

Film News: 2022 Sundance Film Festival Starts its Engines

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CHICAGO – The 2022 Sundance Film Festival heads into Day Three after Opening Night and a full slate of films for Day Two. Like last year, the festival is virtual and online, meaning anyone/anywhere with a ticket or a pass ([link](#) [22]) can indulge in the film offerings throughout the festival, which runs until January 30th.

One of the elements that cinema does best is to reflect back from the screen, as a mirror to our era. That's the type of films that Sundance presents best, finding voices who will reflect back to us in inclusiveness, subject matter and storytelling. Films also create empathy, as Roger Ebert once observed, and it is these reflective films that increases understanding in our current circumstances.



Emergency

Photo credit: Sundance Film Festival

The Sundance Film Festival is an annual event organized by the Sundance Institute – an organization founded by actor Robert Redford in 1980 – and dedicated to the growth of independent artists. It usually takes place each January in Park City, Utah, and other locations, and is the largest independent film festival in the United States. It includes competitive categories in documentary and dramatic films, both feature length and short works, as well as out-of-competition categories for showcasing new films.

★ FILMS OF SUNDANCE: Capsule Reviews

“Emergency” – Three college friends, two black and one Hispanic, find a young white girl passed out in the house they share, during an epic end-of-semester party week. Sean (RJ Cyler) is impatient to get into the celebration, while his studious Nigerian roommate Kunle (Donald Elise Watkins) and gamer Carlos (Sebastian Chacon) want to make sure the girl is okay. Expanding on a short film – written by KD Davila and directed by Carey Williams, in his festival feature debut – the film expands upon the nature of “driving while black,” even as they truly and somewhat comedically want to help the hapless drunk girl. The issues of modern race relations ... younger people are perceived to be more color blind ... are discussed within the story, another example for the trio that no good deed goes unpunished. It’s that bit of extra caution that people of color have to endure in their everyday lives and the perception of guilty before proven innocent that’s in play in this marvelously and surprisingly sensitive portrayal of buddy friendship.

“Call Jane” – What was America like for women seeking abortions in 1968, five years before Roe v Wade? It ranged from horrific dark corner procedures to sympathetic providers. The film highlights the Jane Collective, a society of Chicago women who banded together to steer women to safer abortion procedures. “Call Jane” is a fictional recreation of the Collective, centering on Joy (Elizabeth Banks), who after obtaining her safe abortion through Jane, becomes a participant advocate. Although the film has many gaps in its context, it still provides an emphasis on abortion being a woman’s health issue (both physical and mental) and how sisters had to do it for themselves in the fight against the medical and political patriarchy. In this age of abortion rights STILL being used as social/political control of women’s health, the film is a reminder that we need more forgiveness and minding of our own business.

“You Won’t Be Alone” – In one of the wildest films conceived in awhile ... the feature debut of writer/director Goran Stolevski ... a 19th century mountain village in Macedonia is infiltrated with real witchery, after a baby is kidnapped and transformed by an ancient mystical spirit. When the baby grows to a young woman, she uses her powers to transform into the people she encounters and subsequently kills. After becoming more curious about these lives, she transforms herself several times, in all genders and consequences. Talk about empathy! Intensely fascinating, especially when the spirit that kidnapped her appears occasionally to remind the newer witch of her hubris. The underlying intuition of this fable are reminders of what our brief humanity means.

Trailer from “You Won’t Be Alone,” due in theaters on April 1st, 2022 ...

Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com will be providing coverage of the Sundance Film Festival 2022 throughout the duration of the festival.

The virtual 2022 Sundance Film Festival will take place January 20th through January 30th. For tickets, schedule and all information click on [Festival.Sundance.org](https://festival.sundance.org) [22]



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