

after the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King and began to understand the depth of racism in that country"

"Our intention is for *White Light* to be used as a tool by anti-gun violence groups to open discussions on how to bring peaceful and positive change. This is a film that must be seen by Australians too. The worldwide protest movement born in the wake of the murder of Minneapolis man George Floyd earlier this year has brought our own country's history with Indigenous Australians into review."

At the epicentre of the violence in Englewood is "May Block", a neighbourhood that found itself in the spotlight of primetime news when a promising young model, Kaylyn Pryor, who had just won the Mario Tricoci Make Me a Model Competition, was shot and killed while visiting her grandparents. *White Light* follows the teenagers who belong to the May Block's Black Stone Brothers led by Solja, who was paralysed and lost his leg after being shot in the local corner store. Respected elder, Steve "Smiley" Armour reveals to Gittoes that the Black Stone Brothers feel trapped in an endless cycle of violence with their rivals that they don't know how to end. The Brothers express frustration that while the local police arrest and intimidate members of the community for minor offences or drug offences, investigations into murders in the area rarely lead to a conviction. Gittoes captures on camera a frightening and tense moment between the filmmakers and the Brothers when they are surrounded by police while filming a freestyle, street rap session.

At the heart of the documentary and central to the lives of the teens of Englewood is rap music. Every corner has its rap poets, whose lyrics are an outlet to express their frustrations with few opportunities to succeed in their segregated and underfunded communities. During their time in Chicago, Gittoes and his producing partner, wife and musician Hellen Rose, opened their apartment to the May Block community's young rappers as a safe space for them to come to write, collaborate and record music. Together the filmmakers and teenagers created the soundtrack for *White Light*.

In 2015, Gittoes was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize, an honour also bestowed on the Black Lives Matter Global Network in 2017. *White Light* strongly supports the Black Lives Matter movement, highlighting a community that has been neglected and ignored for too long. Gittoes and Rose plan to return to Chicago in October to resume filming the Southside Community through the Presidential election period in November. For high-resolution images, click [here](#).

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For more information, images or interview opportunities for *White Light*, please contact Safia van der Zwan, Marketing Communications Specialist, ABC, vanderzwan.safia@abc.net.au / 0432732887

Production credits: A Gittoes Films Production. Directed by George Gittoes, produced by Hellen Rose and George Gittoes, Edited by Peter O' Donoghue, Sound Design by David White, Music Direction by Hellen Rose.