

Thank you for presenting A Dangerous Idea. We made this film to raise awareness about the disturbing history of the eugenics movement in the U.S. and to do what we can to prevent our country's healthcare systems, education systems and opportunities, and even public safety from being shaped by the notion of "genetic superiority". We can all challenge these dangerous ideas to create a better future for our children and future generations. We hope you find this Viewing Guide a valuable companion for hosting the film in 5-easy steps.

### #1 Choose Film Options

#### **Full Film: 1 hour and 47 minutes**

Your group may wish to watch the full film and discuss the full spectrum of topics it covers. If you're doing a virtual screening and discussion, your group can watch the film at home and join a scheduled ZOOM discussion any time after.

#### **42-minute Excerpt**

If you prefer a shorter screening, this version offers the basics about genetic determinism, then features the compelling story of Elaine Riddick, one woman's fight to end forced sterilization. Also included is the little-known history of how the Nixon administration worked to overturn War on Poverty programs while also lifting a moratorium on federal funds being used to reimburse clinics for sterilization operations. That policy change resulted in nearly half a million women and girls living in poverty – most African American – being sterilized without their knowledge, through coercion, or against their will.

#### **13-Minute Film Summary**

Not much time? This edited summary gives a quick overview of the film's topics. If your group has 30-minutes to spend together on this activity, you could watch the 13-minute version and the rest of the time for discussion.

All versions of the film mentioned can be found in your online kit. [Click here to access that page on our website.](#)

### #2 Choose a Virtual or In-Person Screening

#### **Virtual Screening and Discussion**

Many people find that hosting a virtual screening for members of their community group or congregation is the easiest and most accessible option.

1. **Set a date for discussion.** Create a ZOOM invitation link (or another online app). Remember that free ZOOM accounts only allow 40-minute sessions.
2. **Email the Zoom link** to your invitees, along with the film link and discussion questions. Schedule the discussion time within a week so that the film is fresh in everyone's minds.
3. **Host your ZOOM discussion** and determine any follow-on activities.

#### **In-Person Film Viewing and Discussion**

Consider where to host your screening. Which locations in your area could accommodate the number of people you anticipate? Movie theaters, houses of worship, community centers, schools, libraries, museums, commercial venues, parks, and private homes are all excellent venues. Find a partner. Who is already working on these issues in your community? Can they co-sponsor the event? Help spread the word? Speak on a panel discussion after the screening? Potential partners include educational groups, faith-based community groups, and grassroots organizations. Invite a guest speaker. Teachers, religious leaders, and community activists offer insight into the issues raised in the film and help encourage discussion or facilitate a Q&A session with your audience after the screening.

## #3 Promote Your Event

Think about the best ways to publicize your screening. Send emails to your group and personal contact lists. Share on social media. Create a Facebook event page. Post to online community calendars, and place announcements in your email newsletters. Feel free to include the film trailer and testimonials.

Promotional Trailer: <https://bit.ly/3KIqVfd>

Your [online screening kit](#) includes links to promotional language and images that you can use.

### Testimonials that you can use to promote your screening event:

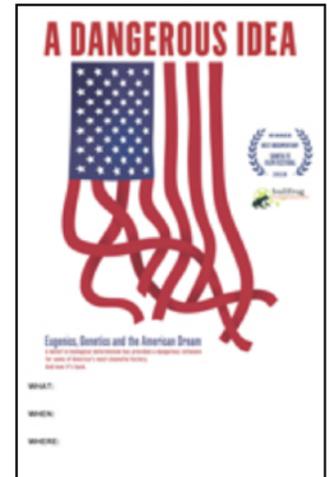
“You have these people who ... just seemed to have missed the whole point of the country. And they think that the founding reality of profound inequality is fine with them. And that view even tries to masquerade as science.”

— **VAN JONES**, activist, commentator, author, non-practicing attorney

“In this time of false facts and backlash against a new equality, A Dangerous Idea should be required viewing.”

— **GLORIA STEINEM**, writer, lecturer, political activist

**A DANGEROUS IDEA**  
Screening Poster  
click to download  
(customize for your event)



## #4 Lead a Discussion

### Here are some sample questions you can use in your post-screening discussion depending on your group's interests:

The book, *The Bell Curve*, was notorious for its arguments that there is a racial hierarchy in terms of “intelligence”. But the main argument the authors were making was that a genetic hierarchy that determines where you end up in society, rich or poor, success or failure. Have you encountered views reflecting this sentiment? What do you think helps to perpetuate this view?

After viewing *A Dangerous Idea*, do you feel that cutting funds to lift people out of poverty is a form of eugenics? If so, why? What can moral arguments be made against these policy decisions?

Have you heard claims that males and females have different brains that make them better suited for specific jobs or abilities? What other assumptions about the sexes have you encountered or experienced?

We often hear comments about people having certain genes to describe their personality or behavior, like “the smart gene” or “the funny gene”. What about when it’s used to claim that people are born with genes that make them more prone to poverty and criminal behavior?

Were you required to take IQ tests when you were young? In the military? In order to get a job? What about the SAT to get into college? Talk about your experiences with those tests and the notion that a single number can determine your access to opportunities.

Why is it easier for some groups of immigrants and refugees to come to the U.S. and not others? Do you see this as an example of how eugenics is used to promote so-called “genetic superiority”? If so, why?

Do you know anyone who was a victim of U.S. eugenics policy? What sort of reparations do you believe there should be for them? Do you think a new wave of eugenics could happen again? If so, who do you think would be targeted? How do you think it can be prevented?

## #5 Inspire Action

---

Click on these links for faith-based resources and helpful guides and tools that social justice and community groups can use to create meaningful action after watching *A DANGEROUS IDEA* or shorter versions.

**FAITH-BASED RESOURCES**

**HELPFUL GUIDES & TOOLS**