

MOTION FACTORY FILMS presents



# Man Out Front

*by first-time documentary filmmaker, Kenneth Kilfara*

*"I'd rather dig a ditch for a living  
than act some foolish parody."  
-Canada Lee*

# 1: WHAT MAKES CANADA LEE UNIQUE?

An untold number of people marched the long road to Civil Rights, shedding blood and tears in the fight for equality. In 1941, Canada Lee stood alone on a stage and captivated a nation. One-time boxer turned actor, Canada Lee broke barriers on Broadway and in Hollywood, working with the likes of Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock and Sydney Poitier. His is a story of firsts. The first black man: to be the draw on Broadway, 'Come see CANADA LEE in *Native Son*', to play a non-stereotyped character in Hollywood, to play a white character on Broadway, to produce on Broadway, and to be blacklisted during the 'Hollywood 10' scandal of 1947.



In 1947, a star-studded group of celebrities from both the East and West coasts, including Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall and John Garfield, flew to Washington D. C. to raise their collective voices in opposition to the first of many HUAC investigations. Among those who protested (above), Canada Lee was the only African-American in attendance. Less than four months later, Lee himself would become a target. Unable to find work, his health began to suffer greatly.

# 2: WHAT MAKES A LEADER?

By 1943, Canada Lee was 'the greatest actor of his time' according to legendary theater critic Brooks Atkinson. In 1945, Ed Sullivan trumpeted him as being the leading black figure in entertainment. Even FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover singled him out as a man of prominence in personal letters to the Department of Justice. His stage and screen work depicted blacks with dignity unlike any other before him. Lee came of age in the Federal Theater Project. Out of all the great black performers to come out of the Negro Theater, among them Poitier and Robeson, Ossie Davis, Earle Hyman, Ethel Waters, Ruby Dee, et al., only one among them, Canada Lee, was the former Negro Welterweight Champion of the World. Lee was a fighter, and when stardom was thrust upon him over night, he determined to use his fame to conduct a full frontal assault on the moral stain of racism in America. The fight cost him his life, good name and legacy... until now.

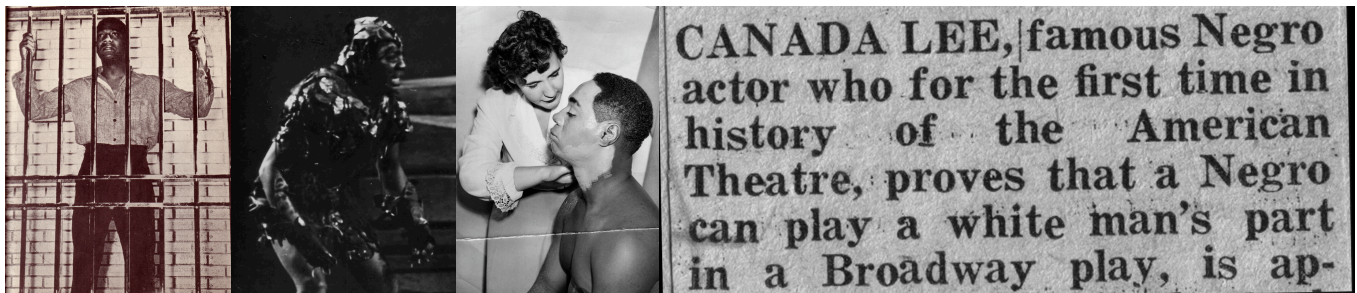
The New York files reflect that LEE spoke on several occasions and at various places and his main interest is in the negro race, anti-discrimination and Jim Crevism. He has also made appearances in connection with War Bond rallies.

Previously redacted excerpt from Lee's FBI file. Lee was investigated for sedition, but never charged with a crime.

### 3: WHO DECIDES WHAT IS PATRIOTIC?

Canada Lee had been knocked down a number of times in his life, one of which left him blind in one eye. Unemployed, broke and permanently injured, Canada Lee literally stumbled into an audition at the Harlem Y.M.C.A. in 1934 and landed a new career, acting. By 1945, Lee's voice rang out like no other before him every time he stepped up to the microphone, as radio host, as public speaker and as performer. What makes him so unique?

Canada Lee did not denigrate his or any other black person's dignity. He performed with eloquence, artistry and soul. From his landmark performance as the first black to perform Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* on Broadway, to what actor Earle Hyman described as "a smoldering power on stage," no black man had previously had the opportunities Lee did. Before Paul Robeson's *Othello*, well before Sydney Poitier's Oscar, Canada Lee was a household name. Canada Lee stood alongside Paul Robeson, both black titans in a predominantly white entertainment world. His performances were depictions of the grace and dignity inherent to a race on the verge of overcoming centuries of enslavement. Canada lived among Harlem's royalty in the years following its Renaissance. He was a close friend with greats like Lena Horne, Duke Ellington and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. - even sparring partner to an up and coming Joe Louis. He was well liked and respected throughout town and though the star of Broadway for a number of years, he, like every other black in America, could not get a bite to eat on the 'Great White Way.'



