

Photo Caption: Criminal Court Judge Rob Montgomery sees repeat offenders regularly in his Sullivan County, Tenn., courtroom. Photo is from the documentary film, “Outcasts: Surviving the Culture of Rejection,” premiering at 7 p.m. on April 26 at Northeast State’s Regional Center for Performing Arts.

Photo Caption: This graphic visual from “Outcasts” symbolizes the ex-con’s “culture of rejection.” The wall, the closed door with no handle and the bit of blue sky showing on the other side represent both the promise and the barriers against reentry into their communities that most former offenders must overcome.

NOTE: A higher-resolution file of the signature wall photo and additional photos can be obtained by contacting jane@hillhouse4design.com.

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World Premiere Set for Documentary “Outcasts: Surviving the Culture of Rejection”

KINGSPORT, Tenn. – The world premiere of “Outcasts: Surviving the Culture of Rejection” will be held at Wellmont Regional Performing Arts Center on the campus of Northeast State Community College, Blountville, on April 26 at 7 p.m.

The showing is free to the public and will be followed by a Q&A and panel discussion at 8:15 p.m.

Locally produced by Hillhouse Video Works LLC of Kingsport, Tenn., the documentary examines the devastating effects of recidivism and its impact on Tennessee communities. Recidivism refers to a person's relapse into criminal behavior after previous incarcerations.

Local film producer Stephen Newton wrote and directed the film, which examines the history and causes for the high rate of recidivism in Tennessee, where more than 50 percent of all released prisoners return to jail or prison within three years. Nationwide, recidivism is a \$50 billion problem.

“Once you’re convicted of a felony crime, your chances of having a normal life after you serve your time are slim to none,” notes Newton of the film’s content. “Being

branded as a felon means you're barred from most jobs, denied public housing and food stamps; probably you have no transportation and cannot vote. Unless you have family support or qualify for rehabilitation, your felony record condemns you to live your life as an outcast."

The film, which will also premiere later this year on Knoxville's East Tennessee PBS station, dramatically shows how recidivism devastates Tennessee families and communities. It also offers possible solutions, such as work carried out at John R. Hay House in Kingsport.

Notably, statistics show that the United States leads the world in the number of people behind bars. One out of 107 Americans is incarcerated, and one out of every 34 Americans is under some kind of correctional supervision.

The musical score for "Outcasts" is by Paul Vanderbeck, a multiple award-winning composer and music producer who has worked with such notable artists as Johnny Cash, Melissa Manchester, Carole Bayer Sager and Peter Allen. Motion graphics designer is Sergei Prokhnevskiy.

Hillhouse Video Works LLC is a division of Hillhouse Graphic Design LLC and produces documentary films for regional nonprofit organizations.

For more information about the documentary and to RSVP to attend the free premiere, please visit www.cultureofrejection.org.

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Interviewees and Institutions Featured

- John R. Hay House, Residential Treatment Center in Kingsport
- Judge Norman and the Davidson County Drug Court (as well as coverage of the opening of the new Morgan County facility)
- William Gupton, Assistant Commissioner of Rehabilitative Services
- Board of Directors and Director of the SteppenStone Juvenile Residential Treatment Center in Limestone
- Lisa Tipton, Director, Families Free in Johnson City
- First Baptist Church's Celebrate Recovery Program, Northeast Tennessee
- Judge Todd Ross and the Hawkins County Drug Court Program
- Alice Snodgrass, Stand in the Gap Organization, Tennessee, Kentucky and Southwest Virginia
- The Justice Policy Institute, Washington, DC
- State Representatives Mike Harrison (Hawkins-Hancock Counties)
- State Representative Tony Shipley (Sullivan County 2nd District)
- Judge Rob Montgomery, Sullivan County Justice Center
- District Attorney General Barry Staubus, Sullivan County
- Sheriff Wayne Anderson, Sullivan County
- Deputy Brian Dillard, Sullivan County Sheriff's Dept.

- Criminal Defense Attorney Rick Spivey
- Pastor David Cagel, First Presbyterian Church
- Professor Nicole Prior, Criminal Justice Professor, ETSU
- Associate Professor Lisa Guenther, Vanderbilt University
- Alex Friedman, Editor, Prison Legal News, Nashville
- Dr. Chuck Walsh, John R. Hay House, Inc.
- Numerous male and female offenders who graciously and courageously shared their stories with us.