

STICKUP KID DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

About **Stickup Kid** – This short film gives an inside perspective on California’s harsh juvenile laws that make it easier to try young people as adults. By following the story of Alonza Thomas, it shows the harmful effects of the so-called “predator laws” created in the early 1990s to get tough on juvenile offenders. While juvenile crime did not rise as predicted, these new state laws kept too many kids like Alonza in adult facilities for too long. Following his story shows us the harsh realities of kids facing adult sentences. (2014) 28 min.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/stickup-kid/>

Questions to Stimulate Thought and Discussion:

1. What were your impressions of Alonza?
2. How does the film represent Alonza’s physical vs. emotional age?
3. Alonza’s family was featured throughout the film. Why do you think the producer of the film included their perspective?
4. The producer also interviewed the victim of the crime, the District Attorney, the defense attorney, and a civil rights attorney. What were the similarities and/or differences among these stakeholders in terms of the age/rights/responsibilities of Alonza?
5. How was the physical environment of the adult prison similar or different from youth detention facilities? How do you think the physical space impacted Alonza?
6. How did Alonza describe/see himself in terms of his age and future?
7. What messages about adolescent development emerge through this film?
8. What are the policies, practices, and protections in your state for youth (under 18) charged and sentenced as adults?
9. How should states begin to use developmental approaches in their policies to protect kids in contact with the criminal justice system?

For more information, contact:

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