

A MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION PRODUCTION

Consuming Kids

The Commercialization of Childhood

“The consumer embryo begins to develop during the first year of existence. Children begin their consumer journey in infancy. And they certainly deserve consideration as consumers at that time.”

– James U. McNeal | Pioneering Youth Marketer

Running Time: 67 minutes

For further information about this film or to arrange interviews or speaking engagements, please contact:

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PRAISE FOR *CONSUMING KIDS*

"This powerful, disturbing and heartbreaking film has the power to change the way we Americans treat our children. It is the best possible parent education product. I recommend it to schools, universities, churches, mosques and synagogues."

- Mary Pipher | Author of *Reviving Ophelia*

"*Consuming Kids* is an invaluable resource for parents, teachers, health care professionals, and anyone wanting to foster children's well-being. This film will be opening eyes and sparking discussion in psychology, media and cultural studies, sociology, health, and economics classrooms for years to come. As a professor of media and children's culture, and as a parent, this is the film I've been waiting for."

- Lynn Phillips | Author of *Flirting with Danger: Young Women's Reflections on Sexuality and Domination*

"*Consuming Kids* is one of the best films I have seen in years that explores the various ways in which the identities, values, and future of young people are held hostage to a world shaped by the poisonous culture of consumption and commodification. Every school should buy this film and learn from it. And every parent, educator, and concerned citizen should watch this film if they believe kids deserve a more just world and future."

- Henry Giroux | Professor of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University | Author of *Youth in a Suspect Society: Democracy or Disposability?*

"*Consuming Kids* is my all time favorite video exploring the negative aspects of advertising in all venues and on all media platforms. It is a wonderfully produced and thought out documentary that remarkably and informatively covers so many critical areas of how corporate America uses its power to amorally define, research, and manipulate various demographic segments of society. In so doing, the film homes in on corporate marketing strategies designed to maximize impact and sales -- and the health of children and teens be damned! This exceptional film will be a service to schools, parents, and children for many years to come."

- Stuart Fischhoff, Ph.D. | Senior Editor, *Journal of Media Psychology* | Member, APA Film and Other Media Committee

"This film is a riveting and compelling expose of the enormous - and enormously cynical - enterprise devoted to transforming our children from kids into consumers. Anyone who wonders why kids are so demanding of brand-name products must see it. This film provides tons of evidence to explain why we need federal regulation of marketing to children, and the sooner the better."

- Marion Nestle | Professor of Nutrition at New York University | Author of *Food Politics and What to Eat*

"An outstanding film with an urgent message, *Consuming Kids* is remarkably researched and elegantly executed. It leaves no room for doubt that relentless marketing to children is hurting their mental and physical health. Turning a child's sandbox, filled with so much imaginative potential, into a shopping mall is a crime. It is not what children consume, but what they are directed to think and feel about themselves and their world that is really at stake."

- Chyng Sun, Ph.D. | Creator of *Mickey Mouse Monopoly*

"This Media Education Foundation film graphically reveals a lack of corporate respect for the young. We have a moral duty to transform societal values and create a culture that respects the children with whose care we are entrusted. Now is the time to call for a child-honoring protocol for commerce."

- Raffi Cavoukian, C.M. | Singer | Author & Founder of Child Honoring

"This film is a damning indictment of an advertising industry whose only concern is brainwashing kids as early as possible, no matter what the consequences. The film's powerful images that back up the experts' claims are jaw-dropping. And if you think it's all up to parents to protect their kids from the onslaught of corporate marketing, this film will convince you otherwise. *Consuming Kids* should be viewed by anyone who has kids or cares about them; in other words, everyone."

- Michele Simon, JD, MPH | Author of *Appetite for Profit: How the Food Industry Undermines Our Health and How to Fight Back* | Research and Policy Director of the Marin Institute

"Marketing to children is pervasive, powerfully effective, and pernicious. This film paints a compelling picture of our children being initiated into consumerism almost from birth, as if it is a special club, and shows how important it is to stop the madness."

- Kelly D. Brownell, Ph.D. | Professor of Psychology, Epidemiology and Public Health | Director of Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University

"Like never before, children today are plagued by a variety of ills, from violence to hyper-sexualization to obesity to rampant materialism. *Consuming Kids* connects these dots, showing how these problems all relate back to corporate marketers preying on our children for profit. Watching this movie will open the eyes of everyone who cares about children to the disturbing new realities of our consumer culture."

