

RUN DND

Mayor David N. Dinkins

A Documentary
Work in Progress

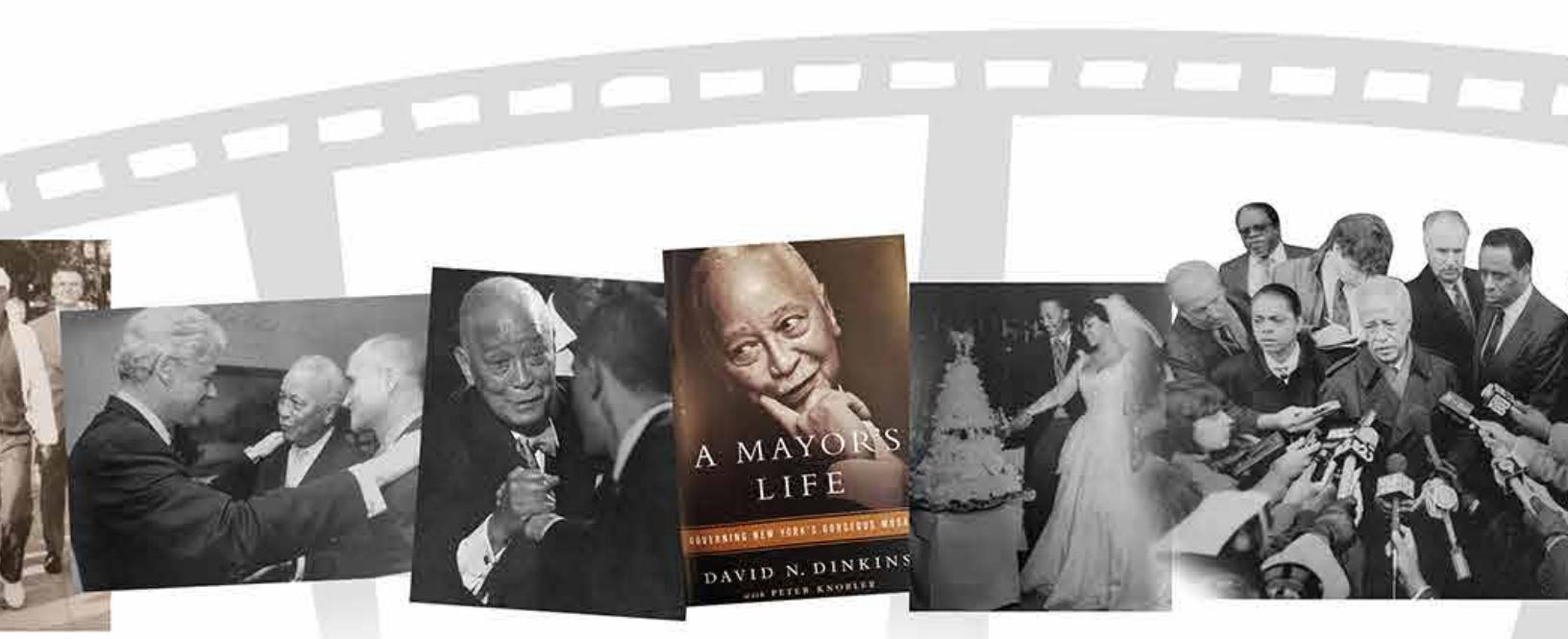


In 1989, David N. Dinkins made history when he was elected the 106th mayor of New York and the city's first African American mayor, defeating three-term Mayor Ed Koch in the primary and beating Rudy Giuliani in the general election.

By his third term, the once popular Mayor Koch had brought the city's storied melting pot to a rapid boil with such racially provocative utterances as, "Any Jew would have to be crazy to vote for Jesse Jackson." With African Americans pitted against Jews, Italians pitted against African Americans, and so on, the simmering racial tensions were exacerbated by widespread charges of police brutality against the city's minority populations. Rampant crime, the crack epidemic, and an economic downturn dragged a beleaguered city to the edge of implosion.

