



**SOUL  
CITY**



**Directed By  
Monica Berra, SheRea DelSol, and Gini Richards**

# The News and Observer

124 Pages Today

Raleigh, N. C., Sunday, March 2, 1975

109th Year

## Soul City: A Tangled Web

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By PAT STITH  
State Writer

Six years have gone by since civil rights leader Floyd B. McKissick called a Washington press conference to announce his vision — a bright new city, a Soul City, that would sow seeds of hope in the worn-out farmland of Warren County.

The dream captured the attention of the national media, excited the imagination of social planners and became a pet project of a Republican admin-

Editor's note: News and Observer reporter Pat Stith spent three months investigating the government's role in the financing of the Soul City development. This article and others on Pages 4 and 5 are the first in a series.

There is no industry there, no shops, no houses — no Soul City.

The handful of residents live in house trailers. The people who work there work for one of six federally-assisted organizations formed by McKissick and his partners.

are sensitive about those barren acres.

"I guarantee that we are pretty frustrated with progress in a lot of things," said Gordon R. Carey, McKissick's right hand man. "We'd be the last ones to tell you that everything is rolling like clockwork

Carey blames the delays on the slow process of closing the project's major loan agreement with the federal government.

But, except for initial resentment among whites in Warren County, there has been little criticism of Soul City's progress.

The national press and television have simply taken McKissick at his word, with few hard questions asked.

While McKissick's timetable as a developer has not kept pace with his dreams, he has

out of money. He braced the campaign and Nixon in 1972, the federal tre open

\$19.5 Million Uncle Sam does many federal pouring money in or how much. In inquiry, however and Observer has \$19.5 million in tance approved. And, as of last sick's staff was

## Synopsis

"Soul City" is a documentary short that tells the story of a group of civil rights activists and city slickers who attempt to build a multiracial utopia in the heart of Klan Country, North Carolina in the 1970s. Their pioneering efforts to jumpstart this black-owned, black-built town run up against tenacious enemies that still face idealists and dreamers today--ingrained racism, public skepticism, and unwillingness on the part of the government to think outside the box to solve social problems. As this group of dreamers try to bring together unlikely allies to support black power and economic development, they are forced to balance their soaring idealism with the hostile reality of the times.

Genre: Documentary

Duration: 20:36

Location: North Carolina, USA

Completed: April 2016



## **Credits**

**Directed, produced and edited by:**

Monica Berra, SheRea DelSol and Gini Richards

**Motion Graphics Artist:** Gini Richards

**Composer:** Patrick Willard

**Sound Mixer:** Tom Green

**Color Correction:** NOLO Digital Film



## Filmmaker Bios



Monica Berra works with Stanley Nelson's Firelight Films, and was previously a television anchor/reporter in Florida. She has produced documentaries about North Carolina public education, a black environmentalist in the Florida Everglades, and novelist Marjorie Rawlings. Her next documentary will explore Cuban-American self-identity through three generations of her family.



SheRea DelSol has worked with London-based production companies Great Guns and Giant Films & TV. She comes to documentary with a Communication background and her academic work focuses on media representations of Blacks. Her recent documentary addressed racism on a college campus. Her next project examines sizeism in the natural hair community.



Gini Richards has worked with PBS Frontline, Alex Gibney's Jigsaw Productions, DCTV, and Wake Forest faculty. Her own documentary work has focused on North Carolina mountain miners, Mars astronaut hopefuls, and racial tensions on a college campus. Her next documentary will focus on race relations in the Mormon church.



## Screenings

Offical Latino Short Film Festival (*New York, NY*) **(2016)** Winner: Best Documentary  
Harlem International Film Festival (*New York, NY*) **(2016)**  
Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival (*New York, NY*) **(2016)** Winner: Best Director's Award  
Austin Film Festival (*Austin, TX*) **(2016)**  
Savannah Film Festival (*Savannah, GA*) **(2016)**  
Tallgrass Film Festival (*Wichita, KS*) **(2016)**  
Aesthetica Short Film Festival (*York, UK*) **(2016)**  
Cucalorus Film Festival (*Wilmington, NC*) **(2016)**

## Awards

**Carole Fielding Grant Recipient**, University Film and Video Association 2015  
**Filmed in N.C. Grant Recipient**, Cucalorus Film Foundation 2016  
**Best Director's Award**, Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival 2016  
**Best Documenary**, Offical Latino Short Film Festival 2016



## Contact Information

Website: <http://www.soulcityfilm.com/>

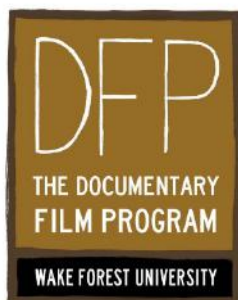
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