10 Movies Dealing With Racial Injustice That All Entrepreneurs Can Learn From

June 25, 2020 9 min read

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As protests and rallies against racial injustice sweep our country, there is heightened public awareness about racial discrimination and inequality in America. Many people are looking for ways to educate themselves about these issues. As an entrepreneur, it's imperative that you understand the context behind these flashpoints and absorb the importance of this moment in our history.

But where do you start to fill in your knowledge gaps and broaden your understanding of what's going on? Movies can be effective in bringing meaningful stories to life and offer an easy way to help us start addressing these complicated issues.

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These films offer big-picture ideas with key messages, like the importance of diversity, tolerance and acceptance. They provide excellent jumping-off points to further inform yourself and pursue a deeper understanding of these obstacles and problems.

The titles below deal with characters, situations and encounters that delve into prejudice and systemic racial issues, making them great conversation starters. To help you delve deeper into these issues, I've included additional

resources that will broaden your perspective and further inform your worldview.

[embedded content]

This must-see movie has helped shape the conversation around capital punishment in the U.S. The film highlights the racial bias that permeates our criminal justice system. Based on the bestselling book by attorney Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), and his real-life experiences, this intense drama focuses on Stevenson (Michael B. Jordan), who is a defense attorney working to appeal the wrongful conviction of Walter McMillian, a black man who was sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit.

Deeper dive: Stevenson's book of the same name goes much deeper into his efforts to change sentencing practices, particularly for teens and children, and those with mental health problems. If you are in the Montgomery, Ala., area, the EJI's Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice offers visceral and impactful displays of the history of slavery and racism in America, including the enslavement of African Americans, racial lynchings, segregation and racial bias.

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Although this film is labeled a teen movie, it offers one of the most authentic portrayals of police brutality in pop culture. Like the award-winning book it's based on, this drama about a black teen named Starr Carter (Amandla Stenberg) who witnesses the fatal police shooting of a close friend deals frankly and powerfully with race and racism. The movie shows her grappling with the difficulties of being a black teenager in a predominantly white area, and the feeling of belonging to one world while living in another. How she stands up for justice is inspiring.

Deeper dive: One character in the movie comments that "white

folks want diversity but not too much diversity," which touches on a subtle bias against living in highly diverse communities or communities that are resistant to organizations' effort to promote diversity. However, there are many studies that prove the positive impact diversity will have on your office and corporate environment.

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Focused on the untold true story of the black women who played vital roles in NASA's development of the U.S. space program, this is a feel-good female empowerment movie. The film highlights three brilliant women who worked at NASA in the 1950s and 60s and offers a realistic look at the racial tensions of the civil rights era. It's also infused with many positive messages about integrity, perseverance, teamwork and communication.

Deeper dive: The movie is a fictional interpretation of the book by the same name, which is definitely worth a read. There are also many other resources out there that highlight these women and their accomplishments. Check out these articles by NPR and the *New York Times*.

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This highly lauded drama follows the Youngers, a black family living together in an apartment in Chicago. Following a death in the family, they come into a substantial amount of money and must decide how to use it. Walter Lee (Sidney Poitier) wants to make a business investment, while his mother, Lena (Claudia McNeil), is intent on buying a house for them all to live in – two differing views of the American Dream. This was one of the first films to really depict how everyday racism affects black families just trying to get by. The film's story still resonates for many today.

Deeper dive: *A Raisin in the Sun* not only explores the tension between white and black society; it also examines the strain

within the black community over how to react to an oppressive white community. Black communities still face economic disparities, as this *Time* article relates. The Brooking Institution has resources to help you better understand how racial and regional inequality affect economic opportunity.

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This is a genre-defining film in every sense of the word. The film tells the tale of young black teen Tre (Cuba Gooding Jr.), who is raised in a tough Los Angeles neighborhood in the mid-1980s through early 90s. Legendary rapper Ice Cube has his acting debut in the film, playing one of the three central characters wrapped up in the drama of the streets. *Boyz* also made John Singleton the first African American to be nominated for best director at the Academy Awards.

Deeper dive: The film's blistering depiction of growing up in inner-city Los Angeles raises questions about the impacts of growing up in economically challenged areas, which the Economic Policy Institute has examined. If you want to know more about the backstory and what went into the making of *Boyz n the Hood*, which Singleton directed when he was just 23 years old, watch the documentary *Friendly Fire: Making an Urban Legend*.

[embedded content]

This Oscar-nominated historical film depicts a significant period in Dr. Martin Luther King's life, when he planned and led the historic march from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., to secure equal voting rights for African Americans. The first attempt at this march led to brutal police violence against peaceful demonstrators. This event, known as Bloody Sunday, generated anger across the nation and prompted President Lyndon B. Johnson to push the Voting Rights Act through Congress.

Deeper dive: As recent events have shown, many Americans are

still fighting against racism. This movie is a reminder of how far we have come as a nation and how much further we have to go. The Hutchins Center for African and African American Research recently unveiled a free online curriculum to bring the voting-rights movement to life.

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This movie confronts several issues at once – police violence, gentrification, re-entry after incarceration and, as its name suggests, implicit bias (blindspotting is when a situation can be interpreted two ways, but your limited perception means you only see one interpretation). These are heavy duty, serious topics, but because the film often takes a comedic approach, it's one of the more accessible movies for viewers.

Written, produced by and starring Daveed Diggs and Rafael Casal, the movie depicts Collin, played by Diggs, a black parolee who witnesses a white cop shooting a black civilian. The complications of racism, relationships and urban gentrification in Oakland play out through Collin's interactions with his short-tempered and reckless white best friend Miles, played by Casal.

Deeper dive: In many ways, the film is asking audiences to examine their own blind spots. It's a call to action that we all become more aware of our implicit biases. To help you examine your own implicit biases, Harvard has developed this online test.

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Loving is a biographical film about Richard and Mildred Loving, a couple who were arrested for their interracial marriage in 1958. Their Supreme Court case was a landmark decision that resulted in the end of laws banning interracial marriage, and this movie shows the powerful impact of standing up and fighting for what you believe in.

Deeper dive: While interracial relationships are on the rise, most Americans say that overall race relations in the U.S. are bad and getting worse. And while interracial dating isn't as taboo as it used to be, many younger people in the black community have been warned that doing so may put you in a vulnerable position.

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Jordan Peele's directorial debut turns white supremacy into a horror flick. The film's premise is what happens when a black man goes to visit his white girlfriend's seemingly liberal parents, though they have a very twisted underlying motive. The movie is the personification of the sentiment "I wish people loved black people as much as they love black culture."

Deeper dive: *Get Out* addresses a more subtle form of covert racism and discrimination, which is often concealed in the fabric of our society, hiding behind the facade of politeness. Fighting this means learning to become an antiracist, and is the topic of a bestselling book by Ibram X. Kendi.

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This film tells the true story of Oscar Grant III (Michael B. Jordan), a young man who was killed in 2009 by a police officer in Oakland, Calif. It opens with the actual footage of Grant and his friends being detained by the BART police, who oversee the Bay Area's public transit system, and goes on to portray the last day of Grant's life through flashbacks. It offers a window into a real-life example of racial discrimination within law enforcement.

Deeper dive: The film depicts how lack of opportunity, routine incarceration and racism conspire to devalue the lives of young black men in America. Some studies have suggested that increasing community connections between police and young black men could lead to a reduction in violent encounters.

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