

Atomic **HOMEFRONT**

Screening Guide

PREMIERES

Feb 12th, 2018 at 8p/7c

HBO | HBO NOW | HBO GO

Available on HBO ON-DEMAND on Feb. 13th

FREE on HBO.com after the HBO premiere through March 8th

For more information, go to

www.atomichomefront.film and

www.hbo.com/documentaries/atomic-homefront

Invite your friends, family and colleagues to watch the film together, and then have a post-screening discussion.

WHAT'S THE FILM ABOUT?

In 1942, the U.S. government chose Mallinckrodt Chemical Works, in downtown St. Louis, as an enrichment center of uranium for the Manhattan Project. Over the next 25 years, the radioactive waste from this processing was moved to sites throughout the city's northern and western suburbs. Many North St. Louis County residents' homes are adjacent to the West Lake landfill yet they were unaware that nuclear weapons waste had been illegally dumped into it. Now an uncontrolled, subsurface fire is moving closer to the radioactive waste. What will happen to the community once the fire and radiation meet? Directed by Rebecca Cammisa (the Oscar®-nominated HBO documentaries "God Is the Bigger Elvis" and "Which Way Home"), the devastating documentary ATOMIC HOMEFRONT exposes the lasting toxic effects nuclear waste can have on communities.

HOW DO YOU HOST A SCREENING?

Invite your group to a gathering spot - anywhere from your living room to a more formal space - to watch the film together. Before you watch, a note of caution: this film contains content and images that some may find disturbing. Please be mindful of your audience.

If you would like to host a community screening, go to '[Schedule a Community Screening](#)' on www.atomichomefront.film.

Here are some tips for hosting a screening:

1. Bring your group together. Send out invitations and collect RSVPs. Here's a sample of what your invitation can say:

<HOST NAME> cordially invites you and a guest to a screening and discussion of

Atomic Homefront

In 1942, the U.S. government chose Mallinckrodt Chemical Works, in downtown St. Louis, as an enrichment center of uranium for the Manhattan Project. Over the next 25 years, the radioactive waste from this processing was moved to sites throughout the city's northern and western suburbs. Many North St. Louis County residents' homes are adjacent to the West Lake landfill yet they were unaware that nuclear weapons waste had been illegally dumped into it. Now an uncontrolled, subsurface fire is moving closer to the radioactive waste. What will happen to the community once the fire and radiation meet? Directed by Rebecca Cammisa (the Oscar®-nominated HBO documentaries "God Is the Bigger Elvis" and "Which Way Home"), the devastating documentary ATOMIC HOMEFRONT exposes the lasting toxic effects nuclear waste can have on communities.

<TIME> WELCOME

<TIME> SCREENING (length 1h 37m)

Please RSVP to <EMAIL address> by <DATE>.

Create a Facebook event as well. Then, promote your screening to potential guests. Tag your tweets with [#AtomicHomefront](#) and [@HBODocs](#). Share the poster (see the end of the guide). Send the link to the trailer too, available at itsh.bo/2BBaiNN

2. Introduce the film. Ask your group. 'What would you do if you found out about plans for a radioactive waste disposal site in your community?' Give everyone a chance to write or at least consider his/her responses before the film.

3. Watch the film. Resources are available at www.atomichomefront.film/ and www.hbo.com/documentaries/atomic-homefront.

4. Talk about what you saw. What have they learned? Have their perceptions changed? Connect the dots. Do you know of communities that have experienced cancer clusters? Consider researching what toxic areas these home and/or communities are near. See below for more sample discussion questions.

5. Think about what your group can do to learn about the health problems associated with radioactive waste and how to approach authorities about waste disposal. Are there local grassroots groups near you who want change? Invite guests to go to review the resources below. Also, urge people to tell their personal networks about the film, and the issues it raises.

6. Thank your guests. Send a thank you email the next day, and include some follow up comments on the discussion. You can include links to some of the groups listed below.

How do I get the discussion going?

