

## The Baltimore Environmental Film Series at Loyola University Maryland

Presents: *Mother Kuskokwim* (Guthrie, 2015) and *Merchants of Doubt* (Kenner, 2014)

November 2, 2015 at 7 PM at the Senator Theatre

Shuttles start from the Library at 5 PM and will return after the film

Tickets are free with student ID, \$7 for all others

### Messina Event Guide

#### Event Synopsis

This event will start at 7 PM with *Mother Kuskokwim*, short film about the people who live in the remote Yukon-Kuskokwim River Delta of Southwest Alaska who practice a subsistence lifestyle and suffer from economic hardship and climate change. This film was made by students at Creighton University and John O'Keefe, producer will be hosting a Q&A about both films at the conclusion of *Merchants of Doubt*. *Merchants of Doubt* is a feature film inspired by the book of the same name. It is an illuminating ride into the heart of conjuring American spin. Filmmaker Robert Kenner lifts the curtain on a secretive group of highly charismatic, silver-tongued pundits-for-hire who present themselves in the media as scientific authorities – yet have the contrary aim of spreading maximum confusion about well-studied public threats ranging from toxic chemicals to pharmaceuticals to climate change.

This event is also a Theology Common text event and is co-sponsored by [Interfaith Power and Light](#).

#### Resources for Attendees

- Mother Kuskokwim Website <http://cubackpack.org/films/mother-kuskokwim/>
- Merchants of Doubt Website <http://sonyclassics.com/merchantsofdoubt/>
- Merchants of Doubt Book & Website <http://www.merchantsofdoubt.org/>
- Further information about the Yu'Pik people <https://intercontinentalcry.org/indigenous-peoples/yupik/>
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change <http://www.ipcc.ch/>
- Catholic Climate Covenant <http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/>

#### Discussion Questions

- In *Merchants of Doubt*, there are many people interviewed in the film. How do these different voices lend themselves to the message this movie is sending...and does it create a biased or skewed view of the topic (climate change) in general?
- Much of *Merchants of Doubt* deals with perception, how media perceives these issues and how the people who are paid to advertise and promote this topic perceive these issues. There's a lot of perspective from different elements, how does each perspective work to inform the narrative? Do some perceptions emerge stronger than others?
- *Merchants of Doubt* compares the tobacco industry's lobbying efforts of the 50s and 60s to what's being done with the tactics used today to spread the message of climate change. Do you agree that many of the same tactics, just with technological advances, are being used today? If so, or if not, why?
- *Mother Kuskokwim* allows us to observe a culture that may be quite different from our own. What are the ethical and moral issues surrounding the loss of a culture or people?
- A quote from *Mother Kuskokwim* is "To the people that don't believe in climate change, I don't blame you for being a skeptic, but there are no climate deniers here in Bethel, or other rural parts of Alaska. We're living climate change. This is ground zero for us." What are the ethics involved with big firms being paid to 'spin' or promote a client or issue? Does it matter when others may be hurt by the spin – as in *Mother Kuskokwim*?
- How is the story of Bethel Alaska also a story about the challenges facing the human community as a whole? In his recent encyclical "Laudato Si'" Pope Francis has called the environmental crisis a moral crisis.
- What moral questions are raised by the plight of the people in southwest Alaska and how can you respond to them?

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