- Tim Kasser | Associate Professor of Psychology at Knox College | Author of *The High Price of Materialism*

"Every parent, stepparent and family professional must understand the impact of marketing on children. The most efficient and compelling way to begin is to watch *Consuming Kids*, the film that will open your eyes to the biggest difference between today and when we were kids: sophisticated and pervasive marketing to children. Your kids can't afford for you to wait."

- Joe Kelly | TheDadMan.com | Author of *Dads & Daughters: How to Inspire, Understand and Support Your Daughter*

"A comprehensive and compelling look at how childhood in America has been sacrificed to the free market. This film helps parents, caregivers and educators to start thinking differently about popular culture and children, and what needs to change."

- Susan Rogers | Editor & publisher of MediaLiteracy.com

FILM SYNOPSIS

With virtually no government oversight or public outcry, the multi-billion dollar youth marketing industry has been able to use the latest advances in psychology, anthropology, and neuroscience to transform American children into one of the most powerful and profitable consumer demographics in the world. American kids now influence an estimated \$700 billion in annual spending, targeted virtually from birth with sophisticated commercial appeals designed to sell everything from Hollywood merchandise and junk foods to iPods, cell phones, and the family car. The result is that childhood itself has been commercialized. *Consuming Kids* traces the evolution and impact of this disturbing and unprecedented phenomenon, exposing the youth marketing industry's controversial tactics, and exploring the effect of hyper-consumerism on the actual lived experience of children.

NOTABLE QUOTES FROM *CONSUMING KIDS*

SUSAN LINN: “This generation of children is marketed to as never before. Kids are being marketed to through brand licensing, through product placement, marketing in schools, through stealth marketing, through viral marketing. There are DVDs, there are video games, there’s the Internet, there are iPods, there are cell phones. There are so many more ways of reaching children, so that there’s a brand in front of a child’s face every moment of every day.”

ENOLA AIRD: “It’s about people wanting to convince our children that life is about buying, life is about getting. So the philosophy becomes cradle to grave: Let’s get to them early. Let’s get to them often. Let’s get to them as many places as we can get them. Not just to sell them products and services, but to turn them into lifelong consumers.”

MICHAEL RICH: “Growing up is a very strenuous, difficult, and sometimes hard and scary process for children. One of the things that gives them some stability and continuity in that is their attachment to touchstones in their lives. And among those touchstones are characters: Clifford The Big Red Dog, Mickey Mouse. These are constants in their lives. These are things that they have figured out, that they feel they understand, and that they feel comfortable with – and indeed, in their own way, *love*. When you take that, and you leverage that into Clifford The Big Red Dog saying, ‘Eat this food,’ you are basically leveraging that very powerful emotion ... to make money.”

JULIET SCHOR: “They [youth marketing researchers] go into supermarkets with children and film exactly how they look at a product, pick it up, put it back down, the way they move around the supermarket. They film them on the playground. They film them in school. They film them eating breakfast. They film them going into their closet and deciding what to wear. They film them talking to their friends. They organize little friendship circles and film what they’re doing. They even follow them into the bathroom. I interviewed a number of people who sat and watched children take baths and showers, watched how they interact with shampoo and soap and health and beauty products, as that category is called, in order to go back and write a report for their clients on what to do with the packaging. It’s creepy. It’s just absolutely creepy the way children are being dissected and put under the microscope by marketers.”

LUCY HUGHES, YOUTH MARKETER: “Somebody asked me: ‘Lucy, is that ethical? You’re essentially manipulating these children.’ Well, is it ethical? I don’t know. But our role at Initiative is to move products, and if we know you move products with a certain creative execution, placed in a certain type of media vehicle, then we’ve done our job. They are tomorrow’s consumer – tomorrow’s adult consumer – so start talking with them now, build that relationship when they’re younger, and you’ve got them as an adult.”

SUSAN LINN: “I think the thing that upsets me the most is that it’s not just products that are being marketed to children, but values. And the primary value that’s being sold to kids over and over and over again is the value that things or stuff or brands will make us happy.”

