



## SHORT/LONG SYNOPSIS

### SHORT SYNOPSIS

The United States has the most prisoners of any nation in the world both in raw numbers and by percentage of the population. These numbers are further compounded within Milwaukee's mostly African-American 53206 ZIP code, where 62% of adult men have spent time in prison, making it the most incarcerated ZIP code in the nation.

*MILWAUKEE 53206* chronicles the lives of those affected by incarceration in America's most incarcerated ZIP code. Through the intimate stories of three 53206 residents, we witness the high toll mass incarceration takes on individuals and families that make up the community. The film not only examines Milwaukee's ZIP code 53206, but also illuminates the story of people from across the United States who live with the daily affects of mass incarceration.

Beverly Walker's husband, Baron, has been incarcerated for 21-years for two 'party-to-a-crime' armed robberies where nobody was hurt. Caught between changing parole laws in Wisconsin, he should have been released years ago. But given the injustice, Beverly tirelessly advocates for his release while keeping their family together.

Dennis Walton is the co-director of Milwaukee's Fatherhood Initiative who, after having his own experiences with the justice system, reformed his life and began to advocate and build community initiatives to support men, parenting and families of those who are experiencing incarceration. Dennis fights to build the 53206 community, but faces extreme challenges when over half of its young men are imprisoned.

Chad Wilson was released after spending 15-years in-and-out of the criminal justice system. A graduate of the Milwaukee Fatherhood program while serving time, Chad has committed himself to self-reform and is seeking a second chance in life. But, his past continues to haunt him at every turn as he struggles to find employment and provide for his children.

In *MILWAUKEE 53206* we witness the high toll and devastating effects incarceration has on a community through these stories. They reflect a way-of-life of millions of households across the nation living during this tragic and uniquely American era of mass incarceration.



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### LONG SYNOPSIS

*MILWAUKEE 53206* chronicles the lives of those affected by incarceration in America's most incarcerated ZIP code. Through the intimate stories of three 53206 residents, we witness the high toll mass incarceration takes on individuals and families that make up the community. The film not only examines Milwaukee's ZIP code 53206, but also illuminates the story of people from across the United States who live with the daily affects of mass incarceration.

Beverly Walker is a wife, mother and grandmother keeping her family together while her husband Baron has been incarcerated for over 21-years. She is the primary breadwinner and is the central caretaker of her extended family. She is an advocate to reform a flawed parole system in Wisconsin where she fights to for her husband to receive a fair parole and release. We witness her day-to-day struggle as she maintains a family with her husband incarcerated for over two decades.

Dennis Walton, who has lived most of his life in 53206, works daily in his neighborhood to make it a better, stronger, and safer place to live. As co-director of the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative, he also works with men in prison to support and empower them in becoming better fathers. Dennis holds countless community events and media programs, which encourages dialogue between the community, police and politicians. He is committed to bringing the crisis of mass incarceration to the general public and resolving this issue in his community.

Chad Wilson has been in-and-out of the criminal justice system for over a decade. Having served his time for his crimes and graduating from the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative's program while incarcerated, he committed himself to self-reform and is seeking a new start. But, his past continues to haunt him at every turn as he struggles to find employment and a second chance in rebuilding his life.

*MILWAUKEE 53206* tells the story of what life is like to live with incarceration daily. Through the lens of these intimate journeys, the film illustrates the high toll incarceration has taken on the hearts, souls and lives of so many Americans and their families.

### MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

The state of Wisconsin holds the highest rate of incarcerated African American males in the country – at 13% it is nearly double the national average.

It is estimated that over half of African American males in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in their 30's have spent time in jail. Within one ZIP code, 53206, the worst in the city, only 38% HAVE NOT spent time in an adult corrections facility.

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of men ages 30-34 from ZIP code 53206 have been incarcerated in state Department of Corrections facilities or are currently incarcerated,

according to a first-time analysis of the population of adults incarcerated in state DOC facilities (from January 1993 through June 2006).

53206 is bordered by I-43 on the east, 27th street on the west, North Avenue to the south and Capitol Drive to the north, though these lines drawn on a map have physically bounded its inhabitants behind a wall of poverty and incarceration.

In 1963, at its peak, nearly 120,000 people were employed in manufacturing. By 2009, little more than 27,000 manufacturing jobs existed.

Milwaukee's median household income dropped by 25 percent between 1979 and 2010. According to a report by the Employment and Training Institute, there was a 12 to 1 income disparity between families in Milwaukee County's wealthiest and poorest ZIP codes. Over that last 5 years house prices have depreciated 44.6% and the current median sales price for a home is \$33,500.

Only 36.3% of working age males are employed. The U.S. Census shows the poverty rate in 53206 is 47.7 percent and two-thirds of the children live in poverty. The median household income in Milwaukee was \$22,962 in 2012.

There are no public libraries or major parks. 95% of students are economically disadvantaged and the schools are 100% hyper-segregated.

Crime and Homicide rates are high. In 2014, Milwaukee was ranked one of the most dangerous cities in America with 1,364 violent crimes per 100,000 residents. 53206 makes up less than 5% of the city's population but it is responsible for almost 20% the homicides and non-fatal shootings.

Why are incarceration rates so high? While it can't be attributed to just one cause, it was a confluence of events like changes in policy, the war on drugs, the "white flight" to the suburbs, poverty, unemployment, and harsh sentencing and policing tactics.

According to WISDOM, a grassroots interfaith organization, working to decrease the number of people in Wisconsin prisons, "the prison population in Wisconsin has more than tripled since 1990. The increase is fueled by increased government funding for drug enforcement (rather than treatment) and prison construction, three-strike rules, mandatory minimum sentence laws, truth-in-sentencing replacing judicial discretion in setting punishments, concentrated policing in minority communities, and state incarceration for minor probation and supervision violations."



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### NATIONAL OVERVIEW AND IMPACT

The United States is only 5% of the world's population, but incarcerates 25% of the world's prison population. Those behind bars are disproportionately African American and Latino men, who are eight times more likely to have served time in prison than white men. The 13th Amendment to the U.S Constitution states:

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, EXCEPT as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." It is important to know the history and acknowledge that the effects of mass incarceration extends far beyond the prisoner and his or her immediate experience of confinement, and deeply affects their families and communities. Recent studies suggest that the wave of mass incarceration contributes to the decline of families and the social fabric that binds them, leading to the further disintegration of already stressed inner-city neighborhoods.

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The *MILWAUKEE 53206* social impact campaign, *Strengthening Communities, Healing Families: Overcoming the Effects of Mass Incarceration* will be launched this Fall 2016 to leverage the power of story and film to engage, educate, and activate audiences around issues connected to America's systems of mass incarceration and the current historic opportunity for reform. The Campaign will engage support for individuals, families, and communities devastated by the multi-generational effects of mass incarceration and support our partners and a coalition of faith-based groups committed to changing laws and social norms that will bring an end to mass incarceration. The impact campaign will specifically raise awareness of the effect mass incarceration has on communities with absent parents and encourage support systems for children, families and communities.

Finally, the campaign will promote the de-stigmatization of those in the criminal justice system, as well as, bring healing among families and communities who have been disproportionately affected by incarceration.