**FRONTLINE and Retro Report Present “American Reckoning”**

*The latest installment of FRONTLINE’s multiplatform* Un(re)solved *initiative, the film offers an extraordinary look at the civil rights era through rare archival footage and the story of the murder of a local NAACP leader in Natchez, Mississippi****American Reckoning***Tue., Feb. 15, 2022  
Streaming at 7/6c at pbs.org/frontline & in the PBS Video App  
Airing at 10/9c on PBS and on YouTube  
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Emmett Till, James Chaney, Medgar Evers, and four little girls from Birmingham — these are some of the well-known stories of racially-motivated violence from the civil rights era. But the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act — signed into law in 2008 — lifted the veil on more than 150 other victims for whom there still has been no justice.  
  
Now, in collaboration with Retro Report, FRONTLINE (PBS) presents ***American Reckoning***: an extraordinary look at the civil rights era - the violence and resistance - through rare footage filmed more than 50-years ago in Natchez, Mississippi, and the still-unresolved killing of local NAACP leader Wharlest Jackson.  
  
From acclaimed directors and producers [Brad Lichtenstein](https://www.371productions.com/staff/brad) (*When Claude Got Shot*, *Messwood*) and [Yoruba Richen](https://www.journalism.cuny.edu/faculty/yoruba-richen/) (*The Killing of Breonna Taylor*, *The Sit In: Harry Belafonte Hosts the Tonight Show*) *American Reckoning* examines Black opposition to racist violence in Mississippi,  spotlighting a little-known armed resistance group called the Deacons for Defense and Justice, woven alongside the Jackson family's decades-long search for justice amid the ongoing federal effort to investigate civil rights era cold cases.  
  
Drawing on intimate, archival film footage of the civil rights era — much of it never-before broadcast — from filmmakers Ed Pincus and David Neuman and made available through the Amistad Research Center, *American Reckoning* offers a window into an untold story of a Black-led liberation and self-defense movement in Natchez, as well as the funeral of Wharlest Jackson Sr. and its aftermath.   
  
“We are at a crucial moment in our country where the stories of white terrorism and Black resistance need to be unearthed in order to truly reckon with our political situation today,” says Richen. “I am so proud to be a part of this effort to amplify the story of Wharlest Jackson Sr. and his family’s efforts to find the truth about his murder, which reveals a much larger narrative about how the U.S has failed to deliver justice to the Black families of the men and women who were victims of racial violence during the civil rights era.”  
  
“It is an honor to be able to share Wharlest Jackson, Sr’s story. He is one of the many unknown but crucial ‘foot soldiers’ who made the civil rights movement a success,” says Lichtenstein. “I’m so grateful that the Jackson family has trusted us with their family’s story — a tough one to share and one that reveals the depths of white denial about our nation’s racist violence, as resonant and urgent today as it was 55 years ago.”  
  
Combining verité footage from 1965 and 1967, profound interviews, extensive reporting, and rich archival material from the time of Jackson’s death, the documentary feature also taps into the groundbreaking reporting of the *Concordia Sentinel* journalist Stanley Nelson, who investigated allegations of the involvement of a Ku Klux Klan offshoot, known as the Silver Dollar Group, in Jackson’s murder.  *American Reckoning* is the latest component of FRONTLINE’s [*Un(re)solved*](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/unresolved/) initiative — which also includes a [web-based interactive experience](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/unresolved/interactive) and [traveling augmented-reality installation](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/unresolved/installation) creatively directed by Ado Ato’s Tamara Shogaolu, and a [podcast series](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/unresolved/podcast) hosted by podcast producer James Edwards. *Un(re)solved* is executive produced by award-winning filmmakers [Dawn Porter](https://www.trilogy-films.com/dawn-porter) (John Lewis: Good Trouble, Gideon’s Army) and [Raney Aronson-Rath](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/about-us/executive-producer-raney-aronson-rath/) (Executive Producer, FRONTLINE). The film is supported by [Chasing the Dream](http://pbs.org/chasingthedream), a public media initiative from The WNET Group that examines poverty, justice and economic opportunity in America.

“To understand the present, we must look to the past — and *American Reckoning* does that in a unique way, complementing the investigative reporting and storytelling seen in our larger *Un(re)solved* initiative and shining a light on America’s history of racial violence,” says Raney Aronson-Rath, executive producer of FRONTLINE. “We are grateful to the Amistad Research Center for making this remarkable footage come to life again, to Yoruba and Brad and Dawn for helping us investigate this critical story, and to Retro Report for their editorial partnership.”  
  
