

# AMERICAN AUTUMN

An OccuDoc

[College Version Transcript]

## INTRODUCTION

**NARRATOR:** My name is Dennis. I made this movie, and there are a few things you should know about me right from the jump. I'm not an expert on the economy, climate change or foreign policy. I'm also not an expert on sustainable farming systems, the history of social movements or Legos. The Occupy movement has experts on all those things and more, but I'm not really one of them. I'm a happily married husband, a father of two fantastic children. I live on a main street in a small New England town with actual white picket fences. I made this movie – for you, me, and everyone we know – in the hope that we can create a world where human need comes before corporate greed. So why does it feel almost un-American to say that? Think about it this way. Just go with me for a second here.

**NARRATOR [with Text on Screen]:** You know that scene from the Oliver Stone film *Wall Street* when Gordon Gekko, played by Michael Douglas in a role that would win him an Oscar, appears at a share-holder's meeting of a company, Teldar Paper, to defend his actions and his grotesque world view and delivers the now famous speech where he says:

**FILM CLIP [audio only]** "Greed, for lack of a better word, is good. Greed is right. Greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit. And greed, you mark my words, will not only save Teldar Paper but that other malfunctioning corporation called the U.S.A."

**NARRATOR:** Audiences flipped out. They cheered. Everybody in the 80s wanted to be Gordon Gekko. But the thing is this: Oliver Stone wrote it as a piece of satire. But nobody got it. Just the opposite. While Oliver Stone was trying to send up the excesses of the Reagan Era, Michael Douglas' portrayal helped inspire a whole generation of slick-backed hairdos in double-breasted suits, adopting the "greed is good" ethos.

And pursuing the American Dream, as it had come to be defined, now delivers obscene wealth for a very few, while raining poverty and misery down on many and serving as a homicidal force for others. Because people do, in fact, die for lack of access to healthcare in the richest country in the world. That's the U.S. of A. Human consumption is, in fact, accelerating the destruction of our planet. People do, in fact, die in wars waged based on lies that profit a precious few. Over 5 million children globally, each year, do not reach their 5th birthday because they die of starvation.

All of this is not because the system that puts man on the moon or can squeeze an entire library onto a computer chip the size of a thumbnail has failed to find a way to solve these

problems rather our system, without apology, places corporate greed above human need. And greed, to take back the popular phrase, is not good. Fuck you, Gordon Gekko.

Now the question many within the Occupy movement are trying to solve is this one: What would a world look like that had a culture and an economic system that places human need above corporate greed? And how do we bring that world into being? Who cares what it is called? Call it "socialism," call it "real democracy now," call it "chunky-monkey cherry garcia." The world needs to change radically, it needs to change dramatically, and it needs to change fast. This documentary is an invitation for you to participate in that positive change. Frankly, because we need you. Yes, you.

### **RECLAIMING PUBLIC SPACE**

**Text on Screen:** Occupy public space; create a process to address the problems we face. – From the “Declaration of the Occupation of NYC.” September 29, 2011

**KEVIN ZEESE:** It's gotten so bad, the wealth divide. It's a bad wealth divide, but it makes it a problem that's easy to solve. All the money's in one place. And so all you got to do is go where the money is. You know, you got 400 people that have the wealth of 154 million. You have 6 Walton heirs that have the wealth of 30% of American families. You have 1% with the wealth of 95% of Americans.

**SENATOR BERNIE SANDERS:** I would hope that for these people who are worth hundreds of millions of dollars, they will look around them and say, "There is something more important in life than the richest people becoming richer when we have the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world." How can anybody be proud to say that I'm a multi-millionaire and I'm getting a huge tax-break, and one-quarter of the kids in this country is on food stamps? How do you be proud of that? I don't know.

**KATIE GOODMAN:** [Singing] There's never been a time, there's never been a time, there's never been a time as fucked up as this. As fucked up as this. I didn't fuck it up. You probably didn't fuck it up. But they, whoever they are, they fucked it up. Now it's fucked up.

**NARRATOR:** Okay, so now that we've identified the problem, broadly speaking, what do you think the solution is? Raise your hand if you think the way our representative democracy currently functions, bought and sold as it is by Wall St. and super PACs, offers a bright ray of hope forward. Anyone? Anyone?

**DAVID DEGRAW:** Politicians know, if they outspend their competitors, they're going to win the election 94 percent of the time. So they have no fear of the American people. They fear the people who are going to fund their campaigns.

**NARRATOR:** Right. So that means that you, me, and just about everyone we know has very little say over who represents us and little to no influence over them once they get into

office. The process is rigged to throw an enormous amount of money behind candidates in the two major parties and, consequently, choosing the lesser of two evils is something Americans have done with a fatalistic shrug of the shoulders for far too long. To say the U.S. government currently functions of, for, and by the people would be a funny joke if the joke were not on you, me, and almost everyone we know. Imagine a world in which your single voice carried as much weight as the CEO of Goldman Sachs, and you're starting to imagine the world that the Occupy movement is trying to bring into being.

