

## **Newark is next stop at Sundance**

Forest Whitaker among producers of new doc series

By Kimberly Nordyke

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Forest Whitaker (Getty Images photo)

Sundance Channel is taking an in-depth look at the challenges facing Newark, N.J., in a new documentary series executive produced by Forest Whitaker and filmmakers Marc Levin and Mark Benjamin.

"Brick City" will center on Newark Mayor Cory Booker, local citizens and key figures from real estate developers to former gang members as they try to remake the city, working to stamp out violence, poverty and corruption and make improvements in housing, employment and education.

Levin ("Slam") and Benjamin ("The Last Party") also direct the series, which will debut with six half-hour episodes in third-quarter 2009. The series will take place over the span of about a year so viewers can see whether things in Newark change.

"This docu series touches on everything that's important to Sundance: economics; politics; well-told, compelling stories about social justice; environmental issues; and questions about developers moving in," Sundance executive vp and GM Laura Michal-chyshyn said. "We try to do longer and more in-depth stories than just what you read in newspaper headlines or one-minute news stories."

She said it hasn't been determined whether Whitaker, who she says is a "huge supporter of this project and of Newark," might provide voice-over.