After the credits end, turn up the lights and kick off the conversation. Below are some discussion prompts to start you off. A good place to start is by asking your guests if they were surprised by what they saw.

How did radioactive waste end up at the West Lake Landfill? According to Historian and Archivist Kay Drey, "Mallinckrodt Chemical Works processed uranium for the U.S. government in downtown St. Louis, starting in April of 1942. It was in total secrecy.... The federal government decided they wanted to sell these materials that had been dumped at the airport site over an eleven or twelve-year period, because they were very valuable and lots of minerals and so forth... So they put ads and they did find a company called the Cotter Corporation in Colorado. They trucked just about a mile away to a place called Latty Avenue... Then in 1973, the wastes were trucked to West Lake landfill by a company hired by the Cotter Corporation... The wastes were dumped there illegally."

What is a 'subsurface smoldering event'? What danger does it pose for the residents of North St. Louis County? The Bridgeton Landfill in North St. Louis County contains an underground fire, known as a Subsurface Smoldering Event or "SSE." According to Véronique LaCapra of KWMU St. Louis Public Radio, an SSE is a "self-sustaining, high-temperature reaction that consumes waste underground, producing rapid "settlement" of the landfill's surface."¹ The adjacent West Lake landfill contains 47,000 tons of radioactive waste including Uranium 238, Thorium 230 and Radium 226. Left untreated, radioactive waste is extremely hazardous. At one point in the film, Captain Richard Sambolin says that the decay product of uranium is radon, which has been proven to cause cancer. If the Bridgeton fire breaches this waste in the West Lake Landfill, many are concerned it could cause a radioactive incident.

In the film, Dawn Chapman, co-founder, Just Moms STL says "My message to other moms who find themselves in a similar situation: Superman's not coming. Sometimes you have to be your own superhero." What do you think Chapman means? How did she raise awareness about the dangers from radioactive waste that posed a threat to her community? How did Just Moms STL create a powerful coalition and then confront the corporate and government authorities to gain their attention and then get them to take responsibility?

Over the course of the film, Just Moms meet with and ask their congressional representatives, representatives of the EPA, state regulators and Republic Services - the owner and operator of the landfill - for more information about the landfills, tests for radioactive material, and any remediation plans. An important note: Just Moms STL reached out and enlisted the help of veteran environmental activist Lois Gibbs who founded the Love Canal Homeowners Association in 1978 to fight dioxin poisoning in her community. In addition, the Moms contacted their local fire department, Pattonville, whose first responders would have had to rush in to fight any landfill fire. They partnered with Assistant Fire Chief Matt LaVanchy and asked for his professional opinion about the fire, which lent credibility to the grave concerns residents had about radioactive particle release.

In December 2017, EPA administrator Scott Pruitt choose West Lake landfill as one of 21 **superfund** sites to be targeted for 'immediate and intense' action. There are more than 1,300 Superfund sites nationwide. In early February 2018, Pruitt announced a plan to remediate 70% of the radioactive waste buried in West Lake Landfill and a **Public Comment period** – until March 22nd - during which citizens could give feedback on the plan. From the EPA - "The proposed remedy – "Excavation Plus" – includes both the removal of the majority of the radioactive material and construction of an engineered cover system to best protect the community of Bridgeton over the long term."²

¹ <http://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/confused-about-bridgeton-west-lake-landfills-heres-what-you-should-know#stream/0>

² <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-administrator-scott-pruitt-announces-west-lake-landfill-superfund-proposed-remedy>

In response, Karen Nickel of Just Moms STL said “We view this as a victory for this community that EPA has now acknowledged this is dangerous and it needs to be taken away. It’s been a long, hard battle.” Ed Smith of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, said partial removal “is not acceptable” and that “It means high levels of radioactivity will be left behind with the potential for water or airborne contamination into the future, creating unnecessary long-term risks to the St. Louis region.”³ What do you think should be done to protect the citizens of Bridgeton? Who should handle the oversight of this process?

