

SIGN MY NAME TO FREEDOM

The Lost Music of Betty Reid Soskin

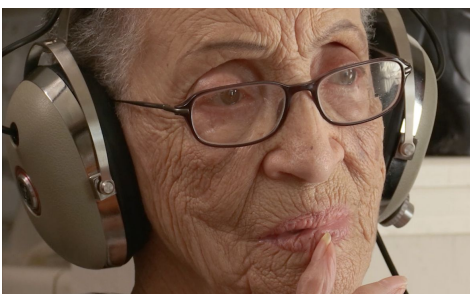
A FEATURE DOCUMENTARY FILM

CURRENTLY IN PRODUCTION



At an age when most people have been retired for decades, Betty Reid Soskin is helping redefine our understanding of racial segregation and civil rights. As a 20-year-old, she worked in the WWII home front effort but California's segregated shipyards restricted her to a menial job as a secretary in a Jim Crow union hall. Seventy-five years later, Betty is now the country's oldest national park ranger at 96, and she has shaped Richmond's Rosie the Riveter Park into a public examination of racism and segregation during the War, earning a presidential medal of honor from Barack Obama.

But there is a hidden side to Betty's life she rarely talks about. Back in the 1960s, Betty was a singer/songwriter with a voice like Billie Holiday and the relevance of Nina Simone, but she turned her back on a potential career as a singer, and her music has not been heard for 40 years. Betty's songs were born from her experiences as the first African American family to move into an all-white suburb, and they are windows into the forgotten history of Jim Crow in California. Now Betty teams up with jazz composer Marcus Shelby and his orchestra of young musicians in San Francisco to write and perform new arrangements of her songs, sparking an autobiographical journey through the black experience by three generations of musicians.



Sign My Name to Freedom is a feature documentary about Betty, her lost music and her family's experiences confronting segregation in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Directed by Bryan Gibel

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