

## **DIRECTORS' STATEMENT**

In the winter of 1994, killings by police were on our minds because they were so much a part of our environment in New York City. When Amadou Diallo, an unarmed man, was shot at 41 times in his own vestibule, we felt we had to get out there with a camera and talk to people for our own sanity, to understand what was happening. It was like the topic of this film chose us.

We were concerned about the high level of visibility of this topic, and the challenge was to find a unique angle on something that had had a lot of media coverage already. Then we found the mothers as a way in that was different, and decided to focus on their enormous transition from this terrible experience to speaking out for changes in policing, and decided to look at what was it in them that pushed them to do that.

We both felt that it was not enough to make a documentary about police brutality alone. We wanted it to deal with these issues, but also to have a human component and an aspect of hope. The three mothers in EVERY MOTHER'S SON -- Kadiatou Diallo, Iris Baez and Doris Busch Boskey-- have found a resilience in themselves that is remarkable and can provide inspiration to others.

We have always been attracted to stories that explore large social and political questions through the intimate personal experiences of people affected by them. Policing was such a dense topic that we decided that focusing on New York City during the Giuliani years, and on the stories of three mothers (though they are part of a larger movement), would allow us to get at the big issues through a very personal lens.

Ultimately, we would like the viewer to understand that police brutality is a problem that extends far beyond individual "bad cops," and that many of the problems facing us are systemic in that they have to do with policies that put police officers in situations where abuses are likely to take place. We would like to have Americans who don't live in poor urban areas to have a sense of what people in these communities experience from the police on a daily basis. We know it would be shocking for many people to see how unequal policing is in terms of its effect on citizens.

Finally, we hope that this film will motivate viewers to take action where they live in terms of the creation of independent citizen review boards that have enforcement capability, the creation of independent prosecutor positions where they do not exist, and the building of coalitions with organizations that are fighting to reform policing in America