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CONTACT

Mary Lugo	770/623-8190	lugo@negia.net
Cara White	843/881-1480	carapub@aol.com
Randall Cole	415/356-8383 x254	randall_cole@itvs.org
Desiree Gutierrez	415/356-8383 x244	desiree_gutierrez@itvs.org

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Program companion website: www.pbs.org/redhookjustice



**"RED HOOK JUSTICE" TO AIR NATIONALLY
ON PBS SERIES INDEPENDENT LENS**

**New Documentary by Meema Spadola Explores a
Revolutionary Community Court System That Is
Changing The Face of Justice Nationwide**

*Hosted by Susan Sarandon Tuesday, May 24, 2005 at 10:00 P.M.
(check local listings)*

*"The Red Hook Community Justice Center—the first multi-jurisdictional court
in the country—seeks not only to ensure that the wheels of justice turn smoothly
and quickly, but also to help those who come before it to turn their lives around."*

—RUDOLPH GIULIANI, FORMER NEW YORK MAYOR

(San Francisco) — The Independent Television Service (ITVS) presents **RED HOOK JUSTICE**, a new documentary by acclaimed filmmaker Meema Spadola. An up-close examination of a revolutionary new type of community court, which was the first of its kind and has since served as a model for cities nationwide, **RED HOOK JUSTICE** will air nationally on the PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Susan Sarandon, on Tuesday, May 24, 2005 at 10 PM (check local listings).

In 2000, an experimental court opened its doors in Red Hook, Brooklyn—a neighborhood plagued by a cycle of unemployment, poverty and crime. The Red Hook Community Justice Center (RHCJC) is at the center of a legal revolution—the community justice movement. Instead of jail time, offend-

ers are sentenced to job training, drug counseling and community service. But it's no easy way out. If they fail, they face jail time.



Our nation's criminal courts are clogged with over 11 million low-level crimes each year, many of them committed by repeat offenders. RHCJC was created to stop the revolving door approach to these crimes by turning around the lives of those who find themselves repeatedly before the bench and healing the surrounding community. **RED HOOK JUSTICE** profiles the early years of this bold new "problem-solving court." The filmmakers were allowed exclusive access at the RHCJC for nearly two years, capturing vérité scenes of intake

interviews in the Center's holding cells, court proceedings, community meetings and other day-to-day workings of the Justice Center.

RED HOOK JUSTICE focuses on the dramatic stories of three Red Hook defendants and a handful of staffers at the Center. The stories told include those of Anthony and Michael, orphaned teen brothers who have multiple drug arrests and are struggling to get their lives on track while they resist the pull of the streets and a family legacy of death and jail. We meet Letitia, who has sold drugs and worked as a prostitute. She gets pregnant shortly after being arrested while trying to buy heroin. She has already lost two children to the foster care system, but if she stays off drugs, she'll have another shot at motherhood.

Also featured is Brett Taylor, a passionate Legal Aid defender who handles a hundred criminal cases at a time, and wonders if this new court helps or hurts his clients; Leroy Davis, a court officer who grew up in the Red Hook housing projects; District Attorney Gerianne Abriano, who works to redefine the role of prosecutor and sometimes finds herself in the unlikely position of advocating for drug treatment rather than jail; and Judge Alex Calabrese, the public face of the court who takes a hands-on approach with defendants.



The U.S. Department of Justice has called the Red Hook Community Justice Center "a standard bearer for the entire country." Indeed, today there are three dozen courts like it around the United States, and justice centers are opening in Europe. **RED HOOK JUSTICE** graphically and dramatically illustrates what this new kind of court can and will mean for the other targeted neighborhoods worldwide.

The program's interactive companion website (www.pbs.org/redhookjustice) features detailed information on the film, including an interview with the filmmaker, crew bios as well as links and resources pertaining to the film's subject matter. The site also features a "talkback" section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film and more.

RED HOOK JUSTICE was produced with support from The Sundance Documentary Fund, The New York Bar Foundation, The Soros Documentary Fund, Wellspring Foundation, and The Lucius & Eva Eastman

Fund. Women Make Movies, Inc. served as a fiscal sponsor for the project.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Meema Spadola (Producer/Director/Co-Writer)

Meema Spadola is a producer, director and writer in television and radio in Brooklyn (a short subway ride from Red Hook). Spadola has produced documentaries for PBS, HBO, Cinemax, Sundance Channel, Metro Channel, and NPR. Past work includes the *Independent Lens* documentary **GUNS & MOTHERS**, about two mothers on opposite sides of the gun control debate, co-produced with director Thom Powers. Spadola's ITVS documentary **OUR HOUSE** premiered on PBS in 2000, and featured the sons and daughters in five diverse gay and lesbian American families. It received jury awards for Best Documentary at both the New York and Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Film Festivals, and has been broadcast worldwide.

