

A FILM BY REMINGTON SMITH

IN

THESE

TIMES

www.INTHESETIMESFILM.COM

Title: *"In These Times"*

Runtime: 03:12

Year of Completion: Feb 2021, shot summer 2020

Format: 16mm & 4K Digital

Language: English

Press Kit Files: <http://bit.ly/3bGqwe3>

Website: www.InTheseTimesFilm.com

Instagram: @TheRemingtonSmith

Facebook: @TheRemingtonSmith

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ReelRemington>

Teaser Link (22sec): <https://youtu.be/R856tVOxVo0>

Full Film Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/527263064>

Contact: theremingtonsmith@gmail.com // 502-341-9439

CREDITS

Director/Producer/Editor/Cinematographer: Remington Smith

Music: Zach Driscoll

SYNOPSIS: Shot on 16mm and digital cameras in the summer of 2020, this dialogue-free short doc reveals the personal & public experiences of Louisville, KY's battle with the coronavirus and police brutality in the wake of Breonna Taylor's killing by the Louisville Metro PD.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

Like everyone else's lives, mine ground to a halt in March 2020. As a filmmaker I felt an invisible pressure to try and help in some way but was so unmoored during those first few months I wasn't sure what that would look like. Eager to do anything, I started volunteering with Meals on Wheels and some other groups to deliver food to folks in need. My hands were at work while my mind was busy trying to figure out what else I could do.

Meanwhile, variations of the phrase "in these times" started popping up after lockdowns began. Advertising agencies were hard at work trying to come up with ways to continue selling to us while the world was forced to live on Zoom. This euphemistic language felt inadequate to address a global pandemic and started to annoy me so much I began a log of all the ads using the phrase.

Then in late May, protests that had been ongoing since Breonna Taylor was killed on March 13, 2020 ballooned into violent clashes with LMPD. I began to visit what was unofficially renamed Injustice Square Park downtown, talk to folks, do some filming, and offer assistance in whatever ways I could. Taylor's death was just the tip of the iceberg of a long history of police and city abuses of Black residents. Much like other cities

across the country, ours had earned the crowds calling out the city's indifference to Black lives.

All the while, any filmmaking ideas I considered had to be weighed with the risks not just to me, but to my wife and our first unborn child. Our pregnancy was about new life in a literal sense, but it also began to feel like a symbolic question about the future: are we going to beat this pandemic back? Are we finally going to address systemic racism? With that idea of a "pregnant moment" for a better future in place, I began to shoot in earnest, using this triptych structure of the personal, the coronavirus response and the Breonna Taylor protests to account in some meager way for one hell of a year.

For me the process of making is a process of attempted catharsis and understanding. As I was setting up the title shot, painted on a pane of glass, I wanted to have the brick come at the audience much like 2020 mauled us all. It felt like a good way to start the film off with a bang, but also take out some anger on 2020's host of ills and the unofficial motto of the pandemic.

In that way, I hope this film offers you some of the same catharsis, acknowledging what a nightmare we've experienced this last year as we all try to maintain ourselves physically and emotionally. Advertising, bosses, and some of our friends and family want to act like things are okay on all these fronts. This film is meant to address that lie, while still finding hope in the work of trying to help each other "in these times."

Thanks for watching.
- Remington Smith, Director

ABOUT THE FILM'S PRODUCTION:

Filmmaker Remington Smith was ready. His previous shorts had earned distribution deals and his feature length script had just won an award. To attract investors to shoot the screenplay, he made a visual test/teaser trailer and pitch deck and was beginning to discuss fundraising. "Then the whole world fell apart," said Remington.

March 2020 is burned into our collective consciousness as the period when cities and states shut down as the coronavirus turned into a global pandemic. Movie theaters closed and film productions around the world ground to a halt due to safety concerns. Remington's film couldn't move forward. "I wasn't about to shoot something that might get someone sick or killed," says Remington, "So I had to hit the pause button."

He began volunteering to deliver food to those in need as a way to keep busy and help his neighbors. Meanwhile, his home city of Louisville, KY became one of the epicenters for nationwide protests demanding racial justice after George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis. The national spotlight turned to Louisvillian Breonna Taylor, who was killed on March 13, the same day the president declared the coronavirus a national emergency in the United States. Remington wanted to document the protests happening mere miles from his house. "But my wife was pregnant, making her one of the more at-risk groups for Covid-19. So now I had to decide if it was safe to film these

large crowds not just for myself or my spouse, but our unborn child.”

