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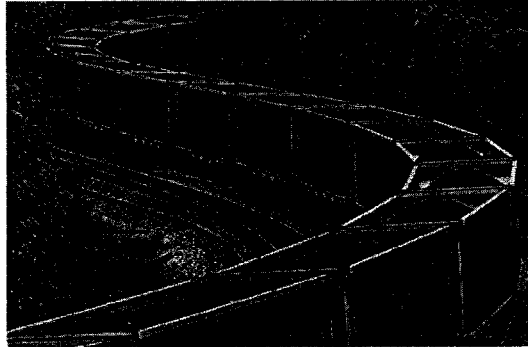
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Dumping Ground (working title)

One-Page Concept Paper

By Matt Durning and N'Jeri Eaton

Nearly every day, a train arrives at the rail yard in rural Uniontown, Alabama carrying 8,500 tons of toxic coal ash to the local Arrowhead Landfill. The coal ash comes from Kingston, Tennessee, site of the largest coal ash spill in U.S. history. It will take years to transport all the waste, 350,000 train carloads full. More arrive every day.



Elected leaders in Uniontown, which is very poor and 70 percent black, are proud to have brought the controversial waste material to their town. In fact, they see it as a matter of economic necessity. Revenue from the dumping will nearly double the county's \$4.5 million annual budget and has created some 40 new jobs in a town where the unemployment rate pushes 20 percent and a third of all households live below the poverty line.

These leaders, most of who are black themselves, argue that the coal ash is perfectly safe and their landfill is uniquely equipped to handle this toxic sludge. But environmental activists and public health officials disagree. They believe exposure to coal ash can cause cancer, birth defects, and other serious health problems. At issue is the fact that coal ash is currently defined as a non-hazardous material under both federal EPA and Alabama regulations.

Dumping Ground will be shot on location in Uniontown, AL, and Kingston, TN. It will explore the struggle between county officials spearheading the dumping, local residents fighting to stop the project who feel that those officials have written them off; and the people caught in the middle, those who took jobs at the landfill as a means of survival.

Through interviews and cinema verite footage, we will follow some of the workers who were recently hired at the landfill, Perry County Commissioner Albert Turner Jr., who believes that the coal ash is the town's only hope for economic survival, and Robert Bamberg, a local catfish farmer turned environmental activist who opposes the dumping.

The film will also weave in the legacy of toxic dumping in the rural South and explore the history of coal ash regulation in the United States. By looking at the struggles of people and principles in Uniontown, *Dumping Ground* will present a case study on environmental racism in the era of clean energy.