

Public Health Related Movies

Out of the Shadow

The documentary film opens with the filmmaker, Susan Smiley, in search of her mother, Millie, who suffers from paranoid schizophrenia and who, once again, has disappeared into the woefully inadequate public health care system of middle America. Through old photographs and home movies, interviews with family members and health care professionals, and voice-over and direct narration by Smiley herself, the film chronicles the descent of a young, beautiful woman in her twenties into severe and chronic mental illness.

Disease of the Wind

During a seven-day humanitarian journey to Kenya with the American Red Cross, viewers get a glimpse of the crisis and the hope of a continent riddled with this deadly disease. Jane Seymour and the students learn first hand that measles kills one half million children each year in Africa, while affecting even more lives. In contrast, the optimism and hopefulness the Kenyans displayed throughout the visit touched and amazed Seymour and the students.

Rx For Survival PBS Series

The Heroes

This special program presents the stories of unsung champions who protect people worldwide from the ravages of threatening disease. Using highlights from the six-hour series, this special focuses on the individual heroes whose tireless perseverance saves millions of lives across the globe. From young polio warriors in India to armies of grandmothers in Nepal, the program takes viewers inside the stirring campaigns that have brought renewed faith to poor communities from Africa to South America.

Program 1: Disease Warriors

Before there was an understanding of infectious disease, few weapons were available to fight it. Disease Warriors chronicles the groundbreaking work of early researchers, such as the famed scientist Louis Pasteur, who unmasked germs as the source of illness. Pasteur went on to develop a rabies vaccine — a great scientific triumph. Today, vaccines have made huge strides against epidemics, conquering smallpox and bringing the global eradication of polio within reach. But the world still faces major challenges in getting basic vaccines to those who still need them, and in creating new ones to combat modern nemeses, like AIDS.

Program 2: Rise of the Superbugs

It's difficult to imagine a world without medicines — and yet, before the twentieth century there weren't any. The discovery of the very first antibiotic, penicillin, and the subsequent development of more "wonder drugs" transformed the face of modern medicine. Rise of the Superbugs chronicles these historic successes, as well as the growing threat posed by new strains of germs, such as tuberculosis and staph, that are resistant to our best antibiotics. Are our strongest medicines becoming obsolete, and can we develop new drugs in time to replace them?

Program 3: Delivering the Goods

At the dawn of the 21st century, we can prevent, treat or cure most of the deadliest diseases known to humankind — and yet millions die needlessly every year because the benefits of modern medicine and public health fail to reach them. What are the obstacles to providing care to populations in need? From the villages of the Gambia to the cities and towns of Thailand, from the sun-scorched refugee camps of Chad to the teeming streets of Bangladesh — this episode chronicles innovative health programs and charismatic leaders

who, against all odds, are Delivering the Goods to millions of individuals — and inspiring a new vision for the future of global health.

Program 4: Deadly Messengers

Since the plague killed millions of Europeans in the Middle Ages, vector-borne diseases — those that rely on insects and animals to spread infectious agents — have posed a serious threat to public health. Today, the most dangerous vector on earth is the mosquito. From malaria to yellow fever to West Nile virus, mosquito-borne diseases continue to threaten the health of millions around the world. *Deadly Messengers* recounts the stories of heroic scientists and health workers who battled against the mosquito, and examines current efforts to control dangerous and spreading vector-borne diseases.

Program 5: Back to the Basics

Ever since sailors noticed that scurvy could be prevented with citrus fruits, it has been clear that illness could be caused by a lack of certain nutrients. While nutrient-enriched products have reduced diseases caused by vitamin deficiency in the developed countries, the problem continues to plague the developing world. And many in poorer countries suffer from the twin problems of poor nutrition and unsafe water, which create a disease burden that is almost unbearable. *Back to the Basics* explores the connection between health and the essential requirements that so many people take for granted. It also examines how an overabundance of nutrition — in the form of over-consumption — is causing an epidemic of obesity that is spreading across the globe.

Program 6: How Safe Are We?

During the past 100 years, life expectancy more than doubled in developed countries. In the last few decades, however, thirty new infectious diseases have emerged and one of them — AIDS — is becoming perhaps the most devastating epidemic in history. New diseases travel the globe with unprecedented rapidity, and older killers that once seemed controllable are roaring back with a vengeance. *How Safe Are We?* examines the most critical threats we face today — including avian flu — and the pressing need to strengthen global public health systems.

