



Sundance Wrap Part II: Pronounced Culture-Shifting Art

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

The 2022 Sundance Film Festival promised culture-shifting voices and none were more pronounced than Director Sophie Hyde and Writer Katy Brand's, ***Good Luck To You, Leo Grande***, starring Dame Emma Thompson, as a retired schoolteacher who has yet to experience the joy of sex. Enter Daryl McCormack as the young and debonaire sex worker, Leo Grande. What starts out as a cold transactional relationship ends up as a deep, warm, caring transactional relationship opening hearts and minds to a retelling of modern love. Picked up by Searchlight Pictures and scheduled to stream exclusively on Hulu. Four stars.



Good Luck To You Leo Grande (Photo courtesy of Sundance Institute).

Phyllis Nagy's ***Call Jane***, set in the mid to late 1960's follows the pursuit of women's rights led by Elizabeth Banks, progressive suburbanite wife, and homemaker, Joy, who discovers a more engaging life in helping women get safe medical procedures for their unwanted or life-endangering pregnancies.

Nagy wrote the 2015 Douglas Sirkian style melodrama, ***Carol***, directed by Todd Haynes. Jane has a similar look with a joyous, optimistic, and forward-looking narrative. Four stars.



Elizabeth Banks appears in *Call Jane* by Phyllis Nagy, an official selection of the Premieres section at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival. Courtesy of Sundance Institute | photo by Wilson Webb.

[*Emily The Criminal*](#) from Director John Patton Ford addresses the fallout from the collateral damage of a young woman's college experience and relationship troubles. Aubrey Plaza portrays Emily, a young woman who went to college on student loans, partied, got an education, then received an assault conviction for her role in a relationship fight. Unable to land suitable work with her criminal record, Emily becomes a "dummy shopper," in an illegal, underworld enterprise. Fast-paced, this psychological, neo-thriller reverberates an age-old adage, "desperate people do desperate things." Highly recommended. A top pick.



Emily The Criminal (Photo courtesy of Sundance Film Festival).

[*Emergency*](#), the recipient of the **Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award: U.S. Dramatic**, harkens the

impact racism can have on life-threatening, real-life situations and its ramifications on human potential. Told through a darkly comedic lens with moments of “throw it all at the kitchen sink” style of comedy. Guaranteed to “shock, enlighten, and infuriate.” From two-time Sundance alum Carey Williams (2021’s modern, social media retelling of “Romeo and Juliet,” *R#J*), based on his 2018 Sundance short film of the same name. Excellent writing and strong acting. Four stars.



Emergency (Photo courtesy of Sundance Institute)

Director Rachel Lears, whose Lears 2019 Sundance film *Knock Down the House* followed four women who ran insurgent congressional campaigns in 2018, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Cori Bush. The film won the Audience Award and the Festival Favorite Award and was shortlisted for an Oscar and nominated for an Emmy. Lears 2022 offering, ***To The End***, is a visionary look behind the scenes of a philosophical movement, social and political, where young people have rejected the cynicism and complacency of a power structure that has failed to meaningfully address the existential threat faced by climate change. Told through the narratives of four instrumental leaders and women of color — Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Varshini Prakash, Alexandra Rojas, and Rhiana Gunn-Wright. This is more than the Green New Deal. It’s planetary survival. Four stars.



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