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**Interview with Kenneth Cole  
Kaiser Family Foundation Broadcast Studio  
Washington, D.C.  
December 1, 2005**

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**JACKIE JUDD:** Kenneth Cole, thank you so much for joining us today on World AIDS Day. You are launching a new campaign, it is called "We All Have AIDS." What does that mean?

**KENNETH COLE:** It is essentially a message of solidarity to address the stigma today, which is the single greatest cumbering force in curing this disease. It sends the message: If anyone has it, we all have it. If it exists anywhere, it exists everywhere. Some people have it medically, but we all have it culturally, socially, and spiritually. We are living in the devastation that has followed.

**JACKIE JUDD:** And in what ways do you plan to get the message out?

**KENNETH COLE:** To a degree, you can adjust the stigma; you can get people comfortable with addressing the status. One can make an extraordinary difference because, apparently, according the World Health Organization, as many as 95 percent of the people living with HIV do not know they have it. So then one naturally says well, if we can somehow get people to get comfortable with the stigma, which is the reason they do not want to deal with because they essentially are often ostracized from their communities and often their families. If we can ease that in any way, and if can get even 5 percent of those people to address their status and their health, their sexual health,

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their physical health, we can affect millions of people immediately. So that is the goal, and we have chosen and reached out the appropriate role models, individuals who are often celebrities, but they have been activists. They have addressed those AIDS-related issues over the years, and they done it articulately, and they have done it passionately, and they have been genuine in their efforts, for many of them, for as long as 20 years.

**JACKIE JUDD:** The message in those seems to be not only directed at the people who may be HIV positive and do not want to be tested, but also at the entire community, really at all Americans.

**KENNETH COLE:** The message is that we can all essentially get comfortable with what HIV is; it is an ailment, and it is treatable to the degree that you can live comfortably with it. If we can get to a point where people are able to discuss it and they are able to deal with it publically, then we will see significant change quickly. I think we all have the ability to do that in our own way.

**JACKIE JUDD:** One piece of this is a website, [www.WeAllHaveAIDS.com](http://www.WeAllHaveAIDS.com). What happens there?

**KENNETH COLE:** What happens is that now there is a place to go; there is a place to go to get answers. There is one single voice of reason. How to get tested; how to find out what to do depending upon the results of having been tested; how if it is not me, if it is somebody I know and love; if you are here, if you are India, if you are in South Africa; and

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then what the results of those tests mean. All of those are essentially answers that could be found. They could be found here through a link which takes you through [www.KNOWHIVAIDS.org](http://www.KNOWHIVAIDS.org), but we take you there and we also explain to you the merits of the individuals, of these role models who have, many of them, spent a good part of their lives and careers talking about the affect that HIV has had on so many of our lives.

**JACKIE JUDD:** As you mentioned a couple of times, some of these people involved in this campaign are really veterans in the war. How much of the messaging is intended to reach the next generation?

**KENNETH COLE:** I think, invariably, that is what that is going to take, and this next generation is going to have to come forward. They are going to have to get a genuine sense of the horror that they are going to ultimately have to deal with if they do not, because there is this sense of complacency that has become somewhat prevalent in certain communities, and I think we are going to see that ultimately go away because it is going to need to. This next generation, who in fact are the ones who are truly at risk, are going to need to step forward and deal with this. And I believe essentially, at some point, that they will.

**JACKIE JUDD:** The first campaign that you launched about AIDS was back in 1986; it is now 2005. Are you

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discouraged at all that you still are doing this on these age-old issues of stigma and discrimination?

**KENNETH COLE:** It is a little discouraging and unsettling. Here we are 20 years later, we knew then how then how to contain it, but we did not know how to cure it, and it is really not any different today. But what is different is that we do have means to make living with HIV/AIDS very tolerable, to a point that people have become desensitized which, in some cases, has worked against this battle. I think that people become desensitized because they know people or very often hear of people who know people who have HIV/AIDS, and they appear to be living basically healthy lives. We do not truly understand the mental toll and the physical anguish that they often live with and the burdens that come with living today with HIV/AIDS.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Thank you very much, Kenneth Cole, I appreciate the time.

**KENNETH COLE:** Thank you very much.

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