Crapshoot: The Gamble with our Wastes

A hazardous mix of solid and liquid waste is flushed into the sewer every day. With literally billions of gallons of water passing through municipal sewer systems – composed of unknown quantities of chemicals, solvents, heavy metals, human waste, and food – the question becomes: where does it all go? And what effect does that have on us? From ancient times, countries have chosen the sewer as the waste management system of choice, flushing untold amounts of household and industrial contaminants that inevitably resurface in the food chain; fish swim through rivers choked with waste water, while processed sewage sludge is spread on farmland as a fertilizer. With *Crapshoot: The Gamble with our Wastes* filmmaker Jeff McKay takes viewers on an eye-opening journey around the world to explore different approaches to sewage, starting at the 2,500 year old Cloaca Maxima in Rome, where the modern concept of sewers began. Filmed in Italy, India, Sweden, the United States and Canada, this bold documentary questions whether the sewer is alleviating or compounding our waste problem. While scientists warn of links between sewage practices and potential health risks, our fundamental attitudes toward waste are being challenged by activists, engineers and concerned citizens alike. Does our need to dispose of waste take precedence over public health and safety? What are the alternatives?

Choropampa: The Price of Gold

This is the story of an Andean paradise lost - lost after a devastating mercury spill. On June 2nd, 2000 at the Yanacocha goldmine in the Peruvian Andes, 151 kilograms of liquid mercury spilled over a 25-mile long area, contaminating three mountain villages, including Choropampa. The environmental catastrophe turned this quiet village into a hotbed of civil resistance.

And the Band Played On

A real-life drama about the tragic, time-consuming battles among government agencies, gay groups and scientists that impeded the discovery of, and research on, the AIDS virus. Gay leader Bill Kraus is dying -- and no doctor can name the disease that's killing him. All anyone knows is that some epidemic is attacking homosexual men. But rather than get down to serious experimentation and study, the Center for Disease Control stonewalls any effort to prove that the disease is transmitted through the blood; French and American scientists squabble about who should get credit for discovering the virus; and the gay community, sensitive about criticism of their lifestyle, refuses to admit that their own actions could make a difference in the spread of AIDS.

Born Into Brothels

Amidst the apparent growing prosperity of India, there is a dark underbelly of poverty of another side of the nation that is little known. This film is a chronicle of filmmakers Zana Briski and Ross Kauffman's efforts to show that world of Calcutta's red light district. To do that, they inspired a special group of children of the prostitutes of the area to photograph the most reluctant subjects of it. As the kids excel in their new found art, the filmmakers struggle to help them have a chance for a better life away from the miserable poverty that threatens to crush their dreams.

Sowing the Seeds of Hunger

Barnabas and Mary Chalaba were once among the more prosperous farmers of their village in the north of Zambia. But today, they are destitute - too sick to farm their land, and dependent on their children to oversee the crops. Like 30 million others in sub-Saharan Africa, Mary and Barnabas are infected with the HIV virus. In southern Africa, the highest rates of HIV infection occur among young adults, whose ages range from 15 to 49. This is the same group who, as agricultural workers and small scale farmers, are the backbone and future of countries such as Zambia. Since 1985, more than seven million farmers have succumbed to AIDS, striking at the heart of agricultural production. But as SOWING SEEDS OF HUNGER shows, the fallout from this pandemic extends beyond agriculture, undermining development in the region while endangering the lives of orphans and widows affected by the rampant spread of HIV.

The Education of Shelby Knox

A self-described "good Southern Baptist girl," 15-year-old Shelby Knox of Lubbock, Texas has pledged abstinence until marriage. But she becomes an unlikely advocate for comprehensive sex ed when she finds that Lubbock, where high schools teach abstinence as the only safe sex, has some of the highest rates of teen pregnancy and STDs in the state.

God's Children

Smoky Mountain, the massive garbage dump in the north of Manila known as the largest slum in Asia, was forcibly dismantled by the government of the Philippines in November, 1995. Some of the people who had made their living as scavengers on Smoky Mountain moved to the setting of this film, the Payatas dump located in neighboring Quezon City. Known as "the second Smoky Mountain," the area of the Payatas dump currently encompasses two garbage dumps, one large and one small, and is home to 3500 households. God's Children is a portrait of three strong, proud and resilient families over the course of four months. It is a film about the tragic reality of death and the promise of new life appearing in the midst of various problems. A documentary, it faithfully records the residents who retain their pride in a harsh environment and live with dignity and strength.

Supersize Me

Filmmaker Morgan Spurlock hit the road and interviewed experts in 20 U.S. cities, including Houston, the "Fattest City" in America. From Surgeon Generals to gym teachers, cooks to kids, lawmakers to legislators, these authorities shared their research, opinions and "gut feelings" on our ever-expanding girth. During the journey, Spurlock also put his own body on the line, living on nothing but McDonald's for an entire month with three simple rules:

- 1) No options: he could only eat what was available over the counter (water included!)
- 2) No supersizing unless offered
- 3) No excuses: he had to eat every item on the menu at least once

It all adds up to a fat food bill, harrowing visits to the doctor, and compelling viewing for anyone who's ever wondered if man could live on fast food alone. The film explores the horror of school lunch programs, declining health and physical education classes, food addictions and the extreme measures people take to lose weight and regain their health. Super Size Me is a satirical jab in the stomach, overstuffed with fat and facts about the billion-dollar industry besieged by doctors, lawyers and nutritionists alike.

