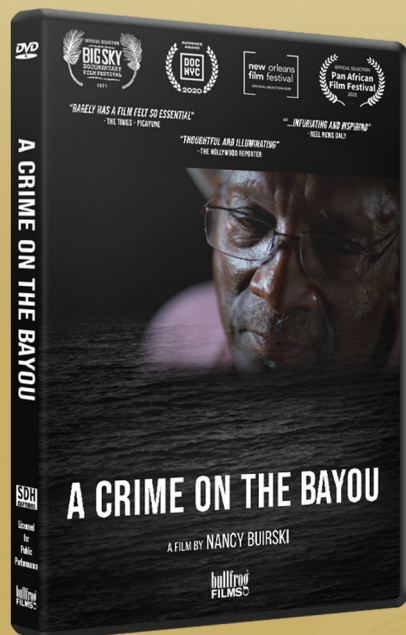


## A CRIME ON THE BAYOU

Use your screening of **A CRIME ON THE BAYOU** as a tool for educating your community about the realities of segregation and the treatment of Black Americans in 1960s Louisiana, and the historical significance of Duncan v. Louisiana. This guide offers some background information, helpful tips & discussion questions for an informative, rewarding screening. **Good Luck!**

### what you'll find inside!

- about the film & filmmaker
- ready to watch! screening guide
- ready to talk! discussion guide
- ready to act! handout



### About the film

In 1966, young Black fisherman Gary Duncan tries to break up a fight between white and Black teenagers outside a newly integrated school in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana. During the confrontation, he touches one of the white teens on the arm. That night, police arrest 19-year-old Duncan for assault on a minor. In Washington, DC, a young Jewish attorney named Richard Sobol leaves a prestigious law firm to offer his legal services in New Orleans as a volunteer for the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee. With Sobol's help, Duncan confronts a racist Louisiana legal system to challenge his unfair arrest. **A CRIME ON THE BAYOU** chronicles their legal fight as it goes all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, and in the process enshrines the Constitutional right to a jury trial at the state level.



### About the filmmaker

Nancy Buirski is the Founder and was the Director of the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, the acclaimed international festival based in Durham, NC. She produced the documentary film *The Loving Story*, which was shortlisted for an Oscar. Prior to her work in film, she was a documentary photographer, writing and photographing "Earth Angels: Migrant Children in America," and the Foreign Picture Editor at *The New York Times*.

# ready to watch!

## Ideas and best practices to help make your community screening a success!

**1. Publicize Your Event!** This is the most important step because it not only tells the world what you're up to, but it lets the Bullfrog Community team know what your plans are so we can help you publicize your event. Visit <https://www.bullfrogcommunities.com/acrimeonthebayou> to register and get the word out about your upcoming screening. You can also email us at [info@bullfrogcommunities.com](mailto:info@bullfrogcommunities.com) if you need help getting started!

**2. Visualize Your Goal!** What do you hope to achieve with your screening? Your goal could be to generate a lively post-film discussion about issues raised in the film, gain support or recruit volunteers for a local grassroots campaign, or raise funds for a group on your campus or in your community. Or, you can simply use the screening to provide an opportunity for your audience to watch and learn together.

**3. Where To Host?** Consider which locations in your area would be ideal for accommodating an in-person community film screening of the size you anticipate: downtown movie theaters, churches and synagogues, town halls, community centers, public libraries, school auditoriums, university and college venues, warehouse spaces, a local business, outdoor screenings at parks and playgrounds, and even private homes have been venues for many successful community screenings. Virtual screenings can be hosted on <https://streaming.bullfrogcommunities.com>, or by using a customized screening room on Vimeo.

**4. Find A Partner!** Give some thought to who is already working on this issue in your community. Can they help sponsor the event? Spread the word? Participate in a panel discussion or Zoom meeting after the screening? Some potential partners include: student groups at schools, universities and colleges; a local public or campus library; representatives from local religious congregations or faith-based community groups; local chapters of national/global activist or grassroots organizations; faculty members at nearby universities and colleges; reporters/journalists from local news publications such as newspapers and magazines; local nonprofits; and any community organizations that share goals or views with the film you are screening.

**5. Invite A Guest Speaker!** Guest speakers and panelists are a great way to encourage discussion and debate after a community screening. When people are engaged and thinking about the issues they will stay engaged long after the screening has passed. Contact representatives of local non-profits, faith groups, journalists and reporters from local media outlets, or teachers and professors who have expertise and/or insight into the issues raised by the film, and invite them to attend your screening—in person, via Skype or Zoom, etc—and participate in a discussion or Q&A session with your audience.

**6. Engage Your Audience!** Use this discussion guide to engage your audience. Included in this guide is a section called Ready to Talk! with a few suggested discussion questions to get the conversation started, and a section called Ready to Act!— which can be used as a handout — listing additional resources for further investigation about key issues raised in the film.

