

## 'The Interruptors:' Documentary Film Examines Movement Against Chicago's Homicide Rate

### MOVIE REVIEWS

by Kam Williams



Chicago landed on the nation's radar a couple of years ago when a high school honor student's slaying by a mob of fellow teenagers was captured on a cell phone camera. Sadly, that killing was not all that unusual for the Windy City where the homicide rate in the 'hood is higher than that among American soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The only thing that made this particular murder newsworthy was

fact that it had been recorded which meant that there was footage to play for ratings on the 11 O'clock News. The sad truth is that similar scenarios are being repeated with painful regularity in our impoverished inner cities all across the country.

Fortunately, at least in Chicago, Violence Interrupters has been formed with the aim of reversing the lethal trend. The organization is spearheaded by reformed gang-bangers willing to put their butts on the line by calling for cooler heads to prevail when tempers start to flare on the mean streets of the ghetto.

Directed by Oscar-nominee Steve James (Hoop Dreams) and produced by best-selling author Alex Kotlowitz (There Are No Children Here), The Interruptors is a riveting documentary which chronicles the efforts of several intrepid community organizers over the course of a year, including Ameena Mathews, Tio Hardiman and Cobe Williams. With the aim of bringing an end to black-on-black crime, the three devote their time to everything from disarming the revenge-minded to mentoring lost souls to consoling grieving parents to helping ex-cons readjust to civilian life.



Ameena Mathews (background), violence interrupter

The movie also allows some well-known Chicago luminaries to weigh-in on the burgeoning crisis, such as Jesse Jackson ("This is a state of emergency; this is what a war zone looks like.") and President Obama's Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

("Violence is an American problem."). But the experts' pontificating pales in comparison to the unenviable task of being the one actually trying to talk sense to an enraged man-child with vengeance in his heart and a loaded gun at his disposal.

A crash course on how to stage an intervention, at your own risk, on behalf of a gangsta' urgently in need of a little tough love.

Excellent (4 stars)  
Unrated  
Running time: 125 Minutes  
Studio: Kartemquin Films  
Distributor: Cinema Guild

### COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## SEATTLE AUGUST 2011

### BULLETIN BOARD



If you have an event you want to share with the community, email it two weeks in advance to *The Skanner* at [info@theskanner.com](mailto:info@theskanner.com)

Seattle Bulletin

#### Thursday August 4

**CHARLIE THE NOISE GUY:** Charlie the Noise Guy who has an incredible gift for vocal sound effects will perform at the amphitheatre. FREE. 11 a.m. Magnuson Park, 6344 NE 74th

#### Friday August 5

**BLUE ANGELS AIR SHOW!** Kick-off Seafair by heading to the heart of the Blue Angels action. We'll search out a viewing area and picnic while watching the fastest 2-hour show. 11 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Hiawatha Community Center, 2700 California Ave. SW FREE.

#### Saturday August 6

**PLANET HOME SUSTAINABILITY LIVING FESTIVAL** This free community event offers speakers, workshops, conversations and much more. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Hunter Tree Farm Lot, 7744 36th Ave. NE.

#### Tuesday August 9

**FIRE SAFETY DAY!** Join is for some special lobby activities! Full-day and half-day camps are available for additional charge. The Children's Museum, 305 Harrison St. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

#### Wednesday August 10

**THE TREASURE OF TWIN VALLEY DAIRY HISTORY PROGRAM!** Unearth treasures of the past. Explore this historic farm park, meet the farm animals and much more. 11 a.m. Kelsey Creek Farm Park Amphitheater, 410 130th Place SE, Bellevue, WA

#### Friday August 12

**7TH ANNUAL SOUTH LAKE UNION BLOCK PARTY!** As always this free event will feature a full day of outdoor summertime fun and entertainment for all ages. Noon - 11:30 p.m. South Lake Union Discovery Center, 101 Westlake Ave N.

#### Saturday August 13

**TASTE OF HOOD CANAL:** Community event by The North Mason Rotary with over 80 booths of food, crafts, kids' fun and information. Free for everyone to enjoy: Belfair, WA.

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