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FRAME 394

Directed by Rich Williamson

2016 | Canada | 30 min

TEACHER'S GUIDE

This guide has been designed to help teachers and students enrich their experience of *Frame 394* by providing support in the form of questions and activities. There are a range of questions that will help teachers frame discussions with their class, activities for before, during and after viewing the film, and some weblinks that provide starting points for further research or discussion.

The Film

While scouring the Internet one night, Daniel Voshart stumbles upon a viral cell phone video. In North Charleston, South Carolina, a chilling scene unfolds. A white police officer shoots an unarmed black man in the back as he runs away, pulling the trigger eight times. Out of an obsessive quest for the truth, Daniel is compelled to dig deeper, hoping to use his expertise in image stabilization to find evidence in the shaky video that will help indict the police officer. But in the glimmer of a shiny object, he finds something that could potentially help the man he set out to incriminate. Will he take things a step further and leave the comfort and safety of his apartment to actually get involved? What are the implications of being seen as helping a man vilified in the court of public opinion? Set against the bigger narrative of the growing Black Lives Matter movement, the film's micro-narrative profiles Daniel's fascinating journey down the rabbit hole and follows his moral quandary to South Carolina. With surprising access, the film offers a rare glimpse behind the scenes of a justice system that allows this scenario to keep replaying itself over and over again. *Frame 394* questions our ideas of truth and justice in a modern viral media landscape—one that often features surface-level coverage and heavily polarized opinions; a place where ideas—even wrong ones—can spread like wildfire.

Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/shortdocs/shorts/frame-394>

The Filmmaker

Rich Williamson graduated from Ryerson University in 2008, focusing on cinematography and editing. He has since worked as a freelancer, shooting and cutting films, corporate videos, trailers and TV programs for well-known brands and companies, as well as fellow independent filmmakers. As a director, his work blends the best of fiction and documentary technique together with a focus on social-issue subjects. His award-winning short films, including *The Sugar Bowl* (2011), *Joe* (2012) and *Unsinkable* (2012), have screened at festivals worldwide including the DC Shorts, LA Shorts, Atlanta and Aljazeera film festivals. *The Sugar Bowl* won Best Film and Best Documentary at the 2013 Aesthetica Film Festival, the WIFT Award at the 2011 Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival, and was nominated for Aljazeera's Gold Award in 2013. *The Sugar Bowl* and *Joe* were recently broadcast across the United States and Europe on ShortsTV and were released on iTunes. Williamson participated in the Reykjavik International Film Festival's 2013 Talent Lab and recently completed the Canadian Film Centre's Cineplex Entertainment Film Program.

Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/shortdocs/filmmakers/>

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VIEWING THE FILM WITH STUDENTS

The following three sub-sections are intended to provide you with a range of Pre-Viewing, Viewing and Post-Viewing activities. They are followed by a set of questions based upon the film's larger thematic domains, some follow-up questions and quotations, sample curricular outcomes and a page of weblinks for further investigation.

Pre-Viewing Activities

Have students create a KWL chart for some or all of the following terms: (a) Reddit, (b) gif, (c) image stabilization, (d) expert witness, (e) bystander, (f) solitary confinement, (g) civil war and (h) Black Lives Matter. Students can add to this chart after they watch the film.

Have an informal class discussion on how students access and share news and media online. What sources do they consider credible and reputable?

Have students discuss characteristics and stereotypes of police officers. Using Google Image Search or another online image search engine, have students look up the word "police." How do the results compare or contrast with their initial impressions and discussion? Have student return to their initial impressions of police officers after viewing the film.

Set a purpose for viewing by having a discussion about one or more of the questions or quotations from the Extension Activities section of this guide. Have students share the statement and what they think or believe about it with the class.

Viewing Activities

Have students keep track of any words, terms or ideas they don't understand. After viewing the film, have students look up the definitions.

Have students make notes on the different types of footage and techniques that are used throughout the documentary. Students can consider the purpose and effectiveness of the footage and techniques in their notes.

Pause the film at various points. Have students discuss or record their immediate reactions, and then discuss as a class in a Post-Viewing Activity.

