

Tribeca2022: Seeking Justice Through the Tribeca Film Fest

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NEW YORK – One of the honorable characteristics of the Tribeca Film Festival is their documentary programming, which reflects our current debates and circumstances. Two docs reviewed below are indicative of the search for truth and justice. The at-home Fest is available now, click [TRIBECAatHOME](#) [22] for access.

The 2022 Tribeca Festival, presented by Crypto Platform OKX, brings artists and diverse audiences together to celebrate storytelling in all its forms, including film, TV, VR, gaming, music, and online work. With strong roots in independent film, Tribeca is a platform for creative expression and immersive entertainment. Throughout the festival, HollywoodChicago will be reviewing the films of Tribeca.



Kaepernick & America

Photo credit: TribecaFilm.com

The Tribeca Film Festival was founded in 2002 by Jane Rosenthal, Craig Hatkoff and actor Robert De Niro as a reactive strike back at the September 11th attack in 2001 on New York City and the nearby Tribeca neighborhood. The 2022 edition will show 110 feature films from 150 filmmakers across 40 countries, and will have screenings and awards for U.S. Narrative Films, World Narrative Films, Short Film Competition, Best Documentary, the Spotlight Competition and Best New Narrative and Documentary Filmmakers, among its presentations.



FILMS OF TRIBECA: Capsule Reviews

“Kaepernick & America” – The happenstance of Colin Kaepernick “taking a knee” is familiar to most Americans, no matter the attitude towards the gesture. “Kaepernick & America” tells the unfamiliar story, including the background that Kaepernick went through, which included his outsider origins as an adoptee by a white family (he’s bi-racial), in addition to continued misunderstanding of his gesture, which was simply to protest the treatment for people of color by law enforcement. The step-by-step reveal of the circumstance behind the situation ... including an intrepid sportswriter who first broke the protest ... should put to rest the other interpretations from redefining opinions, but most likely it won’t. And when the George Floyd incident finally put a harsh spotlight on the problem, it was Kaepernick who had always been there. This documentary is essential to get “the rest of the story,” including an NFL who later admitted that they weren’t listening, and in remembering very recent history.

“Wes Schlagenhauf is Dying” – This wacky comedy seems to make fun of everything having to do with making an independent film, including numerous “high five” moments about which festival the film will get into. Parker Seaman (also director) and Deven Das portray “themselves,” a pair of filmmakers stuck shooting commercials, while they long to break into the feature films. They see an opportunity when the sneaker company they do ads for fronts them money for a road trip documentary, as they travel to Idaho during the early COVID era to visit their virus afflicted friend, Wes Schlagenhauf (himself). Once on the road, their concept begins to falter, as does their close friendship. While making fun of making indie films, they also somewhat embrace it, which is essentially what the film is about. It’s also very funny, with nutty surprises around every corner ... Parker Seaman and the title character are particularly manic, and yet the film also embraces the youthful love of making movies and being together while they do it. Lotsa fun, and hey guys you got into Tribeca.

“The Big Payback” – This documentary stood out because of its ties to the local scene. The city of Evanston, Illinois – just north of Chicago on the lakefront – was the locale for a legislative process to create a fund for reparations to African Americans, the first ever on a municipal level. Through the ardent efforts of former Evanston alderman Robin Rue Simmons, the film shows the steps that made it happen, from 2019 to the present, even as the COVID crisis threatened to slow it down. What was most interesting was the case made for these reparations, as Evanston was proved to be a segregated city, and those forefathers were denied fair housing, schooling and all the other indignities of Jim Crow. Evanston is both a liberal and wealthy city, and this first step could be a blueprint for reparations even on a national level. Once, my conservative uncle asked me if I believed in reparations. I told him to look at it in an economic sense, that the U.S. was built for over 200 years with the forced free labor of a stolen people. And then when they were set “free,” continued to deny them fair citizenship. There has got to be a way to make up for that history, and Evanston is leading the way.

“We Might as Well Be Dead” – In a stark German/Romanian film, the themes of safety, income inequality, wealth and autocracy are explored through an apartment complex. In the near future, this gated secure building becomes a closed society from a civilization that has apparently broken down. The film opens with a family practically begging to get into an available apartment, and their desperation sets the tone for the rest of the story. The caretaker of the building loses his dog, and blames the head of security Anna (Ioana Iacob), throwing the rest of building into a paranoid frenzy. Meanwhile, Anna is dealing with her daughter Iris (Pola Geiger), who has locked herself into the bathroom because she thinks her “evil eye” is to blame for the dog’s disappearance. This debut film from co-writer/director Natalia Sinelnikova is highly symbolic, frightening and certainly disconcerting, but the themes have been explored before and there doesn’t seem to be any new territory mined, save for the evil eye. It seems like every future we see in cinema fiction sucks these days.

Trailer for “We Might as Well Be Dead” ...

Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com will be providing coverage of the Tribeca Film Festival 2022 throughout the duration of the fest. For more capsule Tribeca Film Fest reviews, [click here](#) [23].

The 21st Tribeca Film Festival will take place fthrough June 19th, 2022. For tickets, events schedule and all information click on [TribecaFilm.com](#) [24]



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