
Volume 5 *The Revolution Is Now Being
Televised and Tweeted: Black Protest,
Preaching, and (Re)Presentations, From the
Black Arts Movement to #BlackLivesMatter,
c. 1965-2016*

Article 10

2017

THE RULE

Marylou and Jerome Bongiorno
Bongiorno Productions

Follow this and additional works at: <https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/jtb>



Part of the African American Studies Commons, Oral History Commons, Other Religion Commons, Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons, Social History Commons, and the United States History Commons

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Recommended Citation

Bongiorno, Marylou and Jerome (2017) "THE RULE," *The Journal of Traditions & Beliefs*: Vol. 5, Article 10. Available at: <https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/jtb/vol5/iss1/10>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Michael Schwartz Library at EngagedScholarship@CSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Journal of Traditions & Beliefs by an authorized editor of EngagedScholarship@CSU. For more information, please contact library.es@csuohio.edu.

An Essay on the Documentary Film *THE RULE*

Marylou and Jerome Bongiorno, Filmmakers*

Our home city of Newark, New Jersey has great potential but suffers from the devastating effects of poverty. As a result, since 2007, the city has experienced increases in the murder rate – from eighth to seventh highest in the nation; unemployment – from 9.5 to 14.2 percent; poverty rate – from 25 percent to an even more appalling 32 percent. With a population of 278,000, this means that almost 90,000 Newarkers live in poverty! Therefore, inner city schools, unlike their higher socioeconomic counterparts, are faced with difficult challenges that necessitate providing young people with the tools that counteract the environment of poverty, in order for kids to attain maturity and educational success.

During a tour of *Revolution '67*, an earlier documentary film, we met historian Dr. Tom McCabe, who introduced us to St. Benedict's Prep (SBP). In Newark, where the average high school graduation rate is abysmal, SBP is the exception — with a near 100 percent college acceptance rate for their predominantly African American and Latino young men. In our *THE RULE* feature documentary, we profile the school and the Benedictine monks of Newark Abbey to see how and why they achieve success.

Making this film we learned that, for inner city youth, cognitive skills are impeded by the dysfunctional environment caused by poverty. Inner city schools must be committed to helping students overcome this dysfunction so that the process of education can begin. At SBP, this commitment includes protracted counseling as well as a year-round residence for the most vulnerable students.

We worked with alumni of Teachers College, Columbia University, and NJ teachers to develop a free study guide for policymakers and educators that uses *THE RULE* as a vehicle for urban school reform.

While *Revolution '67* explored the causes for the demise of Rust Belt cities like Newark, and *THE RULE* presents the solutions for school reform, the third in our 3Rs Trilogy of films on “Urban America Is Rust,” focusing on poverty reduction.

**Filmmakers Marylou and Jerome Bongiorno prepared this essay to introduce their 2014 documentary film, THE RULE. It is reprinted here with the authors' permission.*

If you would like to view clips from the documentary film, please visit:

http://www.bongiornoproductions.com/THE_RULE/Promos.html.

To obtain information on how to request a free companion curriculum guide, please visit:

http://www.bongiornoproductions.com/THE_RULE/Curriculum.html.

For more information on their company, Bongiorno Productions, please visit: www.BongiornoProductions.com.