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DOCUMENTARY PROPOSAL

“NO KIDDING, ME TOO”

OVERVIEW

Our society stigmatizes brain dis-eases (mental illness). It takes a tremendous amount of personal courage to acknowledge living with a brain dis-ease even though, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, 26.2% of all adults in this country – more than one in every four -- live with one. This is the largest health care issue our nation faces.

Every year, American society suffers billions of dollars in lost productivity due to brain dis-eases left undiagnosed -- \$193 billion to be exact. The most significant barrier to receiving proper diagnosis is the social stigma that is ingrained in our society. Proper diagnosis coupled with appropriate treatment leads to recovery for over 80% of those experiencing the effects of brain dis-ease. By removing this stigma, we can make society a better place for everybody.

The stigma-busting fact that people with brain dis-ease can lead full, productive lives will be brought to light through the documentary, *No Kidding, Me Too*. Created by award-winning actors, producers and directors, *No Kidding, Me Too* will document the lives of ordinary individuals who, empowered by their diagnoses, are doing their part to remove this stigma.

BACKGROUND

In 2006, Emmy Award-winning actor, Joey Pantoliano, along with Academy Award-winning actress Marcia Gay Harden, filmed the movie *Canvas*. *Canvas* is the story of a young boy dealing with his mother’s brain dis-ease, schizophrenia. Soon after the movie was completed, with its thought-provoking experience still fresh in Joey’s mind, a personal tragedy caused him to seek professional help for the first time. It was then that he was diagnosed with clinical depression.

While coming to grips with this diagnosis and the accompanying stigma, Joey prepared for another movie role and went for an industry-standard physical



examination where he indicated he was now taking prescription anti-depressants. To his surprise, the production company informed him he was required to sign a waiver accepting fiscal responsibility for any delays if he were to experience a nervous breakdown during filming. Joey questioned why he could suffer a heart attack – he had long been on cholesterol medication – and not be liable, yet be liable for a brain dis-ease. It was at this point Joey knew he had found a calling and created the nonprofit organization No Kidding, Me Too! (NKM2).

NKM2 is comprised of entertainment industry members united in an effort to educate Americans about all brain dis-eases. The goal of NKM2 is to remove the stigma attached to brain dis-ease through education and the breaking down of societal barriers and to empower those with brain dis-ease to admit their illness, seek treatment, and become even greater members of society.

DOCUMENTARY DETAILS

NKM2 has joined together with award-winning filmmakers to create this documentary, *No Kidding, Me Too*. To be narrated and directed by Joey Pantoliano, *No Kidding, Me Too* will be an empowering portrayal of what can be done after the diagnosis of a brain dis-ease. The film will include a personal look at Pantoliano's own life; his reflections on what it was like to have a mother whose un-diagnosed illness would today be described as bipolar disorder; his discovery of his own clinical depression; and, how both experiences have fueled his craft and creativity.

Additional stories in *No Kidding, Me Too* include a world-famous doctor struggling with a drug and alcohol addiction; an 18-year old gifted student-athlete dealing with depression; an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran handling a traumatic brain injury and severe Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; a young man who turned to alcohol at the age of 14 while attempting to quiet the voices in his head; and, a young woman living with schizophrenia.

No Kidding, Me Too will give viewers an honest portrayal of living with brain dis-ease. The psychological benefits of humor will also be explored to show how it can be used to offset and cope with stigma. The tongue-in-cheek wit employed by NKM2 through its name and logo were carefully crafted to add brevity to a serious issue and to demonstrate the universal reach of brain dis-ease. The participants in *No Kidding, Me Too* are confident that by sharing these stories, viewers will gain the strength and courage needed to rise above stigma in order to lead more fulfilling lives.

No Kidding, Me Too will have a running time of approximately 60 minutes. NKM2 commenced filming in June 2008 with a targeted completion date of February 2009.

CONCLUSION

The stigma that surrounds brain dis-ease is horribly detrimental to our society and NKM2 is committed to removing that stigma. With the support of generous sponsors, *No Kidding, Me Too* can help achieve that goal. We ask you to consider a donation to NKM2 to be used for the production of *No Kidding, Me Too*. In recognition of your generous support, NKM2 would be pleased to recognize your contribution in the credits of *No Kidding, Me Too* as well as on the packaging. Thank you for your consideration.