**DR. CORNEL WEST:** We're not always going to agree. It's not about unanimity. We're gonna be like a Duke Ellington jazz orchestra. Everybody got they're own voice and even Duke is not the conductor. He's just one voice among the others. Hit it, Gonzales! Hit it, Johnny Hodges! Yes, that's democracy in action at the deepest level.

**NATHAN SCHNEIDER:** Experiencing the horizontal community and culture and organization was so radicalizing for people and continues to be so radicalizing, because it draws such a stark contrast up against what they're fighting. And actually, in their minds, clarifies what they're up against more than it would be clarified if somebody got up and tried to clarify it for them.

**MEDEA BENJAMIN:** Thanks to Occupy Wall Street, there's a lot of new ways of organizing, which is not just calling people to participate in something you came up with but giving people the opportunity to create themselves and to be part of the original brainstorming about what to do so that they feel empowered in this movement. It's also, I think, finally put the kibosh on, "Let's organize a rally on a Saturday in Washington, D.C. when everything is closed," and people come from around the country and spend a lot of money to walk around in a circle and then go home.

**MICHAEL PATTERSON:** I think now people are seeing what the government actually is. They're seeing the empire, what it actually stands for, and what you're seeing is all these repressive laws being passed and all these acts: NDAA, SOPA, PIPA . . . People's mindsets are changing. People's mindsets are becoming much more open to the fact that this government no longer represents the people, and the people are going to take this country back.

**Occupy Protesters:** [Chanting] "Obama, come out! We've got some stuff to talk about!"

**MICHAEL MOORE:** The media wants to know, who organized this? I'll tell you who organized this: Bank of America organized this! Chase Bank organized this! Citi Bank organized this! Exxon-Mobil organized this! BP organized this! That's who organized this. Well, thank you! Thank you, Bank of America, for organizing this.

**ASHLEY SANDERS:** We're brilliant, and if we're brave enough, bold enough and beautiful enough, we'll make them remember. But we don't actually need them. They need us. Their factories need workers. Their elections need voters. Their news needs believers, and we say 'no!' And we're here to say 'no!' We're not thinking anymore about the rich and how to make them richer. We're thinking about the poor and how to help them survive. And we're

thinking about the homeless and how to give them a home. And we're thinking about single moms and how to help them survive. And we're thinking about people who wake up every day to bombs, and we're thinking that maybe one day they could wake up to a gorgeous silence.

## **BIRTH OF A MOVEMENT**

**Text on Screen:** Our system must protect our rights, and upon corruption of that system, it is up to individuals to protect their own rights, and those of their neighbors. -From the "Declaration of the Occupation of NYC." September 29, 2011

**NARRATOR:** At 5:30 in the morning in Zuccotti, on most mornings, early in the Occupy Wall Street movement, there would only be about 50 to maybe 200 or so occupying the space. But at 5:30 in the morning on the morning of October 14th, 2011, several thousand people were gathered there wide-awake. Why? Because Mayor Mike Bloomberg had declared that his own "personal army" - his words - the NYPD, constituting the 7th largest army in the world, would evict Occupy Wall Street. And these thousands were there, not just in solidarity. They were there armed with an idea, some cardboard signs, and an urgency to protect the young movement. And many of them were prepared to go to jail trying to hold the space.

I had already gone to jail once since all of this started. As an organizer with the October 2011 coalition, I had been in Washington, D.C. in the early days of the movement and, you can see me here, after suggesting repeatedly, I admit, inside the Hart Senate office building, that we find other uses for the money we lavish on our homicidal bull in a geopolitical china shop of a foreign policy. I was given a "do not pass go - go directly to jail" card. And in a few days, I would be arrested again - this time for protesting corporate personhood on the steps of the Supreme Court.

**DR. CORNEL WEST:** We are here to bear witness with, and be in solidarity with, the Occupy Movement all around the world, because we love poor people, we love working people and we want Martin Luther King Jr. to smile from the grave that we haven't forgot his cause.

**NARRATOR:** Occupy D.C., Occupy Wall Street, Occupy the Supreme Court, Occupy everywhere. In my willingness to go to jail for the movement, though, I was hardly unique. And with the thousands that were in Zuccotti on the morning of October 14th, it seemed that we were about to eclipse the previous one-day record total of 700 protestors arrested on the Brooklyn Bridge. What was it that brought all of those people to Zuccotti that morning?

**LEE CAMP:** This may not be a revolution in the traditional sense, but this is a revolution of the mind, alright. This is a thought revolution and it's not going to be stopped by police barricades and pepper spray, ankle-sprains . . . Pepper spray, gosh, is like throwing water on gremlins: the more you do it, the more of us fucking show up.

**NARRATOR:** It's true. The movement did grow in the early stages because many of the arrests that occurred were the result of the borderline sadistic behavior of men with badges, guns and pepper spray. And this police violence was met with a decidedly nonviolent response. In the first six months of the movement, about 7,000 people have been arrested in Occupy related protests or events. Why all the fuss? And, why in the predawn hours, on that Friday in October, were so many prepared to go to jail?

