

Podtalk: Director David Siev for His Doc on Hometown 'Bad Axe'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 14, 2022 - 12:17pm

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CHICAGO – The combination of the divisive Donald Trump election and the pandemic affected many U.S. communities. David Siev, an American filmmaker from a Cambodian-origin family, turned on his camera to tell the story of that time in his hometown of Bad Axe, Michigan. The results became the documentary “Bad Axe.”



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

When the pandemic hit in 2020, Siev moved from his New York City residence back to his Bad Axe. His family had ended up there after his father survived the genocidal “Killing Fields” of 1970s Khmer Rouge Cambodia and immigrated to the U.S. While the family quarantined, and their successful restaurant was challenged, all the issues of Trumpism and pandemic isolation on Bad Axe began to emerge. This was combined with the Black Lives Matter movement and video of David’s sister confronting a counter BLM protestor, which ignited further bigotry toward the family ... including threats of violence.



'Bad Axe,' directed by David Siev (inset)

Photo credit: IFC Films

What is extraordinary about the documentary was Siev's wherewithal to turn on the camera early, to get the story as it began to develop. The result is a specific chronicle of a time in history on a personal level, as the isolation of David's father generates a reckoning with his Cambodian past, as his family becomes a scapegoat because of their Asian roots, and as the anger of bigotry – seemingly freed – rises to the surface in small town Michigan. If all politics are local, then the effect of the pandemic was as well.

David Siev is an alumni of the University of Michigan, and learned his filmmaking craft in Los Angeles with the production company Gorilla Flicks. His first short film, "Year Zero," made a splash on the film fest circuit, including the Manhattan International Film Festival. He currently works and resides in New York City.

In a Podtalk with Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, director David Siev reflects on his film "Bad Axe" ...

"Bad Axe" opens in select theaters and through Video On Demand November 18th. Directed by David Siev. Not Rated.



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