Lee in *Native Son*, *The Tempest* and *Duchess of Malfi* - 1945, two years after Robeson's *Othello*, Lee plays in whiteface.

I am very happy to be here and I deem it quite a – I was going to say I deem it quite a privilege to be here but it's not a privilege, it's a duty to come here this evening. I am a Negro and a proud Negro. A Negro who intends to fight to the death for the rights of my people.\*

Mass demonstration Chicago, IL  
Sunday, Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Lee collaborated with Orson Wells, was sought by Alfred Hitchcock, worked with Eugene O'Neill, Lee Strasburg and Stella Adler, was close friends with Charlie Chaplin and Langston Hughes, even inspired a young Neil Simon to take an interest in theater. Canada Lee was an indomitable presence in both the black and white social circles during the 1940s and 50s. With his uncompromising stance on progressive issues and unquenchable voice, he became a power on the national stage. Tragically, at the height of his career, Lee's uncompromising stance on civil rights prompted the U.S. Government to defame his reputation and destroy his career. Lee died in 1952 at the age of 45, penniless and all but forgotten. Over fifty years later, CANADA LEE - MAN OUT FRONT gathers an unprecedented cast of people to reclaim the legacy of a great performer, patriot and pioneer.

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\* It is our intent to cast reputable actors to read excerpts Lee's speeches aloud, from a list including: Morgan Freeman, James Earle Jones, Denzel Washington, Danny Glover, Forest Whitaker, et al.

# PRODUCTION BIOS:

**Kenneth Kilfara** *Producer / Director*



Kenneth Kilfara is an award-winning filmmaker who has screened across the U.S., Canada, Bermuda, and Germany, was one of the youngest full-time faculty members in the history of University of Georgia. He has guest-lectured in Germany and the United States, in both classrooms and private venues. With extensive experience in both large-scale and one-on-one environments, Kilfara wears many hats: teacher, performer, editor and also freelance website designer. At UGA, he produced and co-wrote an interactive multi-media performance piece for a cast of 12 that performed in Chicago's prestigious *Second City*. Kilfara is also a professional swordsman; his credits include History Channel's *The Last Stand of the 300* and a member of *Swordplay L.A.* He currently teaches Media Studies at the Ross School in East Hampton, NY, where he, along with three other faculty members, chaperoned a two-week-long trip to Morocco with twenty-four students. Kilfara sits on the Board of Trustees for the newly reconstituted *Canada Lee Heritage Foundation*, is a founding member of the *Athens Film Foundation* and co-owner of the online video game company *Insight Interactive Games*.

## EDUCATION

MFA in Dramatic Media	University of Georgia	2004
Magna Cum Laude		
BA in Drama	University of Georgia	2001

## FILMOGRAPHY

<i>Iran – Descent into Madness</i>	Documentary work in progress	2009
<i>Canada Lee – Man Out Front</i>	Director/Producer, Motion Factory Films	2003-09
<i>After We Had to Leave</i>	Director/Producer, Motion Factory Films	2007
<i>On Assignment</i>	Producer, University of Georgia	2004
<i>The End Runner</i>	AD/Star, Motion Factory Films	2002-03
<i>Before Crossing</i>	Director/Producer, Motion Factory Films	2002
<i>The Right Copy</i>	Director/Producer, Motion Factory Films	2002
7 Untitled 8 mm Shorts	Director/Producer, University of Georgia	2002

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

<i>Project Kashmir</i>	Website and Poster Designer, Hollywood, CA	2008
<i>CBS's Rules of the Game</i>	Assistant Editor Burbank, CA	2008
<i>Juma TV</i>	Assistant Editor, Burbank, CA	2008
<i>Visions Made Real, Inc.</i>	Editor, Hollywood, CA	2007
<i>Tidal Wave Media, Inc.</i>	Editor, Hollywood, CA	2007
<i>J&amp;M Costumers</i>	Web Designer/Editor, Hollywood, CA	2007
<i>Eo Studios</i>	Editor/DVD Author/Motion Graphics Artist, Athens, GA	2006
<i>PODz (online game)</i>	Production Manager, Programmer	2005



