



# Kids for Ca\$h

"I Wanted Them To Be Scared Out Of Their Minds."

– Judge Mark A. Ciavarella

**Presented by: SenArt Films**

[www.KidsForCashTheMovie.com](http://www.KidsForCashTheMovie.com)

Runtime: 102 minutes



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## ABOUT THE STORY

KIDS FOR CASH is a riveting look behind the notorious scandal that rocked the nation. Beginning in the wake of the shootings at Columbine, a small town in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania elected a charismatic judge who was hell-bent on keeping kids in line. Under his reign, over 3,000 children were ripped from their families and imprisoned for years for crimes as petty as creating a fake MySpace page. When one parent dared to question this harsh brand of justice, it was revealed that the judge had received millions of dollars in payments from the privately-owned juvenile detention centers where the kids—most of them only in their early teens—were incarcerated.

Exposing the hidden scandal behind the headlines, KIDS FOR CASH unfolds like a real-life thriller. Charting the previously untold stories of the masterminds at the center of the scandal, the film reveals a shocking American secret told from the perspectives of the villains, the victims, and the unsung heroes who helped uncover the scandal. In a major dramatic coup, the film features extensive, exclusive access to the judges behind the scheme.

KIDS FOR CASH premiered at DOC NYC in November of 2013, followed by a successful nationwide theatrical release in February of 2014. The film was released on all major VOD platforms in May and has screened before the US Department of Justice, the US Department of Education and for Congress on Capitol Hill (hosted by Senator Robert Casey and Congressman Tony Cárdenas). Additional screenings in Washington DC and throughout the US over the next nine months are in the works in order to take advantage of the larger issue the film exposes.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

KIDS FOR CASH is a riveting, non-fiction thriller about a judicial scandal that shocked America when it catapulted to the headlines in January of 2009. Set in the mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania, the film is an absorbing account of the serpentine events leading up to the scandal, as well as a richly detailed chronicle of the often-incredible revelations unearthed by the criminal investigation and extensive media coverage. Blending greed, corruption, betrayal of trust, abuse of power, and wrongful imprisonment in a manner almost novelistic in its twists and turns, it is one of those true stories that is, as the saying goes, "stranger than fiction." But, what leaves an indelible impression on those who are initially attracted to the tale's more sensational aspects is the fact that the victims of the corruption in question—all 3,000 of those who were betrayed, abused, and wronged—were children.

Ironically, what caused the furor was not the fact that wholesale incarceration of adolescents and teens—most for non-violent crimes—had been taking place in Luzerne County for a number of years. Rather, it was the discovery that two of the presiding judges in the district—prominent and popular judges—had allegedly received more than \$2.8 million in bribes (or, as they called them, "finder's fees"), for sentencing these unfortunate children to privately-owned juvenile detention centers where some of them would remain for years. Almost immediately, the case came to be known as the "Kids for Cash" scandal because it appeared that the judges, Mark Ciavarella and Michael Conahan, had literally been selling these kids "up the river" for their own monetary gain. The story attained such notoriety that when producer-director Robert May decided to make a film about it, the title KIDS FOR CASH was the only logical choice.

In a twist of fate, May, the producer of several acclaimed and honored documentaries, including the Oscar-winning THE FOG OF WAR, happens to make his home in the very region where the scandal erupted. As he recalls it, "my producing partner, Lauren Timmons, and I were in the midst of an extended story retreat on a fiction project when the scandal broke. Each day, we would pick up the local and national papers and read about what was happening right where I live. I was stunned to learn that these judges were accused of such heinous crimes involving children, especially since I probably voted for both of them!" May had never met either judge and admits he didn't know much about them. What he does recall were their reputations. "I was aware," he observes, "that both were celebrated within the community, and I knew that Ciavarella had campaigned on a zero-tolerance for crime platform which, at the time, I thought was a great thing."

