

THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES AFI DOCS 2019 AWARD WINNERS

Description

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AFI DOCS 2019 AWARD WINNERS

Audience Award for Best Feature Goes to CHASING THE MOON

Audience Award for Best Short Goes to ST. LOUIS SUPERMAN

Short Film Grand Jury Prize Goes to IN THE ABSENCE

Lilly Ledbetter, Bryan Stevenson, Freida Lee Mock, Eric Holder and More

Celebrate Documentary Film in the Nationâ??s Capital



AFI DOCS festival attendees at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Cinemaâ??s Legacy panel a reception (Credit: Gediyon Kifle).



Bryan Stevenson of the Equal Justice Initiative at AFI DOCS Opening Night (Credit: Gediyon Kifle).



Left to right; Mike Aguilar, Freida Lee Mock, AFI Festivalsâ?? Michael Lumpkin, Lilly Ledbetter, and Washington Postâ??s Ann Hornaday attend the Guggenheim Symposium at AFI DOCS 2019 (Credi Kifle).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE â?? JUNE 25, 2019, WASHINGTON, DC â?? The American Film Institute has announced the AFI DOCS 2019 Award Winners, concluding the five-day festival supported by Presenting Sponsor AT&T in Washington, DC, and Silver Spring, MD. The festivalâ??s Audience Award for Best Feature went to CHASING THE MOON, directed by Robert Stone. The Audience Award for Best Short went to ST. LOUIS SUPERMAN, directed by Smriti Mundhra and Sami Khan.

This yearâ??s competitive Short Films slate included a voting jury comprised of film producer Dolly Turner, documentary filmmaker Gabriella Garcia-Pardo and The Washington Postâ??s pop culture writer Elahe Izadi. The Grand Jury Prize for Short Films went to IN THE ABSENCE, directed by Yi Seung-Jun. The jury said of IN THE ABSENCE: â??â?¦a sweeping account that stuns. Through an exhaustive sourcing of content, the filmmaker precisely and chillingly weaves together a haunting tapestry that calls into question the trust we place in authority.â?•

The jury also awarded an honorable mention to A LOVE SONG FOR LATASHA, directed by Sophia Nahli Allison, whom the jury called â??an emerging artist.â?• The jury described the film as â??[a] relevant and intimate portrait depicting the trauma that stems from Americaâ??s insidious racism and how that lingers beyond a single violent moment.â?• An honorable mention also went to SCENES FROM A DRY CITY, â??an eerily crafted dystopian snapshot that both underscores the privilege of water and the United Nationsâ?? recent exhortation for â??rapid and unprecedented actionâ?? to mitigate climate change,â?• directed by Francois Verster and Simon Wood.

With 72 films from 17 countries, the 17th edition of AFI DOCS presented stories taking place as close as 17 blocks from the capital and as far as the moon, with subjects varying from a family-run ambulance service in Mexico to the surrogate pregnancy boom in Idaho to reforms needed in the criminal justice system. Among the attendees were filmmakers and notables including former Attorney General Eric Holder, Missouri State Representative Bruce Franks, Jr., National Council members Anthony R. Jimenez and Stephanie Hunt, the Equal Justice Initiativeâ??s Bryan Stevenson, Lilly Lynn

Ledbetter, Grace Guggenheim, Thomas Allen Harris, Liz Garbus, Morgan Neville, Freida Lee Mock, Terry Sanders, Rob Epstein, Jeffrey Friedman, Martha Shane and Irene Taylor Brodsky.

This yearâ??s festival included a number of panels featuring engaging discussions between filmmakers, film subjects and audience members â?? with conversation and examination of issues led by some of the nationâ??s top journalists: NBC Newsâ?? Morgan Radford;â?• NBC Newsâ?? â??Meet the Pressâ?• moderator and NBC News Political Director Chuck Todd; NBC Newsâ?? Chief White House Correspondent Hallie Jackson; Roll Call editor Jason Dick; and The Washington Postâ??s chief film critic Ann Hornaday, senior correspondent Kevin Sullivan, national correspondent Wesley Lowery, media reporter Paul Farhi, national security reporter Greg Miller, senior video editor Thomas LeGro, corporate accountability reporter Douglas MacMillan, entertainment reporter Emily Yahr and feature reporter Roxanne Roberts.