RESOURCES

Do you live near radioactive waste disposal site? Do you know its history - what organization manages the site and its safety? See the resource links below for more information.

Just Moms STL

www.stlradwastelegacy.com

Cold Water Creek

www.coldwatercreekfacts.com/mission/

Center for Health, Environment and Justice

chej.org

Missouri Coalition for the Environment

moenvironment.org

Nuclear Information and Resource Service

www.nirs.org

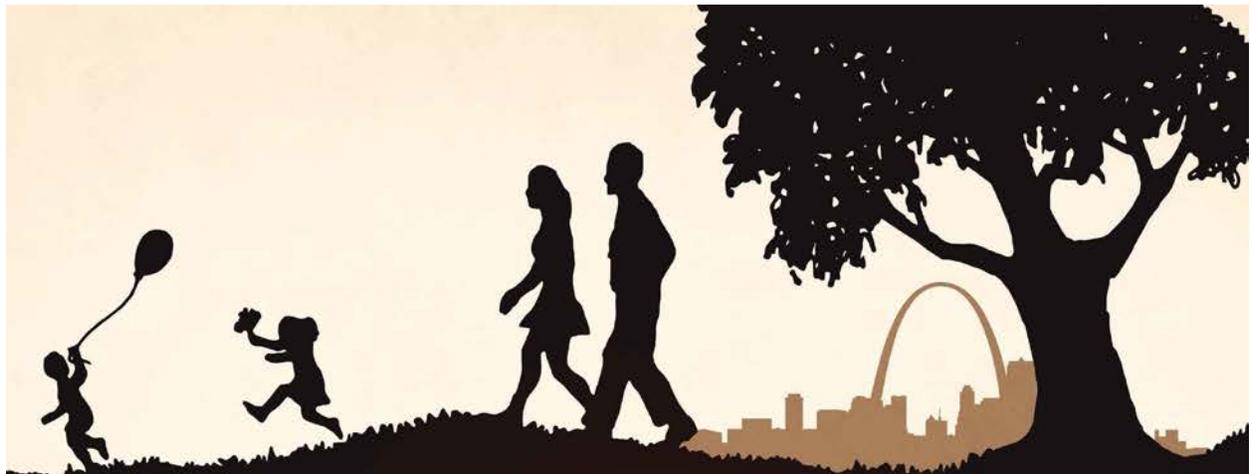
Bombs in Your Backyard - ProPublica

projects.propublica.org/bombs

US Environmental Protection Agency – Superfund Sites

www.epa.gov/superfund/search-superfund-sites-where-you-live

³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/amhtml/business/epa-announces-plan-for-suburban-st-louis-landfill-cleanup/2018/02/01/5a324c58-0797-11e8-aa61-f3391373867e_story.html&freshcontent=1



AN UNCONTROLLED SUBSURFACE FIRE
ENCROACHING ON 47,000 TONS OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE...

TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE,
YOU HAVE TO BE YOUR OWN SUPERHERO

Atomic HOMEFRONT

HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS PRESENTS A PRODUCTION BY JEFF PROBERT AND DOCUMENTARIES TODAY PRESENTS "ATOMIC HOMEFRONT" WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY FELICIA LARROSA PRODUCED BY JAMES D. TRAPANELO EDITED BY JUSTIN HILLS
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: CARA COSTELLO EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JOHN KILGUS / MING WU PRODUCED BY MARGARET CLAUDIA RASCHKE PRODUCED BY THOMAS BUCHNER / KRISTIN JOHNSON MUSIC COMPOSED AND PERFORMED BY ROBERT MULLER
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JAMES GARD / WILL BENWISSE / ZACH BENWISSE / TONY SILEASARI / ADRIAN AGUIAR / WENDY BELLE / OLGA WILSON AND PBS STORY PRODUCED BY SARA HERRSTEIN EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: STEVE WATSON

PREMIERES MONDAY FEB 12, 8PM **HBO**

WWW.ATOMICHOMEFRONT.FILM @ATOMICHOMEFRONT

ENGELHARDT