May, like many other citizens of the post-Columbine school shooting era, believed that the only way to keep schools safe for his own children (who were 10 and 13 in 2009), was to strictly enforce regulations, and separate the "good" kids from the "bad" ones. "Prior to my immersion in this story," he adds, "one of my own misconceptions was 'if you do an adult crime, you should do adult time.' I believed, like most other parents, that warning children about the dire consequences of doing something wrong would somehow keep them from doing it (i.e., 'Just Say No!'), and I thought that having 'zero tolerance' for bad behavior would somehow motivate them to stay out of certain kinds

of trouble. I actually believed that we could 'scare them straight,' and make them so afraid of getting punished that they would do anything to avoid it." Judge Ciavarella was the very embodiment of these principles, and everyone, from police, to educators and school administrators, to the community at large, was aware of his policies and, in fact, embraced them.

In January of 2009, when the federal government announced that Judges Ciavarella and Conahan agreed to plead guilty to "Honest Services Fraud" and "Tax Matters" for accepting the so-called "finder's fees," people were forced to see things in a new light. "It was only then," May notes, "when money came into the picture, that the community questioned Ciavarella's motivations for his widely-adopted policies. No one suspected corruption of this kind." May recalls, "The community was shocked." Such was the impact, that the scandal prompted an endless flow of front-page stories. "Newspapers were selling at rates not seen in decades," May remembers. "It was the lead story all over television, and the all-news radio station in the area was suddenly overtaking the music stations in ratings." The story began to spread beyond Luzerne County, and national and international media started to cover it as well, with some outlets calling it "the most egregious judicial scandal in history." Like everyone else, May was riveted. "What became clear," he says, "was that this was no typical 'small town scandal,' and what made it different from other judicial scandals was that this one involved children."

"For Lauren and me," he continues, "the story of these children was a natural. They were the victims of whatever scheme or master plan had been developed by these two judges—judges who had been celebrated, elected by the community, and then revealed to be evil. When you ask yourself, 'what kind of person would literally trade children for cash?' you think of the sort of nefarious characters found in a Charles Dickens tale, or perhaps the darkest, most chilling crime stories, 'ripped from the headlines,' as the expression goes. A juvenile court judge accused of getting paid for every child he incarcerates? Yes, Dickens could have made this up, but instead, the story was unfolding right before our eyes, in real life."

Even though everyone was talking about this so-called "Kids for Cash" scandal, May noticed that few people were actually discussing how it could have happened. "How could such upstanding pillars of the community sink to such a low level?" he asked himself. "Was the entire community in on it? Could it be that the police were in on it, and the schools? Were they all making money on the backs of children? How could all of this happen without anyone catching on?"

May needed to find answers to these questions and, as he recalls it, "from that moment on, the fiction film we'd been working on became less and less of our focus." Clearly, he and Timmons had gotten hooked by the "Kids for Cash" scandal—not just as citizens, but as storytellers. They began to see it as a potential subject for a feature film; one that could capture an audience's imagination just as it had captured their own.

Not surprisingly, they found that the more information they gathered, the more complex the material became. "At first," May recalls, "we thought things were limited to this small town until we began to research data about kids, schools, and the entire juvenile justice system. We found that the manner in which kids were treated

elsewhere—in fact, across the entire country—was shockingly similar to what was taking place in Luzerne County. Zero-tolerance policies were actively supported by police, schools, and communities everywhere, and children were often being arrested for the kinds of things that most of us had done when we were kids.” May also learned that juvenile crime had been on a downward trend for a few years prior to Columbine yet, despite that trend, school-based arrests post-Columbine soared. In fact, school-based arrests rose by a staggering 300% in some areas. Like most parents, May had been “completely unaware of what actually goes on within the juvenile justice system, which is why some refer to it as a ‘Secretive American Institution.’ It’s closed to the public in most jurisdictions across the United States in order to protect the children. However, while the concept of a closed system might be well-intentioned, the opportunity for abuse is notable.”

May read every article he could find on the scandal, each more sensational than the last. “Each was a one-sided story that made it seem as if the judges had prepared for this scheme their entire lives, disguising themselves as respected community leaders,” May observes. “After all,” he notes, “what could be a better cloak than the robe of a judge?” However, May felt that this sensationalistic, tabloid approach taken by the mass media did not do the story justice. “I felt they used the kids and the huge amounts of money involved as a way to entice their audience. They laid out a simple story of greed and corruption, which was the most obvious story to tell.” However, what interested May personally were the reasons behind it all—why these people did the things they did. “We can’t begin to understand complex issues through brief summaries, charts, graphs, and statistics,” he insists. “I felt that unless we better understood why these people did what they did, why they made the judgments they made, and grasped what influenced and motivated their actions and opinions, we couldn’t begin to figure out how to change things.”