<i>Center for Humanities &amp; Arts</i>	Special Guest Lecturer, Athens, GA	2006
<i>Humboldt University</i>	Special Guest Lecturer, Berlin, Germany	2005
<i>Word Whacky (online game)</i>	Production Manager, Programmer	2005
<i>Georgia Museum of Art</i>	Lecturer, Athens, GA	2005
<i>The Ticket</i>	Producer, Second City, Chicago	2005
<i>13<sup>th</sup> Cinema of Tomorrow</i>	Special Guest Lecturer, Augsburg, Germany	2003
<i>(professional acting resume available at <a href="http://www.Kilfara.com">www.Kilfara.com</a>)</i>		

## ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Teenage Techie	Producer, The Ross School	2008-09
<i>Finding High School</i>	Producer, The Ross School	2008-09
Video Production Electives		
9 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> grade Media Studies	The Ross School	2008-09
Fictional & Documentary	Instructor University of Georgia	2004-05
Filmmaking/Interactive-Narrative		

## WEBSITES:

<a href="http://www.Kilfara.com">www.Kilfara.com</a>	<a href="http://www.BlacklistTheMovie.com">www.BlacklistTheMovie.com</a>
<a href="http://www.ProjectKashmir.org">www.ProjectKashmir.org</a>	<a href="http://www.JMCostumers.com">www.JMCostumers.com</a>

## REFERENCES

Allen Partridge.....	(724) 357-3781, <a href="mailto:allen.partridge@iup.edu">allen.partridge@iup.edu</a>
J. Michael Hussey.....	(706) 255-3382, <a href="mailto:mike@uga.edu">mike@uga.edu</a>
Senain Kheshgi.....	(323) 243-9683, <a href="mailto:senain@dishoompix.com">senain@dishoompix.com</a>
Dini Zimmerman.....	

## KEY PERSONNEL:

**Tim Nackashi** *Editor / Associate Producer / Camera Operator*



Award-winning filmmaker who collaborated with actor/producer Edward Norton and co-director David Sampliner on the award-winning documentary *Dirty Work* which premiered at Sundance 2004, broadcast on the Sundance Channel and screened at Silverdocs, Full-frame, Calgary Int'l and won Best Documentary Feature at the 2004 Atlanta Film Festival and Jury Prize at Bendfilm 2004.

## FILMOGRAPHY

<i>Radiohead: The Making of House of Cards</i>	Producer	2008
<i>Stuntmen</i>	Editor	2008
<i>Obama</i>	Field Producer, Camera	2008

<i>Wired Science</i>	Editor	2007
<i>Sold In America</i>	Editor, Composer	2007
<i>Cop Car Confessions</i>	Editor	2007
<i>The Paper (Feature Doc)</i>	Composer	2006
<i>Project Kashmir (Feature Doc)</i>	Camera, Editor	2006
<i>Cleft</i>	Director, Camera, Editor	2006
<i>Tattoo Diaries (TV Pilot)</i>	Director, Camera	2005
<i>Dirty Work (Feature Doc)</i>	Co-Director, Camera, Editor	2004
<i>R.E.M.-A Year In the Press</i>	Editor, Sound Design	2004-06
<i>A Life of Choices (Short Doc)</i>	Editor	2004

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Eo Studios, Athens, GA	Co-Founder, Production Manager	1999-2004
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## EDUCATION

Post Baccalaureate Studies in CGI	The University of Georgia	1999
BFA in Visual Arts	The University of Florida	1995

## REFERENCES

Kate Amend (323) 578-5700, kamend@sbcglobal.net

## JIM VIRGA *Cinematographer / Consulting Producer*



*El Charango* – Director, short, Spanish-language documentary, recently screened at the 2006 Silverdocs Film Festival Director –*Dancing on Mother Earth*, winner, Eastman Kodak Documentary Award, Indian Diaspora Film Festival in New York and screened at the Smithsonian Native American Film and Video Festival in addition to numerous film festivals nationally and internationally. *Mother Earth* was broadcast on PBS in November 2003 in more than 40 cities across the United States.

As a professional photojournalist, Virga's work has been published by dozens of newspapers and magazines throughout the country and abroad. During his 10 years as a staffer at Ft. Lauderdale's Sun-Sentinel newspaper Virga covered stories in Cuba, Haiti and Central America. He has won several National Press Photographer Awards, and his photos have appeared in the Best of Photojournalism Books.

## OUR ADVISORS:

### FILM ADVISORS:

- **Peter Miller** (Producer of ITVS-funded in-progress *A Class Apart*, producer for Ken Burns, including *Jazz*, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, producer, Academy Award-winning, *American Dream*)
- **Senain Kheshgi** (Director of the ITVS-funded documentary *Project Kashmir*)
- **Dini Zimmerman** (CNN director of programming, Producer, etc.)

