

PRESS KIT

SHELBY STEELE'S WHITE GUILT

A DOCUMENTARY ESSAY
by Eli Steele



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INTRODUCTION

We are living through a moment of profound moral confusion.

Across the Western world, institutions are surrendering their principles not to reason or justice, but to fear. The fear of being seen as racist. The fear of being stigmatized.

The fear that has a name: white guilt.

In their bold new documentary, Shelby and Eli Steele trace the origins of that fear from the Civil Rights Movement's moral reckoning in 1960s America to its present incarnation as a global force reshaping politics, culture, and identity on every continent.

What began as one nation's attempt to atone for centuries of racial oppression has become something far larger and far more dangerous — a new evil reordering free societies from within.

White Guilt is the film that finally says what so many have been afraid to say. This press kit contains everything you need to tell its story.

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WHY THIS FILM MATTERS NOW

We live in a moment of profound moral crisis and confusion. Across the Western world, institutions, governments, and individuals are surrendering their freedoms and authority not to reason or principle, but to white guilt. And this white guilt is tearing us apart.

Shelby Steele saw this coming. Forty years ago.

After centuries of racial oppression, America arrived at a profound reckoning in the 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement exposed the moral bankruptcy of white supremacy and, in doing so, stripped white Americans of their moral standing. What followed was white guilt, not genuine guilt in any deep psychological sense, but something more insidious: the fear of being stigmatized as a racist and being tied to America's racist history. To escape that stigma, whites and the institutions they controlled began making a bargain with the devil. They surrendered American principles like merit, individual rights, and equal justice under law in exchange for the appearance of moral authority. It was not conscience. It was self-protection.

The consequences have been catastrophic.

Decades of identity politics have sorted Americans by race, demanding that individuals see themselves first and foremost as members of a group defined by grievance or white guilt. And here we are: a nation consumed by tribalism. The very tribalism we fought to escape during the era of white supremacy has returned, now dressed in the language of social justice, equity and inclusion. Different ideology. Same poison.

And it has not stayed in America. White guilt has swept through Europe, Australia, Canada, and beyond, reshaping politics, dismantling free expression, and embedding grievance into the institutions meant to serve everyone. It has even sanctified the evils of Hamas on October 7th, reframing their terrorism into the acts of freedom fighters.

The documentary, "White Guilt," enters this moment with clarity and courage. This is no longer an American story. It is a human one. Wherever white guilt has spread, tribalism has followed, and with it the erosion of the very principles that free societies depend on to survive. Shelby and Eli Steele issue an urgent challenge to the world: see clearly, speak honestly, and choose principles over fear before the cost becomes too great to bear.

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LOGLINE & SYNOPSIS

LOGLINE:

In a bold new documentary, father and son Shelby and Eli Steele confront the uncomfortable truth that white guilt, not white racism, is the new evil reshaping societies across the globe.

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

"White guilt morally and culturally disarms the West. It makes the First World apologetic."

— Shelby Steele

From civil rights warrior and black militant to fearless dissident, Shelby Steele unmasks white guilt as the toxin that poisoned America -- destroying merit, igniting riots, demolishing standards, and now arming global chaos from campus bloodlust to civilizational suicide. When good and evil have been utterly reversed, what happens to those who refuse to surrender?

LONG SYNOPSIS:

After the Civil Rights victories of the 1960s, white America didn't just feel guilt. It surrendered. That surrender became a weapon. Merit collapsed. Standards fell. Individual responsibility gave way to grievance as power. And the institutions meant to lift people up were quietly repurposed to keep them down.

Shelby Steele, once a black militant who embraced liberation movements across the third world, spent a lifetime watching white guilt metastasize from a campus bargain into a civilizational crisis. Now, after October 7th, he sees the endpoint: a West so disarmed by its own guilt that Hamas's massacre of a thousand people is called resistance, campus antisemitism goes unpunished, and anti-Western tribalism marches openly in the streets.

What's at stake is nothing less than America's greatest gift to the world: the individual. The radical idea that every human being stands equal under the law, fully accountable for his own life, free to rise or fall on his own terms. White guilt doesn't just undermine that principle. It destroys it, replacing the individual with the tribe, and freedom with the scramble for victim status.

Featuring David Mamet, Batya Ungar-Sargon, Pastor Corey Brooks, Jodi Shaw, Paul Rossi, Jason Riley, Rafael Mangual, Andrew Gutmann, Seneca Scott, and others who refused to kneel — and paid for it.

White guilt didn't end racism. It reversed good and evil. The answer isn't more guilt. It's the oldest American idea there is: be an individual. Be an American.

