



# CALIFORNIA AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Espinosa Productions

## "CALIFORNIA AND THE AMERICAN DREAM"

EXPLORES DYNAMICS OF CULTURE, COMMUNITY  
AND IDENTITY IN ONE OF WORLD'S MOST DIVERSE REGIONS

Four-Part Series Airing Nationally on PBS

CALIFORNIA AND THE AMERICAN DREAM, a new four-part series narrated by Academy Award-winning actress Linda Hunt, explores the dynamics of culture, community and identity in one of the world's most diverse regions. In the last 35 years, California, a state with the world's sixth-largest economy, has seen dramatic changes in social, demographic and cultural trends, which have transformed the state so much that it bears little resemblance to the Hollywood dreamscape projected in previous decades.

CALIFORNIA AND THE AMERICAN DREAM tells the story of the "real" California, a state that is leading the nation in terms of innovation and solutions to the myriad of issues facing the country today. California is also a prime example of a post-industrial America in which minorities make up the majority of the population. In each episode, veteran filmmakers Jed Riffe, Paul Espinosa, Lyn Goldfarb and Emiko Omori offer an in-depth look at these issues and current trends — from changing demographics to new models of civic engagement; from the role of immigrants in neighborhood life to the democratic challenge of the initiative process; and from sustainable agriculture to Native American gaming and sovereignty. Each one of the hour-long four independently-produced films stands alone. However as a series, the four episodes examine a complex and crucial set of issues California currently faces, as well as the country as a whole.

### **Episode 1: "California's 'Lost' Tribes"**

Producer/Director: Jed Riffe

Co-Producer: Jack Kohler, (California tribal member Karuk, Yurock, Hupa)

In a few short years, American Indians in California went from being the poorest people in the state to some of the richest—gaining unimaginable wealth from gambling—from being virtually invisible to being the most powerful political lobby in the sixth largest economy in the world. "California's 'Lost' Tribes" is the first documentary to go behind the façade of glitz and glamour at American Indian casinos to reveal the current conflicts over Indian gaming, and to explore the historical underpinnings of tribal sovereignty and the evolution of tribal gaming over the last 30 years. Concern over gaming is further stoked by the development of casinos in rural lands, creating friction between tribes and non-Indians. This episode weighs the impact of gaming on Indian self-determination, and explores the challenges native peoples face in defining their identity for the future.

### **Episode 2: "The Price of Renewal"**

Producer/Director: Paul Espinosa

This episode examines issues of community development, philanthropy and civic engagement as a single community struggles to rebuild a tattered and declining neighborhood. The story follows the long-term redevelopment of an older, deteriorating neighborhood called City Heights, often referred to as the Ellis Island of San Diego. The community has a rich mix of cultural values and people, including immigrants from Mexico and Latin America and refugees from Southeast Asia and East Africa. Redevelopment plans have placed the community in an unlikely partnership with businessman and



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philanthropist Sol Price, the founder of the Price Club, who is widely recognized as the father of the discount warehouse industry, and William Jones, an African American real estate developer who was the youngest person ever elected to the San Diego City Council. "The Price of Renewal" explores what is gained and what is lost as a community develops and improves itself through a partnership with public and private entities. What are the challenges of crafting a vibrant urban village from an ethnically, culturally and economically diverse population?

### **Episode 3: "The New Los Angeles"**

Producer/Director: Lyn Goldfarb

The third episode explores the complexities of inclusion in Los Angeles—the nation's largest majority minority city and the city with the largest divide between rich and poor. This powerful portrait of a city in transition begins in 1973 with the election of Mayor Tom Bradley, the first African American mayor of a major city without a black majority, and concludes with the political empowerment of Latinos and the election of Antonio Villaraigosa, Los Angeles' first Latino mayor in more than 130 years. The documentary looks beyond the Hollywood dreamscape to a vibrant city grappling with many of the issues now commonplace throughout the nation: immigration, globalization, de-industrialization and a shrinking middle class. This story profiles the efforts of immigrants and the working poor, in coalition with community organizations, labor unions and elected officials, to transform the environment in which they live and to make the city of Los Angeles accountable to its residents. "The New Los Angeles" explores the shifting political ground that is shaping the city's future and demonstrating that change is possible. This is a story about forging coalitions, nurturing inclusion, seeding innovation, salvaging identity and building community.

### **Episode 4: "Ripe for Change"**

Producers: Emiko Omori and Jed Riffe; Director: Emiko Omori

The final episode chronicles the intersection of food and politics in California over the last 30 years. California is at a crossroads in agriculture, fending off overdevelopment and the loss of farming traditions while simultaneously embracing innovative visions of sustainability. Always a fascinating marriage of opposing extremes, California is the state from which Cesar Chavez brought the plight of migrant farm workers and the hazards of industrial farming to the attention of the world. Yet it is also the state that embraced the biotechnology industry and spurred the fast-food movement. Alongside this movement are the leaders in redefining school lunch programs, the marketing system known as community supported agriculture (CSA) and calls for more sustainable farming that considers the impact on environment, community and workers. With diminishing resources and a growing population, how will the state cope with this dilemma? How can consumers participate in these life-affecting decisions? Revealing interviews with some of California's prominent farmers, chefs and food thinkers offer an opportunity to consider these complex questions. These stories are about survival, building communities and reclaiming the aesthetics of food, and how food nurtures our souls while sustaining our bodies.

CALIFORNIA AND THE AMERICAN DREAM is a co-production of Executive Producers Paul Espinosa, Lyn Goldfarb and Jed Riffe and the Independent Television Service (ITVS). Executive Producer for ITVS is Sally Jo Fifer. Major funding was provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting with additional funding provided by PBS, The Ford Foundation, the Independent Television Service, Native American Public Telecommunications, Skirball Foundation, Latino Public Broadcasting, National Asian American Telecommunications Association, The Rockefeller Foundation and the California Council for the Humanities. <[www.californiadreamseries.org](http://www.californiadreamseries.org)>