

'Evolution of a Criminal' Featured at WKAR Community Cinema and Project 60/50

Free Screening and Conversation at WKAR

EAST LANSING, MI; NOVEMBER 6, 2014 – WKAR Community Cinema returns in November with a screening and conversation about **Evolution of a Criminal**. The new documentary poses the question, How does a 16-year-old evolve into a bank robber? Filmmaker Darius Clark Monroe searches for the answers — about himself. Years after his release from prison, Monroe returns to his old neighborhood to speak with family and friends, along with classmates, teachers, law enforcement officials, and the innocent victims in the bank on the fateful day of the robbery.

The WKAR Community Cinema event takes place **Thursday, Nov. 13 at 7 p.m.** at WKAR in the Communication Arts and Sciences building on the Michigan State campus. The event is free, but online reservations are required at WKAR.org.

The evening begins with a screening of a short portion of the film and continues with conversation led by MSU Professor Carl Taylor, Kristen Staley of the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency, Jane Zehnder-Merrell of "Kids Count in Michigan" and Lois DeMott of the Family Participation Program.

This screening and conversation is a free presentation in partnership with **Project 60/50** at Michigan State University.

About the Panelists

Professor Carl Taylor is a criminologist with extensive experience in field research aimed at the reduction of violence involving American youth. He has worked with communities, foundations and government agencies in understanding gangs, youth culture, and violence. Taylor is a professor in the Department of Sociology at Michigan State University.

Kristen Staley is senior policy associate with the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency, where she is responsible for advancing efforts to improve Michigan's juvenile justice system. Prior to her work in Michigan, Staley was a family law attorney in the Louisville, KY area, specializing in domestic violence and child custody issues.

Jane Zehnder-Merrell is project director for "Kids Count in Michigan," a project of the Michigan League for Public Policy that produces an annual data book on child well-being and conducts an ongoing public information campaign around children's issues. Zehnder-Merrell is also co-chair to the Child Care Task Force and secretary for the Michigan Coalition for Children and Families.

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Lois DeMott recently launched the Family Participation Program in Michigan. The program includes working with the Department of Corrections at four pilot prisons, and is available to all loved ones who are dealing with the prison system in Michigan. The program works to assist families in learning how to navigate and advocate for their incarcerated loved ones.

About 'Evolution of a Criminal'

A native of Houston, Texas, Darius Clark Monroe had a happy childhood with his mother, stepfather, and close-knit extended family. However, as he grew older and saw his parents struggling to make ends meet, Monroe's vision of the world changed: "I went from being a carefree and joyous child to becoming acutely aware of the fact that the world was not as I saw it. And the burden that my parents had was slowly trickling down to me." Placing his own culpability at the heart of the story, Monroe pulls no punches, using dramatized scenes of the bank robbery to capture the tragically bad decisions he and his friends made, and to bring home the terror of those they held at gunpoint. More than just a tale of a good kid gone wrong, *Evolution of a Criminal* is filled with compassion for human frailty and the knowledge that a person is not forever defined by their mistakes.

On the Air

Evolution of a Criminal premieres on PBS and WKAR Monday, January 12 at 10pm.

About Project 60/50

Michigan State University facilitates a year-long community conversation on civil and human rights. Learn more at inclusion.msu.edu

Community Cinema is a groundbreaking public education and civic engagement initiative featuring screenings of films from Independent Lens on location in 100 cities and online. Between September and June, Community Cinema brings together leading organizations, community members and public television stations to learn, discuss and get involved in today's critical social issues.

The WKAR Network is part of Michigan State University's College of Communication Arts and Sciences. The WKAR Network provides mid-Michigan and the global community with award-winning original programming and the best from PBS and NPR via television channels WKAR-HD, WKAR World and WKAR Create; and radio broadcasts at 90.5 FM, AM 870 and WKAR Radio Reading Service. At WKAR.org and video.wkar.org, the network offers live audio streaming, plus local news features, TV original full episodes and the best from NPR and PBS on-demand. The WKAR Network provides additional community outreach with WKAR Ready to Learn Service and PBS LearningMedia.

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