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

ELI STEELE: When my father, Shelby Steele, published "White Guilt" in 2006, I thought it should be a film. We even talked about it. But for some reason, fate would not allow it. I wasn't ready yet. I had been in the world of narrative films and had not begun the transition back into the world of documentaries -- I made my first documentary on deaf teenagers when I was 16. After making "How Jack Became Black" and "What Killed Michael Brown?" in addition to over 20 documentaries over a two year period at FOX, I knew the time had come to update and bring "White Guilt" to life as a visual medium.

In the nearly two decades since the book's release, white guilt hadn't faded one bit. Instead, it metastasized and grew into a worldwide behemoth. We had lived through the Obama presidency, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, the stratospheric rise of Black Lives Matter, and then the climactic summer of George Floyd. Nearly every American institution from kindergarten classrooms to corporate boardrooms had embraced race and equity as their organizing principle. The ideas my father had written about in 2006 were no longer a diagnosis of something troubling. They had become the operating system of American life. I saw this up close with my work at FOX and I knew now was the time to make the film or it would never happen.

So I quit my job and my father and I dove into the making of the film. We didn't quite have a handle on the film, but the beauty of making documentaries is that you have to dive in and let the world tell you where the story is. The start of "White Guilt" was disastrous. On our first trip to San Francisco, our SUV rental was broken into and \$45,000 of camera equipment was stolen, including my beloved camera that filmed "What Killed Michael Brown?" More importantly, some of the material that we were covering such as San Francisco's reparations debacle felt uninspired, a retreading of old material. Then October 7 erupted and the world, especially the culture war, shifted monumentally.

To understand this shift, I took six months to make "Killing America," a documentary that asked the question: why did antisemitism explode easily in some of the wealthiest Bay Area high schools after October 7? As I made that film, I thought about the stories that my father told me of how he had been a black militant and had flown to Algiers to visit the exiled Black Panthers, missing Yasser Arafat's visit to Eldridge Cleaver by mere days. He had been drawn, like so many young men of his generation, to the liberation movement.

After watching many in the West embrace Hamas as freedom fighters rather than terrorists, I realized my father's entire life had tracked the very same arc of this liberation ideology that had only grown more sophisticated, more global, and more dangerous with each passing decade. The murder of over a thousand people in southern Israel was being made justifiable by the same moral framework my father had once embraced and then spent his life exposing. That realization shook us both. White guilt had not merely redefined America. It had gone global.

We rebuilt the film from the ground up. We worked together every day. That relationship is, I'll admit, one of the quiet joys of this project. My father is one of the great minds of his generation, and to have spent years in genuine creative partnership with him, arguing, pushing, building, is something I don't take lightly. I see it as my duty as his son and as a filmmaker to take his ideas and bring them to life in a way that reaches people who will never pick up a book. That is what documentary filmmaking is for.

Many people today believe it is Marxism, or suicidal empathy, or woke ideology that is undermining the West. I understand why. But those are symptoms. White guilt is the grease that makes all of it possible. It strips Western institutions of their moral authority and then hands that authority to anyone willing to weaponize the accusation of racism. Marxism, liberation ideology, DEI, the global embrace of Hamas — none of it travels without white guilt clearing the path. Until we name it clearly and honestly, we have no chance of reversing it.

Our redemption does not lie in more guilt. It lies in the timeless American principles that my father's parents marched for — individual dignity, equal accountability under the law, and the radical idea that every human being is capable of freedom. That is what this film is ultimately about and that is why we dedicated to America on her 250th birthday.

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KEY BIOS

Dr. Shelby Steele is a renowned author and documentary filmmaker who has long specialized in race relations, multiculturalism, and affirmative action. He has written extensively on race in American society and the unintended consequences of modern social programs on race relations.

His influential 2006 bestseller “White Guilt: How Blacks and Whites Together Destroyed the Promise of the Civil Rights Era” has now been updated and reexamined in the new documentary “White Guilt.” Earlier, in 2020, Steele released the critically acclaimed documentary “What Killed Michael Brown?” which became a top-ten film on Amazon for four weeks.

Steele’s groundbreaking work has earned widespread recognition. In 1990, he received the National Book Critics Circle Award for his book “The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America.” His writing for the 1990 PBS documentary “Seven Days in Bensonhurst” was honored with an Emmy Award, the Writers Guild Award, and the San Francisco Film Festival Award. In 2004, President George W. Bush presented him with the National Humanities Medal for his examinations of race relations and cultural issues. In 2006, he was awarded the Bradley Prize for his contributions to the study of race in America. His other books include “Shame,” “A Dream Deferred,” and “A Bound Man.”

Eli Steele is an award-winning documentary filmmaker known for tackling provocative cultural and social issues. His latest project is the upcoming documentary “White Guilt” with his father, Shelby Steele, an adaptation and update of Shelby’s influential 2006 book exploring the corrosive effects of white guilt on American society.

