

GíNí Films

PRESENTS

Open Wound

PRESS KIT

www.openwoundfilm.com

Running Time: 20 minutes

Open Wound

SYNOPSIS

On September 26, 1982, six days after my 7th birthday, my aunt, Janie Bennett, was stabbed 24 times, doused with gasoline, and torched. She was 30 years old.

Open Wound will be a personal journey showing how my family lives in the wake of this tragedy, while the perpetrator of the crime awaits parole. The documentary will build toward the parole hearing and potential release of Grady Stokes, the man who killed my aunt, while reflecting back on the implications of her murder and how it has transformed my family.

Rocky Mount, NC is the town where I was raised. It's a place still fraught with racism, where in 1992 the Ku Klux Klan felt comfortable enough to march in front of my high school. Train tracks literally divide the two counties in Rocky Mount. Edgecombe county, majority poor and African American and Nash County, a community peppered with golf courses and million dollar homes. I often wonder if more would have been done to bring all responsible for my aunt's death to justice if we lived on the "right side" of the tracks.

People react to grief in different ways. Some become self destructive and barrel through life with an immense amount of anger, hate, and betrayal. Others ignore the pain in the hopes that time will heal. I am guilty of some measure of both. I will use *Open Wound* as a vehicle to start a dialogue within my family about how we have been affected by this veil of silence.

With a combination of photographs, interviews with my family members and hopefully with the man responsible for her death, I will shape a positive, truthful documentary out of a tragic story, the murder of my aunt.

Mary Brake is about to come face to face with the man who killed her sister. If Grady Stokes is paroled, will this reopen my family's wounds or give some kind of sad closure to this story? Will talking with Grady Stokes give me the apology and enable me to finally move on?

Open Wound

CREDITS

A FILM BY
Nikki Brake

Nikki Brake

PRODUCED BY
Tony Clomax

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
Vincent Venturella

FILM EDITOR
Isis Nabut

MUSIC BY
Vincent Venturella

LIVE SOUND
Tony Clomax

SOUND DESIGN AND MIX BY
Debra Lilavois

Open Wound

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Open Wound's production started with Grady Stoke's parole hearing, in May 2007. We drove to North Carolina uncertain of the outcome of the hearing.

Throughout the months of production I realize that the parole hearing serves as the catalyst for my journey, but not the soul of my film.

I want to know more about my Aunt Janie. My strongest memory of her is her death. My family has started to open up about her life before her brutal murder and through this opening I now know more about Janie and I knowing more about Janie, I know more about my family and myself.

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ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

NIKKI BRAKE (WRITER/DIRECTOR)

Nikki graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in Spanish and Biology. Her biology background enabled her to secure an Immunology research position at Penn's Med school, where her former boss asked her to learn how to shoot videos in order to train the lab's users. This class led her on a path of self-discovery.

She is currently completing her Masters in Fine Arts at the City College of New York. Her thesis film entitled, [Open Wound](#), has received funding from the National Board of Review, The Princess Grace Foundation, The Bert Saperstein Foundation, The Institute for Humane Studies and the Danielle and Larry Nyman Family Project Award. *Open Wound* will premiere June 2, 2007 at [CityVisions](#).

Nikki has played an integral part in two feature films. She was the assistant editor for the SXSW documentary Audience Award recipient, [Run Granny, Run!](#), by Marlo Poras. Nikki was also the Production Manager for the soon to be released documentary film, [UNFever](#), by Andrea Weiss.

Nikki will film *Operation: Crossroads*, a feature length documentary, in The Gambia, June 2007. *Crossroads* will show the universal human evolution that each participant has when placed in a situation that draws on their strengths while opening their souls to endless possibilities.

TONY CLOMAX (PRODUCER)

Mr. Clomax is a second-year City College M.F.A. graduate film student from Chicago, who specializes in all genres of film. He is a film buff and lover of music. Mr. Clomax is the writer, director and producer of short films such as *The Competition*, *Urban Samurai*, *Stare of Obsession*, *The Abyss of Love* and *Daddy's Pride and Joy*. His upcoming thesis production in February 2007 is a cop thriller entitled *My Brother's Keeper*. Mr. Clomax has also worked as Casting Director, Still Photographer and 1st Assistant Director on various classmates' films. His previous careers in Business and Education Administration develop transferable skills that have been beneficial in his short film career.

VINCENT VENTURELLA(DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Vincent Venturella is currently working on an M.F.A. in film at the City College of New York. Having formerly studied experimental filmmaking at Binghamton University, Vincent looks outside of conventional modes in developing skills in his specialization of Cinematography. He is also involved in film scoring and sound design, with 10 years of performance and composition experience in experimental and independent rock music.

ISIS NABUT(EDITOR)

Isis has graduated with a degree in Electronic Intermedia from the University of Florida in 2001. Her degree incorporated visual art, performance & installation and digital media. From this diverse incorporation of studies, Isis has taken on the "passion of video editing" and has maintained a professional history since then. She started her skills in Chiapas, México, where she helped indigenous Mexicans learn how to edit and cut videos for political rights. She then went on to create an animation for a Dutch television show in Hilversum, Netherlands. From these experiences she decided to pack her bags and move to the city that never sleeps to start her dreams. Isis has worked with big companies like Nike & L'Oreal but has also worked with independent directors who have gone on to enter their films into festivals. Her previous work with City College has been editing the films, *Ana's Story* & *Oseas* from two already graduated Masters students & directors; Bozena Bogdziewicz and Monica Yu. Currently working with Nikki Brake on *Open Wound*, Isis continues to edit and strives to look for that person who enjoys the "passion of editing."