**Occupy Protester:** [fighting police] Get off of me! I did not do anything to you!

**Occupy Protester:** When we were supposed to get cleaned out of the park, we swept the shit out of that park and then we took brooms, and we took them to Wall Street to go clean up Wall Street. I think the problem was that most of the filth was in the offices, so we didn't get to it but we did a little victory lap and the police brutalized and arrested a lot of people. But, you know, they do that and they have done that for 225 years in this country.

**NARRATOR:** Nonviolent confrontations with the police, whether they be in asserting one's First Amendment rights to assemble, or an un-permitted, spontaneous marches in the streets, can be an incredibly empowering, movement-building experience. An antidote to the years of disempowering and Orwellian-free speech zones that had come to be the norm. And yet, civil resistance is but one part, one tactic of the movement. If you only saw the early stages of the Occupy movement through the lens of the mainstream media, you might think the movement was solely about clashes with the police.

**SGT. SHAMAR THOMAS:** When I care to speak, you all want to shut me up. Why are you treating people like this? This is America! Why are you all treating people like this? Why are you all gearing up like this is war? This is not war! This is not war! Why are you all acting like this? Nobody has guns! There is no honor in hurting unarmed civilians.

**Reporter:** What did you see today that bothered you?

**SGT. SHAMAR THOMAS:** I was here October 5th, I saw them beating people. . . people that had nothing to do with anything. Just grabbing people out of the crowds. There is no honor in that. My mom, my father, everybody has served in Iraq, Afghanistan. I did 14 months in Iraq, my father was in Afghanistan, my mother did a year in Iraq. We fought for this country. I don't come home. . . I'm in New York City! I am from New York City and these cops are hurting people I fought to protect. There is no reason for this. There is no honor in hurting unarmed civilians.

**Occupy Protesters:** [Chanting] "We are Occupy Wall Street and we march in solidarity, against police brutality!"

**NARRATOR:** Okay, let's just be honest here for a moment. For some people, this is – and justifiably so – a battle about a police state. Since 1980, the number of people imprisoned per capita in the United States has more than tripled. We now imprison a greater percentage of our population than any other country in the world. In fact, the United

States, with only 5 percent of the world population, has 25 percent of the world's prison population. In the U.S., 1 in every 106 white males aged 18 or over is incarcerated. For Hispanic males, that number is 1 in 36. And 1 in 15 black males over 18, is currently in jail. Between 1987 and 2007, state spending on incarceration related expenses increased 127 percent, while spending on higher education during that same period rose a mere 21 percent. Is it that much more profitable to jail our population than it is to educate it?

**SADE ADONA:** I think that's a great reason to stand there and lock arms and say, "You now what, take me to jail if you're gonna continue to do this. I'd rather go to jail than watch you continue to put my brother or my sister, or my aunt or my uncle, or anybody else that looks like me under arrest." And I think it should be a scary thing, not just for those people of color or minority, but all of us, to know we have to live in a society like that.

### **FIGHTING FORECLOSURE & REFORMING HEALTHCARE**

**Text on Screen:** They have taken our houses through an illegal foreclosure process, despite not having the original mortgage. -From the Declaration of the Occupation of NYC, Sept. 29th, 2011

**NARRATOR:** Okay, so depending on your geographic location, you're everyday reality may reflect the police state we live in, to larger or smaller degrees, but at least you have your health. Right? At least you have your home.

**Occupy Protesters at home foreclosure auction:** "Mic Check! Auction taking place right now, right in front of my camera!" / [auctioneer] thank you.

**NARRATOR:** You're welcome, pal. Sometimes, demanding change on a large scale has to start with small groups of individuals saying 'enough is enough,' like this group of individuals in Worcester, Massachusetts, who gathered in an attempt to stop Bank of America from executing yet another foreclosure auction.

**Occupy Protesters at home foreclosure auction:** [chanting] "What do we do when the banks attack? Stand up, fight back!"

**Film Clip:** [shooting] Let's get out of here!

**NARRATOR:** A lack of government regulations gave banks enough rope to operate like cowboys in the Wild West. And they responded by lassoing homeowners with these predatory lending practices. When the housing bubble burst, Bank of America got bailed out and those with underwater mortgages were sold out so that CEO's like Brian Moynihan could collect a year-end bonus of over 9 million dollars. Are we cool with that?

**GRACE ROSS:** ...And they have enough money to pay for a reasonable mortgage at today's values, so this is something that all of Worcester can stand behind. We believe that when folks have a home that they should be able to stay in that home. And it's not like they're not

willing to pay. This is the weirdest movement I've ever worked in, the anti-foreclosure movement, because we are begging people to take money and they won't take it.

**NARRATOR:** Of course, Occupy hardly invented foreclosure defenses. People like Grace and anti-foreclosure organizations have been toiling away at this for years. But when Occupy Wall Street went to East New York in December to launch "Occupy Our Homes," more and more people around the country started to realize that there was another way to take back control of their lives.

**Anti-foreclosure protest:** [chanting] "We're taking it back!"

**NARRATOR:** And sometimes demanding change on a large-scale starts with even smaller groups. Dr. Margaret Flowers is among the nation's leading advocates for true health care reform. Health care reform that would eliminate the for-profit insurance companies, and provide Medicare for all individuals in the United States. A former pediatrician and congressional fellow, Dr. Flowers worked within the system for years.

