**QUICK TEACHER’S GUIDE**

TO ACCOMPANY RARE DOCUMENTARY – ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL: BEYOND BLACK AND WHITE



**TEACHER AND STUDENT GUIDE FOR**

**ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL: BEYOND BLACK AND WHITE**

Prepared by: Lea Vaughn

22 January 2022

Introduction

This guide has been prepared for students and teachers who will be viewing the documentary film *Roosevelt High School: Beyond Black & White*. It has a guide to the film, suggested questions, suggested teaching formats, and some information about RARE as well as the four Class of 1971 grads who speak in the film.

Synopsis of Film

This 30-minute film covers a lot of ground but focuses principally on the inter-relationship of school and race. Many of the underlying themes ask the viewer whether things have changed all that much in the fifty years since the founders of Roosevelt Alumni for Racial Equity (RARE), RHS Class of 1971, graduated. Beginning with voiceovers musing about the role of race in Seattle, the film reviews the history of integration in the Seattle public schools: the voluntary transfer program, the mandatory bussing program, and the neighborhood choice programs. It notes that much of the segregation in the Seattle Schools arises from discriminatory housing practices historically practiced in Seattle, such as racial covenants and “redlining” that were not ended until Seattle passed an Open Housing Ordinance in 1968. The film then segues to ask what can schools, and schooling, do to end racial inequities as racism is experienced in Seattle. Finally, the film ends by asking the viewer to become engaged in reformative change.

Minute Mark Synopsis of Film

NOTE: *Some teachers may want to stop the film at certain points to focus on particular themes. This “minute mark” presentation is designed to help a teacher “fast forward” to a particular theme or idea, and is accurate to within about five seconds of the mark.*

MARK CONTENT

25 sec THE MORE THINGS CHANGE THE MORE THEY REMAIN THE SAME

Voiceovers – Scenes from the 1960s are intermixed with scenes from

the 2020s. At 45 seconds, the framing quotation from the Kerner

Commission appears – “Two nations . . . .”

54 sec Voiceovers and interviews: how do we discuss race in Seattle – the

“race dance”

1:41 Narration begins, talking about schools and integration. This segment

begins the focus on integration efforts in Seattle Public Schools. It also

begins one of the film’s animating themes: that not that much has changed from the late 1960s until now.

3:00 SEATTLE SCHOOLS AND INTEGRATION: A HISTORY

What is the role of schools in addressing integration and ending racial

discrimination? Schools were thought to be a/the cure.

3:30 How Joe and Tony met at Roosevelt, playing basketball together.

4:20 Brown v Board of Education – scenes from the South, and Seattle’s

reaction to the decision.

5:38 Seattle Public Schools (SPS) begin the voluntary transfer program

6:20 What was the first day of school like for transfer students?

8:19 SPS adopts the “Seattle Plan” of mandatory bussing

9:50 In the 1980s and 1990s, SPS reach their most integrated point as a system on a school-by-school basis

10:10 Did any of these approaches/plans work? What were the costs and

Benefits of these programs? Who bore the costs? Whites flee the

system for private schools. Mandatory bussing programs end in 1996.

13:20 Transition – Board Pres. Brandon Hersey suggests that the “opportunity

gap” may be more important than integration per se.

14:00 PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AS A BARRIER TO INTEGRATED SCHOOLS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

History of racial covenants and redlining; idea that racially distinct neighborhoods and therefore racially distinct schools are “baked into” the system.

15:53 Segue: Resource Inequity which flows from segregated housing patterns

into the schools

18:50 SEATTLE RACISM

How does racism manifest in Seattle vs. its more commonly depicted manifestation(s) in the South?

20:00 How racism manifests as the unequal distribution of resources in north and south end schools.

21:00 Current student experiences of racism in schooling

20:40 STUDENT VOICES FOR CHANGE: Performative vs. Reformative Change

Leah Scott introduces the idea of performative vs. reformative change. The idea that students can virtue signal with social media without really engaging in real change or dialogue. What real change can look like.

25:00 WHAT’S AT STAKE: VOICES OF CHANGE AND HOPE: We want it to be different/better; diversity matters – students need to be exposed to a wide range of opinions and people and experiences. This is the work we are called to do.

