

THE REFUGE MEDIA PROJECT

www.refugemediaproject.org

Ben Achtenberg

Brief Resume – Summer, 2010

Ben Achtenberg is a film and video producer whose many honors include an Academy Award nomination for the groundbreaking documentary **Code Gray: Ethical Dilemmas in Nursing**, as well as seven CINE Golden Eagles, a first-place “Freddie” award from the National Health and Medical Film Competition, and awards from the San Francisco International Film Festival, Chicago International Film Festival, and many others.

Achtenberg is the Director of **The Refuge Media Project**, which is producing a video documentary dealing with the experiences of immigrant torture survivors as they learn to cope with life in the United States and, in particular, with the American medical and social service systems. The Project’s website and recently created blog, **Caring for Survivors of Torture**, have become increasingly respected resources for professionals (and students) dealing with torture and related issues.

He was, until recently, the owner and President of **Fanlight Productions**, a nationally-respected film and video distributor specializing in programs on healthcare, mental health, disabilities, aging, family, gender, and workplace issues. In October, 2009, he sold the company to Icarus Films in order to focus fulltime on the Refuge Media Project.

Achtenberg has been a leader and active participant in a number of cooperative efforts within the filmmaking and human rights communities. He founded and chaired the **Boston Independent Film Distributors Group**, and was a founder and Executive Committee Member of the national **Independent Media Distributors Alliance**. He was a member of **AIVF** and **BFVF**, and is currently a member of **Center for Independent Documentary**, which is the fiscal sponsor for The Refuge Media Project. He is a board member, past Treasurer, and webmaster of the **Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health & Human Rights**.

Achtenberg was cited as one of the “Top 100 Producers of 1997” by the magazine *AV Video & Multimedia Producer*. His most recently completed film, *Everyday Choices*, focuses on the ethical dilemmas faced by homecare nurses dealing with elderly patients. It was the Documentary Video Winner in the Key West IndieFest, and a finalist in the National Health & Medical Film Competition. His prior productions, *Caring at the End of Life*, *Stanley* and *Discussing Advance Directives*, completed a series of four films on the hospital care of dying patients, produced for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. *Caring at the End of Life* has received the CINE Golden Eagle, a Silver Award from the Houston International Film Festival, and honors from the American Academy of Nursing, the American Medical Writers Association, and the Columbus International Film & Video Festival. The first film in the series, *The Support Project: To Improve Care at the End of*

Life, received an award in Bioethics at the International Conference on Grief and Bereavement in Contemporary Society.

Achtenberg received his second **New England Regional Film/Video Fellowship** in support of *Not on the Sidelines*, which dealt with the impact of spinal cord injury on four athletes. The film was a Gold Medal winner in the National Health Information Awards. Among his other independent works, *Healthcare for the Homeless: You Can Never Give Up*, received a Special Jury Award from the New York Expo of Short Film and Video and honors from the American Medical Writers Association and *American Journal of Nursing* Media Awards.