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Academy Award Winning Filmmaker Comes To Santa Cruz

On Sunday, January 27th, Academy Award-winning filmmaker Barbara Trent will be presenting *Soldiers Speak Out*, a 28-minute first-hand testament to the reality of the military experience, told entirely in the words of American veterans who have been to war and are now opposing it.

The event will be held at The Veterans Memorial Building on 846 Front St. in Santa Cruz. Prior to the film, there will be a wine and cheese reception at 6:30 PM. *Soldiers Speak Out* and a highlight of *The Panama Deception* will screen at 7pm. Ms. Trent will lead a question and answer session after the films. A \$10 donation requested at the door will benefit distribution of *Soldiers Speak Out* as well as production costs for Empowerment Project's newest film tentatively entitled *Seizing Power*. This event is sponsored by the Empowerment Project and Corrie-Mizo Veterans for Peace, Chapter 11.

Barbara Trent and David Kasper directed *Soldiers Speak Out* as a counter-recruitment and organizing tool for veterans, activists, schools, and organizations. Veterans voice their thoughts on the deceptive military recruitment tactics, the Bush administration's erroneous reasons for the necessity of military campaigning in Iraq, and the incredulous combat environment soldiers are exposed to. Not only does it provide a sober view of the war in Iraq, but it also sheds light on the growing and courageous anti-war movement within the military and their families.

Ms. Trent will also announce the re-release of *The Panama Deception*, the riveting Academy Award winning film which documents the untold story of the December 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama, the events which led to it, the excessive force used, the enormity of the death and destruction and the devastating aftermath. A special feature of the film entitled "Panama to Iraq: The Trajectory of U.S. Militarism" will be screened. This segment includes interviews with Greg Grandin (Professor of History at New York University), former Panamanian Diplomat Humberto Brown, Phyllis Bennis (Institute for Policy Studies, and author of *Challenging Empire: How People, Governments, and the UN Defy US Power*), and former CIA analyst David MacMichael, who discuss the eerie parallels between the two invasions.

A seasoned activist and filmmaker, Barbara Trent won an Oscar in 1993 for the documentary, *The Panama Deception*, and has both directed and produced other films including *Waging Peace*, *Destination Nicaragua*, and *Coverup: Behind the Iran-Contra Affair*. She has publicly exposed criminal activities in the White House, Pentagon, and CIA; and has been the target of at least three FBI counter-intelligence operations. Appointed as an Expert Senior Training Specialist for the VISTA Program under Jimmy Carter, Ms. Trent has been decorated with the Gaspar Octavio Hernandez Award by the Journalist's Union in Panama, and is a recipient of the American Humanist Association's Arts Award for her "courageous advocacy of progressive ideas." **Ms. Trent will be available for phone interviews January 16th through January 23rd, and can be contacted at project4@mindspring.com or by phone at (919) 967-3966.**

Barbara Trent and David Kasper direct the Empowerment Project, based in Chapel Hill, NC. The Empowerment Project is a media resource center serving hundreds of progressive videographers and filmmakers each year. It produces and distributes its own documentary films and videos, and provides low cost access to facilities, training and other support for independent producers, artists, activists and organizations working in video and other electronic media. Its purpose is to work towards democratizing access to the media, and to provide the resources necessary to put the power of media in the hands of individuals and organizations working to further important social, political and artistic purposes. For more information, visit www.empowermentproject.org.

Press Photos:

Barbara Trent



Cover, *Soldiers Speak Out*



Kelly Daugherty, Iraq Veterans Against the War. Photo: Silke Mayer