

## Interview, Audio: ‘An Atramentous Mind’ at Chicago’s Black Harvest Film Fest on Aug. 27, 2017

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 26, 2017 - 10:29pm

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CHICAGO – What happens when one of the more prominent filmmakers in Chicago of the last five years meets a up-and-coming female director? They get together to make a statement in a short film. “An Atramentous Mind” will have its Midwest Premiere at the Black Harvest Film Festival on August 27th, 2017, as part of their “Chicago Shorts” series. The 23rd edition of this vital Chicago festival runs through August 31st at the downtown Gene Siskel Film Center.

“An Atramentous Mind” is a ten minute in-the-moment short film that illustrates a situation that has dominated the headlines in the last couple of years. The issue of law enforcement treatment of African Americans has been an ongoing discussion before and since the incident in Ferguson, Missouri, and continues to define the relationships of the police and black communities in America. Williams and Edwards created a confrontation between a white cop and a black woman, and take that fraught atmosphere into a fantasy realm. The stark and dreamy film puts an exclamation point on the attitudes that prevail, and the healing change that needs to happen.



‘An Atramentous Mind,’ Co-Directed by Layne Marie Williams and Lonnie Edwards

*Photo credit: Black Harvest Film Festival*

Layne Marie Williams and Lonnie Edwards are two young filmmakers that have made their mark in Chicago and beyond. Less than two years after moving here, Williams has premiered her first major short film, “DollFace,” and brought her women’s filmmaker organization, “Woman of the Now” to the city. Lonnie Edwards has been on a monumental run of award winning films, including his debut “Parietal Guidance” and the recent “Sounds of Exodus: An Ode to the Great Migration.” In 2017, he will have achieved the filmmaker equivalent of a Chicago “grand slam,” by placing his films in the Chicago Underground Film Festival (CUFF), the Chicago International Movies & Music (CIMM) Festival, the

Black Harvest Festival and the upcoming Chicago International Film Festival.

In both transcript and audio, HollywoodChicago.com talked to Layne Marie Williams and Lonnie Edwards on separate occasions, and combined the the interviews to give both directors a chance to give perspective on "An Atramentous Mind."

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Layne, what is the origins of your collaboration with Lonnie on 'An Atramentous Mind'? Where did the idea come from and how was the script formulated?

**Layne Marie Williams:** I first met Lonnie right after I moved to Chicago, at a film event here. I remember seeing him across the room and immediately thinking, 'who is that?' He has a really strong presence, and we just kind of turned and saw each other and introduced ourselves. And of course when we asked what each other did, the answer was 'I'm a filmmaker.'

Then several months later, we ran into each other again at CIMM Fest here, and this was after I had premiered 'DollFace,' which he knew about. This was another synergy-filled connection, and in our discussions, we found we both had a response to the police brutality issue that was going on in America. So in response to that discussion, we decided to join forces in collaboration. Lonnie first sketched out the script, and sent it to me. I got in there and fleshed out the characters, and breathed the otherworldly aspect into it. We pulled in some other collaborators, and shot the film in one day.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** What was the source of the unusual title?



Lonnie Edwards & Layne Marie Williams of 'An Atramentous Mind'  
Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

**Williams:** Atramentous means 'black as ink.' That became a theme of the film, and word was found by Lonnie. It took on a life of its own, because as filmmakers we went through the process of shooting and editing, and by the time we were in post production it had a significant meaning. It's difficult to say, and I even had to practice to pronounce it properly, but it's an incredibly powerful word, in the way it's pronounced and how it looks, and then of course what it means.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Lonnie, from your point of view, how did you and Layne develop that first thought of taking on the police brutality issue to formulating the final form?

**Lonnie Edwards:** For myself, I had done a Ferguson film, I've written scripts that haven't been produced in regards to this subject, and I've lived in this society as a young black man and artist. As for Layne, she is committed with the Women of the Now to women of color, when she and I started familiarizing ourselves with each other, it became something we wanted to do together. The protagonist in our film is a black woman, and I want to keep having those characters in my films, whether it's a superhero film or something like 'An Atramentous Mind.' We need women of color in films at this point in time, it's necessary.

**In the audio portion of the interview, Layne Marie Williams and Lonnie Edwards talk more about their collaboration, the reaction to the film at the New York City premiere and Lonnie's position on what he represents as a filmmaker.**

*The Midwest Premiere of "An Atramentous Mind" takes place on August 27th, 2017, at 5pm as part of the Black Harvest Film Festival, with a repeat showing on August 29th at 8:15pm. All films in the fest are screened at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 North State Street, Chicago. For more information about the Black Harvest Fest, which runs through August 31st, 2017, [click here](#). [17]*

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [19]  
Writer, Editorial Coordinator  
HollywoodChicago.com



[18]

[pat@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com) [18]

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