



Time **4REAL** Change

4REAL – a new breed of documentary presents ‘real’ stories with everyday heroes helping to promote change and inspire hope all over the world. Co-founder and host Sol Guy openly chats with *Exposé* on the show’s beginnings, what’s ahead for season two and 2009.

By Clare Douglas

In the Haiti countryside, a woman wakes up each morning with one purpose – to educate, empower and help save the lives of more than 3000 members of her community. Camseuze Moise, a village health agent, spends hours on foot travelling to Haitian homes to provide necessary health care and education. With desperate mothers caring for sick children and malnourishment a common affliction, Camseuze hears their call and through her hard work and dedication, inspires hope throughout Haiti. Tahis is one of the many socially conscious stories shared on 4REAL – a new breed of documentary.

After successfully making strides within the music industry, Vancouver native Sol Guy, along with his good friend Josh Thome decided to use their shared experiences to create a new vehicle where charity and celebrity could work together to promote positivity and change. The show travels to various locations around the world to meet individuals who are taking “leadership” to a whole different level. As the show’s host, Sol has unintentionally become the representative of 4REAL, a responsibility that he respects but in his own modest words, “it’s not about him” but it sort of is – it’s about all of us, a collective-conscious demanding only the highest standards of life and happiness for everyone.

Gossip blogs, paparazzi, weekly rag-mags and an alarming obsession with “celebrity” is now the norm. To engage audiences, the creators knew they had to find a unique angle and decided to bring a celebrity along on each adventure. Sol states, “by merging non-profit and entertainment, we knew the bridge was going to be culture and art and the epicentre of that is (we now call them celebrities) talented artists. If you’re a creator or a talented artist in our society, you get elevated to this very interesting status. You can’t tear that system down. So to be effective

you have to create something within it that is just as cool, just as impactful and can inspire people.” Unlike some documentaries, the featured leaders’ star power outshines the celebrity, so much so, “you might like Cameron Diaz, but by the end of the show you’ll love Puma.” The leaders “are so



4Real Producer Sol Guy. Photos by Brianna Heald

dynamic. When you are around them, it doesn’t matter how big a star you are. You’re humbled in their presence.”

In 2010, the world’s eyes will be on Vancouver when it hosts the Olympics. As the celebration of sport ensues, thousands of inhabitants from Vancouver’s downtown east side will face immeasurable challenges. Out of sight, out of mind is unacceptable here – a community ravished by drugs, poverty and lack of housing, all products of social determinants created by society at large. Sol is most proud of the 4REAL episode highlighting the great work of Liz Evans and her team at the Portland Hotel Society who fight every day to keep Canadians alive. According to Sol, the neighbourhood is “appalling. Not the people that are there, but

the situation that we collectively have created, and that is not their problem, it’s our collective problem.”

4REAL isn’t finished spreading positive stories, season two is in the works and Sol and Josh hope to feature leaders in Cambodia, India, the Middle East, South Africa, Australia, Uganda, Nunavut and the US. In addition, dignitaries, celebrities, politicians and philanthropic notables will gather together in New York in February of this year – to celebrate and applaud the work of grassroots leaders who are fundamental in ensuring that the Millennium Development Goals in accordance with the United Nations are successfully achieved. The goals target child mortality, gender equality, HIV/AIDS, poverty and education to name a few and Sol believes that everyone can help. “The idea of getting involved in social change is not an abstract thought that exists outside of you, in fact, it’s probably one of the most personal and intimate things that you can do.” First, live your passion and, “through that you’ll better yourself.” Make sure you have an “I can” attitude because it will ultimately lead to positive change. Most importantly, “open yourself up to the idea that you want to do more, and you have a personal responsibility to do so. It doesn’t have to be daunting. You’re personal responsibility might be to your siblings or your friends, and that is gigantic. It’s grassroots – person to person, so spread that vibe.”

Sol Guy has seen some of the world’s greatest minds living out their passion for change and social mobilization, but it’s important to remember that the people who stand on the sidelines are just as important as those on the field. Encouragement, support and applause are essential in ensuring that motivation is universal. At the same time, it’s up to us to demand playing time, swapping positions every now and then until the global community is victorious. 

Celebs Get Real

Photos courtesy of CTV

SPOTLIGHT ON LIBERIA

Who: **M.I.A**

What's Real? Kimmie Weeks, a civil war survivor, founded Youth Action International (YAI) – an organization dedicated to re-building war-torn countries in Africa. YAI aims to empower youth to break the cycles of violence and poverty especially among children.



SPOTLIGHT ON KENYA

Who: **K'NAAN**

What's Real? After personal struggles in his childhood, Salim Mohammed vowed to work hard to ensure that future generations didn't share his experiences. As co-founder and Executive Director of Carolina for Kibera, Salim encourages youth leadership through education, sports, theatre and dance.



SPOTLIGHT ON VANCOUVER

Who: **Eva Mendes**

What's Real? Liz Evans, Executive Director and Founder of the Portland Hotel Society, works closely with inhabitants of Vancouver's downtown east side who face personal struggles including: poverty, addiction, homelessness and mental health concerns. The society oversees numerous programs including North America's first safe injection site.



SPOTLIGHT ON PERU

Who: **Cameron Diaz**

What's Real? Puma Singona – a medicine man who continues to preserve Peruvian Quechua traditions and culture. With outside influences and urban migration on the rise, Puma works with young people in hopes that they continue to spread and teach traditional practices.



SPOTLIGHT ON YAWANAWA, BRAZIL

Who: **Joaquin Phoenix**

What's Real? In 2001, Tashka Yawanawa became Chief of the Yawanawa. Under his leadership, the territory has doubled in size. Tashka works diligently to retain rights and uphold the culture, wisdom, practices and language of the Yawanawa people.



SPOTLIGHT ON PAWNEE NATION RESERVATION, OKLAHOMA

Who: **Casey Affleck**

What's Real? Crystal Echo Hawk has been an active voice for Native Americans, in particular the Pawnee Nation. She founded NVision with leading members of the Native American arts community. Through music, dance, film and art, NVision empowers youth to use their creativity to promote positivity for themselves and their community.



SPOTLIGHT ON HAITI

Who: **Flea of the Red Hot Chili Peppers**

What's Real? As a health agent for the Haitian Health Foundation, Camseuze Moise provides healthcare to more than 3000 people in Jeremie, Haiti. She finds innovative ways to educate the citizens, particularly sexuality and women's health concerns.



SPOTLIGHT ON CITY OF GOD, BRAZIL

Who: **Mos Def**

What's Real? MV Bill (Alex Pereira Barbosa) was born and raised in The City of God – a region inflicted by gang violence, drugs and poverty. Not only is he a respected member of Brazil's hip hop community, he is one of the most important activists striving to empower youth. Through hip hop and art, MV Bill's CUFA (Central Unica das Favelas) provides a safe haven for young people to explore their creativity and personal development.