For this reason, when May and Timmons set out to make their film, they decided to go beyond the obvious, and to get behind the headlines in order to find the “real” story. As for what that story might be, May found numerous ideas that intrigued him, and several themes he wanted to explore: “This is a story of complicity and complacency,” he asserts. “It’s a story about those who look to authority for help, and the power those in authority hold over them; it’s a story about zero tolerance and intolerance; it’s a story about trust and mistrust; it’s a story about parenting; it’s a story about fear—fear for our children and fear of our children; it’s a story about that fine line we walk and what happens when we step over it to the wrong side; finally, it’s a story that challenges what we think we know.”

Having undertaken the formidable task of capturing the “Kids for Cash” scandal on screen, May and Timmons began what would become a four year-long inquiry into “the story behind the story.” Their pre-production process was extensive for a documentary, and they established certain ground rules early on. “We were dealing with two parallel dramas,” May observes, “one historical, the other active and ongoing. We were also dealing with the raw emotions of all the subjects, and of the community at large. Because of this, we felt strongly that we needed to go about our research quietly, and conduct our investigations without becoming part of the story. For instance, we never shared information about who we were interviewing with any of our subjects in order to

protect the integrity of their individual stories.” Because of the sensitivity of some of these interviews, all subjects were assigned numbers, and their names were never used. For the most confidential of interviews, knowledge was restricted to only those members of the filmmaking team who had a specific need to know.

Since they would undoubtedly provide the emotional core of the film, finding the right children to represent the story was May’s first priority. “We felt it was necessary,” he says, “to immerse ourselves deeply in the characters, thereby allowing the audience to place themselves into their shoes and understand their feelings of being alone and targeted, isolated, and abandoned by the community. Then, there would be the growing awareness that these stories were merely an example of how kids are treated elsewhere. This would prove to be the revelation, the twist that would inevitably leave the audience with a punch in the gut.” Through the efforts of May’s diligent research team, finding the appropriate characters to cover was far from difficult. “Sadly,” May notes, “there was no shortage of kids who suffered at what appeared to be Ciavarella’s hands.” Preliminary interviews were conducted via telephone and, while some potential subjects declined to participate in the film, most victims were willing to share their stories. “For us,” May says, “the priority was to select stories that would best represent a cross section of the kids who came before Ciavarella.” One of the first to catch May’s attention was that of Charlie Balasavage, a typical example of what had been going on in Luzerne County, and one that proved especially illuminating—and disturbing.

Charlie, aged 14, wanted a motor scooter, but it was beyond his family’s means. When his parents found one for \$200, they bought it, not knowing that it was stolen. One day the police showed up at Charlie’s house when his parents weren’t home, asking if he’d recently acquired a scooter. Charlie, thinking he was in trouble for riding without a helmet, told them that he had. When his parents got home, the police informed them that they, along with their son, were being charged with receiving stolen property. Eventually, the police relented and told Charlie’s parents that the charges against them would be dropped. They also said that if Charlie went to juvenile court, he would receive only a minor reprimand. With his mother at his side, Charlie faced Judge Ciavarella, thinking his ordeal was about to end. Unfortunately, Judge Ciavarella decided that since Charlie was having trouble in school, he would instead be remanded to “Camp Adams.” “From its name,” May notes ironically, “it sounds like a fun place to be if you’re a kid.” In fact, Camp Adams was a facility for juvenile delinquents where Charlie began his five-year saga “in the system” – a journey that would change him and his family forever.

Once again, May found himself asking questions: “Could those two police officers be in on it? How about all those who investigated the incident and interrogated Charlie and his family? How did it even get so far as to go before Judge Ciavarella in the first place?” But the larger question May would find himself asking was “how many other stories like this are there?” The answer was staggering and endless: in covering the victims, their families, members of the community, and those who were directly or indirectly involved with the scandal, he would eventually accumulate over 600 hours of film depicting story after story about how children and families were treated.