29:28 Fade to black – Gorman quotation

30:00 James Baldwin quotation

Procedures: How to Teach It

1. Civility Code/Ground Rules: Discussing race and racial equity can be difficult. It often helps to have rules or guidelines ahead of time to ensure a fair discussion. Don’t be surprised if people become emotional, but you want to channel the emotions constructively rather than destructively. Part of what you’re trying to do is model how to have a good discussion about race and racial inequity.

a. Ground Rules/Guidelines for a Discussion: Please place on the board or read before the discussion begins. (Only a suggestion – a lot of teachers establish these types of guidelines at the start of the semester.)

1. Please be courteous and civil to all classroom members, regardless of their question or comment. Aim to generate light and understanding, rather than heat and discord.

2. Criticize ideas and not the person asking the question. That is, don’t engage in put downs. Give reasons for your disagreement. Provide evidence for your reasons rather than talking in conclusions.

3. Please be crisp, concise and to-the-point. Try to answer in no more than 45 seconds.

4. If you have something to add to another person’s answer, please raise your hand so that the moderator can see you. Please make sure that your addition is truly additive.

5. The moderator’s/facilitator’s role is to balance the questions, as well as balance the time each person spends in answering questions.

6. Please don’t hog the forum, and no shameless self-promotion.

7. (If by ZOOM) The Q&A means the focus will be on you. Please dress appropriately and have an appropriate background as well as good lighting. Please do not engage in distracting behavior like eating during the discussion and mute your screen unless you are talking.

8. Listen to the question with an open mind, and assume that the question is being asked in good faith. Think before you speak – it’s okay to wait for a few seconds before answering as you gather your thoughts.

2. Teaching Method Ideas

a. Write to focus thinking: Place a prompt up on the board. It can be general (I think the movie was . . . .) or targeted (Seattle’s property history is the cause of baked-in racism. Agree or disagree.) Let everyone write for about five minutes. Then open it up for discussion.

b. Small Groups: Sometimes, because these are difficult topics to discuss, and some members of the class may be reluctant to talk, it can be more effective to split a class up into smaller groups (five people per group maximum). Each group can discuss the same question and then open it up for general discussion after a suitable amount of time, or, alternatively, each group can be assigned a different question, and then report out their views/opinions at the close of class.

c. Whole Group discussions: Everyone will discuss questions, or address comments as a full classroom group.

d. Panel: Some students may have seen the film before the 4th. IF this is so, you could have them act as “experts” and ask the class to bounce questions off of them. This is a little harder to work, however. Or, you could ask your experts to come prepared to explain things like “redlining,” or the meaning of the word “equity,” etc.

e. Debate : A class could be divided into two groups. One group could argue that the movie is wrong – lots of things have changed. The other group could agree with the movie – nothing has changed. At the end, the class can vote. Can sometimes be a little hard to control/direct.

Discussion Questions

a. Before Viewing - To think about while viewing (choose 1 or 2)

1. What is the overall message of this film in your opinion? Agree or disagree with the message?

2. With which person did you most agree? Why?

3. Are schools the best way to address societal racism? Why?

b. After Viewing (From RARE)

1. As the film shows, for many years Seattle tried to integrate public schools, to have students of different racial backgrounds in classrooms and schools together. Was this a good idea? Did it succeed? Why or why not?
2. To what are extent are the issues of racial equity today the same as they were 50 years ago? What is similar and what is different?
3. Which statements or figures in the film do you particularly agree with, and why? With which do you disagree, and why?
4. Please comment on your reactions to some or all of the following passages in the film:

* Tola says that Seattle does a “race dance.”
* Lea describes how, as a child, she was not able to visit the home of white family members.
* Craig says that the system isn’t broken, “it was meant to work this way.”
* Leah and Theo say that to deal with racial equity we need to be reformative, not performative.

1. Is the situation at Roosevelt High School shown in the film similar to the situation at other schools? Why or why not? How is it similar or different from the situation at your school, or in your community – if you are connected to RHS, is the situation portrayed accurately?
2. Does this film make you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of racial equity issues? Explain your answer, drawing on points made in the film.
3. If you were in charge of Seattle Public Schools, what changes would you make to improve racial equity? Try to come up with three policies or actions, and explain why you selected each one.
4. What is “race,” and why does it matter? Should it matter?
5. What actions should be taken by your school and your community regarding racial issues? Most important, what should you do as an individual? How does the film influence your answer, if at all?
6. What would you like to say about the film and how it made you feel?