**DR. MARGARET FLOWERS:** After the reform passed, I was traveling around the country and people kept saying, "Well, how are we going to get single-payer?" I was speaking around various states and it slowly came together as a movement – even though we're in the majority of the population who wants a single-payer system – we're not going to be strong enough as a single issue movement, to have that kind of political power. Healthcare is really part of a broader social and economic justice movement anyway, and so we really needed to come together, bring our strengths together and combine our strengths to have the power. So, I noticed in my talks I was starting to shift more into calling for a broader movement.

**NARRATOR:** As a core organizer of the October 2011 coalition that occupied Freedom Plaza in Washington D.C., Dr. Flowers thought fit to attend as an uninvited guest. A "Wall Street Comes to Washington Healthcare" conference. I crashed the party with her, although they wouldn't let my big camera in, so I had to shoot the video of this impromptu meeting with the real death panels on my cell phone.

**Dr. Margaret Flowers at "Wall Street Comes to Washington Healthcare" Conference:** Wall Street needs to get out of healthcare now: We need a national healthcare system. This is unacceptable! Doctors are leaving practice because they can't provide quality medicine. I trained at Johns Hopkins hospital, I was #1 in my class and I can't practice medicine. This is violent! Excuse me, take your hands off of me. / [security guard] You need to leave, you are disrupting. . . / No, they need to leave. The real criminals are sitting at this table. The real criminals are the ones that are making money while people are dying. Too many people in this country a year can't get cancer treatment. They have to choose between cancer treatment and sending their children to college. You should be ashamed. Every single one of you should be ashamed for what you're part of. If you're in here, you're with Wall Street. You should be outside with us.

**NARRATOR:** We got bounced, but not arrested and joined protesters picketing outside where Adara Scarlet shared her story of why healthcare was literally a life and death issue.

**ADARA SCARLET:** I came here, because in 2004, my father Martin Ellis Goldstein committed suicide. He shot himself in the head and the reason that he did this was because he had a blood clot, he didn't have enough money to pay for healthcare to take care of it and he didn't want to pass the cost on to my sister and myself. He was 54 years old. This is the most considerate suicide I've ever heard of. He put sticky notes on everything that he had borrowed from anybody, saying "return this book to this person" and etc., etc.

Everything that could have possibly been done, he did it. He even called 9-1-1 right before he shot himself and said, "Please come collect my body so that my daughters will not have to find it." And he says, verbatim in his note, "I am sure you understand that this was something I had to do. Being old and ill without money is simply not an option in this country." That's why I'm here at this march, standing up for people like him. Every person that dies for lack of access to healthcare is somebody's father or son or daughter, and I'm here today to stand up, not only for my father, but for all those like him who have names and who have families.

### **LABOR FIGHTS BACK**

**Text on Screen:** They have continuously sought to strip employees of the right to negotiate for better pay and safer working conditions. -From the "Declaration of the Occupation of NYC," September 29, 2011.

**Occupy Protester:** [Chanting] "An injury to one is an injury to all!" [protestor] All power to the people, thank you!

**NARRATOR:** Okay, you think, "Even though my mortgage is under water and my healthcare costs are going through the roof, this here is America. I'll just pull myself up by the bootstraps and get to work. Nose to the grindstone will solve all ills." But, be careful out there. If you haven't noticed, there is a war on workers well underway. Between 1980 and 2008, the average income of the bottom 90 percent remained effectively unchanged at \$31,000 per year. In that same time span, the average income of the top 1% went from \$400,000 to over \$1.1 million per year. So much for trickle-down economics.

In 1980, a CEO made 42 times that of an average employee. By 2010, CEO's were earning 343 times a worker's median wage. And while the rich got richer, they were paying less and less taxes. In 1945, millionaires payed a tax rate of 66%. In 2010, the millionaire's effective tax rate was 32%. If you're a corporation, things look even better. Bank of America holds over 2.2 trillion in assets and pays less in taxes than the average American household.

In 2010, G.E. reported \$5.2 billion in profit and was awarded a tax refund of \$3.2 billion. Citi group has not paid taxes in the last 4 years and yet, in the wake of the financial crisis,



they are deemed "too big to fail" and received \$476 billion in taxpayer bailout money. And Goldman Sachs has spent \$22 million in campaign contributions and \$21 million in lobbying efforts in the past decade. And in 2008, paid taxes at a rate of (wait for it): 1%.

**Occupy Protester:** [Singing] "Enough is enough is enough is enough! We're not going to take it anymore!"

**Occupy Protester:** I never thought Americans could do this and here we are in New York, finally voicing our opinion, and it feels so good.

**DR. CORNEL WEST:** When 1 percent got 81 percent of all the income growth in 25 years, that's nothing but greed and squeezing working people, rendering poor people invisible. How long did they think we would put up with it? We may have been born at night, but not last night. How long did they think we would be quiet? How long did they think we would be complacent?

**NELINI STAMP:** Down at Occupy Wall Street, we've been down there standing up for you and you. All the workers: D.C. 37, IBEW, CWA. All of the workers and all the people who are in the 99%.

