

Black August Documentary Movie List
Created by Our Voices Project LLC

- ***Ida B. Wells: A Chicago Stories Special*** | There are few Chicago historical figures whose life and work speak to the current moment more than Ida B. Wells, the 19th century investigative journalist, civil rights leader, and passionate suffragist. WTTW brings you a new CHICAGO STORIES special that tells her story as never before. Freed from slavery just six months after she was born, Ida B. Wells once described her childhood with her parents and siblings in Holly Springs, Mississippi as “happy.” But a tragedy would alter the course of Wells’ youth. As a young woman and teacher, she refused to give up her seat on a train car that she was told was reserved white women. That incident launched the young Wells into her first public fight for justice. Through writing, Ida B. Wells found her “real” self. As she put pen to paper, her words became an important tool to analyze, debate, and persuade readers on the issues of the day, particularly when it came to race and gender. But after the lynching of her close friend in Memphis, Wells found a new kind of power in her pen. | [YouTube](#)
- ***Mapantsula*** (1988) | Panic (Thomas Mogotlane) is a low-rent hustler who works the crime-ridden streets of Johannesburg, South Africa, with only his own interests in mind. However, as the world around him shifts with the burgeoning anti-apartheid efforts, Panic finds himself being irreversibly pulled into the fray and his community. Now, Panic must choose between his selfish goals and becoming a part of a larger movement to fight the racism that has controlled his country for so long. | [Prime](#) (via Film Movement+) or on DVD at [Brighton Memorial Library](#)
- ***The Murder of Fred Hampton*** (1971) | The Murder of Fred Hampton is a 1971 American documentary film about the short life and death of Fred Hampton, a young African-American civil rights activist in Chicago and leader of the Illinois Black Panther Party. During the film's production, Hampton was fatally shot on December 4, 1969, in a pre-dawn raid at his apartment by the Chicago Police Department. The raid was revealed to have been organized in cooperation with the FBI. When they learned of Hampton's death, filmmakers Howard Alk and Mike Gray, director and producer, respectively, went to his apartment, which was still unsecured. They took film footage of the crime scene. They later used this to challenge news reports and police testimony about the events. They also conducted investigative reporting into Hampton's death, with related material included in the film. | [YouTube](#)
- ***Lumumba: Death of a Prophet*** (1991) | Filmmaker Raoul Peck shows the political life of Patrice Lumumba, who was assassinated in 1961 at age 35. | [YouTube](#)
- ***Let the Fire Burn*** (2013) | *Let the Fire Burn* brings to life the longtime feud between Philadelphia police and the controversial urban group MOVE that came to a tragic climax in 1985. | [YouTube](#)

- ***The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975*** (2011) | The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975 mobilizes a treasure trove of 16mm material shot by Swedish journalists who came to the US drawn by stories of urban unrest and revolution. Gaining access to many of the leaders of the Black Power Movement—Stokely Carmichael, Bobby Seale, Angela Davis and Eldridge Cleaver among them—the filmmakers captured them in intimate moments and remarkably unguarded interviews. Thirty years later, this lush collection was found languishing in the basement of Swedish Television. Director Göran Olsson and co-producer Danny Glover bring this footage to light in a mosaic of images, music and narration chronicling the evolution one of our nation's most indelible turning points, the Black Power movement. | **Available on HBO Max**
- ***Paris is Burning*** (1990) | This documentary focuses on drag queens living in New York City and their "house" culture, which provides a sense of community and support for the flamboyant and often socially shunned performers. Groups from each house compete in elaborate balls that take cues from the world of fashion. Also touching on issues of racism and poverty, the film features interviews with a number of renowned drag queens, including Willi Ninja, Pepper LaBeija and Dorian Corey. | **Available on HBO, Tubi and at local [libraries](#)** (Arnett Branch Library, Irondequoit Public Library, Lincoln Branch Library, Lyell Branch Library, Maplewood Community Library, Monroe Branch Library, and Webster Public Library)
- ***The Stroll*** (2023) | Recounts the history of New York's Meatpacking District from the perspective of transgender sex workers who lived and worked there. They speak on the violence, policing and gentrification that led to a movement for transgender rights. | HBO Max or through [Kanopy](#) (Library Card required)

Honorable Mentions:

- ***The Trials of Winnie Mandela*** (2026) | Audiences will hear the 'Mother of the Nation' in her own words as she reflects on her childhood, her activism, and her relationships as a wife, mother, and comrade, drawing on never-before-seen footage from the later years of the struggle icon's life. The series explores the controversies that defined her public image, including the headlines and scandals that followed her, as well as her persecution by the apartheid regime. The biography includes the voices of her detractors and some of her harshest critics, offering a fuller view of a life lived under unforgiving, relentless scrutiny.
 - *Available on Netflix Africa – can access via VPN*
- ***Eyes On The Prize*** (1987 Docuseries) | This landmark series, which first premiered in 1987, documents the history of the civil rights movement in America. Produced by Blackside, segments include the Montgomery bus boycott of 1954, school desegregation in 1957 Arkansas, the right-to-vote battle within Mississippi, the march from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. | *You can find each part by doing a Google Search for "Where to Watch Eyes on the Prize"*

Are we missing any? Let us know at info@ourvoicesproject.com!