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## 13th

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ishment for a crime." The movie's basic thesis is that, after the Civil War, racists seized on that loophole to keep the black masses in chains.

The film features interviews with an array of luminaries, including Angela Davis, Senator Cory Booker, Dr. Henry Louis Gates and attorney Michelle Alexander, author of "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness."

Inter alia, "13th" blames

D.W. Griffith's "The Birth of a Nation" (1915) for resurrecting the Ku Klux Klan by demonizing Black males. It goes on to point out that more than 300 Klansmen were elected delegates to the

**“Virtually no one who is white understands the challenge of being black in America” —Newt Gingrich**

1924 Democratic National Convention.

Though an arch-conservative, Newt Gingrich adopts a sympathetic posture regarding the plight of African Amer-

icans, observing that "Virtually no one who is White understands the challenge of being Black in America." And former Green Czar Van Jones, who served in the Obama administration, asks a

very thought-provoking question, namely: "Why is the Black community so weak in defending itself?"

Part of the answer is revealed in the profit-max-

imizing agenda of the Corrections Corporation of America, a company which has successfully lobbied to expand and privatize the prison industry. The upshot is that today there are millions of Blacks behind bars, a sad reflection of the reality that a defendant is way better off in the courts being rich and guilty than poor and innocent.

The incendiary expose' closes with Jones asserting that the Black Lives Matter movement "is not a stoppable phenomenon" because it's fundamentally about reshaping the country's understanding of human

dignity.

It'll certainly be interesting to see how things shake out, given the ascension of Donald Trump, who has taken the position that "All lives matter" while declaring himself the law-and-order president-elect.

Excellent ★★★★★

Unrated

Running time: 100 minutes

Distributor: Netflix

### STREETCAR SAFETY & RISK OFFICER I

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12-21-16

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12-28-16

## Legend

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one we'd love to collaborate with. My producing partner [Mike Jackson] suggested we connect with him very early on, after we saw a screener of "Whiplash."

We finally got a chance to sit down and discuss something creative when he was in the process of preparing to shoot "La La Land." The script was finished, and they were already in talks with Ryan and Emma to star in it. Damien wanted to see if we were interested in getting involved. He was originally thinking in terms of executive producing and in terms of the music for the character, Keith, and his band, The Messengers. But eventually, he asked me if I wanted to play Keith. I said, "Yeah, let's do it!" I hadn't done anything

like it before. I hadn't had a major speaking role in a film before. But I guess he felt that I could pull it off, because the character had some similarities to my own background as a musician. Damien thought I could relate to the character, and I felt the same way. So, it made sense for me to do it, since I was already a fan of his work. And then, when I found out that Ryan and Emma had come aboard, it seemed like a no-brainer for us to get involved.

**KW:** Early in your career, were you a musical purist like Sebastian, who had a reverence for the classics?

**JL:** No, I never looked at myself as a purist in the sense of simply wanting to recreate old music that I'd grown up listening to. I never struggled with that conundrum. But I think every artist is influenced by certain tradi-

tions and the artists they grew up listening to. For Taylor Swift, it was country music. For me, it was gospel and soul. Other artists grew up listening to folk, classic rock or whatever else it was for them. But no matter what your early influences are, you have to decide how much you're just recreating the feelings those artists gave you, recreating their styles, or doing something fresh and new that's influenced by them. I think we all deal with that. There's always the push and pull in our careers of how much we go traditional and how much we try to change it up and do something new.

**KW:** After watching the film, I was surprised to see that you have so few acting credits, because you did a phenomenal job.

**JL:** Thank you! I'd spent my whole career focused on music. Acting wasn't something I was really pursuing, even though we were doing film and TV behind the camera as producers, because music takes up so much of my creative energy. But I couldn't pass up the opportunity to work with such great people.

**KW:** Editor/Legist Patricia Turnier says: Like many people, I think that you are a great artist and I consider you like the young Stevie Wonder. I saw you in Montreal when you opened for Alicia Keys on one of her tours. Given that your new film is about jazz, please name a few of your favorite jazz musicians.

**JL:** Honestly, I don't consider myself much of a jazz aficionado. When I was growing up, my dad used to play a lot of vocalists like Billie Holiday, Ella [Fitzgerald], Sarah

Vaughan, Nancy Wilson and Nat King Cole. So, I grew up loving some of the great standards singers and jazz vocalists. Also Nina Simone, who cut across a few different genres. Those are a few of my bigger influences, but I wouldn't say I was much of a jazz expert.

**KW:** I'd like to congratulate you on your new album, "Darkness and Light," which I've been

listening to. It's terrific!

**JL:** Thank you. I'm really proud of it. It's funny being in "La La Land" mode today, since I've been in Darkness and Light mode for the past month, and I'll be back into it for the next year or so. It's exciting to support this really beautiful film and to have a new album out at the same time.

Read the rest of this interview at [TheSkanner.com](http://TheSkanner.com)

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