**NARRATOR:** Okay, full disclosure: I've got some real skin in the game when it comes to this anti-worker, war-on-unions thing. My father is a CWA Union leader and an assistant to the man I'm speaking with here. Vice-president of CWA District 1, Chris Shelton. One of the groups CWA represents is Verizon workers, and as of June 2012, the Verizon workers he represents have been working without a contract for over a year. Except, this round of contracts is different. Verizon is trying to break the union. Everything my father worked for his whole career could be gone within his lifetime.

**ROLANDO SCOTT:** So many diverse peoples from many walks of life that recognize that we are the 99%. That at a time of record profits at Verizon, the very same people that have made them lucrative and a rich corporation, they now want to erode away our benefits. Unacceptable from my point of view.

**CHRIS SHELTON:** Verizon should be the poster child for corporate greed, because of all the money they make and what they're trying to do to us and everybody else at the bottom.

**Dennis Trainor interviewing Chris Shelton:** They say it's about saving a million dollars next year, but what do you think that this current negotiation is really about?

**CHRIS SHELTON:** This current negotiation is about destroying our standard of living. This is corporations trying to get what they want, that they've been trying to get for the last 25 years and we cannot let them. That's why Occupy Wall Street's message and our message are exactly the same. Corporate greed is destroying this country and we cannot let it.

**JACKIE DISALVO:** We have built very close ties with the communication workers. Before September 17th, we were already supporting the phone workers and they responded by

supporting us. We went to their last rally at the headquarters: they marched back to the park with us. And some of them slept there. They're going to be in a tough struggle. That's why we're getting this relationship with labor. Labor sees, is relieved, they are... I never expected, when I first started contacting unions, that the response would be so enthusiastic, but the labor movement has been kicked around now for quite a while and they have to fight. And they see people fighting and they see they're fighting the same enemy, and they see them reaching out. This movement has shown such an eagerness to reach out to the mainstream of the American public and the unions represent the organized part of that. The focus on the 1% and the first time in an American movement -- I don't even think in the '30's that the communist party did this and they are mass work -- I don't even think they identified the enemy as the ruling class.

### **CONFRONTING THE MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX**

**President Obama [2012 State of the Union Address]:** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, members of congress, distinguished guests and fellow Americans. . .

**Text on Screen:** They continue to create weapons of mass destruction in order to receive government contracts. -From the "Declaration of the Occupation of NYC," September 29, 2011.

**President Barack Obama [2012 State of the Union Address]:** . . . Last month, I went to Andrews Air Force Base and welcomed home some of our last troops to serve in Iraq. Together we offered a final, proud salute to the colors under which more than a million of our fellow citizens fought. And several thousand gave their lives.

**Text on Screen:** They have participated in the torture and murder of innocent civilians overseas. -From the "Declaration of the Occupation of NYC," September 29, 2011.

**President Barack Obama [2012 State of the Union Address]:** . . . We gather tonight knowing that this generation of heroes has made the United States safer and more respected around the world.

**Text on Screen:** They have perpetuated colonialism at home and abroad. -From the "Declaration of the Occupation of NYC," September 29, 2011.

**NARRATOR:** What's that? You too want to get a standing ovation from both democrats and republicans? Just feed them a lie that feeds the bottom line of the military industrial complex, which just so happens to have embedded itself in every congressional district in the country. Nobody really believes that being the undisputed greatest purveyor of violence in the world actually makes us safer and more respected? I mean, come on. That kind of attitude is not going to earn anyone any Nobel Peace Prizes or anything.

**President Barack Obama [Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech]:** Distinguished members of the Norwegian Nobel committee, citizens of America and citizens of the world. I receive this honor with deep gratitude and great humility.

**NARRATOR:** George Orwell would have had a hard time coming up with this. Are we really this delusional? You see, the more honest we are with ourselves about exactly what our foreign policy is, the better chance we have to stop some of the truly horrific conditions it visits upon many of the people of the world. So, say it with me: The U.S. Foreign Policy is a blowback inducing, homicidal bull in a cultural-religious and geopolitical china shop.

**PHYLLIS BENNIS:** The world didn't change on September 11th. There was tragedy and a horrifying crime. A crime against humanity. Death for far too many people. And too many families left mourning. A city left destroyed. But it was not world-changing; It was not a threat to our country or our democracy. That happened on September 12th.

**SGT. SHAMAR THOMAS:** I served in Iraq in 2004 and 2006. I was in the second battle of Fallujah – "*Al-Fajr*" – in Fallujah in November of 2004. As a human being, and as a person who has a heart, I can't lie to myself or anybody else to say that we had a reason to be there. That there's a reason for the million Iraqis and the 5,000 troops that died. We say we're the greatest country in the world, but we go and kill people in their country yet we don't stop genocides in Africa, we don't help people that we can help. That would be the greatest country in the world, if we can save a million people instead of killing a million people.