Despite the wealth of material at his disposal, there was a crucial element missing that

May would somehow have to capture on camera—interviews with the now disgraced judges Ciavarella and Conahan. As May tells it, “for us, the only way to tell this story was to contrast the testimony of the victims with that of the villains and in order for the project to work, we needed to get both. We already knew that the kids and families would agree to share their stories with us and we felt, quite rightly, that their stories would be full of emotion and character. But, when it came to the judges, we faced a number of very real obstacles: how would we reach them and why would they even agree to talk with us?”

Once again, what worked in May’s favor was his desire to get beyond the obvious narrative presented by the media. “The press had portrayed a very simplistic, one-sided view of what happened. So, my pitch to the judges was that every story has at least two sides, and that we wanted to tell both sides of this story.” The problem was that Ciavarella and Conahan were in the midst of an active federal prosecution, and their attorneys would almost certainly not allow them to talk. Independently, each judge agreed to be interviewed after the legal proceedings were over. But May needed to capture their version of the events as they continued to unfold. “It was clear to me,” May says, “that there would be no emotional arc to their stories if it was told after the fact. Both judges initially turned us down, but I continually reminded them that we were the only ones trying to figure out how all this really happened, the only ones trying to show more than their legal and financial improprieties. I specifically reminded them that if their side of the story was true, and they didn’t sell children for money, this was their only chance to tell us what really happened.” Ultimately, Judge Ciavarella agreed to be interviewed under the condition that it would be done in complete secrecy.

May agreed, and created various safeguards to protect the integrity of the interview process. Knowledge that the judge was being filmed was limited to key crew members only. In fact, Ciavarella refused to inform his own attorney that he was participating in the film. “When I asked why he wouldn’t want his attorney to know,” May recalls, “he replied, ‘because he would kill me!’” Ultimately with these conditions in place, Judge Conahan agreed to be interviewed as well. “One of the other conditions of the deal,” May adds, “was that neither judge would inform the other that they had agreed to participate in the making of this film.”

Whether interviewing the victims or the villains, establishing trust was essential, so May and Timmons developed an interview technique designed to place everyone—the kids, their families, the judges, and the large array of commentators—at ease. Painstaking and time-consuming as it was, they began by exploring each subject’s life, starting with his or her earliest memories. This allowed them to better understand everyone’s point of view, and provided an orderly and progressive build-up to the experiences pertaining to the scandal itself. Typically, each interview lasted approximately three hours, and the number of on-camera interviews per subject ranged from three to six days, over a three-year period. May stresses that, “because of my genuine curiosity and concern for each of our subjects, I really had no pre-judgments about any of them or about the details of their stories. Each interview was really less of an interview and more of a conversation.”

“Even after the interviews were done,” he adds, “we continued to conduct research and

maintain communication with our subjects. Because we followed them over such a long period of time, we were able to experience first-hand their personal evolutions.” To be sure, there were characters/subjects who had fascinating stories to tell that didn’t necessarily connect with the larger drama. There were also numerous interviews conducted with children, parents, the judge’s families, jurors at their trials, community leaders, police, and school officials that, while powerful, could not be included in the finished film. “Ultimately,” May tells us, “we opted to include those subjects who could best articulate their personal stories. We selected the final stories we used in the film based on what each would contribute to the overall story arc.”

May’s greatest challenge as a storyteller was to explain the inexplicable: how was it that 3,000 kids were sent away during a short period of time with no one asking questions or trying to stop it? “I think there are two distinct answers to this question,” he says. “There is the ‘simple’ answer, which is that the police, schools, and the community-at-large got what it wanted—a tough love, zero-tolerant judge who kept schools and communities safe from kids who were out of control.” The unintended consequence of this attitude was, simply put, “out of sight, out of mind.” May’s complex answer, is that first, because most juvenile court proceedings are closed to the public, the public is largely unaware of what happens to kids who get into the system. “Add to this,” he says, “the pack mentality of those who professionally operate within that system—the police, judges, public defenders, prosecutors, probation officers, caregivers, school officials, and detention center operators.” Once the first of these takes a stand, the rest follow, and few of these professionals ever question the process or challenge the outcomes.” May goes on to say “it’s not that they wanted to see kids suffer, but rather they likely took a position closer to the simple answer—thinking that subjecting kids to the “system” was good for them.”

