



## THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES AFI DOCS 2016 AUDIENCE AWARD WINNERS

### Description

Best Feature Goes to MAYA ANGELOU: AND STILL I RISE

Best Short Goes to SNAILS

**Festival Connects International Filmmakers with U.S. and Global Leaders**





### Judd Apatow, Werner Herzog, Norman Lear, Members of Congress and More Join Industry??s

### Top Documentarians for 14th Edition of AFI DOCS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** ??? JUNE 27, 2016, WASHINGTON, DC ??? The American Film Institute announced today the AFI DOCS 2016 Audience Award winners, concluding the five-day festival in Washington, DC, and Silver Spring, MD. This year??s Audience Award for Best Feature went to MAYA ANGELOU: AND STILL I RISE, directed by Rita Coburn Whack and Bob Hercules (U.S.). This year??s Audience Award for Best Short went to SNAILS, directed by Grzegorz Szczepaniak (Poland). With 93 films from 30 countries, the festival brought together filmmakers, industry, national policy and opinion leaders.

The 2016 festival provided unique opportunities for audiences, filmmakers and policymakers to meet in our nation??s capital as news unfolded. U.S. Representatives Jim Himes and Nita Lowey addressed the NEWTOWN Spotlight Screening audience at the Newseum just hours after Democrats concluded their sit-in on the floor of the House of Representatives. AFI DOCS filmmakers convened with policymakers at the White House, while AFI DOCS Impact Lab-participating filmmakers met with U.S. Representatives Ted Lieu, Jim McGovern and David Price.

As part of AFI DOCS 2016, the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands and the U.S. State Department conducted a gathering and roundtable of international filmmakers from Pakistan. The meeting focused on how international filmmakers can make the leap into the established western film community, along with private conversations on how to handle issues such as funding, distribution and censorship. This is the third year AFI DOCS and the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands have partnered to organize programs to advance the art and impact of documentary film.

This year's AFI DOCS attendees included renowned filmmakers Judd Apatow, Ramin Bahrani, Heidi Ewing, Alex Gibney, Rachel Grady, Werner Herzog (this year's AFI DOCS Charles Guggenheim Symposium honoree) and Barbara Kopple, along with acclaimed singer Sharon Jones and television icon Norman Lear. Global, national and local leaders in attendance included U.S. Representatives Jim Himes and Nita Lowey and German Ambassador Peter Wittig.

Joining the opinion leaders were distinguished journalists: PBS NewsHour's Chief Arts Correspondent Jeffrey Brown and Political Director Lisa Desjardins; The Undeclared's Editor-in-Chief Kevin Merida and Culture Writer Soraya Nadia McDonald; and The Washington Post's Chief Film Critic Ann Hornaday, Editor Josh Freedom du Lac and Opinion Writer Alyssa Rosenberg.

## **MORE ABOUT THE WINNING FILMS:**

### **MAYA ANGELOU: AND STILL I RISE**

Co-directors Bob Hercules and Rita Coburn Whack present a lovingly crafted and comprehensive portrait of the esteemed Dr. Maya Angelou. The story is told by Angelou herself, along with a cast of contemporaries from her careers as actress, writer, poet and activist. In chronicling Angelou's life from her youth in the Depression-era South through her rise to international prominence, the film is a vital document about the importance of grace, dignity and the quest for peace.

### **SNAILS**

Best friends with a shared goal of becoming millionaires believe they've found the answer to their dreams in an unlikely profession: snail farming.

AT&T is the presenting sponsor of AFI DOCS 2016. AFI's official airline, American Airlines, returned as an Official Sponsor of the festival. Official Sponsors included the Corporation for Public

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Broadcasting, NBCUniversal and VIZIO. Major Sponsors included The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands, BRICKTOWN, Catapult Film Fund, CrossCurrents Foundation, CYM Media & Entertainment, DC Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment, the Fledgling Fund, Google, Harbers Studios and the Maryland Film Office.

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### **About AFI DOCS**

AFI DOCS is the American Film Institute's annual documentary festival in the Washington, DC area. Presenting the year's best documentaries, AFI DOCS is the premier festival in the U.S. dedicated to screenings and events that connect audiences, filmmakers and policy leaders in the seat of our nation's government. The AFI DOCS advisory board includes Ken Burns, Davis Guggenheim, Chris Hegedus, Werner Herzog, Rory Kennedy, Barbara Kopple, Spike Lee, Errol Morris, Stanley Nelson, D A Pennebaker, Agn s Varda and Frederick Wiseman. Now in its 14th year, the festival will be held June 22  26, 2016 in landmark Washington, DC venues and the historic AFI Silver Theatre in Silver Spring, MD. Visit [AFI.com/afidocs](http://AFI.com/afidocs) and connect on [twitter.com/afidocs](https://twitter.com/afidocs), [facebook.com/afidocs](https://facebook.com/afidocs) and [youtube.com/AFI](https://youtube.com/AFI).

## **About the American Film Institute**

**AFI is America's promise to preserve the heritage of the motion picture, to honor the artists and their work and to educate the next generation of storytellers.** AFI programs include the *AFI Catalog of Feature Films* and the **AFI Archive**, which preserve film heritage for future generations; the **AFI Life Achievement Award**, the highest honor for a career in film; **AFI AWARDS**, honoring the most outstanding movies and TV series of the year; **AFI's 100 Years! 100 Movies** television events and movie reference lists, which have introduced and reintroduced classic American movies to millions of film lovers; year-round and special event exhibition through **AFI FEST presented by Audi**, **AFI DOCS** and the **AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center**; and educating the next generation of storytellers at the world-renowned AFI Conservatory. For more information about AFI, visit [AFI.com](http://AFI.com) or connect with AFI at [twitter.com/AmericanFilm](https://twitter.com/AmericanFilm), [facebook.com/AmericanFilmInstitute](https://facebook.com/AmericanFilmInstitute), [instagram.com/AmericanFilmInstitute](https://instagram.com/AmericanFilmInstitute) and [youtube.com/AFI](https://youtube.com/AFI).

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