**NARRATOR:** If you're not convinced our foreign policy is morally bankrupt, perhaps we should talk about money. Taxpayers in the United States have paid 1.4 trillion dollars for total war spending in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. Have you ever wondered what 1.4 trillion dollars would buy? Well, it could pay the annual energy costs for every household in America for five years. But I hear you saying, that would not do very much to decrease our dependence on foreign oil. Fair enough. 1.4 trillion dollars could convert every home in America to 100 percent solar energy, five times over. Or, it could convert every home in America to 100% wind energy, nine times over. Or, groceries for everyone in the country, free for two years. Or, provide scholarships to every college student in America and award them a \$5,500 grant seven times over. Or, turn all volunteer fire fighters into full time employees and pay them a full salary for 23 years. Or, pay the full time salaries of every public school teacher for the next 6 years.

Instead, we took 1.4 trillion dollars to pay a small black ops team to hunt, track and kill Osama Bin Laden. Oh, we even had money left over in the budget to decimate two countries, launch hostilities resulting in over 1 million innocent civilians dead and counting. Ask yourself: how many orphans going to bed with clenched fists tonight in Afghanistan or Iraq will grow up willing to fly a plane into a building? And how many trillions are we prepared to spend on avenging that future blowback?

In the fall of 2011, a so-called "super committee" made up of six democrats and six republicans was charged with producing a recommendation that would have addressed the

growing deficit. After two months, the super committee delivered the following terse and less-than-super public statement: "After months of hard work and intense deliberations, we have come to the conclusion today that it will not be possible to make any bipartisan agreement available to the public before the committee's deadline." Before that frank declaration of legislative impotence, one member of the 99%, Leah Bolger, spoke for the rest of us.

**Leah Bolger at the Joint Deficit Reduction Committee:** Tax the rich and end the war: that's how we fix the deficit. And all this obfuscation with percentages of GDP, this is just trying to confuse the issue... The vast majority of the public wants you to tax the rich, end the war. We spend more on war spending than the rest of the world combined, and this history of this vast, grotesque spending on wars and the war machine has depleted the base of this economy. We would have enough money for housing and healthcare and everything that we wanted if we stopped spending our money on this black hole of the military machine. It's very obvious. I speak for the 99%. End the wars and tax the rich.

### **STUDENT DEBT: STRATEGIES OF REFUSAL**

**Text on Screen:** They have held student's hostage with tens of thousands of dollars of debt on education, which is itself a human right. -From the "Declaration of the Occupation of NYC," September 29, 2011.

**MIA:** The fact that you can do everything right: go to school and not just go to school, but excel in school; work really, really hard. . . And I graduated and really had the feeling a lot of the time, very consciously in my head, that I might as well not have. You know, I'm in debt now. Was there a reason for me to be in debt?

**Brian Jennings on NBC Nightly News:** *Good evening. Of all the time bombs in the American economy set to explode with dire consequences, this is a big one: staggering debt from student loans. Every one is told a college education is a way to get ahead. College tuitions, though, keep going up. So does the borrowing. And we just hit an awful milestone. Our nation's combined student loan debt has now hit \$1 trillion. That averages out to \$24,000 per student. It's now larger than credit card debt in this country, and it comes just as an entire generation is just starting out.*

**Student Occupiers at The New School:** Public occupation in this New School building! We are protesting student debt and tuition hikes, so join us in this public occupation.

**JOHN NICHOLS:** I don't think that a year ago anybody would have predicted that on a cold, rainy day in November 2011, you would have thousands and thousands of young people out on the streets in New York City and cities across the country. Something has changed, and we journalists ought to be out here paying close attention to it.

**Student Protester:** This is the only chance we have: we do it now or we don't do it, ever.

**DR. JAMAL BRYANT:** We're asking for absolute security on Pell Grants, so that all of our young people might be able to compete on a global stage with affordable education. It is horrific; it is a miscarriage of justice that there is, in fact, more student loan debt than there is credit card debt.

**MONICA JOHNSON:** When congress raises loan limits, schools respond to those increased loan limits by raising tuition because they think that students can afford to pay more, because they're actually allowed more loan money. Nobody really has the option to expect to get a comfortable job and not go to college. We don't have an unskilled workforce anymore: for the workforce that we have right now, it's socially irresponsible not to go to school because the entire workforce is predicated on higher education. I think our education system hasn't caught up to our economy yet and that's one of the problems and that's where this problem is coming in. That's why people are speaking up, that's why I'm here.

There are no bankruptcy protections for any student loans. This is the only loan in all of U.S. history that you can't ever default on. You can't ever discharge this with bankruptcy. The idea of the EDU Debtor's Union is based on the labor union model. And what they did effectively, when our economy was very different, when there was so-called "unskilled labor," they negotiated with the factories for better working conditions so that they could go back to work. Just that same way the EDU Debtor's Union could renegotiate a better contract or arrangement with our lenders so that we can repay our loans. It's employing an autonomous strategy of refusal. So, you refuse to do something, you're saying no to something in favor of making things better.

### **WHOSE EARTH? OUR EARTH!**

**Text on Screen:** They have purposely covered up oil spills, accidents, faulty bookkeeping, and inactive ingredients in pursuit of profit. -From "The Declaration of the Occupation of NYC," September 29, 2011.