Have students jot down two to three ideas for discussion, or questions that the film raises in their minds. As an Extension and/or Post-Viewing Activity, students can enter their questions into an online response or polling system and can vote on the questions or issues they would like to explore in further detail. Encourage students to use multiple levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Post-Viewing Activities

As an extension to what they learned about Walter Scott, students can extend their understanding and investigate the police-related shooting deaths of individuals such as Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Laquan McDonald, Sammy Yatim and Keith Scott. What happened in these cases, and what were the outcomes? Have students present their findings. You may wish to guide students with specific graphics and interactive resources from the *Washington Post* (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/police-shootings-2016/>) or the story "Looking for Accountability in Police-Involved Deaths of Blacks" in *The New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com/> Type the title of the article into the search function of the website).

The film confronts issues of implicit and explicit bias. Have students complete the Implicit Association Test from Project Implicit (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit>) and reflect on their results in a one-page journal response. Students will not have to register to use the website.

Have students explore a page on Daniel Voshart's website (<http://voshart.com/stabilized>) that is dedicated to the Walter Scott shooting. The page includes the original video, Voshart's initial perceptions of and reactions to the video, a GIF timeline, enhanced audio of the shooting, notes on his personal biases and links to additional information on the shooting.

At one point in the film, Daniel Voshart says, "I feel bad because I'm almost building a case for someone I initially didn't like. It is entirely possible that the officer didn't see the Taser being thrown. The Supreme Court states that if you feel threatened for your life, you can shoot to kill." In 2016, 61 American police officers were shot while on the line of duty. Have students read about the deaths of these officers (<http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/14/us/police-officers-fatal-shooting-line-duty-nationwide/>) and consider whether or not the film addresses this perspective.

Have students watch the August 2015 clip "What Happens to Americans who Film Police Violence" where Feidin Santana reflects on his recording of Walter Scott's death, which led to the arrest of Michael Slager (<https://www.theguardian.com/> Type the title of the clip into the search function of the website). Students can also read the accompanying article. What were the effects of the shooting on Santana, and how have police responded to instances of "vigilante recording"? Students may wish to conduct additional research into Santana's involvement in Slager's trial.

On the board, write down "I read it on the Internet" and "I heard it on the news." Ask students if they have ever said these phrases and discuss with references to the film and real life. Next, discuss how students can verify whether or not news is accurate, especially in the context of social media, the 24-hour news cycle and websites such as Reddit. As an extension, have students create a news evaluation tool.

While Daniel Voshart is speaking with Michael Slager and Andrew Savage, he says that he is not opposed to switching sides. Savage laughs and says, "The TSA might not be his biggest problem if he says that again." What did Savage mean by this statement? Have students reflect on this in pairs, and then discuss as a class.

Show the students their quotations from the Pre-Viewing Activity and see if their opinions were changed, altered or enhanced by the film.

Have students participate in a Socratic discussion on the film. Guidelines for Socratic discussions can be found here: <http://www.authenticeducation.org/documents/WhatSeminar04.pdf>

Have students complete an exit note. The exit note should contain one idea that demonstrates what they learned from the film, as well as one question that they still have about the topic.

WEBSITES AND ONLINE RESOURCES

Additional Resources

Black Lives Matter: This organization campaigns against systemic violence directed at black people. The website includes information about the organization, how individuals can get involved and up-to-date social media postings.
<http://blacklivesmatter.com>

CBC: This resource, called "Reddit Crime Solvers Intervene in Legal Cases," looks into Reddit "websleuths" who have become involved in trying to solve crimes offline.
<http://www.cbc.ca/> Type the name of the resource into the search function of the website.

NPR: In this resource from December 2016, called "Why Police Shooting Trials Put Juries in a Bind," Seth Stoughton discusses the underlying issues and biases that juries face when dealing with shootings that involve police officers.
<http://www.npr.org/> Type the name of the article into the search function of the website.