**7. Spread The Word!** Think about the best methods available to you for publicizing your film screening to people in your community. Sending emails to a contact list, creating event notifications on Facebook, Instagram, Eventbrite or an online community calendar, using Twitter to announce your event, and placing screening announcements in local newspapers and newsletters is a good start. In addition to this guide, you can download a screening poster and press photos that can be used to help publicize your event: <https://www.bullfrogcommunities.com/acrimeonthebayou>

**8. Tell Us How It Went!** Visit <https://www.bullfrogcommunities.com/acrimeonthebayou> to tell us about your event. Contribute to the film’s discussion page (if available) to help other student groups, universities, non-profits, congregations and community groups further the discussion and put on successful screening events of their own. Where was your screening held? Who attended? What went well, and what was challenging? What did you discuss? Your feedback will help others to organize their own events, and will energize Bullfrog Communities as a whole.

# ready to talk!

**Your audience will be excited to discuss the issues raised by the film.  
Here are some questions that will get people talking.**

- 1.** How do you think Gary Duncan and Richard Sobol's backgrounds shaped their reactions to the case?
- 2.** What barriers did Gary Duncan face to getting a fair hearing in court? How are those barriers relevant for defendants and the legal community today?
- 3.** Duncan v Louisiana mandated jury trials for a wider range of criminal cases. How has access to jury trials evolved for criminal defendants over the decades?
- 4.** How does the composition of juries impact the fairness of civil and criminal trials? In the 1960s deep south would Gary Duncan always have benefited from a jury trial? If not, why did Richard Sobol proceed with this appeal?
- 5.** Richard Sobol testified during his case against Leander Perez about some of the lawyers who volunteered in New Orleans:

*"The volunteer lawyers would come down for a three week period only, usually on their vacations and do whatever...but the one thing that Negro leadership in the south is rightly disinclined to accept is white people telling them any further what to do and what not to do. Even well meaning and committed white liberal northerners. The leadership is theirs and so are the choices. Including the option not to work with any white lawyers at all."*

How does Sobol's statement speak to the issue of representation in the legal profession and in the pro-bono community?

# ready to act!

## **Organizations and Web Resources**

### **National Urban League** — <https://nul.org>

Founded in 1910 and headquartered in New York City, The National Urban League is a historic civil rights organization dedicated to economic empowerment in order to elevate the standard of living in historically underserved urban communities.

### **Jewish Film Institute** — <https://jfi.org>

The Jewish Film Institute (JFI) is the premier curatorial voice for Jewish film and media around the world. Founded in 1980 as the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival (SFJFF), JFI's programs illuminate the full diversity of Jewish experiences.

### **Duncan v. Louisiana, 391 U.S. 145 (1968) (Oyez.org)** — <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1967/410>

Syllabus and documentation concerning the U.S. Supreme Court case Duncan v Louisiana, including audio of Oral Arguments from January 17, 1968.

### **Stanford Center for Racial Justice** — <https://law.stanford.edu/stanford-center-for-racial-justice/>

The Stanford Center for Racial Justice (SCRJ) was created in June 2020 in the wake of deep reflection in the U.S. about racial divisions and the urgent need for solutions. The aspiration of SCRJ is a multicultural democracy where our ability to create opportunities, promote wellbeing for all, and advance freedom is not undermined by racism.

### **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)** — <https://www.aclu.org/>

Founded in 1920, the ACLU works in the courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States.

### **Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)** — <https://www.splcenter.org/>

The SPLC is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people.

### **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** — <https://naacp.org>

The mission of the NAACP is to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate the well-being, education, and economic security of Black people and all persons of color.

**National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA)** — <https://nationalblsa.wildapricot.org/>

Founded in 1968, the NBLSA is committed to increasing the number of culturally responsible Black and minority attorneys who excel academically, succeed professionally, and positively impact the community.

**National Conference of Black Lawyers** — <https://www.ncbl.org/>

The NCBL is an association of lawyers, scholars, judges, legal workers, law students, and legal activists formed in 1968 to offer legal assistance to black civil rights activists. NCBL is a bar association, but its program focuses on matters of critical concern to the broader Black community. Noted clients included Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, the Attica Brothers, Geronimo Pratt, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Ben Chavis, and the Wilmington Ten.

**National Civil Rights Museum** — <https://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/>

Established in 1991, the National Civil Rights Museum is located at the former Lorraine Motel, where civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968. Through interactive exhibits, historic collections, speakers and special events, the museum offers visitors a chance to walk through history and learn more about the American Civil Rights Movement and explore how this significant era continues to shape equality and freedom globally.

**Equal Justice Initiative** — <https://eji.org/>

Founded in 1989 by Bryan Stevenson, a widely acclaimed public interest lawyer and bestselling author of *Just Mercy*, EJI is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides legal representation to people who have been illegally convicted, unfairly sentenced, or abused in state jails and prisons. EJI is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society.

## **Books and Print Resources**

Lyon, Danny. *Conversations with the Dead*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1971.

Spriggs, Kent. *Voices of Civil Rights Leaders*. University Press of Florida, 2017.

Van Meter, Matthew. *Deep Delta Justice*. Little Brown and Company, 2020.

Warren, Robert Penn. *Who Speaks for the Negro*. Random House, 1965.