

STOP
IS THE FIRST FEATURE-LENGTH TREATMENT OF
THE STOP & FRISK CONTROVERSY
THAT HAS DIVIDED NEW YORK CITY FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS

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PRESS RELEASE



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“This case is going to go down in the history books, and kids will be reading about it!”

Jumaane Williams

New York City Councilman, District 45

For the past several years, stop & frisk in New York City has been front-page news. It has stirred passions, sown division, inspired social activism, and led to a monumental change in New York City’s understanding of policing and its vision of itself. The central catalyst for this change was *Floyd et al. v. the City of New York et al. (Floyd)*, a class-action lawsuit brought by the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) in 2008. The lawsuit alleged racial bias in the pattern and practice of stop & frisks conducted by the New York City Police Department (NYPD). It culminated in Federal Judge Scheindlin’s landmark ruling that the NYPD’s application of stop & frisk was unconstitutional. In January, 2014, Mayor Bill De Blasio announced that the city would drop its appeal to the ruling.

The feature length documentary STOP follows three years in the life of David Ourlicht, one of the four named plaintiffs in *Floyd*. By interweaving the story of David's family with the action around the trial, STOP places the stop & frisk controversy in the context of a long history of civil rights. From David's Jewish grandfather, who describes being arrested in Greenwich Village on his first date with David's grandmother, an African-American woman, to David's biracial father, Italian-American mother, and mixed race sister, the Ourlicht family offers a powerful backdrop to the flashpoint issue of stop & frisk. The film asks: Must we trade safety for civil rights?

From interviews with the lead attorneys bringing the case, to police officers who defend the practice, to the law professor who wrote the expert report, to coverage of Mayor Bloomberg and Police Chief Ray Kelly, STOP paints a picture of a city divided. Then the trial starts. From the rallies, to the press conferences, to the day David testifies, to closing statements and CCR's celebratory party, STOP offers a behind the scenes look at the trial, and gives a history of an era of intense political battles that the City of New York will never forget.

Although the trial is over, stop & frisk is very much alive today. The remedies ordered by Judge Scheindlin have yet to commence, and New York has returned to a policy of “No Tolerance” policing. In wake of Michael Brown’s death in Ferguson, Missouri, and the homicide of Eric Garner by the NYPD on Staten Island, the nation continues to ask itself the questions posed by the film: How can we balance safety against civil rights? How entrenched is racial profiling in law enforcement? When will the police violence ever stop?

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Press

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Indiewire

“One of the most interesting documentaries about New York City at the festival this year is ‘STOP,’ Spencer Wolff’s overview of the recent stop-and-frisk law controversy that sparked numerous debates throughout the city and country about the ongoing problem of racial profiling and police brutality.”

“It’s an honest portrait of the city that stands as the example of that proverbial American melting pot - diverse and divided all at once.”

Zeba Blay

DOC NYC Reviews: 'Stop,' 'Capturing Grace,' and 'Some Kind of Spark' (An NYC-Set Trio)

<http://blogs.indiewire.com/shadowandact/doc-nyc-reviews-stop-capturing-grace-and-some-kind-of-spark-an-nyc-set-trio-20141120>

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VICE

*“In his latest documentary, **STOP**, Spencer Wolff narrates the trial that took New York by storm, erupting into protests that pit community groups of all races against the cops and City Hall. “One for the history books,” as City Councilman Jumaane Williams shouts at one demonstration. “Our kids will be reading about this!” It was a challenge that sought to reform the great Greek tragedy of New York law enforcement and civil rights: stop-and-frisk.”*

“Wolff compares this polarization of realities to a miniature version of apartheid-era South Africa. But the documentary, which premiered Tuesday night at the IFC Center as a part of the DOC NYC festival, digs at something deeper.”

John Surico

Is New York's Stop-and-Frisk Era Ending?

<http://www.vice.com/read/is-the-stop-and-frisk-era-over-in-new-york-1120>

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Columbia Daily Spectator

“Documentary film is a medium for social advocacy and truth-seeking,” Wolff said. “The law makes claims, but film embodies truth.”

Sophia Tepler

Stop and Watch

<http://columbiaspectator.com/arts-and-entertainment/2014/11/11/doc-nyc-features-columbia-alumni-films>



Director's Statement

"I feel like we're being patrolled instead of protected, like they want us to stay locked inside of our homes."

Olavé

Brotherhood SisterSol

Unlike the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who have been stopped over the last decade, I came to the issue of policing in NYC via a newspaper article. In *A Few Blocks, 4 Years, 52,000 Police Stops* (2009), *New York Times* reporter Ray Rivera revealed that thousands upon thousands of fellow New Yorkers were being routinely stopped, interrogated, and often roughed up by the police.

It seemed like a throwback to another era. Like stories I had heard from my family about the civil rights movement, or even the rough days of the 1990s, when Mayor Giuliani's police force aggressively swept through the city.

But this was the shiny safe, new Bloomberg New York. I simply couldn't understand why the police were making nearly 700,000 stops a year.

I called up Ray Rivera, and he put me in contact with the Center for Constitutional Rights. In 2008, they had initiated a lawsuit challenging what they considered the NYPD's disproportionate and indiscriminate stops. As I delved deeper into the police

policy I discovered that these stops were happening all over the city, and they were increasing, not decreasing, as the city got safer.

The people targeted by the police hated the stops. As a lawyer I was dubious about their legality. As a native New Yorker, I was skeptical about their place in a city as diverse as our own. But a cause is not a film.

