***13th –* FILM SUMMARY**

In the years prior to the release of ***13th***, with the help of the Black Lives Matter movement and social media, there was significant rise in awareness around the amount of prejudice African Americans continue to face in the 21st century.

The historical roots of this oppression run deep, as Ava DuVernay’s documentary ***13th*** reveals. The film looks back to the ratification of Amendment XIII, which states, ***“Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, nor any place subject to their jurisdiction.”*** DuVernay argues that a prison-industrial complex which statistically imprisons black men disproportionately and allows for their disciplinary servitude has taken advantage of America’s black population and brings into question if this system ultimately acts as a form of modern day slavery.

Featuring a wide range of interviewees – including civil rights activist Angela Davis, “***The New Jim Crow***” author Michelle Alexander, regular New Yorker reporter and professor Jelani Cobb, social justice author and attorney Van Jones, and many more – ***13th*** moves from the media-induced criminalization of black persons to the corporate privatization of prisons with eloquence, poise, and a cavalcade of statistics to back up its thesis on the dehumanization of black people in America.

The film traces a 150 year-old history of race, incarceration, and disempowerment of minority communities in America. But despite the negatives of that history, DuVernay’s film remains hopeful in acknowledging her fellow African Americans’ diligence and grace in their fight for equality under intolerable conditions. No one knows how bright or dark the future of America will be, but as Jones vigilantly states, “It will be.”