Spadola and Powers' documentaries *Breasts* and *Private Dicks* about women's and men's attitudes about their bodies have been broadcast on HBO to critical acclaim and high ratings. HBO's 2001 adaptation of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* featured interviews produced by Spadola. She produced the four-part series *Shorts From the Underground* for Sundance Channel. Spadola's radio documentaries have appeared on National Public Radio's *This American Life*. She is the author of *Breasts: Our Most Public Private Part* (Wildcat Canyon Press), based on her documentary, and was a contributor to *Out of the Ordinary* (St. Martin's Press) a collection of essays by sons and daughters with LGBT parents. Her knitting patterns have appeared in *Stitch N' Bitch* (Workman Press) and the magazine *Interweave Knits*. Spadola grew up in Searsmont, Maine and graduated from Sarah Lawrence College. For more information, visit sugarpictures.com.

David Moore (Editor)

Moore most recently edited *When Oceans Meet Sky*, which screened at SXSW, The Newfest, and The Los Angeles Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. His other editing credits include **GUNS & MOTHERS** (Independent Lens), *Loving and Cheating* (Cinemax) and *Justifiable Homicide*.

LisaGay Hamilton (Narrator)

Hamilton is an actor and documentary filmmaker. She starred on ABC's *The Practice* for seven years. Hamilton's film credits include *The Truth About Charlie* and *Beloved* for director Jonathan Demme. Her documentary *Beah* premiered on HBO in 2004.

Justin Schein (Director of Photography)

Schein is an award-winning director and cinematographer who specializes in shooting cinema vérité documentary. Most recently he shot and produced a documentary about young gun owners for MTV. Past camera credits include *America Rebuilds: A Year at Ground Zero* (PBS), *Kofi Annan Eye of the Storm* (BBC), and *Explorer* (National Geographic), and numerous episodes of the MTV documentary series *True Life*. Schein co-founded NY based Shadowbox Films Inc. in 1998 with David Mehlman.

Ethan Stoller (Original Music)

Stoller is a composer, multi-instrumentalist, and music historian in Chicago. **RED HOOK JUSTICE** is his first full-length score. Since then, he created the score for *Loving and Cheating* (Cinemax). Stoller was a music advisor for *The Matrix Revolution* directed by the Wachowski brothers. Most recently, he produced a CD called *I Believe in You* under the name Dynamite Ham.

Thom Powers (Co-Producer)

Powers is a documentary filmmaker and writer in Queens, NY. His most recent film, *Loving and Cheating* (Cinemax), exploring monogamy and infidelity, was praised by the *Los Angeles Times* as "subtly revealing and sophisticated." His previous film **GUNS AND MOTHERS** (*Independent Lens*), was described by *Time Out* as "heart-wrenching...an admirably respectful analysis of both sides of a divisive issue." In collaboration with Meema Spadola, he produced the widely acclaimed *Private Dicks: Men Exposed* (HBO) and *Breasts* (Cinemax). He teaches documentary film at New York University. He is currently writing a book about the history of American documentary called *Stranger Than Fiction for Faber & Faber*.

Sam Pollard (Editing Consultant)

Pollard is a documentary filmmaker and editor of documentaries and feature films. Most recently, he edited the ITVS and P.O.V documentary **CHISHOLM '72** directed by Shola Lynch which played at the Sundance Film Festival. He also edited the Spike Lee films *4 Little Girls*, *Clockers*, *Jungle Fever*, *Mo' Better Blues* among many others.

Nancy Roach (Editing Consultant)

Nancy Roach is a documentary editor and producer. Past work includes Spadola's ITVS documentary **OUR HOUSE**; the *American Masters* program *Finding Lucy*; and Jem Cohen and Peter Sillen's film *Benjamin Smoke*. She also produced and edited segments for PBS's *LIFE 360*.

Eliza Byard (Co-writer)

Eliza Byard has worked on numerous award-winning productions for public television, including *Out of the Past*, *School of Colors*, and *Genesis: A Living Conversation with Bill Moyers*. She is currently the Deputy Executive Director of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).

