

AKINTOLA HANIF



### **Freedom or Everybody Dies**

Directed by Akintola Hanif | HYZE

*Freedom or Everybody Dies* is a 5-minute mixed media short that blends photography, video and music to tell the real story of hip-hop's present generation. Focusing on the subculture that takes place in many of America's inner cities, *Freedom or Everybody Dies* is comprised of still photos and video footage synchronized to a score that highlights the intensity of the images.

Shot in and around the now defunct Arcadian Gardens, a subsidized housing project in East Orange, New Jersey, the short film gives a glimpse into the lives of the children and young adults who lived there. With B.L.O.O.D. red as the backdrop, director Akintola Hanif presents a very real image of the gang presence and culture within "The Bity", as Arcadian Gardens is known to it's former residents.

"I really want people to walk away with the realization that our children are dying and killing each other, while we celebrate breakdancing and graffiti. I want to use *Freedom or Everybody Dies* to send a wake-up call that says, 'We aren't dancing anymore. We are dying,' " he says. "After seeing *Freedom*, hopefully people will walk away understanding that not all America's youth are privy to the things every human being should have access to and want to do something about it."

Looping the film three times, Hanif gives audiences added insight into the lives of *Freedom's* children, by including short clips of some of the unknown shining stars from the community. This innovative concept introduces us to Dep, who tells his compressed life story using his own form of poetic license and Lil Holla, a master of freestyle rhyming at just eight years old.

Luis Rivera, an unrehearsed focal point, is introduced at the end of the film, where Hanif shares images from his life and untimely death.

*Freedom or Everybody Dies* is compiled of footage from the feature length documentary, *The Bity*, tentatively scheduled for release in 2007.

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