



PRESS KIT

Logline

In trash, redemption.

Short Synopsis

A surprising number of Americans make their living off America's vast rivers of trash. They are America's unseen. DOGTOWN REDEMPTION tells the story of one river, and the humanity of its inhabitants in Dogtown, West Oakland, a lively, bustling yet invisible corner of California.

We follow the lives of three recyclers: Jason Witt, the titan of recycling, Landon Goodwin, a former minister, who struggles with his own fall from grace, and Miss Hayok Kay, the ultimate outsider, formerly a punk rocker from a prominent Korean family, now at the mercy of the elements and predators. Through them, we are introduced to the art, science, economics and politics of recycling: what it offers, how it touches the poor and why it matters to all of us.

Long Synopsis

Shot over seven years, DOGTOWN REDEMPTION is not only the intimate story of recyclers in West Oakland but a journey through a landscape of love and loss, devotion and addiction, prejudice and poverty.

A surprising number of Americans make their living off a vast river of trash. DOGTOWN REDEMPTION follows this river, and its inhabitants in a lively, bustling yet invisible corner of California. Every year, Californians buy about 22 billion carbonated and non-carbonated drinks in aluminum, glass, and plastic containers—a river of trash. Under California law beverage containers can be redeemed for a few cents per container. As a result of this legal innovation, trash can be turned into cash--a lifeline for a subculture of marginalized recyclers: the unemployed and underemployed, the elderly, the mentally and physically disabled, former criminals, drug addicts and prostitutes can reclaim the pride and joy that comes with having a job.

We follow the lives of three recyclers: Jason Witt, the titan of recycling; Landon Goodwin, a former minister, and addict who struggles with his own fall from grace; and Miss Hayok Kay, the ultimate outsider, formerly a Polkacide drummer from a prominent Korean-American family, now at the mercy of the elements and predators. Through them, we are introduced to the art, science, economics and politics of recycling: what it offers, how it touches the poor and why it matters to all of us.

DOGTOWN REDEMPTION humanizes and celebrates this other America; the America that many of us do not see. That a small recycling center has allowed so many to survive on a daily basis—for years, even decades—is a minor miracle. A reminder that even in trash there can be life, love and redemption.

Production Info

Running Time: 94 minutes

Date Completed: September 2015

Biographies

Amir Soltani is the Producer and Co-Director of DOGTOWN REDEMPTION. Amir is an Iranian-American human rights activist. He has worked in journalism, philanthropy and business. He is the author of *Zahra's Paradise*, a New York Times Bestselling graphic novel on Iran's 2009 protests. Amir studied history at Tufts and Harvard. DOGTOWN REDEMPTION is his first documentary film.

Chihiro Wimbush is a Hapa, Oakland-based filmmaker. Most recently he served as Editor of the award-winning *Changing Season: on the Masumoto Family Farm*. With his wife Meena Srinivasan, he creates mindful media and education content via their nonprofit organization, *A Lens Inside*. Between chasing shopping carts and other stories, Chihiro writes and tries to lure his musical muse out of hiding.

Cast and Crew

Directors: Amir Soltani & Chihiro Wimbush

Producer: Amir Soltani

Executive Producers: Jamie Wolf, GERALYN Dreyfous, Abou Farman, Regina Scully, Khosrow Semnani, Saeed Nasiri.

Co-Producers: Ray Telles, Chihiro Wimbush, Denise Zmekhol

Associate Producer: Zachary Stickney

Director of Photography: Chihiro Wimbush

Editor: Manuel Tsingaris

Music: Pete Sears

Post-Production Audio: Berkeley Sound Artists

Titles & Graphics: Bay Area Film Company

Humanities Advisors: Arthur Boone, Rita Brock, Gabriella Lettini, Richard Rodriguez, Robert Self, Sherman Teichman. Lewis Watts