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Filmmaker's ground-breaking documentary to be screened with ImageNation at Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater on Thursday, June 9, 2011.

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(New York, NY) -- When filmmaker André Robert Lee embarked on the task of creating his provocative and touching film, *The Prep School Negro*, the motivation came from deep within. At age 14, Lee -- born of working-class African American roots in a hardscrabble inner-city Philadelphia neighborhood -- received what promised to be the Golden Ticket to all his dreams: a fully-paid scholarship to attend one of the city's most exclusive private preparatory schools.

The opportunity would propel Lee, via Germantown Friends School, out of the ghetto, into a world of European choir trips and lunchtime discussions of D.H. Lawrence and the Bronte sisters. Eventually, it would send him on to Connecticut College, then Tufts, and, ultimately, toward an impressive career in the film and television industries.

But at what cost?

These four sharp words had begun whispering to Lee all the way back in high school, even as he embraced his scholarship opportunity with a gusto that would endear him to the school's teachers and administrators for years to come.

*Who was the *real* André?*

Was it the newly-minted scholar and thespian, finally able to spread his wings in a world he'd only dreamed about? Or was it still the shy, skinny kid from the ghetto, the one whose mother worked her hands to the bone in a clothing factory -- a factory owned by the father of one of Lee's new prep school classmates?

It was this quest for understanding that set writer/director Lee -- a former executive for Miramax -- on the way to making *The Prep School Negro*. The path would send him back to the streets and classrooms of his youth, in a poignant search for answers to the riddles of family, race, opportunity, and -- ultimately -- self. It was a journey notable not only for the personal intricacy of what he confronted, but also for the profoundly moving stories he began to encounter from others like himself: present-day prep school students of color often quietly doing battle with the same issues of identity and belonging that had plagued Lee for more than 20 years.

In fact, so captivated have present-day students been of the PSN project that, over the past sixteen months, Lee and his team have held over 120 *Prep School Negro* workshops at locations throughout the country. And the appeal has not been limited to the academic world alone. Intrigue -- and, indeed, identification -- with the project has spread to all age groups and walks of life: so much so that Lee has held PSN events at many

notable conferences and conventions, in addition to dozens of educational institutions.

The workshops consist of a presentation of the film, followed by an often-animated discussion/Q&A on the issues of race, identity and education that the documentary provokes. These workshops have spread virally -- and wholly by word-of-mouth -- across the U.S., filling auditoriums in the Ivy League halls of places like Harvard, Penn, and Princeton -- as well as many of the country's most notable prep schools. So successful has this shoe-leather campaign of workshops been that Lee's executive producers at Point Made Films have already seen a return on their investment -- unheard of for a film that is yet to have even its first official screening.

The June 9th screening at Walter Reade promises to be a coming-out party of sorts for a film that has generated not only income, but also a surprising degree of buzz and popularity at the academic and cultural levels -- all without a single ounce of promotion or publicity.

"I intentionally took a very unconventional route with this film," said Lee. "Rather than go the way of festivals and awards, we wanted to take the film directly to the schools. And with over a hundred workshops now, we've been able to reach a far greater audience simply based on reputation and word-of-mouth alone."

Indeed, as ecstatic reviews have poured in from educational institutions around the country, demands for a New York City public screening have reached fever pitch in recent weeks.

The "First Look" presentation at Walter Reade next month will showcase what Lee has dubbed "the feature length version" of *The Prep School Negro*

documentary -- a longer, more personal examination of the filmmaker's place in the dual worlds of his youth and early adulthood. Presented by the ImageNation Cinema Foundation, in partnership with the Film Society of Lincoln Center, the screening will be followed by a director Q&A and reception.

"We're extremely excited to finally have a chance to share this project with the people of New York," Lee said.

***For more information on this project, including requests for interviews with André Lee, please contact Matthew Taylor at Taylor Warwick Public Relations: (718)689-0231.
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Also, please be sure to learn more about this project by clicking: www.theprepschoolnegro.org