Reddit: As featured in the film, Reddit proclaims itself to be the "front page of the Internet." Mashable has more writing on Reddit.
<http://www.Reddit.com>
<http://mashable.com/category/Reddit/>

The Guardian: This resource includes updated information on the Walter Scott shooting and the trial of Michael Slager.
<https://www.theguardian.com/> Type "Walter Scott shooting" into the search function of the website and select "Walter Scott shooting | US news | The Guardian" from the search results.

The Marshall Project: The Marshall Project is a "nonprofit news organization covering the US criminal justice system." The website provides a curated and up-to-date collection of links and resources on several topics from around the web, including policing and race.
<https://www.themarshallproject.org/> Click on the dropdown menu, then Policing or Race.

Toronto Life: In this article from April 2015, Desmond Cole reflects on his 50+ experiences of being stopped, questioned and carded by the Toronto police.
<http://torontolife.com/> Type "Desmond Cole the skin I'm in" into the search function of the website.

United States Department of Justice: This website includes the report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, an implementation guide and a report progress in the field to reduce crime through community-based partnerships.
<https://cops.usdoj.gov/policingtaskforce>

Vanity Fair: This resource, titled "What the Data Really Says About Police and Racial Bias," from July 2016 presents links and key findings from 18 academic studies, legal rulings and media investigations into police officers and racial bias.
<http://www.vanityfair.com/> Type the name of the article into the search function of the website.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Questions for Pre-Viewing or Post-Viewing Activities

What did the filmmakers decide to capture on film? Are there any scenes that stand out, and why? What might have been left out of the film, and why?

What did you know about the shooting of Walter Scott before watching the film? What did you learn as a result of watching the film?

How did you feel about the shooting at the beginning of the film? Did your perceptions of the shooting change throughout the film at all?

What are the different issues and themes that surface in this film?

How are issues of race and class presented in the film?

How does the film deal with issues of freedom, equality, human dignity and individual and collective rights and responsibilities?

How are police officers portrayed in the film?

When are police officers supposed to use lethal force?

What are your perceptions of police officers at different points in the film?

How do the criminal justice systems in the United States and Canada respond to police-related shooting deaths?

Are there other ways that the documentary could have been filmed and edited? How would this change the way you interpreted the film?

At one point in the film, Andrew Savage says, "Those statements, 'White man kills unarmed black man after traffic stop.' That's true, but that's not a true narrative. That's a false narrative." He also goes on to say, "the American narrative of police misconduct, where the default position, the presumptive decision, is that if a white cop shoots a black man, it's unlawful." What does he mean by this? How are narratives (especially around racial bias and policing) created and perpetuated within the media?

QUOTATIONS FROM THE FILM TO EXPLORE

1. *"He needs to know that it wasn't an animal that he killed. That was my son."* Walter's mother
2. *"The New York Times reported that an object was planted beside the body. I just wanted to know—was it a Taser, or was it not a Taser? I can figure this out pretty quickly. Stabilize the footage, post it to Reddit, and shit goes bonkers. It became the most commented gif ever posted to Reddit.... I knew there was important information in all the shakiness."* Daniel Voshart
3. *"I realized that I pretty much fueled hatred. I didn't like this guy, but now people want death on him. I felt pretty guilty."* Daniel Voshart
4. *"Reddit was great for perpetuating the 'This cop is evil' story, and it was awful for telling the more nuanced story. You want to be able to say, this person is evil, this person is not evil. This is not that—this is real life. Someone is kind of lying, kind of not lying. You have someone running because it makes sense to run, but it's against the law. It's a mess."* Daniel Voshart
5. *"Money influences people. I've got to keep this pure, academic, and leave money out of it. I don't want that leveled against me.... The truth is the foundation of everything."* Daniel Voshart
6. *"Everybody in America is entitled to the respect and the same avocation of the law. We believe that firmly. That's why we're in this case. Not because we like Slager. We saw that a fellow lawyer abandoned his client in the time of greatest need. We then accepted this case. We're not getting paid one penny."* Andrew Savage
7. *"Since April 7, he's been held in solitary confinement.... Within 30 days of his arrest, he had his only child, a little boy, Isaac. Conversation with him today about his wife is that she's been hospitalized recently. The majority of it was the stress of the situation. We get to know the family, we get to know all of the circumstances of their life, other than this one event. You just have a different perspective."* Andrew Savage
8. *"I don't like the terminology of 'switching sides' because I'm not on a side. I don't want to befriend a murderer."* Daniel Voshart
9. *"The fact that Michael Slager pulled his trigger eight times, and the holes in the back of Walter Scott, those are the things that can't be interpreted."* Muhiyidin D'Baha
10. *"Had this been almost any European country, Walter Scott would not have, in the back of his mind, the threat of going to jail while being pulled over. The system in Europe is that you don't have someone going to jail for six months, building up child support, leaving, finding out your job is lost and given to someone else, then you're poor and then you have court fees. People have reported that he was only earning \$10,000 a year. How do you pay child support earning \$10,000 a year? It's not that he doesn't want to pay it—it's that he can't pay it. And then if he gets pulled over, he's going to jail. That isn't a system that works."* Daniel Voshart
11. *"If the jury does take the officer's side, there's certainly going to be this perception that justice doesn't exist. It's a joke. If you've got a good enough lawyer, if you're a cop, there's no such thing as justice."* Daniel Voshart
12. *"We already know the truth. We know that this has been happening for 400 years.... This system of justice has never been just to us. This is not getting better. More people know, but it's not getting better."* Muhiyidin D'Baha
13. *"We are losing sight of the larger sociological and historical moment that we're witnessing as a country."* Charles Blow