The AFI DOCS Forum explored unique topics with keynote presentations, conversations, panel discussions, micro-meetings and a day-long convening of local film communities. Programming for the Forum was made possible by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, NBC Newsâ?? â??Meet the Pressâ?• and The Washington Post.

The fifth edition of the AFI DOCS Impact Lab provided participating filmmakers with professional development in preparation for presenting their causes to key audiences to advance their messages and included meetings with advocates and industry and policy leaders.

Five films with AFI Conservatory alumni credits were included in this yearâ??s festival: THE AMAZING JOHNATHAN DOCUMENTARY (Director of Photography Dan Adlerstein); DAVID CROSBY: REMEMBER MY NAME (Director of Photography Edd Lukas); MOONLIGHT SONATA: DEAFNESS IN THREE MOVEMENTS (Executive Producer Sara Bernstein); RUTH â?? JUSTICE GINSBURG IN HER OWN WORDS (Screenwriter/Editor Mike Aguilar); and TONI MORRISON: THE PIECES I AM (Director Timothy Greenfield Sanders).

MORE ABOUT THE AWARD-WINNING FILMS:

AUDIENCE AWARD: FEATURE

CHASING THE MOON

DIR: Robert Stone. 50 years after Neil Armstrongâ??s â??one small step,â?• CHASING THE MOON chronicles Americaâ??s audacious and difficult race to the moon. Using exclusively archival footage â?? with much never before seen in public â?? this exceptional series re-contextualizes the social and historical importance of the Space Age and the sheer wonder of the moon landing itself. After the Soviets launched their Sputnik satellite, what was once thought as science fiction became reality. Fascinating stories told by those involved reveal how Americaâ??s space race fused scientific innovation, political drama and media spectacle into one profound achievement.

AUDIENCE AWARD: SHORT

ST. LOUIS SUPERMAN

DIRS: Smriti Mundhra, Sami Khan. Bruce Franks, Jr., is a 33-year-old battle rapper, Ferguson activist and state representative from St. Louis who has overcome unspeakable loss to become one of the most exciting and unapologetic young leaders in the country today.

SHORT FILM GRAND JURY PRIZE

IN THE ABSENCE

DIR: Yi Seung-Jun. When the passenger ferry MV Sewol sank off the coast of South Korea in 2014, more than 300 people lost their lives, most of them schoolchildren. Years later, the victimsâ?? families and survivors are still demanding justice from national authorities.

Honorable Mention: A LOVE SONG FOR LATASHA

DIR: Sophia Nahli Allison. Latasha Harlins was 15-years-old when she was killed by Soon Ja Du at Empire Liquor in South Central Los Angeles on March 16, 1991. This dreamlike, hybrid documentary reimagines a more nuanced narrative of Latashaâ??s life.

Honorable Mention: SCENES FROM A DRY CITY

DIR: Francois Verster and Simon Wood. In South Africa, an impending water crisis grips an entire nation.

AT&T returns for its sixth year as the Presenting Sponsor of AFI DOCS. The Official Sponsor for the 2019 festival is the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Primary Media sponsors include Meet the Press with Chuck Todd and the Washington Post. Screen Sponsors are Audi, HBO, Netflix and Showtime Documentary Films. Official Media Sponsors include Here TV, Variety and WHUT-TV. CuriosityStream; the DC Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment; 202Creates; IMDbPro; and Maryland Film Office returned this year as Major Sponsors, joined by the National Endowment for the Arts and Participant Media. The Contributing Sponsors are Filmmaker Magazine International Documentary Association. This yearâ??s Supporting Sponsors are Downtown Silver Spring, the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce, and Insight Property Group. Cultural and Community Sponsors are DC Filmmakers, Docs in Progress, the Embassy of Australia, the Mexican Cultural Institute, Producers Guild of America, TIVA-DC, The Video Consortium and Women in Film & Video. Support from individual underwriters was provided by Nancy Blachman, Grace Guggenheim, Stephanie and Hunter Hunt, John and Rachel King, Bryan Oâ??Keefe and Alexandra and Sean Parker.