May notes that much has been made of the fact that there was no lawyer present in 54% of the juvenile cases in Luzerne County, leading us to conclude that this was how Judge Ciavarella was able to send kids away whenever he wanted. However, May disputes this argument: “The fact is there was a lawyer in the courtroom for 100% of the cases—the prosecutor—an officer of the court. And, while the job of prosecutors is to prosecute, they still have an obligation to report courtroom abuse. Why were they silent?” he asks. “How about all those other professionals who were in the courtroom during the prosecution, whether they be school officials, court staff, social workers, probation officials, etc.? Why were they silent? Perhaps they had little understanding of the damage about to be done to the kids who came before the court.” Sobering as these thoughts are, perhaps the *most* sobering is that, were it not for the exchange of money in the “Kids for Cash” scandal, it’s likely that former Judge Ciavarella would still be serving as a member of the court, and that the community would still be applauding him for his zero-tolerance practices. May also notes that “we’ve since found out that the issue of kids appearing in court or at other legal proceedings without an attorney representing them is much more common in the U.S. than you know.”

May emphasizes that making this film only confirmed what he intuitively knew as a parent. “First and foremost,” he tells us, “children learn by example. If we, as adults, lack empathy or understanding, and do not reinforce a sense of fairness and justice, how can we expect our children to do so?” The research, he assures us, is clear: “zero

tolerance policies, and “Scared Straight” policies, actually cause harm, decrease public safety, and do nothing to deter future problem behavior for teens—who are impulsive simply because they are teens. How many parents have asked their kids, ‘what were you thinking?!’ The answer is usually a shrug and ‘I don’t know.’ That’s because the human brain is not fully mature until much later, in fact not until a person reaches their mid-twenties; none of us is the same person we were when we were teenagers. And most, if not all, of the stupid behaviors kids exhibit as teens, vanish as they mature. It’s part of growing up. Perhaps we all need to stop and remember the things we did as kids – and think about what would have happened to us if we had been treated the way kids are being treated today.” May goes on to say “this is probably the most difficult time in history to be a kid. There are vast numbers of so-called entertainment competing for kids’ attention—like a thousand plus TV channels, countless on-line media, video games, social media, instant photo and video sharing all in the palms of their hands – literally. Yet their brains are developing the same way they did 100 years ago.” And, a kid without a complete understanding of the risks associated with some of these entertainment options can very easily get into real trouble.

By way of conclusion, May says, “I set out to tell the real story of the “Kids for Cash” scandal no matter what that turned out to be. I expected to find a clear villain and a clear victim, but I found neither. What I did find was a complex set of circumstances that had been neatly placed into one of two bins –‘black’ and ‘white’; no gray, no options. **When I ultimately did find the real villain, I realized that it’s me, it’s you. It’s all of us.**”

## ABOUT THE KIDS

**Charlie** – A loveable kid who had very few material things, but loved to go camping with his family and help his dad work on cars. He looked forward to his first day of school but an undiagnosed speech impediment brought unwanted teasing from the other kids. Charlie came to dread school and struggled for years. One day his parents surprised him with a used red scooter. Charlie, now 14, took great care of the scooter and rode it every day. One day, the police came to Charlie's door. He immediately thought he was getting into trouble for riding it without a helmet, but soon found out that the scooter had been stolen. His parents unknowingly bought the stolen scooter from a family member. The police arrested Charlie and his parents, but eventually dropped the charges against his mom and dad; Charlie, however, was arrested as a juvenile and sent away. Charlie did not cope well within the juvenile system and once in, he moved from one correction center to another. In total, Charlie spent five years in the system and was subjected to eight placements. Despite his time in the system, his love of poetry and family kept him optimistic about his future, which he felt was bright. He looked forward to college and working with computers. But confinement within the juvenile system did not prepare Charlie for the real world. Now, at 21 years old, Charlie's still that same lovable kid who remains optimistic despite the increasing odds against him in a world that will likely deal him more blows.