CULMINATING ACTIVITY: REFLECTION ON A BROKEN SYSTEM

"Had this been almost any European country, Walter Scott would not have, in the back of his mind, the threat of going to jail while being pulled over. The system in Europe is that you don't have someone going to jail for six months, building up child support, leaving, finding out your job is lost and given to someone else, then you're poor and then you have court fees. People have reported that he was only earning \$10,000 a year. How do you pay child support earning \$10,000 a year? It's not that he doesn't want to pay it—it's that he can't pay it. And then if he gets pulled over, he's going to jail. That isn't a system that works." Daniel Voshart

Frame 394 explores some of the sociological and historical issues involved in incidents between police officers and citizens. In a reflection of between 250 and 500 words, reflect on one or more of the issues that surfaced in the film, with references to the film and current and/or historical events. You may also wish to consider what has been done or what can be done to combat the issues.

ACTIVITY RUBRIC: REFLECTION ON A BROKEN SYSTEM

Knowledge/Understanding

Concepts	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Clear understanding of issue(s)	The reflection demonstrates a limited understanding of the selected issue(s)	The reflection demonstrates a moderate understanding of the selected issue(s)	The reflection demonstrates a considerable understanding of the selected issue(s)	The reflection demonstrates an excellent understanding of the selected issue(s)	/5

Thinking/Inquiry

Research	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Ability to research, synthesize and organize additional resources	The student demonstrates a limited ability to research, synthesize and organize additional resources	The student demonstrates a moderate ability to research, synthesize and organize additional resources	The student demonstrates a considerable ability to research, synthesize and organize additional resources	The student demonstrates an outstanding ability to research, synthesize and organize additional resources	/5

Application

Report	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Written communication	Communicates in writing with limited effectiveness	Communicates in writing with some effectiveness	Communicates in writing with considerable effectiveness	Communicates in writing with a high degree of effectiveness	/5

Communication

Debate	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Organization of ideas	The reflection contains numerous grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	The reflection contains some grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	The reflection is largely free of grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	The reflection is free of grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors	/5

Comments:

