

AFI DOCS 2021 Award Winners

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Audience Award for Best Feature Goes to

STORM LAKE

Audience Award for Best Short Goes to SHELTER

Short Film Grand Jury Prize Goes to RED TAXI

Among the Participants in 19th Annual Festival of Documentary Film:

Senator Amy Klobuchar, Morgan Neville, Garrett Bradley, Dawn Porter

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JUNE 28, 2021, WASHINGTON, DC â?? The American Film Institute (AFI) has announced the AFI DOCS 2021 Award Winners, concluding the six-day festival, with screenings presented online and in-person at the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center. The festivalâ??s Audience Award for Best Feature went to STORM LAKE, directed by Jerry Risius and Beth Levison. The Audience Award for Best Short went toSHELTER, directed by Smriti Mundhra.

This yearâ??s voting jury for the competitive Short Films slate was comprised of Mike Attie, award-winning filmmaker and professor of film at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia; Greta Hagen-Richardson, Director of Programming at the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival and Lead Features Programmer at the New Orleans Film Festival; and Yvonne Ashley Kouadjo, Associate Producer for The New York Timesâ?? award-winning short documentary series Op-Docs.

The Grand Jury Prize for Short Films went to RED TAXI, directed byAnonymous. The jury said of RED TAXI: â??For its creative and accessible approach to telling a story from the perspective of those living and working in a moment of political upheaval, we award the Shorts Grand Jury Prize to RED TAXI.

The courage of the anonymous filmmaker struck us for their commitment to depicting the nuances of reality on the ground.â?• The Shorts Grand Jury Prize at AFI DOCS is a qualifying award for Academy AwardÂ® eligibility.

The jury also awarded the Special Jury Prize to two films: THE COMMUNION OF MY COUSIN ANDREA, directed by BrandÃ¡nCerviÃ±o Abeledo, saying,

â??For its ability to tell a reflexive story with levity and tenderness, we award a Special Jury Prize to THE COMMUNION OF MY COUSIN ANDREAâ?•; and S P A C E S (M E Z E R Y), directed by Nora Å trbovÃ¡, saying, â??For its intelligent use of multi-dimensional media in telling a fraught, emotional story, we award a Special Jury Prize to S P A C E S (M E Z E R Y).â?•

The 19th edition of AFI DOCS presented a diverse slate of 78 films from 23 countries, shedding light on overlooked stories from the past, honoring champions of change and giving us glimpses into the everyday lives of subjects close to home and around the world. This year, 52% of AFI DOCS films were directed by women, 40% by BIPOC directors and 18% by LGBTQ directors.

Among the festival participants were filmmakers and notables including Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar; Academy AwardÂ®winners Morgan Neville, Sean Fine, Andrea Nix Fine and Mark Ronson; Academy AwardÂ®-nominated filmmakers Julie Cohen, Betsy West and Steve James; Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Art Cullen; award-winning filmmaker Dawn Porter; EmmyÂ® Award winner Chris Nee; CNN political contributor and host Van Jones; author and The New Yorker contributor Jelani Cobb; filmmaker and actor Sonja Sohn; musician and filmmaker Ahmir â??Questloveâ?• Thompson; Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture Curator Dwandalyn Reece; President of the African American Film Critics Association Gil Robertson; Georgetown University Professor Dr. Janet Mann; rapper KYLE; and son of late comedian and activist Dick Gregory Christian Gregory.

The festivalâ??s panels and discussions provided filmmakers, film subjects and audiences the opportunity to delve deeper into the films with conversations led by some of the nationâ??s top journalists, including: NBC News Correspondent Morgan Radford; NBC Newsâ?? Meet the Press Moderator and NBC News Political Director Chuck Todd; NBC News Correspondent Anne Thompson; MSNBC Correspondent Trymaine Lee; Varietyâ??s Film Awards Editor Clayton Davis; Axios Justice and Race Reporter Russell Contreras; Senior Segment Producer of WGN Morning News and WGNâ??s Entertainment Producer Tyra Martin; entertainment journalist & TV producer KJ Matthews; CQ Roll Call Deputy Editor Jason Dick andHealth Care Editor Rebecca Adams; and The Washington Postâ??s Managing Editor for Diversity and Inclusion Krissah Thompson, Chief Film Critic Ann Hornaday, Global Opinions writer Jason Rezaian, National Security Editor Peter Finn, Religion Reporter Michelle Boorstein, and Host and Editor of Food Video Mary Beth Albright.