State of Denial

This film illustrates a cross-section of South Africans involved with the AIDS epidemic. It shows how they must fight not only the disease but the greed of the drug cartels and the incomprehensible inactivity of their own government in order to get treatment

Fallon, NV: Deadly Oasis

Sixty-miles east of Reno, in the small military and ranching town of Fallon, Nevada, an unfathomable mystery is unfolding. In the span of just two years, fourteen children have been diagnosed with acute-lymphocytic leukemia, and no-one seems to know why. As the film unfolds, two children die and two more cases are discovered, as families square off with scientists, government bureaucrats and media opportunists who are occupied with everything it seems but the welfare of the children. Due to recent medical advances, for the first time in history, the town of Fallon may be able to provide much-needed answers to the impact environmental hazards can have on health. While kids undergo excruciating spinal taps and parents break down, the community is stretched to the breaking point. As the country gears up for war, military exercises at the Fallon naval air base increase, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention arrive to canvas the population.

Diet for a New America

This well-documented expose of America's "factory farms" should prompt even die-hard meat-and-potatoes lovers to reevaluate their diets. Asserting that "we are ingesting nightmares for breakfast, lunch and dinner," Robbins, who is medical director of the California Institute for Health and Healing, details how livestock is raised under increasingly industrialized conditions by "agribusiness oligopolies." Grazing and foraging have given way to debeaking, tail-docking, dehorning and castration, and treatment with pesticides, hormones, growth and appetite stimulants, tranquilizers and antibiotics which, in turn, are assimilated by humans. The author correlates our "protein obsessed" society with a higher incidence of arteriosclerosis, osteoporosis, cancer and other degenerative diseases, as well as freakish occurrences like premature puberty from estrogen contamination. As Robbins debunks nutritional myths perpetuated by the powerful meat and dairy industries (indicting as well his family's Baskin-Robbins ice-cream empire), this is sure to prove controversial.

The Insider

This film tells the true story of Jeffrey Wigand, a former tobacco executive, who decided to appear on the CBS-TV News show "60 Minutes." As matter of conscience partially prodded by producer Lowell Bergman, he revealed that, the tobacco industry was not only aware that cigarettes are addictive & harmful, but deliberately worked on increasing that addictiveness. Unfortunately, both protagonists of this story learn the hard way that simply telling the truth is not enough as they struggle against both Big Tobacco's attempts to silence them and the CBS TV Network's own cowardly complicit preference of putting money as a higher priority over the truth.

Panic in the Streets (Fiction/Drama)

One night in the New Orleans slums, vicious hoodlum Blackie and his friends kill an illegal immigrant who won too much in a card game. Next morning, Dr. Clint Reed of the Public Health Service confirms the dead man had pneumonic plague. To prevent a catastrophic epidemic, Clint must find and inoculate the killers and their associates, with the reluctant aid of police captain Tom Warren, despite official skepticism, and in total secrecy, lest panic empty the city. Can a doctor turn detective? He has 48 hours to try...

Parting Glances

As Michael and Robert, a gay couple in New York, prepare for Robert's departure for a two-year work assignment in Africa, Michael must face Robert's true motives for leaving while dealing with their circle of eccentric friends, including Nick, who is living with AIDS.

The Andromeda Strain (Fiction/Drama)

A U.S. Army satellite (Scoop VII) falls to earth near Piedmont, New Mexico. The recovery team experiences difficulties as it becomes clear that the satellite has performed its intended function all too well, and has brought back something from space. A team of scientists is assembled in a high-tech, underground facility to identify and defeat the "enemy" before it is too late.

The Human Laboratory

This is a provocative documentary that critiques the U.S. position on population control and the ethics of holding clinical trials in developing nations. Unfortunately, after the

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documentary's release, it was subsequently banned from being screened in the United States, and it is no longer distributed in any country. Take this opportunity to watch an in-depth story of Bangladeshi women and the human rights abuses they suffer from clinical trials.

Bright Leaves

What legacy is passed down to generations when a family is a giant tobacco producer? Filmmaker Ross McElwee, whose great-grandfather created the famous Bull Durham brand in his native North Carolina, takes viewers on an autobiographical journey across that state's social, economic and psychological tobacco terrain.

