

Black Market Green documentary looks at New York's legalization of marijuana and its effects on BIPOC communities

The documentary includes Crystal Peoples Stokes, Jumaane Williams, Cynthia Nixon and others discussing marijuana criminalization, legislation and reparations.

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[Market Green](#): The Whitewashing Of The [Marijuana](#) Industry (BMG), is a feature-length documentary written and directed by Ukachi Arinzeh. BMG, Mr. Arinzeh's first feature-length documentary examines the historical precedent of the war on drugs, the

subsequent mass incarceration of Black and Brown people, and the current attempts to address the disproportionate and devastating impacts of the war on drugs to communities of color, through marijuana legalization. The film highlights the legislation's sponsors, community



Cannabis is projected to be a billion dollar industry.

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Stephen Chukumba, Executive Producer

activists, and many of the proponents of [cannabis](#) legalization, through a series of intimate interviews and dramatized reenactments.

The documentary, which started filming in 2020, while the legislation was still making its way through the legislature, features first-person interviews with the legislation's sponsor, New York State Representative, Crystal People-Stokes, New York City Public Advocate, Jumaane Williams, former gubernatorial candidate and actor, Cynthia Nixon, and drug reform activist, Anthony Papa, among others. The film chronicles the origins of the war on drugs, the impacts on the people, families and communities directly impacted

by it, as well as the opportunities for people of color, created by the legalization of marijuana in

New York state.

Black Market Green differs from other documentaries about cannabis, in that it is the first to focus specifically on the legislative battle as a remedy to the war on drugs. Through incisive interviews with a diverse range of legislators, activists, academics, legacy dealers, and people directly impacted by the war on drugs, BMG presents a

unique look at a pressing, contemporary and complex issue. The film engages with both the people driving the legislative and policy solutions, and those directly impacted by them, including the politicians, cannabis operators, and people currently (and previously) ensnared by the discriminatory application of drug laws and draconian sentencing.



The film will be in post-production Spring 2022, with the film's completion expected before the end of the third quarter. The film's director, Ukachi Arinzeh, believes that "film is the medium which allows us to have honest, candid and critical conversations" about the issues impacting our communities. His previous projects, both short films, also addressed critical social issues. He tackled the hot button topic of "driving while Black," with his 2020 short film "The Inconvenience Of Being Black" and youth homelessness with "Searching for the Promised Land" (originally entitled "Survival Sex"), his first documentary in 2017.

"The inclusion of Black and Brown people in the new multi-billion dollar market being created by marijuana legalization, is a key reason Ukachi and I decided to do this documentary." said Stephen Chukumba, the film's executive producer. "While New York is the most recent state to have given the green light to the green market, significant work still needs to happen to ensure that Black and Brown communities - the people disproportionately impacted by the criminalization of marijuana - are not excluded from the benefits that legalization will provide."

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