



PRESENTS

THE GARDEN

A film by Scott Hamilton Kennedy

2008 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE: Best Documentary Feature



OPENS APRIL 24 AT LANDMARK NUART IN LOS ANGELES
NATIONAL EXPANSION TO FOLLOW

A Black Valley Films Production, In Association With Katahdin Productions and Impact Partners

Produced & Directed by: Scott Hamilton Kennedy

Co-Produced by: Vivianne Nacif, Dominique Derrenger

Executive Produced by: Julie Bergman Sender and Stuart Sender

Running Time: 80 minutes

Rating: Not Rated by the MPAA

DISTRIBUTOR CONTACT:

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- SYNOPSIS

THE GARDEN is a powerful look at the famous political and social battle over the largest community garden in the U.S (located in South Central Los Angeles).

A follow-up to Kennedy's award-winning documentary OT: OUR TOWN, the film shows how the politics of power and greed (backroom deals, land developing, green politics, money) tragically intersect with working class families who rely on this communal garden for their livelihood. THE GARDEN exposes the fault lines in American society and raises crucial and challenging questions about liberty, equality, and justice for the poorest and most vulnerable among us.

As questions about the environment, climate change, energy consumption, and especially access to healthy organic food and the greening of our cities and our economy move to the forefront, THE GARDEN serves as a startling wake up call. The garden, a 14-acre parcel in South Central LA, one of our most infamous urban areas, challenges us to reexamine our priorities and values in the urgency of this moment of economic crisis and opportunity.

- STATEMENT FROM DIRECTOR – SCOTT HAMILTON KENNEDY

There are so many reasons I was inspired to pick up my camera and follow this story. The first time I stepped onto the garden at 41st and Alameda, the city of Los Angeles seemed to vanish. Surrounded by varieties of fruits, vegetables and herbs, the smell, the air was different immediately. And the people: warm, humble, generous in spirit and with the bounty of their plots. But there was another characteristic to the farmers that is essential to this story: while most had never done anything political before, they found a way to get organized, ask questions, do research, and not give up without a fair assessment of what happened here.

So with the threat of bulldozers only weeks away, my journey with THE GARDEN began.

At every turn, we were faced with more and more complex questions, like what is the best use of our limited lands, and how do we make sure that all parties are equally represented in that discussion? Do any of us rise to such challenges as ‘Justice for all,’ or are we more often derailed by things like bias, self-interest, greed, and ego?

To me it is both simple and wickedly complex, timeless and timely: a fascinating story about the many layers of America.

At a moment when economic insecurity abounds—as rising food prices, energy and environmental crisis confront us at seemingly every turn— THE GARDEN tells an essential story and serves as a powerful symbol of the larger world around us.

-PRODUCTION NOTES

The fourteen-acre community garden at 41st and Alameda in South Central Los Angeles is the largest of its kind in the United States. Started as a form of healing after the devastating L.A. riots in 1992, the South Central Farmers have since created a miracle in one of the country's most blighted neighborhoods. Growing their own food. Feeding their families. Creating a community.

But now, bulldozers are poised to level their 14-acre oasis.

THE GARDEN follows the plight of the farmers, from the tilled soil of this urban farm to the polished marble of City Hall. Mostly immigrants from Latin America, from countries where they feared for their lives if they were to speak out, we watch them organize, fight back, and demand answers:

Why was the land sold to a wealthy developer for millions less than fair-market value? Why was the transaction done in a closed-door session of the LA City Council? Why has it never been made public?

And the powers-that-be have the same response: "The garden is wonderful, but there is nothing more we can do."

If everyone told you nothing more could be done, would you give up?

* * *

- RECENT UPDATES (note: spoiler alert)

Real estate developer Ralph Horowitz plans to build warehouses on the former site of the garden for the clothing company FOREVER 21. Mr. Horowitz had been attempting to avoid conducting an 'environmental impact' report before starting to build, but the farmers protested at City Hall again, and won – stopping the warehouse construction. And an investigation by the Los Angeles Times discovered that FOREVER 21 has contributed 1.3 million dollars to the campaigns and pet projects of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, casting further doubt on the integrity of the process that led to the destruction of the garden. As of April 2009, the property is still dirt. The story continues...

