

Robin Rue Simmons Passed The First Tax-Funded Reparations Bill in Documentary 'The Big Payback' at Tribeca Film Festival

The film follows Evanston's Rookie Alderwoman & Founder of FirstRepair, Robin Rue Simmons in her fight to pass the first tax-funded reparations bill for Blacks.

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When former 5th Ward Alderwoman and Founder of [FirstRepair](#), [Robin Rue Simmons](#), succeeded in passing Resolution 126-R-19 in City Council in 2019, she and her colleagues were not anticipating the national coverage that

would follow. This historic vote committed the first \$10 million dollars of the City's Municipal Cannabis Retailers' Occupation Tax to fund local reparations for housing and economic development programs for Black Evanston residents. This caught the attention of actor and director, Erika Alexander (*Living Single*, *Get Out*) who was putting together a story on



World Premiere of Documentary: 'The Big Payback': Fight of Rookie Alderwoman, Robin Rue Simmons

“

Some mornings I wake up, and I feel like wow, I'm a part of history. This is special. But it's intimidating at the same time. Because what if you don't get it right.”

Robin Rue Simmons

reparations, both on the local and national scale. The film that would follow centers Rue Simmon's journey, Evanston's dynamic community and their continued fight for Reparations. 'The Big Payback' will premier this weekend at the [Tribeca Festival](#) in New York City and will become available for at-home screenings on Monday, June 13.

For the first time in American history, a tax funded reparations bill for Blacks is passed in Evanston, IL. Funded

by a tax on cannabis, the program is set to deliver \$10 million as a correction for the systematic bias historically inflicted upon its Black constituents. The film follows the fight of rookie alderwoman Robin Rue Simmons as she leads the community in an uphill battle to obtain this 'big payoff'. Meanwhile, in Washington DC, the formidable Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee

continues the fight to pass HR 40: a national bill languishing in Congress for 30+ years, to examine the merits of introducing reparations for slavery to African Americans. While the racial reckoning of 2020 plays out in the background, the two women navigate supporters and detractors, Black and white, in this quest towards correcting historical wrongs. Erika Alexander (actress, *Living Single* and producer of *John Lewis: Good Trouble*) and Tribeca Festival alum Whitney Dow co-direct this journey of a Black woman stepping into her power and creating measurable change. With a cameo by TaNeheisi Coates, this informative, insightful window into the legislative process brings with it an uplifting message championing the rights of citizens to challenge the status quo and gives needed exposure to the conversation around reparations.

--Karen McMullen

WHAT: Evanston and its local reparations leaders to be featured in upcoming documentary 'The Big Payback' premiering at the Tribeca Festival in New York City this weekend and available for at-home screenings beginning June 13, 2022.

WHO: Robin Rue Simmons of FirstRepair, Dino Robinson of Shorefront Legacy, Kamm Howard, Dr. Ron Daniels of National African American Reparations Commission, The City of Evanston staff, The Reparations Stakeholders Authority of Evanston, and more.

WHERE: Virtual Screening Access

WHEN: Monday, June 13, 2022 — 6 PM

For more information on how to screen the Tribeca Festival's 'The Big Payback' on June 13, visit <https://tribecafilm.com/films/big-payback-2022> to hold your virtual ticket.

FirstRepair is a nonprofit organization founded by Robin Rue Simmons, a former Evanston, Illinois alderwoman and the architect of the nation's first government-funded reparations program for Blacks. More information is available at www.firstrepair.org or email media@firstrepair.org.

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