

SYNOPSIS

SMILE 'TIL IT HURTS: The Up With People Story explores the clean-cut, smile-drenched singing phenomenon *Up With People*. Since 1965, this peppy youth group has sung to 20 million people worldwide, performed at four Superbowl halftime shows, and been parodied on *The Simpsons* and *South Park*. Talent was not required of its members, just a common enthusiastic vision to change the world one squeaky-clean song at a time. But its cheery façade concealed the more complicated reality of an organization founded on conservative American ideals and cult-like utopian ideology.

Up With People was born in response to the liberal counter-culture of the '60s by the ultra-conservative religious sect, Moral ReArmament. Over the years, they were embraced by world leaders from US Presidents Nixon, Reagan and George H.W. Bush to King Juan Carlos of Spain, Queen Noor of Jordan and Pope John Paul II. The organization's access to global dignitaries and developing countries was noticed by corporate giants---like GM, Exxon, Halliburton and Searle---who gave millions of dollars to back the popular group.

Artistically cut with kitschy and never-before-seen archival footage, and the honest reflections of former members, **SMILE 'TIL IT HURTS: The Up With People Story** reveals what can happen when ideology, money and groupthink converge to co-opt youthful idealism.