously, he was Washington Correspondent for the *Village Voice*, where he covered domestic politics, American subcultures, and overseas conflicts from Northern Ireland to the former Yugoslavia. Earlier in his career he wrote for *Ramparts* and *The New Republic*, and founded and edited two independent publications, *Hard Times* and *The Elements*. He is the author of 16 books and co-director of two documentary films. For his work on U.S. prisons, James Ridgeway has received a Soros Justice Media Fellowship, an Alicia Patterson Fellowship, and a Media for a Just Society Award.

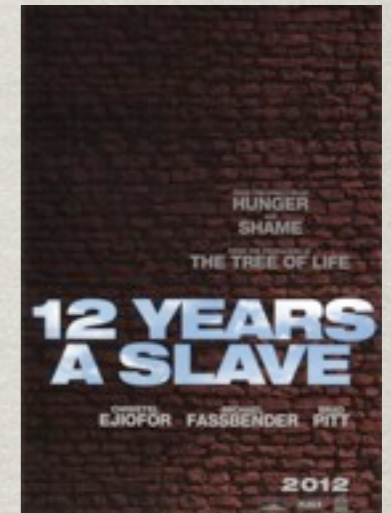
ENTERTAINMENT EDUCATION

Entertainment-education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members' knowledge about an issue, create favorable attitudes, shift social norms, and change the overt behavior of individuals and communities. Entertainment-education programs disseminate or promote certain desired models of behaviors to a set of audience members. However, this dissemination occurs through role models who engage in a dialogue (often conflictual) over a period of time (as soap operas can run for years), which is followed voluntarily by audience members. This modeled dissemination also prompts conversations and dialogues among audience members, who may then come together to take collective decisions or actions. In this sense, these programs help foster a social change discourse, including the demonstration of behavioral possibilities that the target audience may not have considered before.

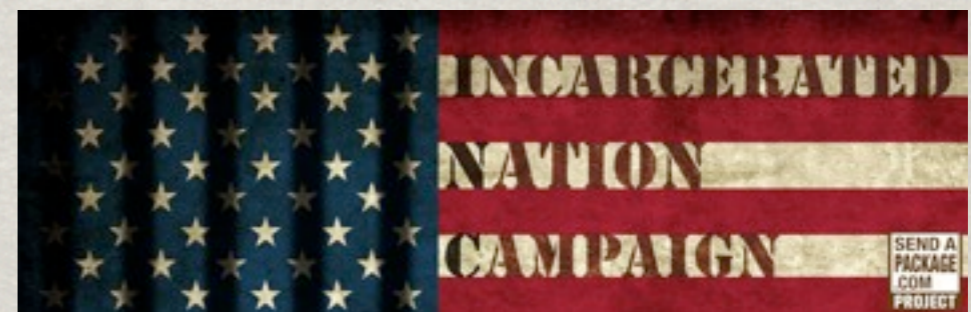
Entertainment-education programs strategically employ media role models to promote socially desirable behaviors and dissuade socially undesirable behaviors.

Some view serialized television and/or web programs as mindless and escapist. However, this type of entertainment is also the most popular genre of mass media programming, cutting across geographic, national, and cultural boundaries; it can be thought provoking, entertaining, educational, and enlightening all at once.

Social change practitioners are increasingly grasping that entertainment-education is one of those rare social change approaches that can be both commercially viable and socially responsible.



PARTNERS & OUTREACH**



****These groups/organizations have a combined outreach of approximately 350,000 people. We expect new partners to be added as well.**