



Mississippi
 Alberta
 North Portland

MIETRO

Vancouver
 East County
 Beaverton



In 1989, five black and Latino teenagers were wrongfully convicted of attacking and raping a white female jogger in New York City's Central Park. The story of injustice is told in the Ken Burns documentary 'The Central Park Five.' (Photo by The Daily News/Courtesy IFC Films)

OPINIONATED JUDGE
 BY JUDGE DARLEEN ORTEGA

Wrongfully Convicted

Attention must be paid when injustice rules

I am often struck by how many stories of oppression and injustice remain untold and unheeded. Foreexample, we live in Indian country, and how many of us in Oregon know anything about what happened to the tribes on whose land we live? How many white Portlanders know about Vanport, a housing development that was home to many of the African Americans who moved to Oregon in the 1940s and whose residents were displaced by a devastating, Katrina-like flood when the

levees broke in 1948? Such neglected stories are all around us. The excellent documentary, "The Central Park Five" -- number six on my list of the best films of 2012 -- tells an especially interesting such story that everyone was talking about back in 1989. Then the story was that five African American and Latino teenagers had raped a young white woman and nearly beaten her to death. However, when the young men were exonerated 13 years later after serving lengthy

sentences for the crimes, the story received relatively little attention. The longer version of this story -- whose ending remains to be written -- deserved an audience and a radical retelling. The filmmakers -- Ken Burns, his daughter Sarah, and her husband David McMahon -- take a perceptive approach to the material. They dispense with voiceover, and instead use journalists and social scientists to explain the context in which the events took place, in a crime-ridden New York where

racial tensions ran particularly high. But primarily they allow the five young men to tell their own stories. Why were they in the park that night? What was their experience of being picked up by the police? Of being interrogated? What were they thinking when they confessed to such brutal crimes? It's an important contrast to the original telling of these events in the press, which was that the five were among a "wolf pack" of minority hoodlums from the projects who were roaming through the park that night, engaged in "wildings," that is, several as-

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