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**Dallas-based AMS Production Group tackles controversial subject in documentary.**

Dallas, Texas. AMS Production Group, a Dallas-based full-service production company, has taken on the controversial subject of electroshock therapy in its new original documentary, “Shock”. Based on the book “Shock: The Healing Power of Electroconvulsive Therapy” by medical writer Larry Tye and former Massachusetts First Lady Kitty Dukakis, “Shock” explores the myths, mysteries, and realities surrounding electroconvulsive therapy, a medical procedure used in treating severe clinical depression and other mental illnesses. The film has received a big “thumbs up” from psychiatric doctors at UT Southwestern Medical Center, who envision its use as an educational tool for patients and doctors alike.

ECT, also known as “shock therapy,” can be a highly effective treatment in severe cases of clinical depression, but its use has been mired in controversy. In its early years, the seizures induced by ECT were often so violent that patients suffered broken bones and teeth and other injuries. In other instances, ECT was administered without the patient’s consent, to allegations that it was used to subdue unruly mental patients or impose social controls on innocent victims. While some of these allegations are true, representations of ECT in the media helped fuel misconceptions and hysteria about the treatment.

The treatment fell out of favor by the late 1970s, was banned altogether in some jurisdictions, and is commonly thought to have gone out of use entirely. However, in a country where as many as 20 million Americans a year suffer from clinical depression, ECT has experienced a quiet comeback. It is now more common than knee replacement surgery, and has been highly effective in patients for whom pharmaceutical treatments are ineffective or dangerous.

In “Shock,” Kitty Dukakis, wife of former presidential candidate Michael Dukakis, recounts her lifelong struggles with depression and the ECT treatments which Michael Dukakis says “were miraculous” and “saved her life.”

Other patients reveal intimate details of their struggles with depression and bipolar disorder, and their own positive and negative experiences with ECT. Doctors from several major medical institutions, including UT Southwestern, provide medical explanations for this still-mysterious treatment. Local film critic Gary Cogill even makes a cameo appearance in which he explains how films like “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” and “Frances” have helped shape public opinions of ECT.

The high-definition documentary is largely told through intimate interviews, movie clips, archival footage and photography and beautiful, impressionistic

reenactments. Remarkably, the film also shows an actual ECT treatment being performed on a patient.

AMS owner and Executive Producer Andy Streitfeld, who founded AMS Production Group 25 years ago, built business by serving mostly Fortune 500 corporate clientele. However, he is equally passionate about his new ventures into original broadcast programming. Mr. Streitfeld explains, “While production and creative services for businesses are still our bread and butter, forays into original documentary programs like “Shock” allow us an opportunity to take creative risks and practice our cinematic chops. Ultimately it will benefit our corporate clients as well, as even the simplest of corporate projects rely on the kinds of storytelling techniques and technical innovations we employ in the making of a broadcast-quality documentary film.”

While Streitfeld has not yet discovered the magic formula for turning his documentary projects into money-making ventures, he is confident that his efforts will pay off in the end. Meanwhile, he is happy to take risks, create documentary films on meaningful subjects, and offer his employees a chance to spread their wings.

Brad Osborne, Senior Producer/Director, explains. “Being primarily responsible for in-depth long-form projects like “Shock” has been a great opportunity for me personally, and has really helped me hone my storytelling and technical skills. It is also very rewarding to work on projects that have some positive impact on people’s lives. Working on projects like “Shock” has allowed me to think deeply about every aspect of the project—from the dialogue to music to mood to visual style—and really concentrate on the subtleties that make a huge difference in effectively conveying a message in a compelling way.”

Streitfeld hopes that the documentary, which is in distribution negotiations, will add value and experience to AMS’ original programming unit. AMS’ library of original documentary programming includes the award-winning *The Power of Harmony*, a moving portrait of Dallas’ Turtle Creek Chorale which had a theatrical run in September 2006, and was broadcast on over 35 public television stations nationwide; *Rising From the Rails: The Story of the Pullman Porter*, which had a screening at the Smithsonian Institution and has a three-year broadcast contract as part of Superstation WGN’s black history month programming; and the recently-completed *Woman Driver: The Katherine Legge Story*.

Other projects are in various stages of pre-production and production, building the foundation for projects that Streitfeld envisions as a key part of AMS’ business segment in years to come.