SUSAN LINN: “It’s really hard to find baby paraphernalia that’s not plastered with media characters. You can find unbranded baby stuff, but you can find it in high-end toy stores. But if you go to just places where poor or middle class families shop, it’s all branded. So the babies start out life with the notion of consumption. And that’s not an accident. What they [marketers] want is cradle-to-grave brand loyalty. That’s what they talk about – share of mind. They talk about owning children for life.”

MICHAEL RICH: “The American Academy of Pediatrics has now, for seven years, recommended that there be no screen media use for children under the age of 2. And this is for some very specific reasons. First of all, there is no solid scientific research evidence that children under the age of 30 months, or two and a half years, can learn anything from an electronic screen. A lot of media early may in fact change the way the brain develops.”

NANCY CARLSSON-PAIGE: “The amount of violence, entertainment violence, that young children are exposed to is startling. They’re getting the message that when you have conflicts, you fight with violence. That you have to fight in order to resolve your differences. That’s what you do. And that watching violence is fun. It’s entertaining.”

DIANE LEVIN: “Girls are being taught that they need to be pretty, sexy, and what they buy determines their value, and how they look determines their value.”

BETSY TAYLOR: “We’re creating a future generation of super consumers. Rather than consuming less, our children will consume even more than the Baby Boom Generation or the Generation Y or X. What does that mean for our future, for our well-being, and for their well-being?”

GARY RUSKIN: “This is one of the very most important public health problems in the United States, if not *the* most important public health problem in the United States.”

JULIET SCHOR: “There’s no way we can really make childhood healthy in this country without a government effort. We’ve done it in other areas. We do it in the area of child safety. We have laws about putting helmets on kids, seatbelt laws, tobacco marketing to kids. But somehow we think it’s okay to make children fair game for marketers who just want to profit from them, irrespective of the impacts on their health and well-being.”

FACT SHEET

- Companies spend about \$17 billion annually marketing to children,¹ a staggering increase from the \$100 million spent in 1983.²
- Children spend about \$40 billion annually³ and influence another \$700 billion in purchases per year.⁴
- Children ages 2-11 see more than 25,000 advertisements a year on TV alone,⁵ a figure that does not include product placement. They are also targeted with advertising on the Internet, cell phones, mp3 players, video games, school buses, and in school.
- Until the age of about 8, children do not understand advertising's persuasive intent.⁶
- By six months, babies are forming mental images of corporate logos and mascots.⁷ According to market research, babies are requesting brands as soon as they can speak.⁸
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen media use for children under the age of 2 years old.⁹ But by the age of three months, 40% of infants are watching screen media regularly. By the time children are 2, the number jumps to 90%.¹⁰
- There is no credible evidence that babies and toddlers learn anything useful from screens.¹¹ What babies do learn from screen media is to recognize, and become attached to, commercialized media characters.¹²
- Materialistic values are correlated to exposure to marketing for children as young as preschoolers.¹³ Children who are more materialistic are less happy, more depressed, have lower self-esteem, and report more symptoms of anxiety.¹⁴

¹ Food Marketing to Children and Youth (2006), Institute of Medicine. Washington: The National Academies Press, p. 8.

² Linn, S. (2005). *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*. New York: New Press.

³ James McNeal quoted in BuyBabies. (2006, December 9). The Economist

⁴ Schor, J. (2004). *Born to Buy*, New York: Scribner, p. 167.

⁵ Federal Trade Commission Bureau of Economics Staff Report. (2007, June 1). *Children's Exposure to TV Advertising in 1977 and 2004*. Holt, D.J., Ippolito, P.M., Desrochers, D.M. & Kelly, C.R. p. 9.

⁶ Kunkel. (2001). Children and Television Advertising. In: D.G. Singer & J.L. Singer (Eds.) *The Handbook of Children and Media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. p. 375-393.

⁷ McNeal, J. & Yeh, C. (1993, June). Born to Shop. *American Demographics*, pp 34-39.

⁸ Hood, D. (2000). Is Advertising to Kids Wrong? Marketers Respond. *Kidscreen*, November 15.

⁹ American Academy of Pediatrics, Children, Adolescents, and Television. *Pediatrics* Vol. 107 No. 2 February 2001 p. 424.

¹⁰ Zimmerman, F.J., Christakis, D.A., Meltzoff, A.N. (2007) Television and DVD/video viewing in children younger than 2 years. *Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine*. 161(5):473-9.

¹¹ Anderson, D. & Pempek, T. (2005). Television and Very Young Children. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 48(5): 505-522.

