

THE PROGRESSIVE FORUM

Great Minds, Great Answers

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For Release

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Eric Schlosser, author of *Fast Food Nation*, to Appear Thursday, September 30

Renowned investigative journalist and author of *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser, will appear at The Progressive Forum, Thursday September 30, 2010, at the Wortham Center, Cullen Theater, at 7:30 PM. Schlosser will sign books and greet fans at the end of the evening.

The Progressive Forum is presenting Eric Schlosser in association with Urban Harvest.

Tickets range from \$14 to \$54. A limited number of \$74 tickets are available which include a pre-event reception with Eric Schlosser, a complimentary signed book, and center-front seating. Tickets are available at www.progressiveforumhouston.org or by calling 832-251-0706. There is no physical box office except at the theater on event night.

Randall Morton, Progressive Forum president, said, “Our Schlosser event is the first of a multi-year series on informed food choices. Michael Pollan, author of the bestseller *In Defense of Food* and *Omnivore’s Dilemma*, is already confirmed for next year, October 27, 2011. Our multi-year series is made possible by a major contribution by the family of Chris Povinelli and Steve Krebs.”

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Morton continued, “Urban Harvest is also behind the multi-year series, and for our first Schlosser event, Urban Harvest has taken an important lead role in the community with their own underwriting, development, and promotion. Other co-sponsors of the Schlosser event include Garland Kerr and Jim Blackburn, Organic Horticulture Business Alliance (OHBA), San Jacinto Environmental Supplies, and Georgia’s Farm to Market.”

Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal (2001) was Eric Schlosser’s first book. It has been translated into more than twenty languages and remained on *The New York Times* bestseller list for over two years. It helped start a revolution in how American’s think about what they eat. The book is a fierce indictment of our industrialized food-agricultural system which has a range of global impacts such as rising obesity rates, food borne illnesses, unfair labor practices, the decline of farming and ranching, environmental degradation, and more. The book details the industry’s growth from its start in southern California through its worldwide presence today, from feedlots and slaughterhouses in rural ghettos to modern food laboratories where tastes are manufactured.

Schlosser says that “...the centralized purchasing decisions of the large restaurant chains and their demand for standardized products have given a handful of corporations an unprecedented degree of power over the nation’s food supply.”

Schlosser also says, “Meaningful change...is going to come from people who realize that there’s a direct link between the food they eat and the society they inhabit. Changing your eating habits can send ripples far and wide in support of agricultural practices that are humane, diverse, and sustainable.”

The *San Francisco Chronicle* called *Fast Food Nation* “As disturbing as it is irresistible.... Exhaustively researched, frighteningly convincing...channeling the spirits of Upton Sinclair and Rachel Carson.”

Schlosser also wrote *Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food* (2006), a *New York Times* bestselling children's book, co-written with Charles Wilson. *Chew on This* introduces young readers to the health effects of fast food and industrial agriculture.

Schlosser co-produced the film and co-starred in *Food, Inc.* (2009), which was nominated for an Academy Award for best documentary feature. According to the film's website, www.foodincmovie.com, the film “exposes America's industrialized agricultural system and its effect on our environment, health, economy, and worker's rights.”

In addition, Schlosser served as executive producer and co-writer of the feature film *Fast Food Nation* (2006).

Beyond his investigative work on food systems, Schlosser has generally explored subjects ignored by the mainstream media. His next book, *Command and Control*, is about nuclear weapons. He's also writing a book about the American prison system.

Schlosser wrote *Reefer Madness: Sex, Drugs, and Cheap Labor in the Black Market* (2003), a look at America's thriving dark underground economy including the marijuana trade, the abuse of illegal migrant workers in California strawberry fields, and how the American porn industry began.

Before writing non-fiction, Schlosser was a playwright and worked for an independent film company. He was an executive producer of the Academy Award winning film, *There*

Will Be Blood, about family, greed, religion, and the early days of oil. Two of Schlosser's plays have been produced in London: *Americans* (2003) at the Arcola Theatre and *We the people* (2007) at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

Schlosser started his career as a journalist with *The Atlantic Monthly*. His work has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Nation*, to name a few. He's won the National Magazine Award as well as the Sidney Hillman Foundation award.

Schlosser was born in Manhattan, New York. He grew up in New York and Los Angeles. He studied American history at Princeton University and earned a graduate degree in British imperial history from Oxford. He lives in California with his wife and has two children.

Urban Harvest is a leading Houston educational organization with over 100 classes a year; about 66 affiliated-member gardens for community, youth, and schools; two farmers' markets; and over 3,000 volunteers. Urban Harvest promotes healthy communities, sound nutrition and respect for the environment by educating children and adults and facilitating harvest and habitat gardens.

The Progressive Forum is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(C)(3) civic speaker organization presenting its events at The Wortham Center. It's the only civic speaker organization in America dedicated expressly to progressive values. Its purpose is to enrich our democracy and culture by striving to present the greatest minds from all the fields of human endeavor, the sciences and the humanities as well as politics and public affairs, great minds it believes are advancing the success of individuals, our species, and life on the earth.

This year of 2010 marks the fifth anniversary of The Progressive Forum. The Progressive

Forum premiered on June 13, 2005, with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Houston Mayor Bill White in a program called “Our Environmental Challenges.” Al Gore launched *An Inconvenient Truth* at The Progressive Forum, his first U.S. book event for that title. Others include Jared Diamond, Seymour Hersh, Molly Ivins, George Soros, Edward O. Wilson, Frank Rich, Garrison Keillor, Joe Klein, Tim Flannery, Anna Deavere Smith, Gloria Steinem, James Hansen, Ken Burns, George Lakoff, Robert Redford, Bill McKibben, Elizabeth Edwards, Larry Wilmore, T. Boone Pickens, Lester Brown, Nancy Pelosi, Brian Greene, and Karen Armstrong.

The Progressive Forum originated a new model in civic speaker organizations in Houston to deliver a higher quality experience in a theater rather than a hotel luncheon, as well as generate a much larger audience than traditional speaking events. The Progressive Forum operates similarly to a performing arts company by using the finest theaters, paying speaker fees to present top intellectual stars, and marketing throughout the region. It offers convenient box office services through its website allowing ticket buyers to print tickets at their computer in addition to traditional phone sales.

Founder and president, Randall R. Morton has owned Randall Morton International, Inc. for 34 years, an advertising and public relations agency whose clients have included leading oil equipment companies in the U.S., Japan, Mexico, and Europe. He served as an adjunct professor at the University of Tulsa teaching advertising design and copy writing. Morton created, produced, and hosted the Oilfield Breakfast Forum from 1994 to 2003, an industry speaker platform which is still the largest in the oil business. While earning a degree in government from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., he served as an issue writer for the Democratic National Committee.