**HISTORICAL ADVISORS:**

- **Tula Goenka** (Producer, *Almost Famous*, first assistant editor, *Malcolm X*, assistant editor, *Do The Right Thing*, *Salaam Bombay!*, *Mississippi Masala*)
- **Valerie Boyd** (Author, *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*, 2003 Georgia Author of the Year, former arts editor, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*)

**NON PROFIT FISCAL SPONSOR:**

Documentary Educational Resources, ([www.der.org](http://www.der.org))

**AUDIENCE:**

The film is being produced for national public broadcast, with ancillary markets including but not limited to release on DVD and online download for home viewing. We anticipate a strong demand for **CANADA LEE – MAN OUT FRONT** in light of its historical relevance, current themes, and dramatic unearthing of Lee's legacy, which has been all-but forgotten for over half a century. The combination of genuine human tragedy within the historical context of a gripping time in America's socio-political history should resonate with a number of viewing audiences.

Our primary viewership includes: African-Americans (youths in particular) and individuals who are captivated by early American political, entertainment and even sports history. **CANADA LEE – MAN OUT FRONT** is also essential viewing for a secondary audience: those who wish to learn more about the history of radical ideology in America. By presenting a complex and intimate examination of the limitations faced by African Americans during the anti-black, anti-communist backlash in America prior to World War II, this film is intended to initiate a public dialogue among several tertiary audiences as well, including: local advocacy groups, schools and a variety of youth groups.

**OUTREACH:**

This documentary also makes a tangible link between the protection of civil liberties and the presence of truthful images in the media. Lee's life personifies this connection, and his story speaks to the empowerment of marginalized groups. The outreach campaign will build towards the goal of engaging the public at large and expanding civic dialogue. A website will be designed initially to promote the film, but over time, it will evolve into a long-term repository and research tool. Teachers will find this a useful tool to incorporate into lesson preps. To maintain a long-term presence in these communities, additional grants and sponsorship will be sought to fund a screening and public speaking tour.

To date, filmmaker Kenneth Kilfara has already spoken about Canada Lee at numerous venues, including Humboldt University in Berlin, Emory University, the University of Oregon, the Georgia Museum of Art and the Center for Humanities and Arts. Interviews have been conducted with various print and online sources. The producers intend to partner with TV stations and advocacy organizations that are interested in increasing public awareness about issues of race through community forums. For the film's research component, the production has built a relationship with The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the premiere library for African American studies, and intend to create some form of permanent interactive display.

## WITH SUPPORT FROM:

- The Canada Lee Estate
- The Canada Lee Heritage Foundation
- The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

## CURRENTLY BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH:

- The National Black Programming Consortium
- The Screen Actor's Guild Foundation
- The Duke University Center for Documentary Studies
- MediaRights
- The Paul Robeson Estate Foundation
- Teaching Tolerance, The Southern Poverty Law Center
- The Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University
- California Newsreel
- Working Films
- American Library Association
- American Federation of Television and Radio Artists
- Creative Response to Conflict

## PROJECT STATUS:

**2003:** *Met and befriended Frances Lee Pearson and agreed to begin interviewing.*

**2004:** *Interviewed and sat with Frances numerous times, flew with Frances to New York and assisted her with conducting research at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, met with producer Peter Miller, who agreed to sign on as project advisor, interviewed James Hatch, Earle Hyman and Oscar Brand, met with close friends of Canada, Dr. Jack Geiger and Leslie Nash, spoke and presented research findings at numerous University of Georgia symposiums and the Georgia Museum of Art.*

**2005:** *Conducted additional research at the Schomburg. Digitized and donated as a gift, most of the Canada Lee Photo archive, presented at Independent Film Week in NYC sponsored by IFP, spoke in Berlin at Humboldt University, appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Canada Lee Heritage Foundation and secured exclusive documentary rights to Lee's life story.*

**2006:** *Spoke at the Athens Film Foundation, University of Oregon and Emory University, spoke and presented a video tribute at France Lee Pearson's memorial, accepted an award on behalf of Canada Lee from the National Black Herstory Taskforce and conducted research at the Museum of the City of New York.*

**2007:** *Flew to Philadelphia and interviewed Leslie Nash, was interviewed by Film Threat Magazine, presented to both the NYC and LA Doculink 10x10 filmmakers forums, interviewed historians Ed Guerrero and Howard Zinn, helped update the Canada Lee Heritage Foundation charter.*

**2008:** *Received grants from the Pacific Pioneer Fund and the Yip Harburg Foundation, conducted further research into the House Un-American Activities Committee and interviewed historian Glenda Gill.*

**2009:** *Interviewed by the East Hampton Star, began redesigning [www.CanadaLee.org](http://www.CanadaLee.org), presented project to former CNN producer Dini Zimmerman and filmmaker Senain Keshgi – both agreed to sign on as project advisors. Received a grant from the Jean-Claude Baker Foundation.*