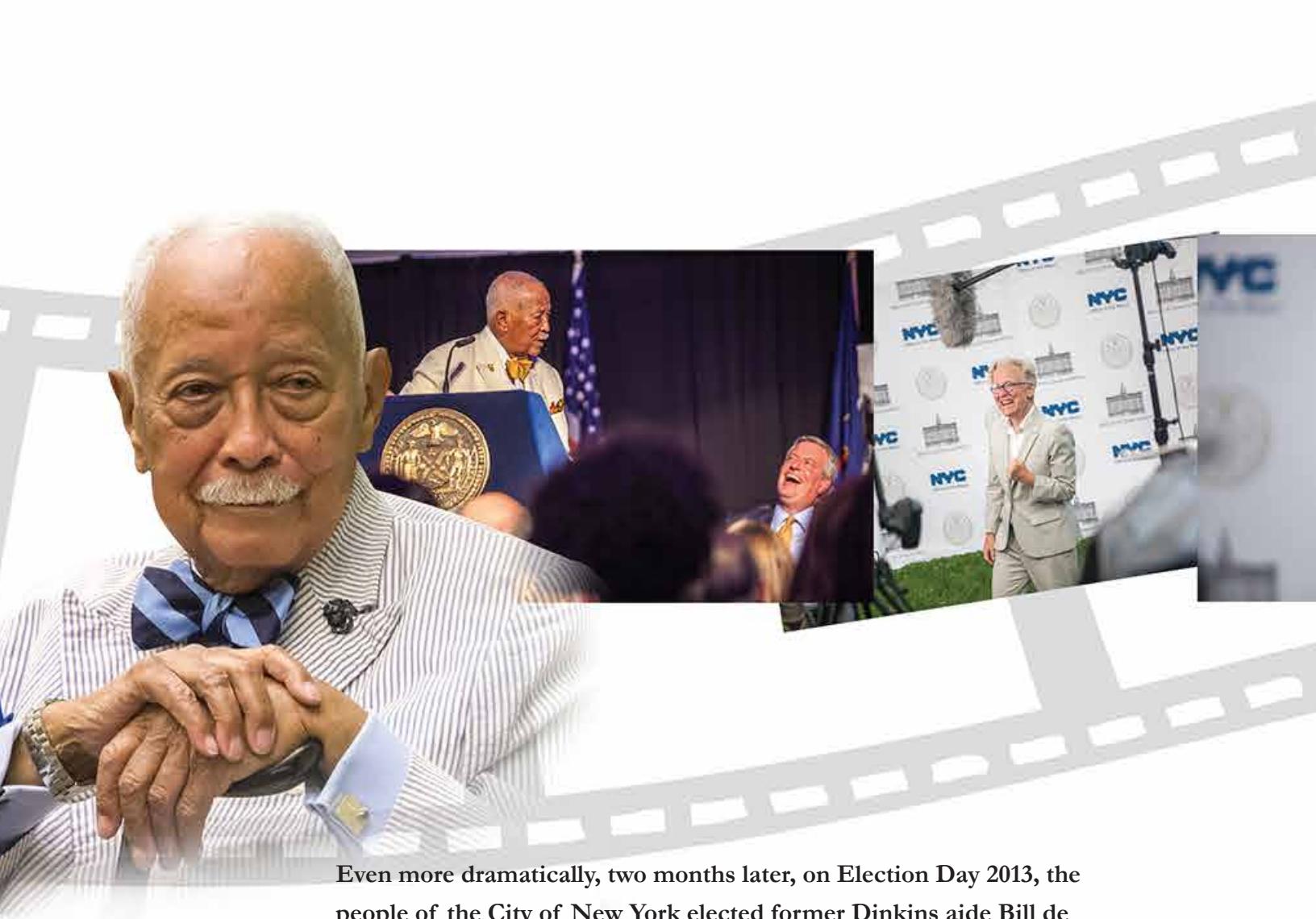
Jesse Jackson's victory in New York City in the 1988 Presidential primary convinced Democratic political leaders that a person of color could become mayor of New York. Manhattan Borough President Dinkins listened to his advisors and decided to go for it. Running under the slogan, "You don't have to be loud to be strong," he and his team mobilized a coalition that truly reflected the city's diverse population and was powered by the city's progressives, including labor.

In electing Mayor Dinkins, New Yorkers voted to end the scalding tensions around them in a call for civility. But today, more than two decades after the end of his term, the man who was elected to heal the racial strains of a city is largely remembered through the narrow prism of a racially charged flashpoint that occurred on his watch: the Crown Heights riot, which deeply frayed the longstanding bond between the city's African-American and Jewish communities.



The loudest voices have tended to dominate the debate about the wins and losses of the Dinkins administration. The Mayor, true to his campaign slogan, chose by and large not to respond to the harsher voices. While this may have allowed others to define his tenure, he steadfastly believed that in the fullness of time a more accurate story of those years would emerge – the story of a turning point for New York, when the rising tide of crime that most accepted as inevitable was finally turned back and a strong foundation built for the Mayor’s successors, through such innovations as Beacon schools, community policing, neighborhood health clinics, and much more.

Twenty years after leaving office, Dinkins himself began the process of telling that story. In 2013, in the wake of Mayor Koch’s passing and the release of a film about his tenure, as well as the untimely death of Bill Lynch, the political strategist behind Mayor Dinkins’s election, Dinkins published his autobiography, *A Mayor’s Life: Governing New York’s Gorgeous Mosaic*, written with Peter Knobler.



Even more dramatically, two months later, on Election Day 2013, the people of the City of New York elected former Dinkins aide Bill de Blasio Mayor – effectively ending the silence by Dinkins and his supporters about his tenure. Most recently, in 2015, on behalf of the city, de Blasio personally led the ceremony that named the Municipal Building after Dinkins.

With these monumental changes, it is important to create and widely distribute a visual documentation of the story of the Dinkins years.

The film will present the historic election and mayoralty of David Dinkins through the eyes of political players, key staff members, journalists, civic leaders and cultural figures including hip-hop artists and activist icons. Person-on-the-street interviews, conducted throughout the city's five boroughs, will add unfiltered attitudes and perspectives. Cultural touchstones in which Mayor Dinkins is mentioned such as "SNL", "In Living Color", "Seinfeld" and hip hop anthems such as "Can You Kick It?" will also be included to capture the zeitgeist, the spirit of the time.



"RUN DND" (working title) will capture a unique moment in New York City's history spanning the spectrum from Dinkins' accomplishments to failures and flashpoints. Over 50 interviews have already been filmed, including Mayor Dinkins, Bill Lynch, Harry Belafonte, members of the administration and many others, with more in the works.

Mayor Dinkins is now 90 years old. It is time for a more complete story of his administration to be told.

"RUN DND" is an independent feature documentary film in progress directed by Laura Hart, a communications professional and former Dinkins aide and produced by Nina Streich, Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre & Broadcasting in the Dinkins Administration, currently Executive Director of the Global Peace Film Festival. "RUN DND" has the full support and involvement of Mayor Dinkins.



ONE **CENTRE** STREET **SYNDICATE**