



A Foundation for
Radical Possibility

Diminished Returns:

The Black Wealth Gap
in Washington D.C.

2025



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Press Kit Release 2025



Diminished Returns: The Black Wealth Gap in Washington, D.C. is a powerful examination of how the legacy of slavery, segregation, and urban renewal continues to rob Black residents in the District of economic opportunity, and what justice truly requires.


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Synopsis

Washington, D.C. is a city defined by contrasts — a place where the powerful and the powerless coexist, where a rich history of Black culture and resilience stands in contrast to deep-seated economic disparities. For centuries, Black residents of the District have faced structural barriers rooted in enslavement, segregation, and serial displacement.

These forces are at the core of the Black wealth gap, still present today. This chasm is not a coincidence. It is the result of intentional policies illustrated by the median net worth disparity between Black and white households — housing discrimination and economic injustice have only widened the gap.

Advocates now call for reparative solutions that begin with understanding history and ends with action that restores and rebuilds Black wealth in Washington, D.C. and beyond.

Filmmakers' Statements:

We created the documentary *Diminished Returns: The Black Wealth Gap in Washington, D.C.*, because popular narratives suggest that Black people lack wealth because of individual choices, but Black wealth inequality began with the brutality of enslavement and has continued through legal segregation, unpaid and underpaid labor, land theft, and ongoing discrimination and stigmatization.

At **iF**, A Foundation for Radical Possibility, we envision a world where Black people and people of the global majority live powerfully, abundantly, and beautifully in healthy, self-determined communities free of social, economic, and ideological violence.

Diminished Returns is part of our larger strategic effort to shift narratives about anti-Black racism and its ill impacts on society and create new narratives that center the voices of those most impacted. The film invites viewers to examine the structural policies and practices that stripped Black people of land, housing, and economic opportunities, thereby creating and perpetuating the Black wealth gap, and explore these legacies through the lens of Washington, D.C., a city with a rich history of resilience and displacement.

The release of this film comes at a pivotal moment in our nation's political climate. As efforts to distort history and suppress critical conversations about racial injustice threaten to undermine progress, we believe that truth-telling is a part of healing. Acknowledging past and current racial atrocities is integral to justice. By understanding the forces behind the Black Wealth Gap, we can inspire bold action and transformative solutions, including real repair and structural change.

We hope you will join us in reimagining the future for Black communities in Washington, D.C., and beyond. -- **iF, A Foundation for Radical Possibility**

I conceived the idea for and served as the executive producer of Diminished Returns because the Black wealth gap is the biggest impediment to Black self-determination in this country. In Washington, D.C., everyone in my field—at the intersection of racial justice, government, nonprofit work, and philanthropy—discusses the Black wealth gap, yet action and viable solutions are few or nonexistent. While the data surrounding this issue is frequently mentioned, I wanted to highlight the personal stories that are encapsulated within that data. Qualitative narratives are just as important as quantitative statistics. There are many ways to learn from and share information, and in this instance, I chose to do so through film. Black people will never reach a place of freedom and liberation in this capitalist society without addressing this wealth gap. -- **Temi F. Bennett, iF, Co-CEO, and Executive Producer**

I wrote and directed Diminished Returns to explore the origins and impacts of the gap in African American and White wealth in our nation's capital. The film rescues Black Washingtonians' stories from beneath the shadows of our national monuments and federal edifices and by putting this unique form of inequality in a historical and political context, Diminished Returns also argues that reparations be afforded to African Americans in DC and across the United States. -- **Sabiya Prince, Writer and Director**

About the Film:

Genre: Documentary, History, African American, Politics

Runtime: Approx. 49 minutes

Production Company: Asparagus Media

Language: English

Diminished Returns: The Black Wealth Gap in Washington, D.C. is a documentary that uses the experiences of Black Americans in Washington, D.C. to explore the origins and impacts of wealth inequality in our Nation's Capital. This film puts the narratives of Black residents in context using historical information and expert opinions and concludes by looking at the solutions local advocates have advanced to close DC's Black wealth gap.

Cast and Crew Bios:

Director:



Sabiyha Prince, PhD has been a social justice organizer since the 1980s. Starting with the anti-apartheid movement, she has also been an environmental justice and anti-war activist working with The Washington Office on Africa and Greenpeace respectively. Prince, a published author and public speaker, also chairs the board of directors for Empower DC and is a founding member of its offshoot organization the DC Legacy Project.