¹² Thomas, S.G. (2007) *Buy Buy Baby: How Consumer Culture Manipulates Parents and Harms Young Minds*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 109-135.

¹³ Goldberg, M.E. & Gorn, G.J. (1978). Some Unintended Consequences of TV Advertising to Children. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 5(1), 22-29.

¹⁴ Schor, J. (2004). *Born to Buy*, New York: Scribner, p. 167.

- Marketers use aspirational advertising — exploiting young children’s natural tendency to idealize older kids and adults — to market child-sized sexualized clothing. Tight belly-baring shirts, tiny halter-tops, “low rider pants” are regularly marketed to pre-teens. The Sax Fifth Avenue chain, Club Libby Lu, for example, offers day spa treatment and makeovers for girls as young as 2 years old.¹⁵
- Violent toys, often tied to violent media, are commonly marketed to young children. Movies with ratings for older children are often marketed with toys rated for younger children.¹⁶
- Today’s best-selling toys often promote gender-stereotyped play.¹⁷ Toys based on media programs come with established characters and storylines, making it unlikely that children will use the toy to create their own world. When children play with a toy based on a television character, they play less creatively, especially right after they have watched a program.¹⁸
- Marketing on cell phones is particularly insidious because marketers have constant access to children and it is particularly hard for parents to monitor. Mobile phone advertising is expected to bring in \$6.5 billion annually in the U.S. by 2012.¹⁹
- Children as young as preschoolers are being lured to online communities like *Webkinz* and *Barbiegirls*, which revolve around virtual shopping.²⁰ At Viacom’s *Neopets*, a virtual world/gaming site, children care for virtual pets by earning currency through branded games²¹ and nurturing them with food from McDonalds.²²
- Due to increasing obesity rates, this generation of children may be the first in 200 years with a shorter life expectancy than their parents.²³ Obesity is linked to increased risk for Type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, cancer, and hypertension.²⁴
- In 2006, based on a comprehensive review of the research, the Institute of Medicine issued a report finding strong evidence that television advertising influences children’s preferences, purchase requests, and diets. Among its recommendations: Stop using licensed characters to promote junk foods.²⁵

¹⁵ Copeland, L. (2006, March 24). Glamour Babes. Washington Post.

¹⁶ CCFC Press Release. (June 28, 2007). *Transformers Marketing: More than Meets the Eye: Hasbro, DreamWorks Target Preschoolers with Violent PG-13 Movie; CCFC calls for FTC Probe.*

¹⁷ Linn, S. (2008) *The Case for Make Believe: Saving Play in a Commercialized World.* New York: The New Press. p. 159-191.

¹⁸ Greenfield, P.M. et al. (1993). The Program-length Commercial. *Children and Television: Images in a Changing Sociocultural World*, eds. Gordon Berry and Joy Keiko Asamen. Newbury Park, CA, p. 53-72.

¹⁹ Chester & Montgomery (2008a) p 9.

²⁰ Linn, S. (2008), p. 183-184.

²¹ Chester & Montgomery (2007).

²² Wade, E. (February 26, 2004). Care and Feeding of Cyberpets Rivits tag-Along Marketers. *New York Times.*

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Olshansky, S.J., Passaro, D.J., Hershov, R.C., et al. (2005). A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 352(11), 1138-1145.

²⁵ Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. (2006). *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?*, Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press. P.2.

CREDITS

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UNITED STATES • 2008 • 67 mins • Shot on Mini-DV • Color • NTSC • BETA/DVD/DVCAM
Aspect Ratio 4:3 • Stereo • English/English Subtitles

BIOGRAPHIES

Enola Aird, J.D., is an activist mother. She is founder and director of the Motherhood Project based at the Institute for American Values in New York City. A graduate of Barnard College and Yale Law School, she has worked for a variety of media corporations, including the National Association of Broadcasters and predecessor entities of Time Warner and Viacom, as well as the Children's Defense Fund.

Nancy Carlsson-Paige, Ed.D., is a Professor of Education at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA, where she has trained teachers for 30 years. She is also a researcher at Lesley's Center for Children, Families, and Public Policy. Since the mid-1980's, Carlsson-Paige has been researching and writing about the effects of violence, especially media violence, on children's social development. Carlsson-Paige also teaches and writes about how the skills needed for caring relationships and positive conflict resolution can be cultivated in children and young people. Her latest book is *Taking Back Childhood: Helping Your Kids Thrive in a Fast-Paced, Media-Saturated, Violence-Filled World*.

