

DIRECTED BY
LAURA WATERS HINSON

STREET REPORTER

SCREENING DISCUSSION GUIDE



THE STORY OF A CITY IS WRITTEN ON ITS STREETS.

IMAGE BEARER PICTURES PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH RENGA MEDIA AND STREET SENSE MEDIA A LAURA WATERS HINSON FILM "STREET REPORTER" FEATURING REGINALD BLACK, SHEILA WHITE AND MICHAEL HARRIS
PRODUCED BY BRYAN BELLO ORIGINAL CHANDA DANCY EDITED BY DAN SADOWSKY DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY KASEY KIRBY EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS HILLA MEDALIA, NANCY SCHAFER, JOHN AND ED PRIDDY CO-PRODUCED BY KASEY KIRBY COORDINATING PRODUCER AMELIA TYSON
WRITTEN BY DAN SADOWSKY AND LAURA WATERS HINSON IMPERCE REGINALD BLACK, SHEILA WHITE AND ROBERT WARREN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH AMERICAN UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY VOICE LAB AND HUMANITIES DC
WWW.STREETREPORTERFILM.COM

ABOUT THE FILM

Sheila White, 58, dreams of becoming a photojournalist and escaping her life of homelessness. Yearning to make this change, she studies at a local university while completing homework late into the night at the women's shelter. As a reporter at Street Sense newspaper, Sheila and her reporting partner Reggie cover the story of DC's "Tent City." Along the way, they meet a charismatic tent resident named Mike who, much like Sheila, longs for a life outside the underpass. As the city moves to shut down Mike's encampment, their journeys are threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic, with unexpected results. *Street Reporter* is a profoundly intimate, character-based film produced with community collaborators that provides a window into the power of community journalism in one woman's life, casting a vision of the re-humanizing effects of life's most basic need: a place to call home.



FEATURING



SHEILA WHITE

Sheila White is a rising documentary creative, activist, and photo-journalism student at the University of the District of Columbia. Her eight-year experience with homelessness ended in May 2020. A life-long D.C. resident and member of the Homeless Filmmakers Cooperative, White's work has been published by Street Sense Media, the International Network of Street Papers, Law at the Margins, and DCTV, where she has worked as a certified producer. Sheila is an active member of the People for Fairness Coalition, D.C.'s top homeless-run advocacy group, also serves as an Impact Producer for the Street Reporter documentary.



REGINALD BLACK

Reginald Black is a journalist, filmmaker, activist, and life-long Washingtonian. His craft is informed by his decade-long experience with homelessness which ended in the fall of 2019. He is a founding member of the nation's first Homeless Filmmaker's Cooperative. Reggie is an impact director with the homeless advocacy organization People for Fairness Coalition and serves as a consumer representative appointed to the D.C. Interagency Council on Homelessness. He also serves as an Impact Producer for this documentary.

HOMELESSNESS AT A GLANCE



THE UNITED STATES


On any given night in the U.S, more than half a million people experience homelessness. Some of the country's most at-risk populations for homelessness include Pacific Islanders and Native Americans, while “Black Americans, multiracial Americans, and Hispanics/Latinxs...are far more likely to be homeless than the national average and white Americans.” Meanwhile, many homeless individuals live in areas with large populations—45% live in areas with a high rate of homelessness. High rates of homelessness are often associated with high housing costs, including expensive rent. This is especially the case in Washington, DC. The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a significant impact homeless in America.

Key Facts
From the 2021 State of Homelessness Report
endhomelessness.org/data

30% increase in unsheltered homeless. The unsheltered population has risen dramatically since 2015, nearly erasing a decade of work.

~209,000 individuals (not living in families with children) were unsheltered in 2020. This is a record high number.

Every race, ethnicity, gender and age group (except for children) is affected.

 National Alliance to
END HOMELESSNESS

THE INTERSECTION OF COVID, RACE, AND HOMELESSNESS

COVID + HOMELESSNESS

The national number of people experiencing homelessness has decreased over the last three years, however, the effects of COVID-19 threaten to increase these rates nationwide.

Unhoused individuals often experience common health conditions like economic insecurity, substance use disorder, mental health issues, chronic illnesses, and domestic violence. Many individuals were formerly in foster care and/or military veterans.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought a new set of complicated challenges to the scene—creating an overlapping trifecta of public health and societal concerns. For example, COVID-19 has heightened the disproportionate effects of homelessness on Washington, DC's Black community.

Service providers to unhoused individuals struggle to meet the CDC guidelines; social distancing, quarantining, and mask mandates. The pandemic has further limited the community's access to support from agencies, neighbors, and local governments, in addition to their lack of access to proper medical care.



THE PROMISE OF STREET PAPERS

The phrase "street papers" refers to papers sold by those experiencing poverty in a specific region or locale, to help them earn an income, spread information, and distribute independent media. These papers exist globally, and in 1994 the international Network of Street Papers (INSP) launched with the goal of helping papers start-up, supporting them, creating jobs, training, and skill development opportunities.

As levels of homelessness across the planet increase, refugee crises, become direr, and housing prices increase, these street papers continue to be a source for independent community journalism and media. Street Papers provide homeless individuals with the ability to share specific interests and concerns that affect their own lives and communities.

CHECK OUT THE GREAT WORK OF THESE STREET PAPERS

Community Connection, Los Angeles, CA
Homeward Street Journal, Sacramento, CA
StreetWise, Chicago, IL
The Heartland News, Omaha, NE
Toledo Streets, Toledo, OH
One Step Away, Philadelphia, PA
The Contributor, Nashville, TN
The Challenger, Austin, TX
Street Sense, Washington, DC

Mi Valedor, Mexico City, Mexico
Traços, Brasília, DF, Brazil
Peatón, Piura, Peru
Hecho En Bs. As., Buenos Aires, Argentina
Ireland's Big Issue, Dublin, Ireland
Cais, Lisbon, Portugal
Sorgenfri, Trondheim, Norway
The Big Issue South Africa, Cape Town, South Africa

You can read more about the phenomena of street papers from the [International Network of Street Papers](#).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



DISUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you think Sheila and Reggie's experiences of living unhoused impact their reporting on issues of homelessness?
2. Why do you think some people choose to live on the street instead of a shelter?
3. What are some of the challenges unhoused people experience when trying to obtain employment?
4. In what ways has COVID-19 impacted people trying to obtain housing?
5. Why should housing be the first step in meeting people's basic needs?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

NEXT STEPS

- Find your local street paper.
- Learn issues of concern of unhoused people in your community.
- Find out what your city is doing to address these concerns.
- Get involved with a local service organization. (Ask your local street paper for ideas!)

Street Reporter is a collaboration between American University's Community Voice Lab and Street Sense Media. It was made possible by grants from HumanitiesDC and American University.

For more resources, visit:
www.StreetReporterFilm.com