

Josue Guillen  
The Praxis Project & May 1  
Communication Working Group  
U.S. Social Forum

Dear Josue,

May 7, 2007

I spoke with Joanne some time back. Rather than a phone number to contact you immediately, she said protocol required an email. This more substantive communication has taken me quite a while to clear time to complete.

I would like to request that you also consult my website at [www.earthtelevision.org](http://www.earthtelevision.org). I will very soon be upgrading it into a more attractive formatting, but it does now incorporate my brochure, which lays out the concept of using sponsored television to present to mass audiences major events like the U.S. Social Forum. The site also includes several previous project proposals and emails I have written to other civil society groups.

**PARTICIPATING IN PREVIOUS FORUMS.** I attended the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2003. The independent media group there showed on their version of public access TV some of the extensive collection of “World Citizen Videobooks” I have produced. Excerpts from these also punctuated an hour long interview with me that was broadcast nationally on their channel equivalent to PBS.

I was very aware at the time of the potential opportunity to telecast globally selected coverage of the most important happenings there, such as newly elected Brazilian President Lula’s speech to Forum attendees at a large sports stadium just before he traveled to that year’s World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, and a roundtable featuring Noam Chomsky and Naomi Klein. I was unable to persuade the organizers of the value in focusing on this prospect, and as a result electronic media coverage of the Forum in the U.S. was essentially nil.

In addition, I came several weeks early to Massachusetts for the Boston Social Forum and the Democratic National Convention in the summer of 2004. There I was able to secure the cooperation of the director of the Boston Public Access station to start shooting at the Forum, to move his edited coverage to late prime time, and to synchronize cablecasts with the Cambridge Community Television outlet. But I could not get the Forum organizers to realize the impact advertising and promoting these cablecasts in the local print media and on NPR and community radio stations would have had. So the Forum transpired without most people in the area even realizing it was taking place, let alone its historic significance.

**U.S. FORUM MEDIA.** Now you folks are staging the United States Social Forum June 30 - July 7 in Atlanta. There will, of course, be some mainstream media reportage on this gathering and probably rather more alternative media news about it. Yet my experience of thirty years as an independent producer tells me that the quantity of comprehensive presentation of the range of groups appearing at and the significance of the ideas emanating from the Forum will be slight and certainly inadequate. The commercial media are simply not in the business of communicating to their audiences in depth and breadth about cutting edge social policy. The alternative media tends to reach mostly an already informed "choir" and rarely has the resources to edit and distribute on site highlights of the action.

**ALIGNING EXTANT ELEMENTS.** I have put a lot of energy into figuring out how to change this unfortunate situation. I would like to work with you and the other event organizers on a specific plan to bring the messages of the assemblage to mass audiences nationally and globally during its run, and then put together a summary television program for broadcasts in Atlanta and other municipalities shortly afterwards.

The key factor is to align already available elements into a functional whole producing an envisioned result. Many volunteer videographers will be attending and recording the Forum. Perhaps you will even arrange for wide screen multi-camera projection of the most important happenings in large venues. I would recommend, based on my participation and observation of hundreds of grass roots convocations, that you also consider integrating all of these productions, raising funds to edit and transmit daily highlights, and secure sponsors for a well-promoted full length TV show to air two weeks after the fact.

**POTENTIAL SPONSORS.** Some of the foundations who underwrite the Forum, non-profit groups who present workshops, and socially responsible firms who exhibit at booths might be very interested in putting their name and activities out to 50,000 or more viewers in Atlanta, and hundreds of thousands in other locales. I suggest that money that may not be forthcoming to just shoot video will flow in profusion to support television outreach to vast audiences.

I can help you with all aspects of execution of such a project. I am seasonally bi-coastal, living in the summer and fall near Woodstock, New York with my fiancé, who is a therapist in Manhattan. I move back to Los Angeles for the winter and spring. I can come to Atlanta well before the event to coordinate all the necessary factors to successfully pull off what I propose. Please call me at (310) 795-4910 to get started now.

Yours,  
David Lionel