Josh Golin is the program manager at the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood (CCFC) at the Judge Baker Children's Center in Boston, a national coalition of health care professionals, educators, advocacy groups, and concerned parents dedicated to countering the harmful effects of marketing to children through action, advocacy, education, research, and collaboration. The baseline mission of CCFC is to support the rights of children to grow up—and the rights of parents to raise them—without being undermined by consumerism.

Diane Levin, Ph.D., is professor of education at Wheelock College in Boston, where she teaches a summer institute on media violence and children. Her most recent books are *Remote Control Childhood? Combating the Hazards of Media Culture* and *Teaching Young Children in Violent Times*. She is a founder of Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood and Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment (TRUCE). Her latest book, co-authored with Jean Kilbourne, is *So Sexy So Soon: The New Sexualized Childhood and What Parents Can Do To Protect Their Kids*.

Dr. Susan Linn is the Director of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood. She is a psychologist, an award-winning producer and writer, and the Associate Director of the Media Center for Children at the Harvard University-affiliated Judge Baker Children's Center in Boston. She is the author of *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood* and *The Case for Make-Believe: Saving Play in a Commercialized World*, and recently produced the pilot episode for Willoughby's Wonders, a half-hour, live-action comedy drama designed to help children acquire basic coping skills. Dr. Linn is also internationally known for her innovative work using puppets in child psychotherapy.

Dr. Michael Rich, a former Hollywood filmmaker, is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, Assistant Professor in Society, Human Development and Health at Harvard School of Public Health, and a pediatrician at Children's Hospital Boston. He is also the founder and director of the Center on Media and Child Health at Children's Hospital Boston. Dr. Rich was honored by the Society for Adolescent Medicine with their New Investigator Award for developing Video Intervention/Prevention Assessment (VIA), and received the Holroyd-Sherry Award from the American Academy of Pediatrics for his contributions to understanding the impact of mass media on young people.

Betsy Taylor is a co-founder and the President of the Board of Directors of the 1Sky Education Fund, a non-profit organization dedicated to fighting global warming. In 1998, she founded the Center for a New American Dream, an organization that promotes responsible consumption and social justice, and served as its president until 2006. Taylor is also the former executive director of the Merck Family Fund, and vice chair of the Environmental Grantmakers Association. She is the author of *What Kids Really Want That Money Can't Buy: Tips For Parenting in a Commercial World*, and is the co-author, with Juliet Schor, of *Sustainable Planet: Solutions for the Twenty-first Century*. Taylor has also served as a member of the Population and Consumption Taskforce for the President's Council on Sustainable Development.

Velma LaPoint, Ph.D., is a professor in the Department of Human Development and Psychoeducational Studies at the Howard University School of Education. She conducts research on the impact of commercialism on the lives of children, with particular focus on how commercial culture affects children of color and poor children. She is also a Senior Research Associate at the CRESPAR/Capstone Institute at Howard University.

Dr. Michael Brody is a child psychiatrist and Chair of the Television and Media Committee of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. He is a professor of American Studies at the University of Maryland, where he teaches a course on Children and Television, and has just completed a documentary film, *Fifty Years of Children's Television from Howdy Doody to SpongeBob*.

Dr. Robert Reiher is a specialist in the area of media psychology with wide-ranging expertise in educational and clinical psychology, business, media and entertainment. He is President of E-Smart Choice, a company dedicated to the development and marketing of enriching products and programs, is co-founder and co-director of Youth Market Systems Consulting and the Character Lab, and has consulted for more than 65 corporations. Reiher is the co-author, with Dan Acuff, of *KIDNAPPED: How Irresponsible Marketers Are Stealing the Minds of Your Children*.

Dr. Dan Acuff is the co-founder and co-director of Youth Market Systems and the Character Lab, and coauthor of the landmark book, *What Kids Buy and Why: The Psychology of Marketing to Kids*. Dr. Acuff has served as a development, research, and marketing consultant to more than 50 major corporations in the arenas of product and program viability assessment, development, marketing, and advertising. His specialization has been new product ideation, age segmentation analysis, product and program maximization, and character creation and development. He is the co-author, with Dr. Robert Reiher, of *KIDNAPPED: How Irresponsible Marketers Are Stealing the Minds of Your Children*.

