



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY TRUST LAUNCHES VIRAL 'HATE GAME' FILM

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) is to launch a viral film with six episodes recreating real-life incidents of hatred – including the Stephen Lawrence murder – as scenes from a simulated computer game called “The Hate Game”.

This provocative 12-minute collection, created by Knifedge, reflect HMD09's contemporary theme, ‘Stand up to Hatred’ and the diverse communities impacted by both Nazi and contemporary hatred. The official publication date is Monday 22 December.

The advance press briefing and screening, hosted jointly by HMDT and Knifedge, takes place at Framstore, 19-23 Wells St, London W1T 3PQ at 12.00pm on Thursday 18th December.

Knifedge's powerful animations form part of a range of materials to support teachers, youth and community workers, and local organisers in planning and running local activities. The films are also being distributed to over a thousand organisers on DVD, with guidance notes. All materials are free of charge.

The Stephen Lawrence film is particularly hard-hitting, as it puts viewers in the shoes of the teenager as he is fatally attacked waiting for a bus with his friend. The film was created with the full blessing of Stephen's mother, Doreen Lawrence OBE, who concludes the film with a direct appeal to camera for us all to 'Stand up to Hatred'.

Her son's story is followed by a graphic account of contemporary homophobia in which Lee Duncan faces his tormentor after 18 months of abuse, and calls on others to report such events immediately. There is then a thought-provoking incident of Islamophobia, depicting a disturbing incident of exclusion of a mother wearing a veil from a parents' evening in a Northern primary school. Anjum Anwar MBE, Dialogue Development Officer of Blackburn Cathedral, herself wearing a hijab, concludes with a powerfully inclusive HMD message from a Muslim perspective.

The final episode depicts a recent incident of antisemitism directed at a school girl, Gabriella Soffer, on Golders Green High Street. An elderly lady, whose husband fought in World War 2 intervenes. Gabriella's message reminds us how the contemporary concerns link to the past.

The contemporary stories are preceded by two scenes from the Holocaust and Nazi persecution. One of these depicts Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) when thousands of Synagogues and Jewish homes and businesses were destroyed and 30,000 Jewish men arrested . The other is the moving story of Robert Wagemann, disabled and a Jehovah's Witness, who was seven years old when his mother overheard doctors discussing their intention to 'put him to sleep'. She managed to rescue him from one of

many euthanasia 'clinics' which put to death over 200,000 disabled men, women and children during the Nazi campaign of hatred. Together they fled and the film concludes with a specially recorded voice-over testimony from Wagemann himself, now 71 and living in America.

Jack Gilbert, HMDT Trustee, explains:

"The issues addressed in these films are occurring every day across the UK and it is vitally important we begin to recognise the dangers that unchecked hatred presents to us. Everyday people in the UK stereotype, discriminate, exclude, bully, persecute and attack - because of race, religion, disability or sexuality.

"All acts of hatred involve making a choice, and for HMD09 we are urging people to choose to 'Stand up to Hatred' and help make our communities stronger and safer. By remembering the past and reflecting on the lessons learnt, we can better understand how to deal with issues that affect society today. We are releasing the video online and on DVD now to enable organisers to work on using it in the classroom and the community during the winter break."

Jonathan Brigden, producer at Knifedge, comments:

"These films aim to highlight the abhorrent nature of hatred, prejudice and discrimination in an interesting and unusual way. I hope they will encourage all who see them to stop and think about how we all need to 'Stand up to Hatred' in the future, and to commemorate those who have died or been persecuted in the past."

Knifedge handled all aspects of production in-house, from initial creative ideas through to final delivery, working closely with executive producers from Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

To view the film or individual episodes, please visit www.hmd.org.uk

ENDS

Issued jointly by HMDT and Highlight PR on behalf of Knifedge.

Notes to editors:

1. The national commemoration for Holocaust Memorial Day 2009 will take place in Coventry on January 27th 2009. The day marks the liberation of the former Nazi concentration and extermination camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau.
2. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (www.hmd.org.uk) is a registered charity, established in 2005 to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and other genocides, and to promote racial and religious harmony, equality and diversity. HM The Queen is patron of the Trust.
3. Knifedge the Creative Network (www.knifedge.net) is a Creative Production Company. It believes in mixing up worlds which have traditionally remained apart and pushing creative boundaries to produce memorable solutions.
4. The films were directed by Tom Hadley and produced by Jonathan Brigden. The executive producers from HMDT were Jack Gilbert, Louise Hector, Barbara Simon and Carly Whyborn.

For further information, please contact:

Nick Vellacott Highlight PR 01225 444268 nick@highlightpr.co.uk