



The Nine O'clock Whistle

A FILM BY *Willia Cofield and Karen Riley*



The Nine O'clock Whistle

Running Time:

61 minutes

Directed By:

**Willa Cofield
Karen Riley**

Produced By:

**Willa Cofield
Gail Cruise-Roberson
Karen Riley**

Production Company:

Grassroots Media Productions

Edited by:

**Julian Berrian
Karen Riley**

Composer:

Jawanza Kobie

Trailer:

<https://vimeo.com/523945349>



LOGLINE

Influenced by civil rights protests in other communities, Black folks in a small, segregated town in North Carolina rebel against the constraints imposed upon them, including an offensive and humiliating whistle blown at nine o'clock every Saturday night warning Blacks to clear the downtown streets.

SYNOPSIS

The Nine O'clock Whistle documents the events that rocked the segregated town of Enfield, North Carolina (USA) from 1963 to 1965 through the narratives of the students who led the protests, one of their teachers, a community organizer, and other residents of the town. Their stories reveal the racist practices that whites employed, including, the blowing of a siren at nine o'clock on Saturday night that ordered Blacks to leave the downtown. The narrators describe a mass protest after the March on Washington, when hundreds of people ignored the whistle. After firemen use high-powered water hoses to send people home, the Black community fights back with a successful three-month boycott. The movement spreads into the surrounding county, morphing into a voter registration campaign, school integration effort, and a legal battle for a fired teacher. The efforts underscore the courage and resilience of the Black community as it challenged Jim Crow laws and finally elected Blacks to the town's government.

OUR STORY

Inspired by a Black man's candidacy for the town council, a group of high school students protest racist policies at the public library, the local movie theater, and downtown drugstores and restaurants. When the town shuts down the protests by making it illegal for anyone under age 18 to picket, adults pick up the mantle. Three days after the 1963 March on Washington, both youth and adults stage a mass protest in downtown Enfield. Town authorities blow the whistle to order everyone off the streets. The protesters refuse to leave, and the authorities wash them off the streets with high-powered fire hoses. Chaos ensues. As a result of this confrontation, irate protesters initiate a three-month boycott of the downtown businesses. Although authorities retaliate, including firing one of the students' Black teachers, the three-month boycott breaks the segregation policies of local businesses and sparks a wider voter registration movement, sowing the seeds for future Black political empowerment.



PRODUCER, Willa Cofield

Willa Cofield is a retired educator with deep roots in Enfield, North Carolina.

Cofield researched and documented the history of the Joseph Keasbey Brick School and Junior College, a Black school that operated in North Carolina from 1895-1933.

She organized a photographic exhibit, "Answering the Cry for Life and Liberty," and produced an award-winning documentary *The Brick School Legacy* (2003) with Scribe Video Center in Philadelphia.

Recipient of numerous awards, Cofield is currently collaborating with a few of her former Enfield High School students writing a companion text to *The Nine O'clock Whistle* film about the impact of the 1960s on their identities as youth cultural workers.

Cofield is 92 years young. She has a daughter, Tanya Watson; two granddaughters, Erika and Korey, and two great-granddaughters, Maliyah and Skye.



PRODUCER, Karen Riley

Co-director Karen Riley is a writer, editor, and media specialist. She was an obituary writer for several daily newspapers for over 13 years.

Previously, she was the program manager for an HIV/AIDS program. She was also a volunteer director and teacher for a church computer literacy program.

Riley is the designer and webmaster of the Black Women's History Conference (BWHC) and the N.J. Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical (NJ AAHGS) websites. She also ran a music club's website, and designed marketing materials for its numerous print and digital campaigns.

Under her brand "Karmyda", Riley is also a gospel house music DJ, graphic designer and multi-media marketer for several small businesses and musicians.



PRODUCER, Gail Cruise-Roberson

As co-director of the National SEED Project, Gail Cruise-Roberson supports New York City-area SEED Leaders who run their own year-long, school-based SEED seminars. She is also working to develop content for the growing National SEED Project website.

Cruise-Roberson has worked in public education reform and adult education. She holds a B.A. in English and has done graduate work in Communications from Queens College (CUNY).



EDITOR, Julian Berrian

Julian Berrian has been a professor at Worcester State University in Massachusetts since 2006. His area of expertise is broadcast media production, which entails videography ,television production, and digital media post-production.

In addition to his professorial duties, Professor Berrian has served two terms as Director of Worcester State University's Center for Community Media.

He received his M.F.A. in Film & Media Arts from Temple University and his B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Maryland-Baltimore County.

Beyond academia, Julian Berrian has worked as a director in public television and edited multiple documentaries including the award-winning The Brick School Legacy.



COMPOSER, Jawanza Kobie

Jawanza Kobie would simply like to be known as a composer in the truest sense of the word. Ever since he was a young boy, he idolized the music of Beethoven, George Gershwin and Aaron Copeland and he began learning to notate his compositions at nine years of age. Jawanza graduated from Berklee College of Music, majoring in composition. He has written music for the “Freedom Theatre” (in Philadelphia) plays and musicals and toured briefly with their productions. Jawanza taught music in public schools, and did session and copyist work for artists on Warner Brothers, and Philadelphia International records. Jawanza was signed to Alpha International Records as a songwriter and producer. Always wanting to score for film and television, he ultimately got the opportunity to hone his skills on many independent projects in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles. He has had music aired in various venues on PBS, as well as television and radio stations in Philadelphia and Chicago. Jawanza scored the music for the documentary, “The Brick School Legacy.”



INTERVIEWERS

Willa Cofield

Gail Cruise-Roberson

Zarinah Shakir

Cynthia Cousins Samuelson



THE 9 O'CLOCK WHISTLE

"They would blow a siren & all the Black people had to go home"



INTERVIEWEES

Adell Boone Wilson

Barbara Simmons

Bud Whitaker

Cynthia Cousins Smith

Delores "Jennie" Ward

Eldon Pittman

Evon Anderson Hughes *

Ira Dale Saunders *

John Salter, Jr. /John Hunter Gray *

Laura Cousar

Mildred Bobbitt Sexton. Ed.D

Tanya Watson

Thomas Hardaway

Willa Cofield (Johnson)



CREDITS

Directed by:

**Willa Cofield
Karen Riley**

Produced by:

**Willa Cofield
Gail Cruise-Roberson
Karen Riley**

Editor

Julian Berrian

Music by

Jawanza Kobie

Technical Consultants

**Louis Massiah
Dan Papa
Danielle Tucker
muthi reed
Linda Janet Holmes
Matoko Maegawa
Marilyn Almonte
Nancy Livingston
Onyx Keesha Monroe
Ryan Saunders**

**ENFIELD
FIREMEN'S
AGRICULTURAL**

FAIR

Monday, September 23rd

—thru—

Saturday, September 28th

EVERYBODY INVITED

YOUR ATTENDANCE WILL BE APPRECIATED

Camera Operators: **Francis LaFountaine**
Karen Riley
Marilyn Almonte
muthi reed
Saroj Lamichhane
Zechariah Jackson

EPK: **Karmyda**

Digital Colorist: **Julian Berrian**

VFX: **Julian Berrian**

Title & End Credits **Julian Berrian**

Music created by: **Jawanza Kobie**

Camera Equipment: **Scribe Video Center**

Lighting: **muthi reed**

CONTACT: 9Whistle.com
Willa Cofield
Karen Riley

Supported by: This project has been supported by The Philadelphia Independent Media Fund administered by Scribe Video Center with funds provided by the Independence Public Media Foundation and the Wyncote Foundation



Plainfield Cultural & Heritage Commission
The National SEED Project
Dr. Dale Ellison



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