**Hillary** – A smart, funny, and creative high school student who grew up in a stable home. She created a MySpace page lampoon of her assistant high school principal, including a disclaimer on the page stating it was a joke.

But one day, Hillary's mother received a call from the police letting her know that her daughter was about to be arrested and charged with terroristic threats. Finding the lampoon anything but funny, the assistant principal felt this was no simple school matter. At 14 years old, Hillary found herself convicted and sentenced to juvenile detention.

If not for her mother Laurene's outreach to a national legal advocacy group called Juvenile Law Center, Hillary could have spent months or years in the system. Instead, her mom sparked an investigation by the group, placing Hillary's case at the forefront of the "Kids for Cash" scandal. Hillary was freed after only three weeks and went on to graduate from both high school and college. She was the lucky one.

**Justin** – A child with a genius IQ, three brothers, and a single mom. Justin was only 12 years old when he was walking his little brother to a neighborhood school bus stop. There, he got into an altercation with a mother of another child. Justin's offensive behavior was reported to the school police officer who promptly contacted Justin's mother Lisa. Lisa had been struggling with Justin's use of obscene language for some time. Thinking that perhaps Justin needed to be "Scared Straight," Lisa agreed to allow the officer to arrest Justin, expecting that he would get into such a program. However,

after being charged with terroristic threats, Justin began a seven year journey within the juvenile justice system where he learned how to smoke pot, do heroin, and steal cars—all from within the walls of juvenile lock up. Through it all, Justin never lost his love for music and has dreams of attending Berklee College of Music. Like Charlie, he's now 21 years old and is attempting to regain his lost childhood. Unlike Charlie, Justin's less optimistic about his future, but good use of his intellect could turn his life around for real.

**Amanda** – Always wanted to be “someone.” Amanda grew up with her father and struggled in school to overcome the social stigma of the single parent family. Lacking material things, her biggest wish throughout her young life was to have an involved mother, just like her friends. When one of those friendships ended badly and the girl became verbally abusive, Amanda grabbed the girl and a fight ensued in the school gymnasium. At 14, she was arrested and charged with aggravated assault and would spend the next five years in the juvenile justice system. Humiliated, frustrated and hopelessly fraught with anxiety after an attempt to re-enter the school, Amanda was diagnosed with PTSD and chose to be homeschooled. She became the first in her family to graduate from high school. Amanda still struggles with depression and anxiety but is determined to make something of herself.

**Ed** – Ed was a spirited kid who channeled all that energy into wrestling. By his junior year of high school, he was an All-Star wrestler. Admired and respected by coaches, teachers and his peers, his mother was proud of the fact her son would likely go on to college on an athletic scholarship. This was Ed's dream.

The summer between his junior and senior year, Ed's popularity at parties began to get him into trouble. He became part of the “party crowd” and began to drink excessively. His father decided to take matters into his own hands, and with the help of his two friends who were local police officers, they decided they would try to “scare him straight.” They decided that Ed would benefit from an appearance in juvenile court, and that going before a judge would scare Ed into staying on track. They planted drug paraphernalia in Ed's truck and arrested him. But instead of the expected slap on the wrist and a warning, Ed ended up being sent away at age 17 to a boot camp where he spent three months, missing out on his senior year of wrestling and losing his chance at a college scholarship forever. He never returned to school or wrestled again.

Ed came back a changed person. He was depressed and angry and consumed by rage, his life spiraling out of control. After another round in a juvenile boot camp, Ed ultimately landed in state prison for assault.

**Juvenile Law Center** – In 1975, Marsha Levick and Robert Schwartz were ambitious new graduates of Temple Law School who wanted to change the world. Recognizing the dire need for children's legal advocacy, they founded Juvenile Law Center with two other colleagues. Since its humble beginnings in borrowed office space in a cardiology office, Juvenile Law Center has grown to become one of the most highly respected non-profit children's legal rights organizations in the world. The group, works diligently, without fanfare, to protect children from being harmed by the very systems that were meant to protect them. After receiving the call from Hillary's mother Laurene, the team

at Juvenile Law Center went to work to free Hillary, and in the process, helped to uncover what many now refer to as the “worst judicial scandal in U.S. history.” Ultimately, the center was successful in reversing and expunging 2,480 juvenile cases.

