

# TWO AMERICAN FAMILIES

1 X 84 HD



PBS®

INTERNATIONAL

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It's a central premise of the American dream: If you're willing to work hard, you'll be able to make a living and build a better life for your children. But what if working hard isn't enough to ensure success—or even the basics of daily life?

*Two American Families*, a special FRONTLINE documentary more than two decades in the making, is a portrait of perseverance that raises unsettling questions about the changing nature of the American economy and the fate of a declining middle class. This is the saga of two ordinary families in Milwaukee, Wisconsin—one black, one white—who have spent the past 21 years in an extraordinary battle to keep from sliding into poverty.

FRONTLINE first began documenting the lives of the Stanleys and the Neumanns more than two decades ago, shortly after the breadwinners in both families had lost well-paying factory jobs and were struggling to adapt to a new, global economy.

With searing intimacy, *Two American Families* chronicles the stories of the Neumanns and the Stanleys through the present as they try to keep their homes, their health insurance, and their dignity. The film is the fourth installment in a series of PBS documentaries following the two families that began in 1992 with *Minimum Wages: The New Economy* and continued throughout the 1990s with two more films—*Living on the Edge* (1995) and *Surviving the Good Times* (2000).

Twelve years, two administrations, and a Great Recession have passed since that most recent film, and nearly 50 million Americans are now living in poverty. Trends toward low-wage, part-time work have only increased.

How are the Stanleys and the Neumanns making do? After fighting for living wages for more than 20 years, have they found an economic foothold? Are they and their now-grown children financially secure? Have they been able to hold their families together? Will they persevere?

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## FRONTLINE

CREDITS

*Producers:* Tom Casciato, Kathleen Hughes

*Writers:* Kathleen Hughes, Bill Moyers

*FRONTLINE Deputy Executive Producer:* Raney Aronson-Rath

*FRONTLINE Executive Producer:* David Fanning

*Photo:* FRONTLINE; Henryk Sadura (Milwaukee Skyline)



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