**Text on Screen:** They have poisoned the food supply through negligence, and undermined the farming system through monopolization. -From "The Declaration of the Occupation of NYC," September 29, 2011.

**Text on Screen:** They continue to block alternate forms of energy to keep us dependent on oil. From "The Declaration of the Occupation of NYC," September 29, 2011.

**GEORGE BARDA:** This is the last great hope for life as we know it. It's really about 'do we believe in a better world than this? Can we imagine another world that is possible?'

**COLIN MOYMEYER:** Just all these effects, that are so massive. Whether it's BP dumping a bunch of oil in the ocean; the tar sands, I think, are the size of Florida at this point in Alberta. I was really interested in the tar sands protest this summer, because to see 1,000 plus people getting arrested like that, willfully, was pretty amazing. . .

**Tar Sands Protester:** I've got a message for all of you today here: Tar sands oil is unethical. In order to get tar sands oil, you have to destroy the earth.

**COLIN MOYMEYER:** . . . So I think that, fine, stop the pipeline. But, what happens after that? Another standoff with big oil? I think so. I don't think the environment's going to magically heal itself because we stop a pipeline. And the thing about the pipeline, and one reason it makes it so urgent, is that NASA scientist, James Hanson, who broke global warming originally a few decades back, says that the pipeline will be game over. 'Game over' means an uninhabitable earth.

**LAUREN MINIS:** We're dreamers. And in the movement, we are actually doing it. We are creating it as we go. And I think that, until the people who are the naysayers come down, talk and actually get involved, they're never going to understand it. They need to allow themselves to open up. We're opening ourselves to the other criticism, we're opening ourselves to have a dialogue and we want people to be able to open themselves up too. It's going to take time. We can't force it, but we are not going to let things get in our way, because we see a better world. We have a vision for a better world. There's this organization called "The Center for the New American Dream." We're creating the new dream.

**Occupy Protesters:** [singing] "The people, united, will never be divided!"

### **MONEY IS NOT FREE SPEECH**

**NARRATOR:** "Starting today," just as John Paul Stevens wrote in the 2010 dissenting opinion of the landmark Citizens United versus FEC supreme court case...

**Text on Screen:** They have influenced the courts to achieve the same rights as people, with none of the culpability or responsibility. -From "The Declaration of the Occupation of NYC," September 29, 2011.

**NARRATOR:** *... "The court's approach to the First Amendment will undoubtedly cripple the ability of ordinary citizens, Congress, and the states to adopt even limited measures to protect against corporate domination of the electoral process. Corporations with large war chests to deploy on electioneering may find democratically elected bodies more attuned to their interests."*

**DAVID DEGRAW:** Overturning Citizens United is a necessary step, but it's a baby step.

**NARRATOR:** In January of 2012, on the 2nd anniversary of the Citizens United Supreme Court ruling, Occupy and Occupy-allied groups converged from all over the country to begin those baby steps of overturning Citizens United.

**GEORGE FRIDAY:** It's time for intervention, y'all. Have you ever seen that show "Intervention"? At the end, they show you all the savvy stuff, and they sit around with somebody who has issues and problems and they talk about, you know, how badly that person has done and what they're going to do if they don't change their behavior. And, for us, we're dealing with folks who have a serious addiction to corporate money, don't you think? Now, we can't expect them to get off it on their own. They've been smoking that crack-rock of corporate money for a minute. And crack-rock can be very easily addictive. Somebody who was cool six years ago, stuck up on the crack-rock this time.

**BILL MOYER:** The Occupy movement has become a conduit and a venue for talking about this corruption. So folks like Move to Amend, they're really, in my mind, setting the bar for the critique that corporations are not persons, money is property, not speech and constitutional rights are for people only.

**THOM HARTMAN:** In 1856 in Dred Scott, this same Supreme Court said that people are property. Dred Scott affirmed slavery. In 2010, the Supreme Court said property is people. Both decisions are insane.

**Move to Amend Protesters:** [chanting] "Rights are for people, not for corporations!"

**DAVID COBB:** My name is David Cobb, I am the spokesperson for the Move to Amend Coalition, a multiracial . . . Yeah, shout out! The Move to Amend coalition is a multiracial, multiethnic coalition of groups, individuals, and organizations coming together with a singular purpose. To demand, to win a constitutional amendment to make it clear, corporations are not persons. They do not have inherent, inalienable rights. And money is not political speech. And I want to be clear: the Move to Amend coalition is committed to both doctrines must be abolished. We cannot overturn corporate personhood and still allow wealthy individuals to spend unlimited amounts of money on our elections. Are we right? Are you with us?

**SHAHID BUTTAR:** Deep in the hearts and minds, trying to find something higher than what we're all mired in / Democracy? Monstrosity. Look around, it's a power monopoly. / Have you noticed? People are like the stubble our society shaves / we get treated like refuse / with the excuse that someone's gotta lose for some corporation to win, as if it's not one world we all live in. / Built on the backs of our poorest brothers, we've all forgotten the things we're all taught by our mothers / share, care for the people out there, be they dark or pail, cool or swell, bald or hairy as the monkey's we all evolved from / Greed, arrogance, pride, vice / it would be so much better if we just remembered that corporations are our creations. It is we, the people, who comprise this nation. / Corporations are our creations. It is we, the people, who comprise this nation.