Against this personal and political backdrop, Remington figured out what his next project would be. “I had a loose narrative I could make out of life at home, the city’s coronavirus response, and the protests for racial justice.” It needed the blessing of a vital person, however. “I asked my wife what she thought of her bookending the film, appearing at the beginning and then revealing she’s pregnant at the end as a symbol of this pregnant moment for change we’re living in. Surprisingly she was excited by the idea. Her willingness to be in it really made me feel confident in the concept .”

Smith's project began to take shape with the help of some old technology. Even before the pandemic he intended to teach himself to shoot on 16mm film and although this was his first time shooting on celluloid, there was something familiar to the process. “Before making my first movie I was a 35mm projectionist, threading up projectors for four years. So when I threaded a roll of film through this Bolex camera for the first time, that muscle memory came back. It felt like I had closed the filmmaking loop in my life - I started with projecting film and now I was shooting on it.”

With a 16mm camera there were no sound recording capabilities, a limitation that Smith actually liked. “I think the most exciting thing to see in a movie is just watching people *do* things, not talk about them.” For “*In These Times*” his inspirations were wide and varied, from music videos to the seminal Russian film *Man with a Movie Camera*. “There’s a beauty in the random associations people draw from images. They interpret and digest them in different emotional ways, and I prefer to leave the audience some of that room to create their own meaning.”

To flesh out the soundscape for this dialogue-free documentary, Remington stayed local, tapping Zach Driscoll to do the score. Over the years Driscoll had done music for other movies in the Louisville film scene, which kindled a friendship between the two. Remington would send Zach songs with a certain instrument or emotional flavor to illustrate where he wanted to go with it. “There’s a track from *28 Days Later* “In The House in a Heartbeat” that’s been stuck with me since I saw it in theaters as a teenager. So that was a big reference I kept mentioning to Zach, because it’s melancholy but also has a raw distorted guitar rage to it that felt right for this film.”

“Remington consistently impressed me with how deeply he listened to the demos I sent him,” says Driscoll of the working process with the director. “I think this tendency comes from the specificity and strength of his vision—he really knows what he’s going for.” Even though creating a score under a pandemic made the collaborative process difficult to pull off, he says there’s an easy way to measure his feelings on the final music. “I’m very proud of the work we’ve done. I think the music compliments the visuals well—if I can watch something for the 1,239th time and still be sort of moved then I’m usually pretty happy with the work.”

It’s the emotional weight of the last year’s traumas that Remington says he’s striving to tap into and exorcise. After a year of living in different degrees of isolation under varied pressures brought on by the pandemic, the director says he wants this film to help people cope. “I think we’re all still in survival mode and need to keep a close eye on how we’re doing externally and internally. In whatever way it can, I hope “*In These*

Times” helps people process the feelings of stress, anxiety, hope, and anger we’re all experiencing due to all of these things: the pandemic, the impact on personal life, and the ongoing police brutality crisis this country has failed to adequately confront.”

And what of that feature film Remington was about to start fundraising a year ago?
“June 2022. I’m giving myself a year to raise money and then we start. I thought the benefit of indie filmmaking was there was always time, but the pandemic shattered that illusion. As long as the vaccine rollout has made it safe, with whatever money and crew we have, we’re shooting.”

THE FILMMAKERS:

Remington Smith

Director, Producer, Editor, Cinematographer



Remington Smith is a working filmmaker and assistant professor of film production at the University of Louisville. Creating both narrative and documentary films, his work has been distributed by *The Atlantic*, *PBS Reel South*, *Alter* and earned a Vimeo Staff Pick among other accolades. His movies have gone on to screen at film festivals around the world, including the Oscar-qualifying RiverRun.

His next project is his feature length narrative debut, a social thriller starting production summer 2022.

When he's not teaching, creating new work or assisting other filmmakers, you can find him reading books on anything from history to horror and going on long bike rides.

Zach Driscoll

Music



Zachary Driscoll has been writing music for film since 2010, with over a dozen credits to his name, including features, shorts, and commercials. His compositions are often informed by his jazz and classical background, but he has written in many styles and genres, including rock, pop, world, electronic, and experimental.

Zach has been an active member of the Louisville music scene for more than a decade. After graduating in 2011 with dual degrees in Jazz Studies and English, he played in several indie bands, including Wax Fang and Deloreans, touring extensively throughout the eastern United States and Great Britain, and playing at many festivals, including CMJ and Forecastle.

He is currently at work on his most ambitious film score yet, written for a symphony orchestra.