

Sundance Film Festival 2022 Wrap â?? Part III

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

The Sundance Film Festival has wrapped another successful year of showcasing the very best independent films from across the globe. Festival programmers, who this year painstakingly whittled down 3,762 feature-length submissions to the final 82 selections â?? not counting Shorts, Midnight, and other film categories; strove to create a balanced slate of films under Festival Programming Director Kim Yutaniâ??s direction, â??that were meaningful and inspiring, in addition to being simply entertaining.â?•

While deals were being made and are being inked, here are some of the 2022 Sundance Film Festival top selections:

Navalny

Festival Favorite Award

Audience Award: U.S. Documentary Presented by Acura



A still from *Navalny*, an official selection of the U.S. Documentary section at the 2022 Sundance Film

In August 2020, a plane traveling from Siberia to Moscow made an emergency landing. One of its passengers, Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, was deathly ill. Taken to a local Siberian hospital and eventually evacuated to Berlin, doctors confirmed that he had been poisoned with Novichok, a nerve agent implicated in attacks on other opponents of the Russian government. President Vladimir Putin immediately cast doubt on the findings and denied any involvement.

While recovering, Navalny and his team â?? already with a large social media following in tow â?? partnered with the data investigative journalism outlet Bellingcat as well as other international news organizations to investigate his attempted assassination and find proof of the Kremlinâ??s involvement. In *NAVALNY*, filmmaker Daniel Roher reveals a courageous and controversial would-be president at the precipice of sacrificing everything in order to bring reform to his homeland. â??BT (Sundance.org)



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

Director Sophie Hyde and Writer Katy Brandâ??s, ***Good Luck To You, Leo Grande***, stars Dame Emma Thompson, as a retired schoolteacher who has yet to experience the joy of sex. Enter Daryl McCormack as the young and debonnaire 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.



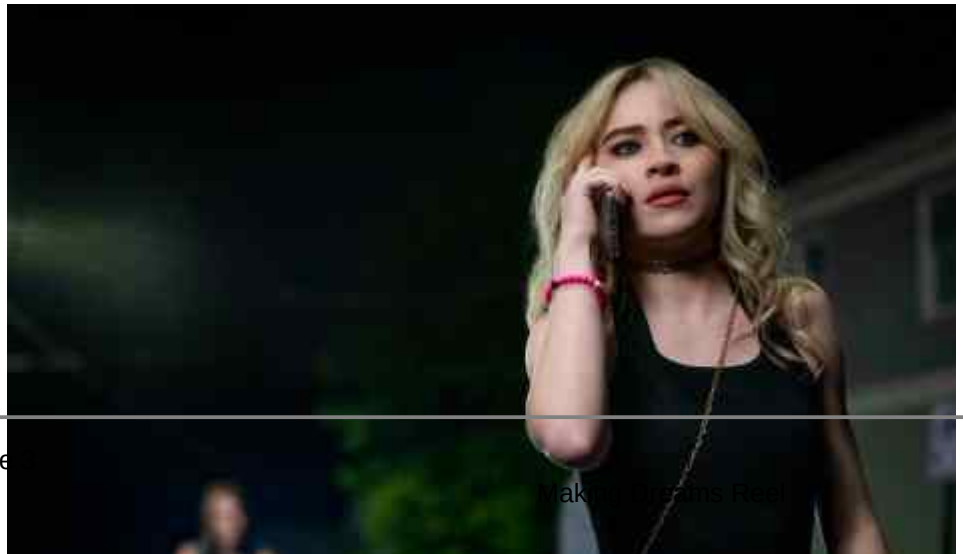
Elizabeth Banks appears in *Call Jane* by Phyllis Nagy, an official selection of the Premieres section a

Phyllis Nagyâ??s ***Call Jane,*** set in the mid to late 1960â??s follows the pursuit of womenâ??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.



