

press release

CORRUPTION REVEALED. FRAUD EXPOSED. ABUSE OF POWER UNCOVERED. ***AIR: AMERICA'S INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS***, A NEW SERIES FROM THIRTEEN/WNET NEW YORK, PREMIERES SEPTEMBER 1ST ON PBS

Weekly Half-Hour Documentary Episodes Will Chronicle Recent Journalistic Investigations That Have Revealed Betrayals Of The Public Trust

A healthy democracy requires an informed public. Yet just outside the din of daily media, the plethora of “news” shows on TV and the mega-mall information overload of the Internet, there are things going on behind closed doors every day that adversely affect the interests of the American people. Whether government corruption, corporate malfeasance, or any other abuse of power by institutions or individuals entrusted with the public good, these acts all share one thing in common: the people committing them want to keep you in the dark.

That’s where investigative journalism comes in.

Now, from the producers of the award-winning documentary series *Wide Angle* at Thirteen/WNET New York, comes ***AIR: AMERICA'S INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS***, premiering Friday, September 1 at 9:00 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings). Each of *AIR*’s weekly, documentary-style half-hour episodes will chronicle powerful, groundbreaking recent journalistic investigations, featuring the committed reporters and editors who have produced them. Whether originating in print, on television, radio or the Internet, these are the stories that have shaken communities, held the powerful accountable and tried to make a difference in the functioning of America’s democracy.

“The truth is the greatest protection a free society can offer its citizens,” said Stephen Segaller, executive in charge of *AIR*, “yet it’s often hidden behind a back-room deal, a confidential memo or the spin of a political operative. *AIR* will document the work of journalists from different media



whose investigations have succeeded in performing a critical role in our democracy – airing the truth to the public.”

AIR will cast a wide net, including reports in the fields of government and the judicial system, business and investment, public safety, law enforcement, immigration, national security, elections, education, health and medicine, sports and more. In detailing the impact of each investigation, *AIR* will tackle broader issues – Is the public better protected now? Was the corruption stopped? Did the Congressman resign? Has the environment improved? And in some cases: Why has nothing been done?

At a time when government transparency is waning, when journalists are subpoenaed to reveal confidential sources, when the Freedom of Information Act – some would say the First Amendment itself – is under attack, the climate for questioning those in power has never been less friendly. Yet recent stories in the American media – from Abu Ghraib to Enron, from FEMA’s preparedness for Hurricane Katrina to the BALCO sports doping scandal – have shown that there remains a vital streak of investigative journalism in America today.

Investigative reporters and editors are storytellers in their own right. Along with excerpts from their original newspaper or magazine articles, television, radio and web reports – some of which have won such prestigious awards as the Pulitzer or duPont-Columbia – *AIR* will feature these personalities and their shrewd insights about their reporting experiences, providing a rare look at journalism from the other side of the lens.

Funders for *AIR: AMERICA’S INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS* include Bernard and Irene Schwartz, Park Foundation, The Jacob Burns Foundation, The Betsy and Jesse Fink Foundation, Tracy and Eric Semler, and Scripps Howard Foundation.

AIR: AMERICA’S INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS is a production of Thirteen/WNET New York in association with the Center for Investigative Reporting. Stephen Segaller, director of news and public affairs programming at Thirteen, is executive in charge of *AIR*.

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Thirteen/WNET New York is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *Charlie Rose*, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*, *Wide Angle*, *Secrets of the Dead*, and *Cyberchase* – as well as the work of Bill Moyers – to audiences nationwide. As the flagship public broadcaster in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metro area, Thirteen reaches millions of viewers each week, airing the best of American public television along with its own local productions such as *The Ethnic Heritage Specials*, *The Thirteen Walking Tours*, *New York Voices*, and *Reel New York*. Thirteen extends the impact of its television productions with educational and community outreach projects – including the *Celebration of Teaching and Learning in Spring 2006*. And as broadcast and digital media converge, Thirteen is blazing trails in the creation of Web sites, enhanced television, CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, educational software, and other cutting-edge media products. More information about Thirteen can be found at: www.thirteen.org.

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