Breasts – A documentary

Breasts, an hour-long documentary, consists of interviews with twenty-two women - ages 6 to 84-years-old - discussing how breasts play a crucial role in the experiences of puberty, motherhood, sex, health, and aging. Interspersed throughout the documentary are segments of breast-related archival footage including a racy 1920s animated cartoon, a 1950s beauty pageant, and a 1970s bra commercial.

The Blood of Yingzhou District

Little is known about the film's main character, Gau Jun, not even his age. Indeed, he does not even speak a word until the closing minutes of the film. Yet the AIDS orphan's search for a home to call his own forms the dramatic center of this stunning documentary set in rural China.

Secret People

Although it has conjured horrific images of society's most feared outcasts ever since Biblical days, leprosy is in fact a mildly communicable disease that has been treatable since the 1940s. "Secret People" recounts the shocking history of this disease in America through the voices of victims who live in the last remaining leprosy sanatorium, in Carville, Louisiana.

Coppermine

In the late 1920s, the Coppermine Indians of Canada's central Arctic were nearly decimated by the tuberculosis, or "ship's illness," introduced by Canadian, American, and British entrepreneurs and missionaries. This historical documentary explores the politics of government indifference to this indigenous community, and includes both reenactments and remarkable footage from the early twentieth century by Canadian ethnologist Diamond Jenness.

The Devil's Water

In Bangladesh and India, 75 million people have been contaminated by arsenic contained in the water they unwittingly drank every day for years. Through the personal accounts of village residents, this striking film unveils the story of what is considered today as the worst mass poisoning in human history.

Memory for Max, Claire, Ida and Company

Who do we become upon losing some of our memory? Meet Max, Claire, and Ida in their slightly off-beat and yet challenging existence on an Alzheimer's ward. Veteran director Allan King provides an intimate look a small band of Jewish elders as they come to grips and find comfort in their adopted home.

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The Voyage of the Women of Zartale

Set against the striking vistas of Afghanistan, Burka-cloaked women walk for hours to reach a health clinic to treat their tuberculosis. As the women fight for their lives, the medical tent provides a space for both the men and women to experience modern medicine, gossip about loved ones, and debate the role of women in their society.

Darfur Diaries

Directed by Aisha Bain, Jen Marlowe, and Adam Shapiro. The film chronicles the history, hopes, and fears of the people in Darfur, Sudan, amidst ongoing genocide that has resulted in the deaths of 400,000 civilians and the displacement of over 2.5 million others. In September, 2004, the Bush Administration declared the violence genocide, yet little has been done to alleviate the conflict and the crisis receives scarce media coverage. In an effort to inform the US public on the ongoing genocide, three independent filmmakers visited refugee camps in eastern Chad and snuck across the border into Darfur to use personal interviews to tell the stories of the Darfurians.

The Breast Cancer Diaries

The Breast Cancer Diaries is an intimate, unvarnished first-person account of a young mother's nine-month journey with breast cancer, punctuated with humor, poignancy and romance. Diagnosed with breast cancer at age 38, Ann Murray Paige sets up a video diary camera in her bedroom, resulting in a memoir of a life turned sideways.

Hungry for Profit

Is our food bought at the price of famine in the developing world? Filmed on five continents, this provocative documentary takes a close look at the global agribusiness system, which is turning the world's food supply into a global supermarket, buying food at the lowest prices - regardless of the effect on small farmers and local populations - and selling it at the highest price and the greatest profit whenever possible.

An international development documentary that goes behind the famine headlines.

Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt

In the late 1970's, a mysterious new disease began infecting and killing gay men. *Common Threads* tells the powerful story of the first decade of the AIDS epidemic, as told through the lives of five very diverse individuals who shared a common fate. Using the monumental NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt as its central metaphor, the film weaves together personal memories and television news stories to expose the U.S. government's failure to respond to the growing epidemic, and the vibrant protest movement that was born as a result. From the Olympic athlete to the inner-city recovering drug addict, from the conservative naval commander to the New York gay activist to the 11-year-old suburban boy with hemophilia, the film uses intimate details to tell an epic story of love, loss, anger and healing.

With Blood

With Blood follows ordinary peoples efforts to overcome extraordinary obstacles in pursuit of routine health care in the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza Strip. Using personal situations to demonstrate the effects of political policy and military actions, this documentary offers a general viewing audience a way to approach what is often depicted as an impenetrable political debate.

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Thirst

Is water part of a shared "commons," a human right for all people? Or is it a commodity to be bought, sold and traded in a global marketplace? Thirst tells the stories of communities in Bolivia, India and the United States that are asking these fundamental questions, as water becomes the most valuable global resource of the 21st Century. A character-driven documentary with no narration, Thirst reveals how the debate over water rights between communities and corporations can serve as a catalyst for explosive and steadfast resistance to globalization.