

For Immediate Release: October 22, 2020

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THE ID FILMS PREMIERE OF “THE WITMANS” EXPLORES THE HARSH REALITIES OF THE UNITED STATES SENTENCING ITS CHILDREN TO LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

– Investigation Discovery Exposes the Injustices of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Through the Tragedy of One Single Family in the Documentary Premiere of “The Witmans” –

(Silver Spring, Md.) – In 1998, 13-year-old Greg Witman stepped off the school bus and 11 minutes later, Greg’s older brother Zach frantically called 911 to report that he had found Greg lying in a pool of blood. 15-year-old Zach went into shock – and then into custody as the police’s only lead. What followed Greg’s murder is a harrowing decades-long journey of one family trapped at the cruel intersection of small-town panic, a media frenzy, and a fractured criminal justice system.

The United States is the only country that allows juveniles to be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole, which is exactly what happened in 2002 to Zach Witman, after he served nearly five years on house arrest before his trial and subsequent conviction. Now, after more than five years in the making, Investigation Discovery and Zero Point Zero Production in association with Docupation Films are proud to premiere **THE WITMANS**, a haunting documentary which serves as a harsh exploration of the intricacies and evolution of juvenile incarceration in America. Told intimately through the eyes of two parents on a 20-year odyssey to free their last surviving child, **THE WITMANS** premieres on Investigation Discovery on **Tuesday, December 1 from 9-11pm ET/PT.**

“**THE WITMANS** profiles an unimaginable tragedy for one family to endure. First, Ron and Sue Witman lost one son to a brutal murder, and then shortly after, the other to the system,” said Henry Schleiff, Group President Investigation Discovery, Travel Channel, American Heroes Channel and Destination America. “We are humbled that the Witmans decided to share their heartbreaking story with ID’s viewers, and we are hopeful that this documentary will provide a critical look at the fractured policies of youth incarceration in America.”

Despite a faulty investigation, only circumstantial evidence, and no motive for murder, Zach was tried as an adult and found guilty, sentenced to life in prison without parole. Despite newly uncovered evidence that might have exonerated him, after 21 years of appeals, reversals, and professions of innocence, Zach Witman took a plea bargain in 2018 and was finally released from prison in May 2019. His release was a direct result of landmark Supreme Court ruling that declared sentencing a child to a mandatory sentence of life without parole was unconstitutional. With expert insight from Bryan Stevenson, the civil rights lawyer who argued the case and founded the Equal Justice Initiative, this two-hour documentary explores impact of youth incarceration, taking into consideration issues of race and affluence, geography and history. Zach Witman is the canary in the coal mine for other children in America suffering under the justice system, proving how tragic it is for every child in this country, and **THE WITMANS** takes viewers on an intimate exploration of the limitations and principles of presumed innocence and a fair trial. The filmmaking team was granted extraordinary access by the family to their story, offering viewers an insight into the case never-before-revealed in the sensational press that followed the case for 20 years.

Directed by Academy-award nominee David Petersen, **THE WITMANS** is produced for Investigation Discovery by Zero Point Zero Production Inc with Lydia Tenaglia, Christopher Collins, and Craig H.

Shepherd serving as executive producers. Shannon Sun-Higginson, Nikolas Diener, Gregory Timmons, and Leslie Drinkwater also executive produce. For ID, Sara Kozak is Executive Producer and Senior Vice President of Production, Kevin Bennett is General Manager, and Henry Schleiff is Group President of Investigation Discovery, Travel Channel, American Heroes Channel and Destination America.

About Zero Point Zero

Zero Point Zero is a television, film, print and digital content company founded in 2003 by Executive Producers Chris Collins and Lydia Tenaglia. Since its inception, the company has produced hundreds of hours of documentary content in over 100 countries around the world, including the critically acclaimed, Emmy & Peabody Award winning series Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown (CNN); the Emmy Award winning The Mind of a Chef (Netflix) and Emmy nominated series My Next Guest with David Letterman (Netflix), Rotten (Netflix), Somebody Feed Phil (Netflix), as well as Pandemic, and Broken (Netflix). Feature documentary credits include: Jeremiah Tower The Last Magnificent (dist. by The Orchard); Wasted! The Story of Food Waste (dist by Neon SuperLTD); Stars in the Sky A Hunting Story (dist by Netflix); Fermented (Dist by Giant), and Fries! The Movie. Zero Point Zero projects have received 89 Emmy nominations and 29 wins over the past 10 years. You can follow ZPZ at www.zeropointzero.com, [facebook](#) | [twitter](#) | [instagram](#)

About Docupation

Docupation is a collection of documentary filmmakers Nikolas Diener, Shannon Sun-Higginson, and Gregory Timmons, who have captured footage from the far corners of the globe, working in a wide range of media from television series to music videos to feature films to commercials. With material inspired by the knife's edge, the members of Docupation have directed feature film documentaries in the Philippines and South Korea, produced music videos for artists ranging from Dan Deacon to St. Vincent, created original programming airing on such networks as CNN, PBS, and the Travel Channel, premiered films at SXSW, and partnered with such clients as Hershey, University of Pennsylvania, NBC Universal, and Disney.

About Investigation Discovery

Investigation Discovery (ID) is the leading crime and justice network on television. Delivering the highest-quality programming to approximately 80 million U.S. households, ID is also available via the network's TV Everywhere offering, [IDGo](#). For exclusive web content and bonus material, fans can follow ID on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) or check out the network's true crime blog, [CrimeFeed](#).

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