Total: ____ /20 = ____ /100

EXAMPLES OF CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

COURSE	OVERALL EXPECTATIONS
Grade 9-12 English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate, gather and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience. • demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts. • identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning.
Grade 11 Media Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts. • deconstruct a variety of types of media texts, identifying the codes, conventions and techniques used and explaining how they create meaning.
Grade 11 Media Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze, through examination and reflection, their initial response to media art works, using various strategies and modes of communication. • identify and explain the messages in and meanings of media texts. • describe the characteristics of particular media genres and forms, and explain how they help to convey meaning and influence the audience.
Grade 11 Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the structures and key roles and processes of the Canadian criminal justice system and explain key interrelationships among them. • assess the ability of the Canadian criminal justice system to provide appropriate and even-handed justice to people living in Canada.
Grade 10 Civics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze responses, at the local, national and international levels, to civic issues that involve multiple perspectives and differing civic purposes. • demonstrate an understanding of the beliefs and values underlying democratic citizenship and explain how they guide citizens' actions.
Grade 11 Politics in Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues of political importance in various communities and ways to address them. • demonstrate an understanding of factors that facilitate and present challenges to democratic political change. • identify and analyze a political issue, with the goal of developing a personal plan of action to address this issue.
Grade 12 Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events and developments of national and international political importance. • demonstrate an understanding of various political ideologies, theories and concepts, and analyze their relevance to Canadian and international politics. • analyze how social, economic and geographic factors influence contemporary politics in and relations between various countries around the world. • analyze the role of civic awareness and responsibility among citizens and non-governmental stakeholders in the national and international community.
Grade 11 Equity, Diversity and Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore topics related to equity, diversity and/or social justice, and formulate questions to guide their research. • create research plans, and locate and select information relevant to their chosen topics, using appropriate social science research and inquiry methods. • assess, record, analyze and synthesize information gathered through research and inquiry. • demonstrate an understanding of a range of historical and contemporary Canadian equity and social justice issues. • demonstrate an understanding of how social activism can be used to support equity and social justice objectives.

Grade 12 Equity and Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore topics related to equity, diversity and/or social justice, and formulate questions to guide their research. • assess, record, analyze and synthesize information gathered through research and inquiry. • communicate the results of their research and inquiry clearly and effectively, and reflect on and evaluate their research, inquiry and communication skills. • demonstrate an understanding of a range of perspectives on and approaches to equity and social justice issues, and of factors that affect inequity and social injustice. • analyze, in historical and contemporary contexts, the dynamics of power relations and privilege as well as various factors that contribute to power or marginalization. • evaluate the contributions of individuals and groups and/or movements identified with specific aspects of the struggle for equity and social justice.
Grade 11 Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology and Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a psychological perspective to explain how diverse factors influence and shape human mental processes and behaviour. • use a sociological perspective to explain how diverse factors influence and shape individual and group social behaviour.
Grade 12 World Issues: A Geographic Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze relationships between demographic and political factors and quality of life in various countries and regions.
Grade 12 World Geography: Urban Patterns and Population Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze interrelationships between social conditions, access to natural resources, government policies and economic disparities within and between countries or regions. • analyze global and regional population trends, and assess their impacts on society, the economy and the ability of societies to meet basic human needs. • analyze impacts of a variety of factors on human rights and quality of life in selected countries.
Grade 12 World History since the 15 th Century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze the significance of various social, economic and political policies, developments and ideas in various regions of the world since 1900. • analyze interactions between various groups since 1900 and how key individuals and social, economic and political forces have affected those interactions. • analyze the development of the rights, identity and heritage of different groups around the world since 1900.
Grade 11 American History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe various social, economic and political events, trends and developments in the United States since 1945, and analyze their key causes and consequences. • analyze how various events and developments have affected specific groups in the United States, and relations between the United States and other countries since 1945. • analyze how various groups, trends and cultural developments have affected identity, citizenship and heritage in the United States since 1945.
Grade 11 Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain the foundational concepts of criminal law and their legal significance. • assess the ability of the Canadian criminal justice system to provide appropriate and even-handed justice to people living in Canada. • analyze how various factors have influenced the development of Canadian criminal law.
Grade 12 Challenge and Change in Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of the causes and effects of social change. • demonstrate an understanding of how forces influence and shape social patterns and trends. • demonstrate an understanding of how various social structures and conditions support or limit global inequalities.
Grade 12 Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of the main questions in ethics, and of the positions of major philosophers and schools of philosophy with respect to some of these questions. • demonstrate an understanding of connections between ethics and other areas of philosophy, other subject areas and various aspects of society, including everyday life.

The Overall Expectations listed above are from the *Ontario Curriculum*. Complete course descriptions, including all Overall and Specific Expectations can be found at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/curriculum.html>