Then I met the Ourlichts. Their family history was a revelation. It brought together New York City's past and present, its many neighborhoods, its struggles with stop and civil rights, its contest over *Floyd* and its fear of criminality. The Ourlichts held up a mirror to our city and helped us look back at ourselves.

Then I knew this wasn't merely a cause. It was a film that had to be made.

Spencer Wolff, Director/Producer of STOP

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Official Festival Link: <http://www.docnyc.net/film/stop/>

Website: www.stopthefilm.org

Contact: press@stopthefilm.org



Key Personnel

Director/Producer

Spencer Wolff

Spencer Wolff is a former Teaching Fellow in the Department of Film Studies at Yale University and a member of the New York Bar. He holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Yale University, a Masters in law from the Sorbonne, a J.D. from Columbia Law School, and a bachelor's degree from Harvard College.

He also blogs on issues of race and policing for the *Huffington Post* (<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/spencer-wolff/>). He has written, directed and produced two short films (*Stigma* 2012, *Paris Trip* 2010), and has worked on several short and feature films.

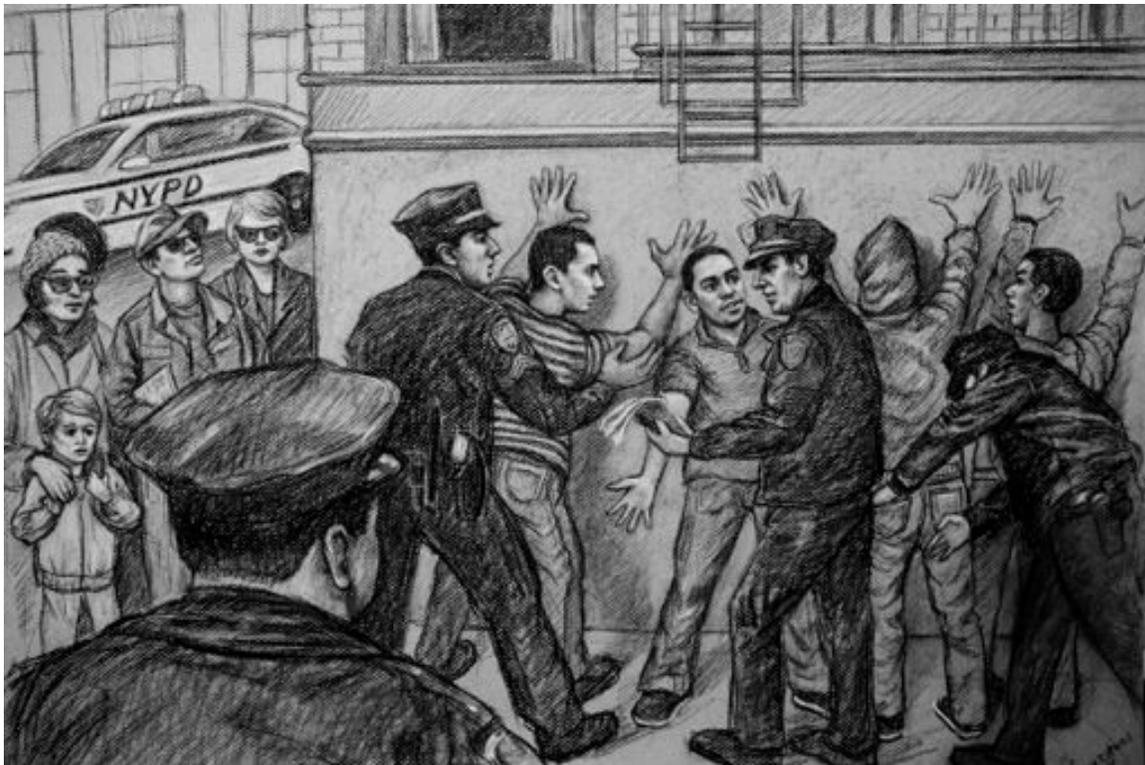
Directors of Photography

Zev Starr-Tambor

Zev Starr-Tambor is a cinematographer and photographer. www.starr-tambor.com

Paul de Luna

Paul de Luna is a cinematographer represented by *Seen Artists*. www.pauldeluna.com



Illustrator

Vicki Khuzami

Vicki Khuzami was born in [Brooklyn, New York](#) and is an American [illustrator](#), [muralist](#) and [set designer](#). She has illustrated book covers, designed holiday store windows and painted murals at the United States capitol, for corporations and private individuals. Khuzami began working in New York City as a [restorer](#) of 19th-century paintings.[3] After a couple of years, she began illustrating book covers for [Dell Publishing](#), [Simon and Schuster](#) and others. She then began working at Evergreene Painting Studios,[3] and in 1993, was in the group of artists who created new murals for the [Capitol Building](#) in Washington, D.C. and she helped to research, design and create many of the historical scenes on the ceiling of the western corridor of the [U.S. House of Representatives](#).[3]

Khuzami opened her own studio in 1995. She has produced murals for the [New York Botanical Garden](#), [Disneyland Tokyo](#), [Bloomingdale's](#), the [National Park Service](#), [Kirin Brewery Company](#) and for author [Tom Robbins](#). [2][3] In 1999, she was featured painting a mural on [Home and Garden Television](#) in an episode of "Modern Masters".

<http://www.khuzamistudio.com>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vicki_Khuzami

Funders

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<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/746481094/stop>