To support the premiere of *American Reckoning*, FRONTLINE will also be hosting a curated collection of [in-person and virtual events](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/unresolved/events). Subscribe to FRONTLINE's newsletter for additional details about future *American Reckoning*-related events, including where to experience in-person the [award-winning AI art installation](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/unresolved/installation), and learn more on the *Un(re)solved* [website](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/unresolved/).  
  
***American Reckoning*** premieres on FRONTLINE (PBS) on Tuesday, February 15 at 10/9c. The documentary is the latest component in FRONTLINE’s ongoing [*Un(re)solved*](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/announcement/frontline-announces-unresolved-unprecedented-multi-platform-investigation-civil-rights-era-cold-case-murders-till-act/) project — an unprecedented, multiplatform investigation of civil rights era cold case murders which includes a web interactive experience; podcast mini-series; augmented-reality installation that can tour schools, libraries, and museums; a companion educational curriculum; and events.  
  
**Credits***American Reckoning* is a FRONTLINE Production with 371 Productions in association with Retro Report. The producers, writers, and directors are Brad Lichtenstein and Yoruba Richen. The executive producer for Retro Report is Kyra Darnton. The executive producers for FRONTLINE’s [*Un(re)solved*](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/unresolved/) initiative are Dawn Porter and Raney Aronson-Rath. The executive producer of FRONTLINE is Raney Aronson-Rath.  
  
**About FRONTLINE**FRONTLINE, U.S. television’s longest running investigative documentary series, explores the issues of our times through powerful storytelling. FRONTLINE has won every major journalism and broadcasting award, including 100 Emmy Awards and 26 Peabody Awards. Visit [pbs.org/frontline](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/) and follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/frontlinepbs), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/frontline), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/frontlinepbs/), and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3ScyryU9Oy9Wse3a8OAmYQ) to learn more. FRONTLINE is produced by GBH in Boston and is broadcast nationwide on PBS. Funding for FRONTLINE is provided through the support of PBS viewers and by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Additional funding is provided by the Abrams Foundation; the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; Park Foundation; and the FRONTLINE Journalism Fund with major support from Jon and Jo Ann Hagler on behalf of the Jon L. Hagler Foundation, and additional support from Koo and Patricia Yuen. Funding for American Reckoning is provided by PBS; the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; the Jonathan Logan Family Foundation; the Sundance Institute; the Fetzer Institute; the Economic Hardship Reporting Project, and The WNET Group’s Chasing the Dream, a public media initiative reporting on poverty, justice, and economic opportunity in America, with major funding by The JPB Foundation and additional funding from The Peter G. Peterson and Joan Ganz Cooney Fund and Sue and Edgar Wachenheim, III.  
  
**About Retro Report**Retro Report is a nonprofit news organization dedicated to injecting historical context into the news cycle. Using investigative reporting and narrative storytelling, our 250 short documentaries have reached tens of millions of viewers through multiple distribution channels, including partnerships with The New York Times, PBS, VICE, The New Yorker and many others. We recently launched Retro Report in the Classroom to help teachers bring history to life at a time when an understanding of American history and civic literacy are diminished.  
  
**About The WNET Group**[The WNET Group](http://wnet.org/) creates inspiring media content and meaningful experiences for diverse audiences nationwide. It is the community-supported home of New York’s [THIRTEEN](http://thirteen.org/) – America’s flagship PBS station – [WLIW21](http://wliw.org/), THIRTEEN PBSKids, WLIW World and Create; [NJ PBS](https://www.mynjpbs.org/), New Jersey’s statewide public television network; Long Island’s only NPR station WLIW-FM; [ALL ARTS](http://allarts.org/), the arts and culture media provider; and newsroom [NJ Spotlight News](https://www.njspotlightnews.org/). Through these channels and streaming platforms, The WNET Group brings arts, culture, education, news, documentary, entertainment and DIY programming to more than five million viewers each month. The WNET Group’s award-winning productions include signature PBS series Nature, Great Performances, American Masters, PBS NewsHour Weekend and Amanpour and Company and trusted local news programs MetroFocus and NJ Spotlight News with Briana Vannozzi. Inspiring curiosity and nurturing dreams, The WNET Group’s award-winning Kids’ Media and Education team produces the PBS KIDS series Cyberchase, interactive Mission US history games, and resources for families, teachers and caregivers. A leading nonprofit public media producer for nearly 60 years, The WNET Group presents and distributes content that fosters lifelong learning, including multiplatform initiatives addressing poverty, jobs, economic opportunity, social justice, understanding and the environment. Through Passport, station members can stream new and archival programming anytime, anywhere. The WNET Group represents the best in public media. Join us.     
  
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