A graduate of Claremont McKenna College and Pepperdine University’s School of Public Policy, his notable works include “Killing America,” which explored the rise in antisemitism in Bay Area schools, “What Killed Michael Brown?” which reached #1 on Amazon’s documentary charts upon release, and “How Jack Became Black,” which examined identity politics and the rising multiracial population. In addition, his “What’s Bugging Seth” film, a narrative feature, won top honors at twelve film festivals, and his MTV Network pilot, Katrina, earned him the Breakthrough Filmmakers Award. He has produced over twenty short documentaries for FOX in a two-year span, along with the Rooftop Revelations series. He has written extensively for Fox News, Quillette, The Free Press, Newsweek, and others.

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CREW LIST

Directed, Produced and Edited by Eli Steele

Written by Shelby Steele and Eli Steele

Narrated and Produced by Shelby Steele

Produced by Rita Steele

Associate Producer: Terrell Allen

Camera: Terrell Allen

Design & Animation: Together:Words+Picture, Hector Herrera

Sound Design:Garrett Schultz

Colorist: Ramin Ouladi

Drone Footage: Terrell Allen - TSA Media

Additional Camera: Eli Steele

Trailer: Terrell Allen

Drone: Terrell Allen

America Tis of Thee: Jodi Shaw

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Award-winning filmmakers Eli Steele and Shelby Steele return with their latest controversial documentary, "White Guilt."

WHITE GUILT CAME FOR THE WESTERN MAN... WILL THE WEST SURVIVE?

From the team behind "What Killed Michael Brown?" — #1 on Amazon Documentaries

LOS ANGELES, CA — On October 7, 2023, Hamas carried out the deadliest massacre of Jewish people since the Holocaust. What followed stunned the world. Across the West from universities to the streets, crowds rallied, not in grief, but in solidarity with the terrorists. For filmmakers Eli Steele and his father, Shelby Steele, the response was not a surprise. It was a confirmation sixty years in the making.

Shelby Steele was there at the beginning. As a young black man coming of age in the 1960s, he witnessed firsthand the moment white guilt was born. Confronted with the undeniable evil of segregation and racial oppression, white America had lost its moral authority. White America did not respond with a renewed commitment to individual freedom and equal humanity. It instead responded with shame. In the autobiographical sections of the film, Steele shows firsthand how Western institutions began offering concessions, preferences, and deference not to solve the problem of racism or its lingering effects, but to escape the stigma of being called racist. Power shifted to those who could exploit that accusation.

"White guilt morally and culturally disarms the West. It makes the First World apologetic."

— Shelby Steele

But what many did not foresee was that white guilt would not stay American. It went global, embedding itself in Western universities, governments, and media. It became the default moral posture of an entire civilization, one so conditioned to split itself into the simplified tribalism of the white oppressors vs the oppressed people of color. This is white guilt in its terminal stage, a force capable of undermining the West's will to defend its own existence.

Shelby Steele saw it born. "White Guilt" watches it come of age.

Directed by Eli Steele and narrated by Shelby Steele, the film is rooted in the latter's seminal 2006 book "White Guilt: How Blacks and Whites Together Destroyed the Promise of the Civil Rights Era." The film features powerful interviews with playwright David Mamet, whistle-blowers Jodi Shaw and Paul Rossi, Pastor Corey Brooks, Batya Ungar-Sargon, Seneca Scott, Dumisani Washington, and others.

Eli Steele is a documentary filmmaker who is a graduate of Claremont McKenna College and Pepperdine University's School of Public Policy. His notable works include "Killing America," "What Killed Michael Brown?" and "How Jack Became Black." He has also produced over twenty short documentaries for FOX.

Distributed by GATHR. Advance screenings: Arizona State University, Cornell University, etc., followed by 10-city theatrical release. Wider release to follow.

Interview availability with Eli Steele, Shelby Steele, and select cast.

Full press kit: www.WhiteGuiltFilm.com

SHELBY STEELE'S WHITE GUILT

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KEY TALKING POINTS

WHITE GUILT IS NOT ACTUAL GUILT

Most people assume white guilt means white Americans feel genuine remorse for historical racism. This film argues something far more unsettling: white guilt is not real guilt at all. It is the terror of being seen as a racist. It is fear of stigma, not moral conscience, and that distinction changes everything about how we understand American racial politics.

AMERICA HAD A RECKONING IT WAS NOT PREPARED FOR

After centuries of white supremacy, the fallout after the Civil Rights Movement stripped many white Americans and white institutions of their moral authority. The result was white guilt. To regain that moral standing, whites and institutions began surrendering American principles — merit, individual rights, equal justice — in exchange for the appearance of innocence. The bargain felt necessary. The consequences have been devastating.