This yearâ??s inaugural DOCS Talks programming included the World Premiere of Netflixâ??s and Higher Groundâ??s WE THE PEOPLE, as well as â??History Is Out of the Closet: Excavating Queer Stories for the Screen,â?• a live stream conversation celebrating LGBTQ+ pride. The AFI DOCS Industry Forum explored building accessibility practices into all steps of the production process, demystifying investigative documentaries, the making of the hit series PHILLY D.A., how documentaries shape conversations on racial violence, a behind-the-scenes look at the Hindsight Project films and new collaborations between public media and indie filmmakers. This yearâ??s Industry Forum programming also included closed captioning and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation. The

AFI DOCS Industry Forum is supported by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Arts.

RED TAXI

DIR: Anonymous. As protests in Hong Kong escalate, taxi drivers experience a city in upheaval driving the streets day and night. Anonymously filmed by locals.

SHORT FILM SPECIAL JURY PRIZE

THE COMMUNION OF MY COUSIN ANDREA

DIR: BrandÃ¡n CerviÃ±o Abeledo. Andreaâ??s First Communion ceremony lacks glamour. For Andrea, things without sparkles are meaningless.

SHORT FILM SPECIAL JURY PRIZE

S P A C E S (M E Z E R Y)

DIR: Nora Å trbovÃ¡. A multi-textured animated exploration of memory as a container of identity, based on the personal story of the filmmaker and her brother who was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

This yearâ??s Premium Sponsor is Apple Original Films. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) returns as Official Sponsor of the festival. NBC Newsâ?? Meet the Press with Chuck Todd and The Washington Post return this year as Primary Media Partners. Variety and The Hollywood Reporter are this yearâ??s Official Media Partners. The Wrap is an Affiliate Media Partner.Screen Sponsors include SHOWTIMEÂ® Documentary Films, Netflix, WarnerMedia and HBO Documentary Films. Participant, National Geographic, and Eventive serve as Major Sponsors. This yearâ??s Contributing Sponsors are ESPN, the National Endowment for the Arts and the DC Office of Cable Television, Film, Music, and Entertainment (OCTFME). Supporting Sponsors include the Maryland Film Office, Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce and Rev. The Embassy of Denmark in Washington, DC, and the Farhang Foundation are this yearâ??s Cultural Sponsors. Generous individual support comes from Stephanie and Hunter Hunt.

About AFI DOCS

AFI DOCS is the American Film Instituteâ??s annual documentary festival historically held 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, Rory Kennedy, Barbara Kopple, Spike Lee, Errol Morris, Stanley Nelson and Frederick Wiseman. Now in its 19th year, the festival will be held June 22-27, 2021. Visit DOCS.AFI.com and connect onTwitter.com/AFIDOCS, Facebook.com/AFIDOCS, YouTube.com/AFIand Instagram.com/AmericanFilmInstitute.

About the American Film Institute (AFI)
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/AmericanFilmand Instagram.com/AmericanFilmInstitute.

About the Corporation for Public Broadcasting

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 managed 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 and follow us on Twitter @CPBmedia, Facebook and LinkedIn, and subscribefor 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 Press Freedom Partnership is a public service initiative from The Washington Post to promote press freedom and raise awareness of the rights of journalists who are in pursuit of the truth. 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 2019-2020 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 1 p.m. ET, to the ongoing weekly podcast, *The Chuck ToddCast*, and to *Meet the Press Reports*, a 30-minute program on NBC News NOW and Peacock, focusing on a single topic explored through the *Meet the Press* lens. Itâ??s the longest-running show in television history, recently expanding its brand

to also 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.

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