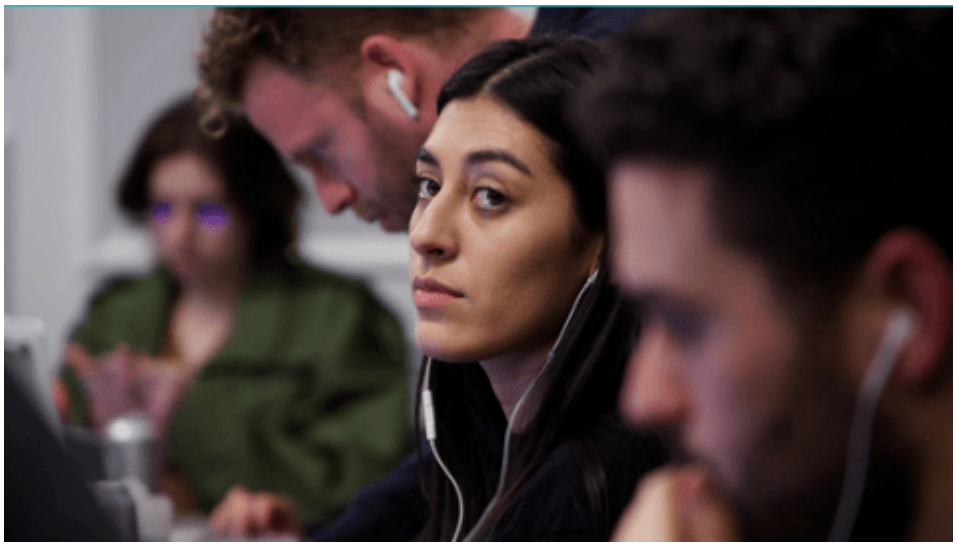
Emily The Criminal (Photo courtesy of Sundance Institute)

Emily The Criminal from Director John Patton Ford addresses the fallout from the collateral damage of a young womanâ??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 â??dummy shopper,â?• in an illegal, underworld enterprise. Fast-paced, this psychological, neo-thriller reverberates an age-old adage, â??desperate people do desperate things.â?• Highly recommended. A top pick.



EMERGENCY

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 â??throw it all at the kitchen sinkâ?• style of comedy. Guaranteed to â??shock, enlighten, and infuriate.â?• From two-time Sundance alum Carey Williams (2021â??s modern, social media retelling of â??Romeo and Juliet,â?• *R#J*), based on his 2018 Sundance short film of the same name. Excellent writing and strong acting. Four stars.



To The End (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 â?? Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Varshini Prakash, Alexandra Rojas, and Rhiana Gunn-Wright. This is more than the Green New Deal. Itâ??s planetary survival. Four stars.



Oscar de la Hoya and Julio Cesar Chavez appear in *La Guerra Civil* by Eva Longoria BastÃ³n, an of

La Guerra Civil, directed and produced by Eva Longoria BastÃ³n tells the story of two of Mexicoâ??s greatest lightweight modern-era boxers, American-born Oscar De La Hoya and Julio Cesar Chavez. More than a boxing story, Longoria BastÃ³n shapes the narrative through the Mexican and Mexican-American cultural lens. What emerges is a very intimate look at both boxers and their impact on the dichotomy of what it means to be Mexican and what it means to be Mexican-American. Four stars.



The Worst Person In The World (Photo courtesy of Sundance Institute).

The Worst Person in the World directed by Joachim Trier is the third part of his Oslo trilogy. A beautifully made film with a first-time film portrayal for the lead actress, Renate Reinsve. The film is told through Reinsveâ??s character and is about finding oneâ??s place in the world. In the filmâ??s introduction, Trier referred to the film as a Norwegian romantic comedy told in twelve separate chapters with an epilogue and a prologue. Originally premiered in competition at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival (with Renate Reinsve winning Best Actress for her performance).


Chiqui (Photo courtesy of Sundance Institute).

Chiqui, an indie episodic set in the 1980s was a romp. Itâ??s 1987. Chiqui and Carlos emigrate from Colombia to New Jersey to find a better life for themselves and their unbornson. Upon their arrival, they quickly realize that the American dream is not as easy to achieve as they thought. The cast and crew â?? simply superb.


Downfall: The Case Against Boeing (Photo courtesy of Sundance Institute).

Downfall: The Case Against Boeing. One of the most anticipated films of the festival from acclaimed director, Rory Kennedy. Kennedyâ??s films are well-researched and provide astute socio-cultural insights. **Downfallâ??s** production values were exceptional resulting in a very polished film revealing shifts in cultural norms undoubtedly contributing to the untimely and tragic Max 737 plane crashes. Scheduled for a February 13th Netflix release followed by a theatrical run. A Netflix and Moxie Films Production. Four stars.


Chloe Okuno

Watcher, Chloe Okunoâ??s, multi-layered suspenseful horror, drama, thriller features Maika Monroe as a young, blonde female coping with life in a foreign country. Monroe delivers a highly competent and strong performance. The non-diegetic soundtrack added immensely to the suspense and featured Max Richterâ??s â??Moment in Paris.â?• Undeniable *Charade* and *Rear Window* Hitchcockian influences Shot on location in Bucharest, Romania. Four stars.



Maika Monroe appears in *Watcher* by Chloe Okuno, an official selection of the U.S. Dramatic Competition at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival. Courtesy of Sundance Institute.

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Date Created
February 4, 2022
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