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Black and White 2020

Recommended

Distributed by [Third World Newsreel](#), 545 Eighth Avenue, Suite 550, New York, NY 10018; 212-947-9277
Produced by Edgar Garcia Chavez
Directed by Edgar Garcia Chavez
Streaming, 5 mins

College - General Adult
Activism; Experimental Film; Social Movements
Date Entered: **06/15/2022**
Reviewed by Brandon West, Social Sciences Librarian, State University of New York at Geneseo

The word “black” is associated with negative words and imagery, such as sinister, devil, and expressions such as “black with rage.” The word “white” serves as a contrast to “black,” being associated with words including purity, honesty, and “reflecting rays of sunshine.” These words are laden with powerful implications for race which Director Garcia Chavez explores in this experimental film. The premise of this film is simple on the surface: the definitions of “black” and “white” are read from the Merriam-Webster dictionary. However, as powerful imagery is added to the reading of these words in a solemn tone, layers of symbolism bring forth many emotions and realities.

As the definitions are read aloud, a Black man is featured front and center of the camera. As the camera zooms outward, there are red and blue flashing lights illuminating his face against a backdrop of Black Lives Matters signs. As the definition of “black” concludes, the man is shown with yellow tape in front of his mouth that says “Danger.” As the definitions switches over to the definition of “white” the man on camera dips his hands into white paint. He makes gun gestures with his hands, including pointing one at his head. He then wraps his hands around his neck. As he begins choking, he repeats “I can’t breathe” multiple times before he falls silent.

This film has a run time of five minutes, and yet it leaves many messages for viewers to absorb and may challenge their worldviews. It not only serves as a commentary on the police brutality toward the Black community, but it also reveals the oppression created by these words that function in society. This film is ideal for engaging students in reflection and conversation in class and serves as a valuable resource for libraries supporting programs that deal with race & ethnicity, social justice, Black & African American studies, and the social sciences.

Awards:
Best Experimental Micro Film, Oregon Documentary Film Festival, 2020; Best Cinematography North America, Alternative Film Festival, Toronto, 2021; Best Short Film, Black Truth Film Festival, 2021; Best Experimental Film, Austin Micro Film Festival, 2021; Best Drama at Snohomish Film Festival, 2021; Honorable Mention, Hollywood New Directors, 2020; Honorable Mention, London Seasonal Short Film Festival, 2021; Honorable Mention, Experimental Forum, Los Angeles, 2021

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