



THE SACRIFICE ZONE
DISCUSSION GUIDE

THESACRIFICEZONE.ORG

PRE-SCREENING QUESTIONS

- What comes to mind when you hear the phrase, “environmental justice?”
- What is the difference between environmental justice and environmentalism?
- What do you know about toxic waste sites? Do you know the location of any toxic waste sites in your neighborhood or surrounding areas?
- What do you know about garbage disposal? Who takes your waste? Where does it go?
- Identify the point at which you stop thinking about your garbage. Where does your relationship with your garbage end?
- What do you think a sacrifice zone is?

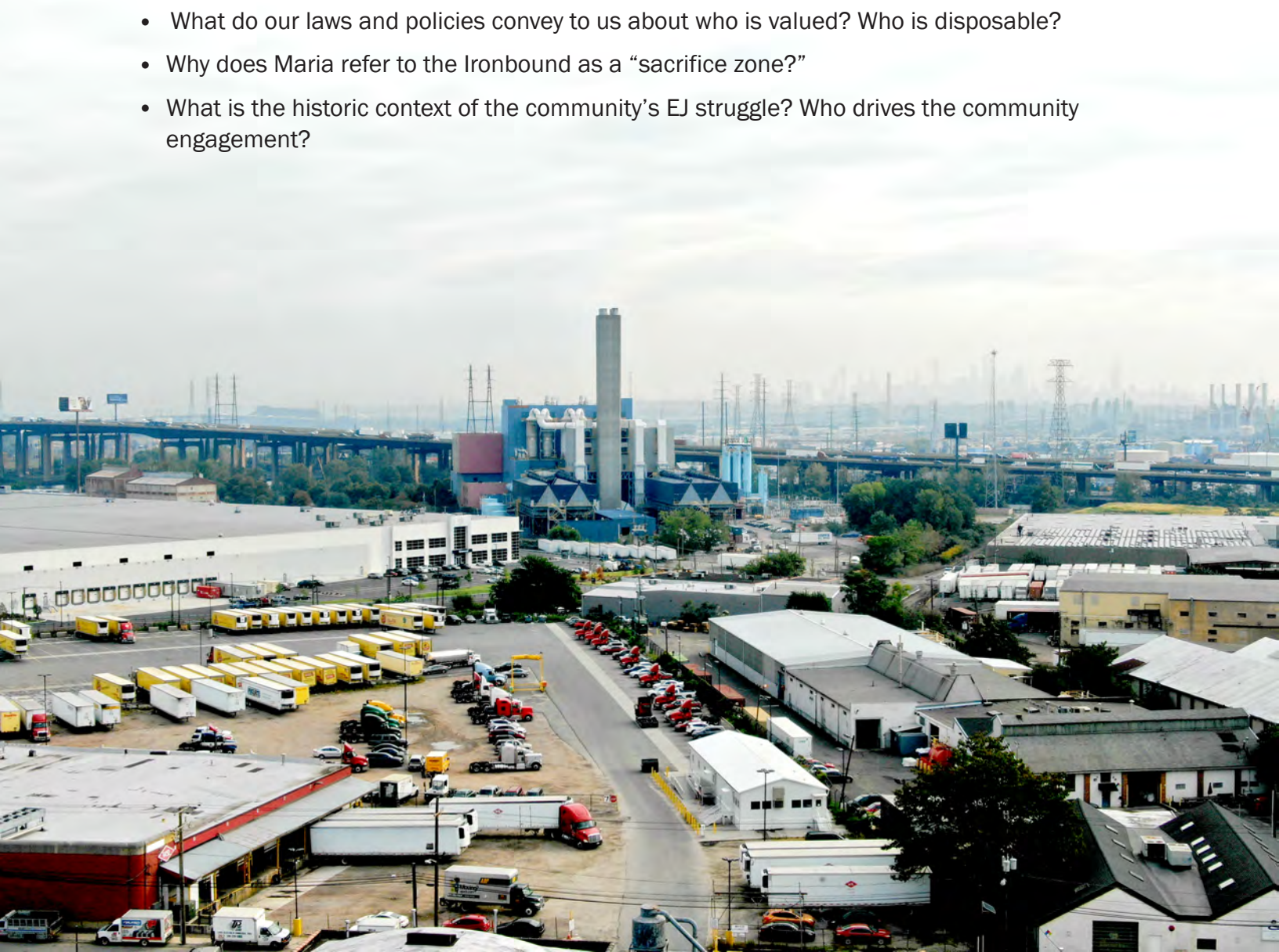
As you watch this film, identify:

- ***Things that stand out to you***
- ***Feelings you have***
- ***Questions that come up***
- ***Things you hadn't realized before***



POST-SCREENING QUESTIONS

- What feelings came up for you while watching this film?
- What did you notice/what stood out to you?
- What questions do you still have?
- What in the film reflected your own life or personal experiences?
- What in the film allowed you to learn about an experience other than your own?
- This film documents the experiences of people who live in the Ironbound section of Newark, NJ. What is the demographic make-up of the community? Consider factors like race, immigrant status, and class/socioeconomic status.
- What communities in our state bear the brunt of environmental injustices and climate change? What do they share in common with the Ironbound?
- What connections do you see between “environmental justice (EJ) communities” and factors like race and class?
- What do our laws and policies convey to us about who is valued? Who is disposable?
- Why does Maria refer to the Ironbound as a “sacrifice zone?”
- What is the historic context of the community’s EJ struggle? Who drives the community engagement?





- Think back to the conversation between Covanta and the Ironbound Community Corporation, and the scene inside Covanta.
 - What different needs and concerns are expressed in those two scenes?
 - What did you notice and observe about the priorities of each group?
- How big is the challenge of waste disposal in NJ and how is it being handled?
- What is the impact of having a private business such as Covanta run waste management? What, if anything, does a business who profits off of the community owe to the community?
- What are the environmental factors and neighborhood design elements shown in this film that impact people's health outcomes?
 - Think back to the interview with Nyheim (the young skateboarder) – what does he highlight for the viewer? What other factors impact health outcomes for residents?
 - What does this tell you about structural inequity?
- If we wouldn't want the garbage burning in our own backyard, why are we comfortable putting it in someone else's? What does this tell us about our ability to detach from other people and communities? How do we regain our sense of humanity and responsibility?
- How is the story in this film connected to other national and global struggles for environmental justice?



CLOSING THOUGHTS

- Before watching the film, we discussed what we know about garbage disposal and toxic waste. After watching this documentary, what did you learn that you had never considered before?
- Find out where your trash goes and how it's processed. What is your responsibility to the land and people where you literally throw your garbage?
- What are steps can you take to decrease the impact you have? How can you consume less?
- Is there a way to consume "better"? What would this look like? Is consuming "better" enough?
- Brainstorm ways you can put pressure on waste disposal companies to decrease their environmental impact.
- The movie highlights examples of community activism, and shows us that individual actions (e.g. recycling, reusable bags) alone cannot alleviate the burden from environmental justice communities. What steps can you take to support environmental justice efforts in your community?

Find out more about the work of the Ironbound Community Corporation by visiting ironboundjustice.org

These discussion questions were created by The ROOTS Project, a grassroots organization committed to justice and equity (inclusiveroots.org), and Talking Eyes Media, a nonprofit documentary production company (talkingeyesmedia.org).