Gary Ruskin is the co-founder and former executive director of Commercial Alert, a nonprofit organization that aims to protect children and communities from the excesses of commercialism. Ruskin has been particularly active in the movement to combat commercialism in schools, and has worked to raise awareness about the deleterious health effects of advertising on children. Since 1993, he has also directed the Congressional Accountability Project, which exposes and opposes corruption in the U.S. Congress.

Allen D. Kanner, Ph.D., has been a clinical child psychologist for nearly 20 years. He teaches at the Wright Institute, is co-editor of *Psychology and Consumer Culture: The Struggle for a Good Life in a Materialistic World*, and is a founder of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood.

Nick Russell is a marketing professional based in the United Kingdom. He is currently looking at business practices in green construction and sustainable luxury goods. He received his MBA from the University of Oxford and his undergraduate degree in Psychology from Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles. He worked in documentary film production in Hollywood before transitioning to youth and luxury brand strategy in San Francisco.

Dr. Juliet Schor is Professor of Sociology at Boston College, and a board member and co-founder of the Center for a New American Dream. Over the last ten years, her research has focused on issues pertaining to trends in work and leisure, consumerism, the relationship between work and family, women's issues and economic justice. Schor's latest book is *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture*. She is also author of *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure* and *The Overspent American: Upscaling, Downshifting and the New Consumer*. Earlier in her career, her research focused on issues of wages, productivity and profitability, and the political economy of central banking. She also teaches periodically at Schumacher College.

Dr. David Walsh is a psychologist and educator, and the president and founder of the National Institute on Media and the Family, based in Minneapolis, MN. He has emerged as one of the world's leading authorities on parenting, family life, and the impact of media on children and teens. He has written eight books, including the national bestseller *Why Do They Act That Way? A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teen*. His newest book is *No: Why Kids of All Ages Need to Hear It and Ways Parents Can Say It*. Walsh received his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Minnesota, where he is currently a faculty member, and is also a consultant to the World Health Organization. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and distinctions, including the 1999 "Friend of the Family Award," presented by the Council on Family Relations.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

ADRIANA BARBARO | Producer, Co-Director, Co-Writer, Co-Editor

Adriana Barbaro has worked with the Media Education Foundation in some form or capacity since 2003. She graduated from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in 2003 with a Bachelor's degree in Communication and minors in Political Science and Italian.

JEREMY EARP | Co-Director & Co-Writer

Jeremy Earp is the director of production at The Media Education Foundation (MEF). Prior to his work on *Consuming Kids*, he co-wrote and co-directed the documentaries *Blood and Oil* (with Scott Morris), *War Made Easy* (with Loretta Alper), and *Hijacking Catastrophe* (with Sut Jhally). Before joining MEF full time in 2003, he taught English and communications at New School University and Parsons School of Design in New York City, The Art Institute of Boston and Northeastern University in Massachusetts, and worked for a number of years as a news and sports reporter for a daily newspaper in Greater Boston. He holds a Master's degree in English from Northeastern University, and is pursuing a doctorate in Communication at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

SUT JHALLY | Executive Producer

Sut Jhally is Professor of Communication at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and founder and executive director of The Media Education Foundation (MEF). He first gained national recognition for his film *Dreamworlds: Desire, Sex & Power in Music Video* when MTV threatened him with a lawsuit over copyright infringement. The resulting press storm led to numerous requests for the video, and provided the rationale for MEF's founding in 1991. In the time since, Jhally has been the executive producer and/or director of more than 25 films produced and distributed by the Media Education Foundation, including the critically acclaimed *Peace, Propaganda & The Promised Land* and *Hijacking Catastrophe*. He is the author of *The Codes of Advertising* and *The Spectacle of Accumulation: Essays in Cultural Politics*, co-author of *Social Communication in Advertising* and *Enlightened Racism*, and the co-editor of *Cultural Politics in Contemporary America*. A renowned lecturer, he is the recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award at UMass, and is regarded as one of the world's leading cultural studies scholars in the area of advertising, media, and consumption.

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The non-profit Media Education Foundation produces and distributes documentary films and other educational resources to inspire critical reflection on the social, political, and cultural impact of American mass media.

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