ABOUT THE RED HOOK COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER

In 2000, an experimental court opened its doors in Red Hook and has since become a model for community courts in cities across the country. This new court seeks to stop crime and heal the surrounding community. It is at the center of a legal revolution—the community justice movement. When it opened, it was the first of its kind. Now it has been replicated in communities across the United States (see list at the end of this section). This innovative project draws both supporters and detractors.

On the Web site for the Center for Court Innovation, (www.courtinnovation.org), a partner in the development and administration of the RHCJC, the project is described as the nation's first multi-jurisdictional community court. Operating out of a refurbished Catholic school in the heart of a low-income Brooklyn neighborhood, the Justice Center seeks to solve neighborhood problems like drugs, "quality-of-life" crimes, juvenile delinquency, family dysfunction, domestic violence, and landlord-tenant disputes. At Red Hook, a single judge hears neighborhood cases that under ordinary circumstances would go to three different courts—Civil, Family and Criminal. The goal is to offer a coordinated, rather than piecemeal, approach to people's problems. The Red Hook judge has an array of sanctions and services at his disposal, including community restitution projects, on-site job training, drug treatment, and mental health counseling—all rigorously monitored to ensure accountability and drive home notions of individual responsibility.

But the Red Hook story goes far beyond what happens in the courtroom. The courthouse is the hub for an array of unconventional programs that engage local residents in "doing justice." These include mediation, community service projects that put local volunteers to work repairing conditions of disorder, and a Youth Court where teenagers resolve actual cases involving their peers. The idea here is to engage the community

in aggressive crime prevention, solving local problems before they even come to court.

The Justice Center is the product of a unique public-private partnership led by the New York State Unified Court System and the City of New York. Planning was underwritten by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and Drug Courts Program Office. Other supporters include the Kings County District Attorney's Office, the National Institute of Justice, New York City Housing Authority, Scherman Foundation, Shubert Foundation, Fund for the City of New York and Booth Ferris Foundation. An array of local partners provides social services. In 2003, the Red Hook Community Justice Center was awarded the Silver Medal Ruby Bruner Award for Urban Excellence.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY JUSTICE MOVEMENT

According to the Community Justice Exchange (www.communityjustice.org), community justice brings together citizens and the criminal justice system to solve neighborhood problems. Community justice programs are collaborations among a range of traditionally separate entities, including ordinary citizens, criminal justice agencies, other government agencies, and social service providers. They emphasize neighborhood-focused problem solving. They posit a belief that citizens are customers to whom the justice system must be accountable. They aspire to improve public confidence in the justice system. Some also pursue restorative justice, which aims to heal the damage crime does to the victim, the community, and the offender.

UNITED STATES COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTERS as of 1/05

The following jurisdictions currently have community courts in operation:

Atlanta, Georgia; Austin, Texas; Brooklyn, New York (Red Hook Community Justice Center); Dallas, Texas; Dakota County, Minnesota; Denver, Colorado; Harlem, New York; Hartford, Connecticut; Gresham, Oregon; Hempstead, New York; Indianapolis, Indiana; Los Angeles (Van Nuys), California; Memphis, Tennessee (four courts); Minneapolis, Minnesota; New York, New York (Midtown Community Court); Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Portland, Oregon (three courts); San Diego, California; St. Paul, Minnesota; Syracuse, New York; Washington, DC; Waterbury, Connecticut; West Palm Beach, Florida.

The following jurisdictions are planning community courts:

Buffalo, New York; Orange County, California; Richmond County, New York; Seattle, Washington; Tacoma, Washington

Beyond these U.S. Community Courts, a Community Justice Center has been established in Liverpool, England. Other European, Australian and South African cities are exploring similar courts.

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

Independent Lens is an Emmy Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. Hosted by Susan Sarandon, the acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. **Independent Lens** features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history, which prompted Nancy Franklin to write in *The New Yorker*: "Watching **Independent Lens**... is like going into an independent bookstore—you don't always find what you were looking for but you often find something you didn't even know you wanted." Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites, and national publicity and community outreach campaigns. Further information about the series is available at www.pbs.org/independentlens. **Independent Lens** is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by



the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts.

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series ***Independent Lens*** on Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting www.itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People.

ABOUT PBS

PBS is a private, nonprofit media enterprise that serves the nation's 349 public noncommercial television stations, reaching nearly 90 million people each week. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is the leading provider of educational materials for K-12 teachers, and offers a broad array of educational services for adult learners. PBS' premier kids' TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online (pbskids.org), continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at pbs.org, the leading dot-org Web site on the Internet. PBS is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia.



ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People.

Pressroom for more information and/or downloadable images: www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos
Program companion website: www.pbs.org/redhookjustice