Read the whole story here:

latimes.com/news/local/la-me-farm18-2008aug18,0,979431.story
[And for more on the farmers: southcentralfarmers.com](http://southcentralfarmers.com)

- FILMMAKER BIOS

SCOTT HAMILTON KENNEDY

Director / Producer / Camera / Editor

Scott's debut documentary, OT: OUR TOWN, was an official selection and won awards at some of the top film festivals in the world. In its theatrical release, OT garnered rave reviews and was selected for several 'best of' lists (including Kenneth Turan of the L.A. Times). OT was also honored by being 'short listed' for an Oscar nomination and was nominated for Best Documentary at the Independent Spirit Awards.

Scott started his career in music videos, making several number-one internationally aired videos including Jimmy Cliff's remake of "I Can See Clearly Now." As a director, Scott has worked with Showtime, CBS, AMC, Roger Corman, and Mattel.

Scott is developing his narrative feature script UP RIVER, an urban adventure movie set on the L.A. River, which went through the IFP/FIND Directors Lab. He is also in post-production on a reality series entitled FAME HIGH, a show about the L.A. County High School for the Arts (LACHSA) which follows freshman and seniors through a school year as they try to become successful actors, singers, dancers, and musicians.

JULIE BERGMAN SENDER & STUART SENDER

Executive Producers

Julie Bergman Sender has worked as a film producer and executive at Warner Bros., Universal and Disney producing a dozen feature films and working with industry notables such as Sydney Pollack and Jodie Foster.

Stuart Sender has written, produced, and directed award-winning news and documentary programs for public and network television in the United States and abroad. His film PRISONER OF PARADISE was nominated for an Academy Award and Directors Guild Award for Best Documentary.

In addition to producing feature and documentary films, Julie and Stuart and their company Balcony Films create, produce, and distribute national media and public service campaigns focusing on social issues; reaching hundreds of millions of viewers and participants on television, on radio, on-line and in print--garnering tens of millions of dollars in free and earned media and helping to register millions of new voters.

VIVIANNE NACIF & DOMINIQUE DERRENGER

Co-Producers

Vivianne Nacif is the daughter of a Christian Mexican Lebanese father and a Jewish American mother. Born and raised in Mexico City and educated in the French, Mexican, and American educational systems, Vivianne was destined to be different and borderless. Vivianne has worked in front of the camera in a myriad of projects, including acting with Culture Clash. Her credits are not limited to acting: she has taught at-risk kids through The Old Globe Theatre, The Shakespeare Festival, The Virginia Avenue Project, and at Optimist Youth Center with 'The Unusual Suspects.'

Dominique Derrenger started working in creative development at Columbia Pictures on such notable films as DESPERADO and THE PEOPLE VS. LARRY FLYNT. As an executive at Jim Henson Pictures he helped develop, and bring to the screen, BUDDY and THE MUPPETS IN SPACE. He independently produced and directed the feature documentary ALL FOR ONE: IN THE SPIRIT OF THE RACE which premiered at the Hot Springs Film Festival, served as a co-producer of the TLC television series FAKING IT, and recently co-produced the feature comedy PUNCHING THE CLOWN which is premiering at the Austin Film Festival this fall.

ALEX BLATT & TYSON FITZGERALD

Editors

Alex Blatt has worked with critically acclaimed filmmakers such as Gregg Araki (SPLENDOR, MYSTERIOUS SKIN, SMILEY FACE), Victor Nunez (COASTLINES), Larry Clark (WASSUP ROCKERS, IMALED). Alex also edited David Munro's FULL GROWN MEN, which premiered at the 2006 Tribeca Film Festival. Since then, Alex edited A BEAUTIFUL LIFE, a film by acclaimed filmmaker Alejandro Chomski (HOY Y MANANA, FEEL THE NOISE).

Tyson FitzGerald was born in Atlanta, GA, and moved to Los Angeles to attend film school at USC. He has edited a wide variety of projects from reality television to music videos. This is his first time cutting a feature length documentary. His other accomplishments include speaking Japanese and playing classical piano.