**Terrie Morgan-Besecker** – Terrie was and remains a dedicated, professional journalist in her hometown. It was her inquisitive, caring nature that drew her to listen to the stories from families who ended up in Ciavarella’s courtroom over the years. She was long familiar with Ciavarella’s zero tolerance mantra, and knew he was true to his word. Terrie’s role as a journalist became a critical factor in breaking the silence that surrounded not just this scandal, but a much larger story affecting millions of children nationwide each year.

The role that Terrie and her reporter colleagues played in sounding the alarm, breaking the silence, and giving the children and families a voice was paramount. In today’s 24-hour headline news cycle, true in-depth journalists like Terrie are a rare, yet invaluable commodity in fighting injustice and protecting our children. Terrie Morgan-Besecker is an award-winning journalist who now works for the *Times Tribune* newspaper in Scranton, PA.

**Steve Corbett** - Steve is host of a daily radio talk-show on WILK-FM in Luzerne County, PA and has lived most of his life in and around Central Pennsylvania, graduating from Pennsylvania State University. After working a variety of jobs - bouncer, construction laborer, bill collector, prison counselor and boxing instructor- he broke into the newspaper business full-time as a reporter with the *Times Leader* in Wilkes-Barre in 1985, where he won dozens of state journalism awards as a columnist as well as a national journalism award for service to the First Amendment.

Steve and his colleagues persistently pressed for answers to the questions that swirled around the Luzerne County courthouse. His dogged challenges to injustice continue to enlighten listeners, encouraging them to get involved, allowing them to share their voices. Steve Corbett’s show can be heard each day on WILK-FM radio from 3-7pm ET.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

**Robert May** (Director/Producer - SenArt Films)

Robert May's past producing projects include:

THE FOG OF WAR: ELEVEN LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF ROBERT S. MCNAMARA, Errol Morris' Oscar®-winning film which premiered at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival and was distributed by Sony Pictures Classics. He was honored to collaborate with Morris, a director Roger Ebert has called "as great a filmmaker as Hitchcock or Fellini." THE FOG OF WAR won numerous awards for Best Documentary including The National Board of Review, the Chicago Film Critics, the Los Angeles Film Critics, the Washington D.C. Area Film Critics, and the Independent Spirit Award.

THE STATION AGENT, directed by Tom McCarthy. Rejecting industry suggestions that the film could never be made as is, May embraced this off-beat celebration of friendship between three isolated individuals featuring the breakout performance of little person Peter Dinklage. The film won the Audience Award, the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award and an Acting Award for Patricia Clarkson at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival, where it was also acquired by Miramax. Appearing on over 60 critics' Top Ten Lists, THE STATION AGENT tied MYSTIC RIVER for the most SAG award nominations and was nominated for a WGA, won a BAFTA for Best Original Screenplay, and won numerous other awards including two Independent Spirit Awards as well as recognition from the National Board of Review as one of the top 10 films of 2003.

THE WAR TAPES, winner of Best Documentary at the 2006 Tribeca Film Festival and Best International Documentary at BritDoc 2006. He was integrally involved in the creation of this unforgettable story of National Guardsmen on the front lines in Iraq, culled from over 1,000 hours of footage, most shot by the guardsmen themselves. In addition, he brought on esteemed past-collaborator Steve James (STEVIE) and worked closely with James and his editing team throughout the production.

STEVIE (distributed by Lions Gate Films), a critically acclaimed documentary by Oscar®-nominated HOOP DREAMS director Steve James. Praised as "a vivid portrait of emotional bonds, responsibility, and family in America" by Chris Vognar of the Dallas Morning News, STEVIE was May's first documentary as well as his first collaboration with James and Gordon Quinn of Kartemquin Films. STEVIE won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2002 International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam and the Excellence in Cinematography Award at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival.

BONNEVILLE, a feature film starring Jessica Lange, Kathy Bates and Joan Allen as old friends who 'come of age' for a second time on a trip across the great American West. As Producer, May shepherded this complex production from script to casting and funding, personally overseeing a shoot that spanned three states and a world-class, dual-coast post-production.

