



**70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green
To Premiere on AMERICA REFRAMED
A film by Ronit Bezalel**

Tuesday, February 21, 2017 at 8 p.m. on WORLD Channel

“Ronit Bezalel’s thought-provoking documentary, **70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green**, is a startling case study into the making and destruction of one of Chicago’s most infamous public housing projects.” – Tony Binns, *Rolling Out*

January 7, 2017 – (New York, NY) – Ronit Bezalel’s award-winning documentary **70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green** will have its U.S. television premiere **Tuesday, February 21, 2017 at 8 p.m.** on WORLD Channel ([check local listings](#)), as part of the new season of public media’s **AMERICA REFRAMED**. The documentary series is dedicated to highlighting intimate stories by emerging and veteran filmmakers chronicling an ever-changing America. The broadcast will be followed by free streaming for audiences across the U.S. at www.worldchannel.org/america-reframed, starting on February 22nd.

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70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green explores the effects of Chicago’s 1.5 billion dollar Plan for Transformation, an order requiring the demolition of the city’s public housing high rises, and the building of mixed-income condominiums. The film chronicles the demolitions at the Cabrini Green Homes, a development erected from 1942-1962 as a housing solution for the working poor. Located a mile from Chicago’s world-famous lakefront, the neighborhoods adjacent to Cabrini Green are some of the most conspicuous and symbolic reminders of income inequality in the city. Among Cabrini locals, this sharp dividing line is familiarly expressed as a distinction between the “gold coast” and the “soul coast.”

Filmed over two-decades, **70 Acres in Chicago** is a remarkable 20-year look at the Cabrini Green redevelopment process, starting in the mid-’90’s as the demolitions begin. Concerns quickly arise over the implementation of the Plan for Transformation and the lack of input afforded to existing residents. The community fights back; they file lawsuits, march and rally. Yet many families wonder if the new housing will accommodate the old residents, or if they will be forced to find affordable housing elsewhere.



Community tension and uncertainty are depicted in town halls and visits from local representatives. The dialogues encapsulate many of the questions with no easy answers brought about by urban renewal. Against this backdrop, the film introduces several longtime residents: Deidre Brewster, Mark Pratt and Raymond McDonald, whose stories over the coming years remain in focus.

The film also sheds light on the city's history of racial segregation, which prevents the mobility of Black families, the historical Great Migration of African Americans from the south moving north, and the demolition of the area's previous community, "Little Sicily," which was razed to build Cabrini Green.

Complex issues emerge as communities previously on opposite sides of the proverbial tracks begin to occupy the same buildings. While some new residents show a willingness to break down old barriers, painful reminders of double standards and privilege gaps remain.

More than a specific portrait of a single housing development, **70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green** illuminates the layers of socio-economic forces and the difficult questions behind urban redevelopment and gentrification taking place in cities throughout the United States today.

"Should the high-rises have been demolished? This film doesn't provide easy answers," Ronit Bezalet, filmmaker of *70 Acres in Chicago* said. "Instead, we want viewers to generate their own discussions on ways society can address affordable housing and poverty issues. We want to educate viewers on the history; that especially in Chicago, but also throughout the country, low-income people of color have constantly been moved out of the city center."

70 Acres in Chicago is a sequel to Bezalet's critically acclaimed *Voices of Cabrini: Remaking Chicago's Public Housing* (1999), a documentary chronicling the initial redevelopment of Cabrini Green from the perspective of residents, community activists, and local business owners. *Voices of Cabrini* was described by *Newsweek* as a "touchstone in the debate over public housing." Chicago film veteran Judy Hoffman is the Executive Producer of both documentaries.

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Media Contact

Journalists and reviewers may contact Neyda Martinez at **917 656 7846** or via email at neyda@amdac.org for interviews and special requests.



FILM CREDITS

Director: Ronit Bezalel

Writer/Editor: Catherine Crouch

Executive Producer: Judy Hoffman

Producer: Brenda Schumacher

Additional Producers: Robyn Epstein, Mark Pratt, Madaliene Schalet

Music: Duane Buford

Narrator: Marguerite Mariama

Featuring: Raymond 'Shaq' McDonald, Deidre Brewster, Tara Stamps, Mark Pratt

About AMERICA REFRAMED

AMERICA REFRAMED is a co-production of the WORLD Channel and American Documentary, Inc.

AMERICA REFRAMED curates a diverse selection of films highlighting innovative and artistic approaches to storytelling from emerging and veteran filmmakers alike. Viewers will be immersed in personal stories from the streets of towns big and small to the exurbs and country roads that span the spectrum of American life. The documentaries invite audiences to reflect on topics as varied as culture, healthcare, politics, gun violence, religion and more.

An award-winning documentary series, AMERICA REFRAMED is the recipient of a Christopher, a GRACIE, and several Telly and Cine Golden Eagle Awards, as well as nominations for an EMMY, Independent Documentary Association, and Imagen Award.

AMERICA REFRAMED Series Credits

Executive Producers: Justine Nagan, Chris Hastings, Chris White

Series Producer: Carmen L. Vicencio

AMERICA REFRAMED can be accessed online via

<http://worldchannel.org/programs/america-reframed/>

and,

<https://www.facebook.com/WorldChannel>

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AMERICA REFRAMED Co-Producers

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia arts organization dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. AmDoc is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. For more information, visit: www.amdoc.org

The WORLD Channel delivers the best of public television’s nonfiction, news and documentary programming, including original content by and about diverse communities, to U.S. audiences through local public television stations and streaming online at worldchannel.org. WORLD reached 35.8 million unique viewers 18+ last year (55% adults 18-49) and over-indexes in key diversity demographics. Online, the WORLD Channel expands on broadcast topics and fuels dialogue across social media, providing opportunities for broad and diverse audience interaction.

WORLD is programmed by WGBH/Boston, in partnership with American Public Television and WNET/New York, and in association with PBS and National Educational Telecommunications Association. Funding for the WORLD Channel is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and The Kendeda Fund. Additional support for America ReFramed is provided by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Wyncote Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

For more information about The WORLD Channel, visit www.worldchannel.org