### **ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE**

**CAL COLGAN:** People are realizing, at the very least, that the way our economic system currently runs is not democratic. It's not beneficial to the vast majority of people and, until

we have some kind of economic democracy wherein the vast majority of people in their communities and their workplaces have more decisions over what these corporations do – if we want to have corporations at all – then political democracy is a sham.

**KEVIN ZEESE:** Just like we all pay a tax on necessities, we buy food and clothing and shelter, if you start to tax the purchase of stocks, bonds and derivatives, suddenly you could solve the deficit problem in two years. And then you look at the military budget, the obscenity of the military budget -- the United States spends as much as the whole world combined, at a time when our infrastructure is literally a D-level grade, according to the American Society of the Civil Engineers. We get a D and they say it threatens the future of our economy that our infrastructure is falling apart. And so, if you face up to those two issues – which are just wrong and unfair, the 1% and the military-industrial complex – suddenly, we have solutions to all the issues we face. Suddenly, there's money to invest in a new, green, sustainable economy. Suddenly there's money to reformat homes so they're not wasting energy, so you could turn roads into solar panels. That's all possible.

**NAOMI KLEIN:** We have picked a fight with the most powerful interests on the planet. That can be a little frightening. As this movement grows, it will get more frightening. There will be a temptation to switch to smaller targets, like the person sitting next to you. After all, that is an easier fight to win. Let's treat each other as if we plan to work side-by-side for many, many years to come. Let's treat this beautiful movement as if it is the most important thing in the world, because it is. It really is. Thank you.

**NARRATOR:** They say that the Occupy movement's major victory to date is that we have changed the conversation. That people are now debating issues such as wealth inequality. At this point, I think we can all agree there is no debate: there is inequity when it comes to wealth. Period. Full stop. And it is growing. And the super-rich are not super-rich because of some force of nature, like summer morphing into fall or heat always going to cold. They are super-rich as a result of their active participation in, or their willingness to be accessories to, criminally rigged, homicidal force of a system. What the Occupy movement has done, and why people armed with nothing more than an idea are being suppressed, often violently, is to acknowledge that so many issues are connected.

Anti-war activists, or true health care reform advocates, or housing, or labor rights advocates, or banking reform advocates, you name it, are now all shining a light on the root cause of inequity. You see, our foreign policy does, in fact, limit our options when it comes healthcare reform. A shareholder capitalism, one that demands growth every quarter, is directly contributing to the assault on collective bargaining issues. The American Dream itself, the way it is understood by many, is a myth of rags to riches. "Anyone can be a millionaire", "greed is good", "grab the most toys before you die" ethos should be euthanized for the greater good and the birth of a new American dream based on equity, sustainability and the general welfare of the people should be brought into being. And by "people", I mean people, not corporations.

**BILL MOYER:** I was out here during the day before inauguration. It was Martin Luther King Day in 2009. People, total strangers, were hugging each other on the streets. We were



having conversations across class and race lines. And all of a sudden, we felt hope. Well, some of us knew better. There's no messiah that's going to get elected by this system and deliver hope and change we can believe in.

**NARRATOR:** So how will the Occupy movement that has wisely stayed away from promoting political parties or individual politicians, navigate the minefield of the potentially co-opting force that is the presidential election cycle?

**NATHAN SCHNEIDER:** Now, this year is just going to be nuts. We've never seen this much money spent on a political process in the history of the world. And this comes at a time, for a movement, that is determinably opposed to this mad influx of money in politics. So, it's going to be a really scary contrast and the challenge of this movement is to create a counter-narrative. Is to show that the justice of its cause is more interesting than anything these candidates can put on television.

**NARRATOR:** I mentioned at the beginning that this movie is an invitation for you to join the Occupy movement. But there are no membership dues, no papers to sign. All that is required is the willingness to see the world as it is and decide that you are going to be part of the solution. Occupy is less of an organization and more of an organism: A living, breathing multi-tentacled force that refuses to find a niche or be pushed into a corner. This organism is still a baby and the narrative it will be telling in the years to come is yours to write. What's your alternative?

**LEE CAMP:** ...And the revolution is not going to wait until you do your Pilates lesson and your fucking hair appointment . . . Alright, and if the revolution may not be televised, but it will be digitized and posted on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and anywhere real ideas are doled. All right. So the revolution apologizes for shitting all over your apathy. Now pick a side.

**NARRATOR:** Thanks, Lee. I couldn't have said it better myself. So when they say "why Occupy?" what will your answer be?

**TRAVIS MORALES:** For the first time in decades, people were really discussing, does the world have to be this way? And how can we bring a better world into being?

**ALICE WOODWARD:** I think there's historical lessons involved here too, like the Freedom Riders. They had to keep coming back and coming back, but they did that because they knew they were right and they knew they could change the equation through actually putting something on the line.

**Occupy Protester:** [chanting] "I believe that we can win!"

[END]