GABRIEL TENORIO & DOUG DEANGELIS

Composers

Gabriel Tenorio is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, and performer from Los Angeles. He has toured internationally with his group Domingosiete and has worked in a wide array of styles with many artists including Alejandro Escovedo and Vincio Capossela. His work can be heard on current films such as WASSUP ROCKER by Larry Clark and THE GARCIA GIRLS by Georgina Garcia. He's a Leo and likes to workout at the gym. Mmmm....

Doug DeAngelis began his career in Boston where he recorded the Nine Inch Nails hit "Head Like A Hole" with world-renowned producer Flood. In 1991, he moved to New York City where he amassed over 300 album credits including 31 #1 Billboard Chart singles with artists like New Order, Janet Jackson, Chaka Khan, Love and Rockets, Alicia Keyes, and No Doubt. As a composer, his music has appeared in CSI, STUDIO 60 LIVE ON THE SUNSET STRIP, DIRTY SEXY MONEY, MEN IN TREES, ALIAS, COLD CASE, SMITH, BLADES OF GLORY, EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH, ER, and SPECIES – THE AWAKENING.

ABOUT KATAHDIN PRODUCTIONS

Katahdin Productions is a nonprofit documentary production company based in Berkeley, California, with production offices in Los Angeles. The mission of Katahdin Productions is to tell compelling stories often ignored by mainstream media – stories that inspire, engage, and even enrage. Founded in 2003 by Lisa Thomas, cofounder and former CEO of Clif Bar, Inc., Katahdin is dedicated to creating and supporting high-quality documentary films, ancillary educational materials and media projects that touch the soul as they sound a call to action. For more information, please visit www.katahdin.org.

ABOUT IMPACT PARTNERS

Impact Partners is a film investment services group for high-net worth individuals who seek to promote social change through film. We pursue a dual-bottom line: we aim for both profit and the creation of films with significant social value.

Films that IP members have financed or co-financed include BORN INTO BROTHELS (winner of the 2005 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature); FREEHELD (winner of the 2007 Academy Award for Best Documentary Short); GHOSTS OF ABU GHRAIB (winner of the 2007 Emmy for Best Documentary Special); and THE GARDEN (nominated for the 2008 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature). IP had four films at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival: CHILDREN OF INVENTION, NO IMPACT MAN, SERGIO, and THE GLASS HOUSE.

IP is currently in production or development on more than 10 films, including new projects by Josh Marston (MARIA FULL OF GRACE), Jose Padilha (ELITE SQUAD, BUS 174), Rachel Boynton (OUR BRAND IS CRISIS), and Susan Motamed (ENRON: THE SMARTEST GUYS IN THE ROOM).

Impact Partners was co-founded by Dan Cogan and Geralyn Dreyfous. The Executive Director of Impact Partners is Dan Cogan.

- CAST OF CHARACTERS



Tezozomoc, Farm Leader



Rufina Juárez, Farm Leader



Josefina Medina, Farmer



'Don' Eddie Luvianos Rumbos, Farmer



Deacon Alexander, Ex-Black Panther/Activist



Miguel Perez, Ex-Brown Beret/Activist



Dan Stormer, Civil Rights Lawyer



Doris Bloch, Founder of the garden



Jan Perry, City Councilwoman, 9th district



Juanita Tate, Founder Concerned Citizens of South Central L.A.

CREW

Produced and Directed by Scott Hamilton Kennedy
Executive Producers Stuart Sender
Julie Bergman Sender
Co-Producers Vivianne Nacif
Dominique Derrenger
Camera Scott Hamilton Kennedy
Still Photography Donald Rogers
Don Normark
Editors Alex Blatt
Tyson FitzGerald
Scott Hamilton Kennedy
Composers Gabriel Tenorio
Doug DeAngelis
Sound Scott Hamilton Kennedy

FEATURING

Tezozomoc
Rufina Juarez
Josefina Medina
'Don' Eddie Luvianos Rumbos
Deacon Alexander
Miguel Perez
Dan Stormer
Doris Bloch
Jan Perry
Juanita Tate
Antonio Villaraigosa
Dennis Kucinich
Daryl Hannah
Joan Baez
Willie Nelson
Maxine Waters
John Quigley
Danny Glover
Zack de la Rocha