Regarding SenArt Films:

Founded by Robert May in 2000, SenArt Films set out to discover new talent, uncover worthy stories and advance all aspects of production. The mission: to create meaningful and commercially viable character-driven films that aspire to the highest levels of storytelling and execution, passionately engaging an audience. The very name "SenArt" stems from the belief that film is, at its essence, a "sensory art".

Sensory, adj.

Belonging to sensation; carrying or transmitting an exciting experience; (e.g. of hope, curiosity, laughter, terror) aroused by some particular occurrence or situation. The production of strong emotion as an aim in works of literature or art.

Film has great power to move us, and SenArt's goal is to tell stories about people and situations which will, through their resonance with an audience, ultimately impact our world in a positive way. SenArt facilitates projects from conception through post-production, sale and delivery, and once committed to a film, SenArt's passion and focus is unwavering.

## CREDITS

SenArt Films Presents

KIDS FOR CASH

Directed by Robert May

Produced by Robert May  
Lauren Timmons

Co Producer Poppy Das

Associate Producer Joseph Craig

Cinematography Jay Gillespie  
Eddie Marritz

Executive Producer John Weekley

Music by Michael Brook

Edited by Poppy Das

Production Design by John Paino

Production Manager Jenny Kranson

WITH GRATITUDE

(in order of appearance)

Stolen Scooter Incident CHARLIE BALASAVAGE

Charlie Balasavage's Mother JOANNE BALASAVAGE

School Bus Stop Incident JUSTIN BODNAR

Justin Bodnar's Mother LISA GRIFFITHS

Hillary Transue's Mother LAURENE TRANSUE

Ed Kenzacoski's Mother SANDY FONZO

School Fight Incident AMANDA LORAH

Amanda Lorah's Father TERRY LORAH

Amanda Lorah's Mother ELIZABETH LORAH

Reporter/Times Leader TERRIE MORGAN-BESECKER

MySpace Page Incident HILLARY TRANSUE  
 Co-Founder/Juvenile Law Center MARSHA LEVICK

Co-Founder/Juvenile Law Center BOB SCHWARTZ

Owner/Tony's Diner JIM ZAMBITO

Former Juvenile Court Judge MARK A. CIAVARELLA

Former President Judge MICHAEL CONAHAN

Radio Host/WILK News Radio STEVE CORBETT

Underage Drinking Incident SANDY FONZO for ED KENZAKOSKI

Attorney/Dyller Law Firm BARRY DYLLER

Former Chief Public Defender BASIL RUSSIN

Former School Superintendent DR. JEFFREY T. NAMEY

Reporter/Times Leader JERRY LYNOTT

Mark A. Ciavarella's Wife CINDY CIAVARELLA

Mark A. Ciavarella's Daughter LAUREN STAHL

Reporter/Times Leader MARK GUYDISH

The Producers also gratefully acknowledge  
 the following children and their families  
 who shared their stories but were  
 not depicted in this film.

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 CYNTHIA LEHAN

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RAY HUBLEY  
AARON WICKENDEN  
RICKY ROSE  
CHARLES E. LITTLE II

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Post Production Supervisor DOUGLAS SALKIN

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Wilkes University Creative Writing Program

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DAWN ZERA EVAN MAY  
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TODD ORAVIC JARED NESI  
ABDULLAH AZAD SHELBY FISK  
RICKY ROSE JUMANE REDWAY  
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Artist – Children Cutouts ERIN MAY

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*Committed to building a more  
just, verdant, & peaceful world.*  
KATHY IM  
LAURIE GARDUQUE

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*Developing solutions to build a bright  
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"CREEP"

WRITTEN BY ALBERT HAMMOND, MIKE HAZLEWOOD,  
THOMAS YORKE, JONATHAN GREENWOOD,  
PHILIP SELWAY, COLIN GREENWOOD, EDWARD O'BRIEN  
PERFORMED BY SCALA & KOLACNY BROTHERS  
COURTESY OF RHINO ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY  
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WARNER MUSIC GROUP FILM & TV LICENSING

"MY LIFE"

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY JUSTIN BODNAR  
ENGINEERED AND PRODUCED BY  
ANTHONY GIAMUSSO  
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### Citations

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