WHITE GUILT IDENTITY POLITICS CREATED A NEW, UGLY TRIBALISM

Decades of sorting people by race, elevating group grievance over individual character, and punishing dissent have produced exactly what they promised to defeat: a new white guilt racial order. The same tribalism that defined the white supremacy era has returned, now wrapped in the language of social justice, equity, and inclusion. This film names that contradiction directly.

WHITE GUILT HAS GONE GLOBAL

What began as America's unresolved racial wound has spread across the Western world via liberation ideology. From Europe to Australia to the Middle East, the same dynamic plays out: Western institutions surrender their principles to avoid the stigma of racism or colonialism, and anti-Western movements exploit that surrender. The October 7th Hamas attacks and their aftermath are the film's most striking and provocative illustration of this global reach.

THE PEOPLE BEING "HELPED" ARE BEING HARMED

White guilt does not empower blacks or other people of color. It infantilizes them. It strips them of responsibility. By substituting preferences and deference for genuine opportunity and accountability, white guilt has denied Americans of all stripes the one thing the nation's founding documents promised: the freedom to be judged as individuals. This film makes the case that good intentions have produced deeply destructive outcomes.

THIS IS A FILM ABOUT FREEDOM

At its core, *White Guilt* is not just about race. It is about the idea of the individual, the foundational Western principle that has come under sustained assault. When institutions capitulate to guilt rather than stand on principle, everyone loses the freedom that principles protect.

THE CONVERSATION THAT EVERYONE IS AVOIDING

In an era when honest discussion of race is increasingly policed and punished, Shelby and Eli Steele go where few are willing to go. This film does not traffic in comfort or ideology. It demands clarity. And it makes the case that without that clarity, neither America nor the world can find its way forward.

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SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

Below is a sampling of posts for X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.

READY TO POST SAMPLE MESSAGES

- White guilt is the most important story no one is telling honestly. Not Marxism. Not woke ideology. Not suicidal empathy. Those are symptoms. White guilt is the disease that allows these other ideologies and behaviors to take hold. It's the grease that makes all of it possible, and until we name it clearly, we have no chance of reversing it.
- "White guilt morally and culturally disarms the West. It makes the First World apologetic." — Shelby Steele
- "Should the civilization that made the individual possible finally collapse, the backward man will still be congratulating himself before the darkness falls on him too." Watch the White Guilt documentary.
- White guilt isn't about feeling guilty. It's about the fear of being called a racist. Shelby and Eli Steele's new documentary White Guilt exposes what that fear has cost America and the world. Are you ready for the conversation everyone is avoiding?
- What started in America didn't stay in America. White guilt has swept across the Western world, reshaping politics, silencing debate, and fueling a new tribalism none of us can afford to ignore. White Guilt is the documentary that names what is happening.
- We fought to escape identity tribalism once. It cost us everything. Now it's back, dressed in the language of social justice and inclusion. Father and son Shelby and Eli Steele confront the uncomfortable truth in their bold new documentary, White Guilt. Watch it. Share it.

SHORT CAPTIONS

- White guilt isn't guilt. It's fear. And fear has consequences.
- White guilt is the new white supremacy.
- White guilt isn't guilt. It's fear. And fear has no borders.
- America surrendered to white guilt in the 1960s. The whole world is paying for it.
- White guilt went from America to the world. The White Guilt documentary explains how.

LONG CAPTIONS

- Most people think white guilt means white Americans feel bad about racism. Shelby Steele has spent decades arguing otherwise. White guilt is not remorse. It is the terror of being stigmatized as a racist. And to escape that stigma, institutions and individuals have been willing to surrender the very principles that make a free society possible. In their bold new documentary, Shelby and Eli Steele trace where that surrender has led, from America's cities to campuses across the globe.
- Many Americans fought to beat back the tribalism of the white supremacy era. It took everything we had. Now tribalism is back and it has gone global. Decades of identity politics have sorted people by race, rewarded grievance, and punished honest conversation, not just in America but across the entire Western world. Now we live under the white guilt racial order. Father and son Shelby and Eli Steele have made a film about what happened, how it spread worldwide, and why the stakes could not be higher.
- Shelby Steele grew up on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement. He watched America reckon with its history of racial oppression and lose its moral footing in the process. What followed was white guilt — not conscience, but fear — and a series of bargains that cost America its principles and blacks their freedom to be seen as individuals. But the story did not stop at America's borders. That same fear spread across the Western world, taking root in governments, universities, and institutions from London to Sydney to South Israel, fueling a new tribalism and silencing the honest conversation that free societies depend on to survive. Forty years later, his son Eli picked up the camera. Together they have made the film America has been waiting for: White Guilt.