Executive Producer:



Temi F. Bennett Esq. is Co-CEO of **iF**, A Foundation for Radical Possibility. She co-leads **iF**'s overall programmatic, financial, and governance strategy development and implementation. Additionally, Temi leads several bodies of work within **iF**'s systems change, culture, and reparations pillars. She is responsible for engaging local governments in the D.C. metropolitan area as they develop and implement racially equitable and just policies that enable Black communities and other communities of color to thrive. Temi also co-founded and is a member of Resourcing Radical Justice (RRJ), a funders collective that centers Black liberation as the path to a thriving greater Washington region. She is a member of the policy table and the reparations working group of Movement 4 Black Lives (M4BL).

Producers:

Dr. Samuel George is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and analyst for the Bertelsmann Foundation, a non-profit, non-partisan organization based in Washington, DC. Samuel's documentaries bring viewers up close and personal to people and communities facing the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, offering candid perspectives that allow viewers to draw their own conclusions.

Magee McIlvaine has chartered his own path of political and cultural exploration throughout the world with his chosen medium of documentary filmmaking. As co-creator of the '**Democracy in Dakar**' and '**Democracy in Paris**' film projects, as well as two political documentaries in Venezuela, Magee worked with a team in the early years of YouTube to successfully explore the possibilities of combining grassroots community-based documentary filmmaking with independent digital releases.

Sarah Shoenfeld is an independent scholar and public historian specializing in DC history. Her work addresses DC's racialized housing landscape and planning regime; the

intersection of race and historic preservation; and the history of organizing around civil rights and Black governance in DC.

Ellie Walton is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, born and raised in Washington, D.C. She is committed to honoring personal stories with authenticity & dignity, through deep collaboration, visual artistry, and shared authorship.

Key Subjects:

Celeste Bryant: Advocate for equity and community empowerment with the Washington Interfaith Network.

Rev. Deborah Boston: Spiritual Leader and scholar of transformative healing.

Dr. G. Derek Musgrove: Associate Professor of History at the University of Maryland and author focused on Black political movements.

Jocelind Julien: Community advocate and descendant of the historic Dry Meadows Community in Chevy Chase.

Justin Hansford, Esq. : Howard University Law Professor, and social and human rights advocate.

Kenyan McDuffie: Experienced public servant and advocate of equity in Washington, D.C.

Kortnee Burwell: Dedicated community advocate, and native Washingtonian.

Lisa Butler, Esquire: Administrative Law Judge and skilled advocate with firsthand insights into discriminatory housing practices.

Lydia Curtis: Owner, Sadiki Educational Safaris, fostering local cultural understanding.

Natalie Hopkinson: Associate Professor at American University, specializing in media, democracy and cultural equity.

Nkechi Tafia, Esq. : Director of the Reparation Education Project, and longtime reparations advocate.

Patrice Sulton, Esq. : Executive Director of DC Justice Lab focusing on criminal justice reform, attorney, community organizer.

Dr. Raymond Winbush: Director of the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University and Research professor.

Temi F. Bennett, Esq. : Co-CEO of **iF**, A Foundation for Radical Possibility and government and policy expert.

Tony Lewis Jr. : Activist, author, and advocate for families impacted by mass incarceration.

Rev. William H. Lamar: Pastor of Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church and leader in faith-based social justice efforts.

Tonia Wellons : President & CEO of the Greater Washington Community, advancing regional philanthropy.

Production Notes:

Filmed across historic neighborhoods in Washington, D.C., including Georgetown, Chevy Chase, and Meridian Hill, areas deeply impacted by gentrification and displacement.

Features archival footage and maps showing the impact of urban renewal policies.

Incorporates interviews with local historians, activists, and community members.

Key Themes and Messages:

The Black Wealth Gap: The definition and examination of the current Black wealth gap in the District of Columbia.

The Roots of the Black Wealth Gap: The structural barriers and stolen opportunities that have perpetuated the Black wealth gap for generations.

Economic Justice, Housing Security, and Public Safety: The interconnected fight for equitable access to affordable housing as a form of economic justice, wealth accumulation, and safe communities.

The Case for Reparative Solutions | Where do we go from here? : The call from the community for reparations and other reparative solutions as a needed step toward justice for Black people.

Press Coverage & Screenings:

Private Screening: August 29, 2024, at HQ by the Burns Brothers

Private Screening: September 10, 2024, at The Gathering Spot

Private Screening: November 18, 2024, at The True Reformer Building

Private Screening: December 11, 2024, at Alamo Drafthouse Cinema

Private Screening: January 30, 2025 at The National Union Building

Press Coverage: Featured in The Washington Post, "**A Black family's home was too close to a White school. So D.C. took it in 1931.**"

Press Coverage: Featured in The Washington Informer, "**Documentary Explores Racial Wealth Gap in Washington, D.C., and Its Consequences.**"

Press Coverage: Featured in WJLA, "**Inside look at new documentary that explores the Black wealth gap in Washington, DC.**"

Press Coverage: Featured in WPFW "**Interview with Writer and Director Sabiyha Prince**"

Media Contact:

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