Additional Questions

1. Vocabulary

-redlining

-restrictive racial covenants

-Open Housing Ordinance

Re: these subjects, *see, e.g.* [Redlining in Seattle - HistoryLink.org](https://www.historylink.org/File/21296#:~:text=In%20April%201968%2C%20three%20weeks%20after%20Martin%20Luther,first%20African%20American%20to%20sit%20on%20the%20Council.)

-equity

-oppression

-“performative” social action

2. The film is bracketed by three quotations:

a. “Our nation is moving toward two societies, on black, one white – separate and unequal.” Kerner Commission, 1968

b. “It’s because being American is more than a pride we inherit,

it’s the past we step into,

and how we repair it.”

Amanda Gorman, 2021 – Inaugural Poem

c. “Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” James Baldwin

What does each quotation mean? What do they mean as a group?

What is RARE? How Did It Get Started?

*See*: [George Floyd’s murder reunites Roosevelt High alumni for lessons on race, life 50 years later | The Seattle Times](https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/after-50-years-george-floyds-murder-reunites-roosevelt-high-alums-for-lessons-on-race-life/) (29 May 2021)

Basically, RARE started shortly after the murder of George Floyd in May, 2020. Tony Allison called Joe Hunter, asking if he could get a small group of Black friends together to zoom call (remember, Covid) with their white teammates from the Class of 1971. Things mushroom from there. The group keeps talking at a much more honest and deeper level than they ever did in high school about race, and lamenting that nothing seems to have changed. They form RARE, and in the fall, women from the class are brought into the group. (Remember, this is before Title IX mandated equal sports opportunities for women.) RARE members decide to undertake two projects: the making of this documentary, and raising funds for scholarships at RHS. Another year later, RARE is in the process of incorporating as a non-profit, and expanding their activities to other schools in the Seattle area. For more information, *see* [Roosevelt Alumni for Racial Equity (RARE) (rhs4racialequity.org)](https://rhs4racialequity.org/)

Where are They Now?

Anthony “Tony” Allison

*See*: [Whatever happened to high school star Tony Allison? (seattlepi.com)](https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Whatever-happened-to-high-school-star-Tony-1123195.php) (2 Sept 2003)

Tony was born and raised in Seattle. His undergraduate degree is from Williams College (History and Russian) although he also attended the University of Oregon and Simon Fraser University, and he has master’s degrees from the University of Washington in business and international studies. He has had two careers. Up until about age 50, Tony spent over twenty years in fisheries-based international trade with Russia, a language in which he is fluent. Some of that time, he lived in Moscow. In 2003, he started teaching high school at University Prep. Currently, he is working on a book in addition to his activities as Co-Leader of RARE.

Allan Bergano: Allan was born and raised in Seattle, Washington.  He graduated from the University of Washington with a BS in Environmental Health and a Doctorate of Dental Surgery.  In 1983, he moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia and began his dental career as a solo practitioner.  He has served the community for 29 years. Dr. Bergano and his spouse, Edwina, are co-founders of the Hampton Roads Chapter of the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS).  They worked collaboratively with local communities and published two books on the lives of Filipino Americans in Hampton Roads.  Dr. Bergano is a mentor to high school,  college students and teachers.  He was an accomplished marathon runner and an avid bogey golfer.

Joe Hunter, Jr: Joe got a degree in Business Administration from Western Washington University and did a master's degree program at Seattle University. For much of his career, he rose steadily through the ranks at the J.C. Penney Company, moving from being a store manager to working in human resource management, as well as district and regional operations. He now has his own consulting business as an independent retail consultant. For example, he has been a field consultant for 7 Eleven Stores for the last decade. Currently, he is the co-leader of RARE.

Lea Vaughn:

*See*: [Honoring retiring faculty and staff | UW School of Law](https://www.law.uw.edu/news-events/news/2020/honoring-2019-20-retiring-faculty-and-staff) (last story; alphabetically arranged)

Lea was born and raised in Seattle. She began her undergraduate education at Radcliffe College (Harvard) but transferred to Princeton University (Philosophy). Her law degree is from the University of Michigan. Before teaching, she represented unions in a Detroit, MI law firm. In 1980, she left practice to run the writing program, teach, and be assistant dean at the University of Detroit Law School. In 1984, she returned home to become a professor at the University of Washington School of Law, where she taught labor, employment law, and a wide variety of procedural courses, as well as writing about a variety of legal topics. Her last scholarly interest was neuroscience and law. In 2019, she retired.