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**Joe and Marylou Bongiorno**  
**Filmmakers**  
**Bonjorno Productions**

**MR. BONGIORNO:** This is my wife and I. I'm Joe Bongiorno. I live in Newark.

When I was young, my father, who had very little education, had a job and that made all the difference in my life. I lived in safety and I had a great education.

My wife and I made a documentary called Revolution '67 and one day during the shoot we filmed in the Central Ward of Newark at midday. What was particularly horrifying was the number of unemployed, young black men and women walking the streets.

The first solution Kerner proposed in 1968 was to create jobs. Today Newark's poverty rate at 25 percent is much higher. The solution is still jobs. Newark needs to get rid of its poverty and to do that it has to create jobs.

**MS. BONGIORNO:** My name is Marylou Tibaldo-Bongiorno. As Joe said, we've been living in the city for over 20 years. I've spent my entire life here. So the reason we made this film was to have this type of dialog that we're having today. We are so grateful for this opportunity and being able to hear all -- everyone's voices because that is what the solutions require.

We spent the past three days screening Revolution '67 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a city whose history is very similar to our own. It had its own rebellion in 1967 in July like Newark.

Our film examines the problems in Newark and other what we call Kerner cities in 1967 and today, and in these screenings, which have gone across the country and internationally, most recently in Nigeria, we've engaged in very powerful dialogs with people like those in Milwaukee.

While standing in the classroom two days ago at W.E. Dubois High School in the center of the city and a highly impoverished area, we asked those young people what is the biggest problem in your life, and in a split second the answer was I'm poor.

That was very staggering for me because as we heard earlier today, we talked about dreams and other issues and to have these students answer so quickly was very, very daunting.

Last night -- excuse me, two days ago we were at America's Black Holocaust Museum in Milwaukee. The community dialog there was focused on one problem again, poverty. And we stood there with the police commissioner, who had to address the Frank Jude

case in Milwaukee which just got resolved yesterday where police brutality once again brought to the forefront and three officers were sentenced to a combined 15 years in prison.

We see change. It is happening. The police commissioner is African American. He was a civil rights activist. He joined the police force years later and he was there to address the community and to talk about what those changes meant, and that was meaningful for us.

But for my husband and I, we've been speaking most passionately about poverty in Newark.

If you look at page 231 of the Kerner Commission Report in the chapter termed Recommendations for National Action, a Larry Hamm (indiscernible) said, this is not just Newark's problem. It's not just urban America's problem. This is America's problem. The first recommendation, number one, is employment.

What we learned from making Revolution '67 is that the Kerner Commission Report is as relevant today as we've heard all morning and all afternoon as it was 40 years ago. Unemployment and under-employment are among the most persistent and serious grievances in cities like Newark and Milwaukee, and all the other cities that we've been to with our film, Tampa, Florida, Detroit, Miami, Los Angeles. And over 150 in 1967 alone, over 3,000 recorded instances in the 1960s and 1970s of civil disturbances. That's our history.

With opportunities like this forum today we can use the Kerner Report to spark successful dialog in reducing Newark's poverty, which is our goal, and I know the question is how and we're working on that, from its current 25 percent to at least 12 percent, the national average and beyond.

And for the first time in many years all of us as citizens of Newark or the greater community will have done something significant for all of the citizens because how can you live in a city with 25 percent poverty and not do anything about it.

The Kerner Commission Report is a classic because it speaks universal and timeless truth and according to that classic the reduction of poverty must be Newark's number one priority.

Thanks for the opportunity.