

JONATHAN DEMME PRESENTS  
**BROTHERS OF THE BLACK LIST**

A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY SEAN GALLAGHER

The longest litigated civil rights case in American history.

Production Notes

Running time: 74 Minutes

Format: DCP | Digital MOV file | Blu-Ray

Aspect ratio: Flat | Sound format: Stereo

Language: English

Website: [www.brothersoftheblacklist.com](http://www.brothersoftheblacklist.com)

Press / Distribution Inquires:

Sean Gallagher | 914.844.4280 | [seangallagher86@gmail.com](mailto:seangallagher86@gmail.com)



## **LOGLINE**

The longest litigated civil rights case in American history.

## **SYNOPSIS**

September 4, 1992: An elderly woman in a small town in upstate New York reports an attempted rape by a young black man who cut his hand during the altercation. While looking for suspects, police contact officials at SUNY Oneonta, a nearby college, and a school administrator reacts by handing over a list of names and residences of 125 black male students. For the next several days, those students are tracked down and interrogated by various police departments under a presumption of guilty until proven innocent.

In *Brothers of the Black List*, director Sean Gallagher tracks this story of racism that became the longest litigated civil rights case in American history. The now grown students and their school counselor, Edward "Bo" Whaley, recount the disturbing events that the college and police department tried sweeping under the rug for many years thereafter. An emotional story of social justice, this unsettling documentary is also a cautionary tale of equal rights gone wrong that is relevant today more than ever.

## **THE FILMMAKER**

**Sean Gallagher** is a filmmaker & editor based out of Westchester, New York. He works as an in-house editor at the Jacob Burns Film Center in Pleasantville, NY. Sean was a recipient of the 2008 Merit for 'Artistic Contribution to Social Justice' by the SUNY Oneonta Department of Africana & Latino Studies. In the Spring of 2011, he was chosen by Westchester Magazine as one of "Westchester's Wunderkinds," professionals under the age of 30 noted for their ideas, ambitions and community involvement.

For more information, please visit [www.seanhasawebsite.com](http://www.seanhasawebsite.com)

## **DIRECTORS STATEMENT**

The first time I heard about the Black List was in 2007 during my senior year at SUNY Oneonta. As I considered myself to be a rather informed student, I was shocked that I spent three years in Oneonta without any knowledge of what occurred on campus back in 1992. Essentially, the school and the town had swept the incident under the rug.

The context of this story is not an isolated incident but rather serves as an example of institutional racism in higher education and a case study in police work. The Black List is still an emotional subject in the Oneonta community, which makes this story all the more important. While the town is put in the spotlight, this film is intended to focus on what happened rather than where it occurred.

It would be inaccurate to say that the subjects in this film were interviewed. Questions were rarely asked and my role was to provide a safe space for these men and women to share their story through honest and uninterrupted reflections. Many described this process as a much needed therapy session.

Twenty years after the incident occurred, the topics explored in this project are relevant now more than ever and it is my hope that *Brothers of the Black List* can start dialogue that communities across the country are in dire need of.

**- Sean Gallagher (Director / Editor)**  
**SUNY Oneonta Class of 2008**

## JONATHAN DEMME “PRESENTS” STATEMENT

*Academy Award winning filmmaker Jonathan Demme is best known as the director of *The Silence of the Lambs*, *Philadelphia*, *Rachel Getting Married* and the celebrated *Talking Heads* concert film *Stop Making Sense*. He is also recognized for his social justice documentaries, giving voice to many unsung heroes and shedding light on momentous issues with such films as *Cousin Bobby*, *The Agronomist*, *Jimmy Carter Man from Plains*, and *I'm Carolyn Parker*.*

The true-life story behind Sean Gallagher's gripping and deeply moving film, *Brothers of the Black List*, arises from a harrowing incident dating back to 1992. This unflinching and beautifully-made documentary bears witness, from a fresh perspective, to the failure of our most honored institutions to help turn the tide on this persistent, chronically vile American social dynamic.

In the days of stop-and-frisk and Trayvon Martin, the well-manicured issue of equal rights -- most especially as applies to young men of African descent -- remains as molten as ever if you just pay attention to what's going on, or if you scratch the skin -- as Sean Gallagher does here, of our nation's racial history through time immemorial.

The eponymous blacklisted brothers themselves are amazing to meet! There is more "rooting interest" on screen in this picture than in any Hollywood blockbuster. Looking back at the events that shaped -- and scarred -- their lives as college students, these heroic, now grown-up Americans make your heart break and your pulse pound at the horror of what they were subjected to, and the heroism and elegance of their response, both then and now.

## **FILM CREDITS & TECHNICAL INFORMATION**

Directed by **Sean Gallagher**

Edited by **Sean Gallagher**

Presented by **Jonathan Demme**

Music by **Thom O'Connor**

Sound Editing by **Thom O'Connor**

Script Development by **Caroline Rothstein**

## **THE INTERVIEWS (In alphabetical order)**

**Kirk Allen**, SUNY Oneonta Student (1992)

**Major Barnett**, SUNY Oneonta Student (1992)

**Regina Betts**, Vice-President of Oneonta Chapter of NAACP

**Ricky Brown**, SUNY Oneonta Student (1992) & Main Plaintiff

**Sheryl Champen**, Former Admissions Counselor

**Scott Fein**, Lawyer for Brothers of the Black List

**Lee Fisher**, President of Oneonta Chapter of NAACP

**Hopeton Gordon**, SUNY Oneonta Student (1992)

**Hugh Harris-Inniss**, SUNY Oneonta Student (1992)

**Tyrone Lohr**, SUNY Oneonta Student (1992)

**John Mason**, SUNY Oneonta Student (1992)

**Raishawn Morris**, SUNY Oneonta Student (1992)

**Kathleen O'Mara**, Professor of Africana & Latino Studies

**Stephen Walsh**, Professor of Economics & Business

**Caridad Souza-Watkins**, Professor of Africana & Latino Studies

**Edward "Bo" Whaley**, Retired EOP Counselor

## **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

Production Company: **Whatnot Productions**

Documentary Website: **[www.brothersoftheblacklist.com](http://www.brothersoftheblacklist.com)**

Director Website: **[www.seanhasawebsite.com](http://www.seanhasawebsite.com)**

IMDB: **[www.imdb.com/title/tt3164056](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3164056)**

Facebook: **[www.facebook.com/brothersoftheblacklist](http://www.facebook.com/brothersoftheblacklist)**

YouTube Channel: **[www.youtube.com/user/BOTBL](http://www.youtube.com/user/BOTBL)**