About AFI DOCS

AFI DOCS is the American Film Instituteâ??s annual documentary festival in Washington, DC. Presenting the yearâ??s best documentaries, AFI DOCS is the only festival in the U.S. dedicated to screenings and events that connect audiences, filmmakers and policy leaders in the heart of our nationâ??s government. The AFI DOCS advisory board includes Ken Burns, Davis Guggenheim, Chris Hegedus, Werner Herzog, Barbara Kopple, Spike Lee, Errol Morris, Stanley Nelson, D A Pennebaker and Frederick Wiseman. Now in its 17th year, the festival took place June 19-23, 2019, in landmark Washington, DC, venues, Landmark Theatres E Street Cinema and at the historic AFI Silver Theatre in Silver Spring, MD. Visit AFI.com/AFIDOCS and connect on twitter.com/AFIDOCS, facebook.com/AFIDOCS, youtube.com/AFI and instagram.com/AmericanFilmInstitute.

About the American Film Institute

Established in 1967, the American Film Institute is the nationâ??s nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and inspiring artists and audiences through initiatives that champion the past, present and future of the moving image. AFIâ??s pioneering programs include filmmaker training at the AFI Conservatory; year-round exhibition at the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center and at AFI Festivals across the nation; workshops aimed at increasing diversity in the storytelling community; honoring todayâ??s masters through the AFI Life Achievement Award and AFI AWARDS; and scholarly efforts such as the AFI Catalog of Feature Films that uphold film history for future generations. Read about all of these programs and more at AFI.com and follow us on social media at Facebook.com/AmericanFilmInstitute, youtube.com/AFI, twitter.com/AmericanFilm and Instagram.com/AmericanFilmInstitute.

About AT&T

AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T) is a diversified, global leader in telecommunications, media and entertainment, and technology. It executes in the market under four operating units. WarnerMediaâ??s HBO, Turner and Warner Bros. divisions are world leaders in creating premium content, operate one of the worldâ??s largest TV and film studios, and own a world-class library of entertainment. AT&T Communications provides more than 100 million U.S. consumers with entertainment and communications experiences across TV, mobile and broadband services. Plus, it serves nearly 3 million business customers with high-speed, highly secure connectivity and smart solutions. AT&T Latin America provides pay-TV services across 11 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean, and is the fastest growing wireless provider in Mexico, serving consumers and businesses. Xandr provides marketers with innovative and relevant advertising solutions for consumers around premium video content and digital advertising through its AppNexus platform.

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The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the federal governmentâ??s investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of more than 1,500 locally owned and operated public television and radio stations nationwide. CPB is also the largest single source of funding for research, technology and program development for public radio, television and related online services. For more information, visit www.cpb.org, follow us on Twitter @CPBmedia, Facebook and LinkedIn, and subscribe for email updates.

About The Washington Post and Washington Post Press Freedom Partnership

The Washington Post is an award-winning news leader whose mission is to connect, inform, and enlighten local, national and global readers with trustworthy reporting, in-depth analysis and engaging opinions. It combines world-class journalism with the latest technology and tools so readers can interact with The Post anytime, anywhere.

The Washington Post Press Freedom Partnership is an ongoing initiative that aims to highlight organizations working vigilantly to promote press freedom and raise awareness of the rights of journalists worldwide. Learn more at www.wapo.st/pressfreedom.

About MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD

Meet the Press with Chuck Todd is where newsmakers come to make news â?? setting the political agenda and spotlighting the impact Washington decision-making has on Americans across the country. It is the #1 most-watched Sunday public affairs show for the 2017-2018 season, reaching more than three million viewers every Sunday and millions more through social, digital and on-demand platforms. *Meet the Press* brings its authority and influencer interviews to MSNBC with *MTP Daily* weekdays at 5 p.m. ET and to the *1947: The Meet the Press Podcast*. Itâ??s the longest-running show in television history, recently expanding its brand to include a political short-documentary film festival in collaboration with the American Film Institute. Chuck Todd is the political director of NBC News and the moderator of *Meet the Press*; John Reiss is the executive producer.

(Press release provided by AFI DOCS PR)

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