



Greenwich Entertainment Presents  
A Peacock Original  
A Participant Presentation Of  
A Multitude Films Production In Association With The Atlantic  
A Film by Geeta Gandbhir & Sam Pollard



In Theaters and on Amazon and Apple TV December 2.

Running Time: 90 minutes. Language: English.

**Directed by**  
Sam Pollard & Geeta Gandbhir

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**LOGLINE:**

Through first person accounts and searing archival footage, **LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER** tells the story of the local movement and young Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organizers who fought not just for voting rights, but for Black Power in Lowndes County, Alabama.

**SYNOPSIS:**

The passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 represented not the culmination of the Civil Rights Movement, but the beginning of a new, crucial chapter. Nowhere was this next battle better epitomized than in Lowndes County, Alabama, a rural, impoverished county with a vicious history of racist terrorism. In a county that was 80 percent Black but had zero Black voters, laws were just paper without power. This isn't a story of hope but of action. Through first person accounts and searing archival footage, **LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER** tells the story of the local movement and young Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organizers who fought not just for voting rights, but for Black Power in Lowndes County.



*Election night, Lowndes County, 1966*

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Directors Geeta Gandbhir and Sam Pollard well know that the long road toward racial justice is not linear, but cyclical. Their body of work, separately and collectively, speaks to this.

Gandbhir—whose recent credits include *(Black and Missing and Why We Hate)* and Pollard—*(MLK/FBI, Citizen Ashe)*—explore the contours and nuances of social hierarchies and human behavior. Add to this catalog Pollard’s trailblazing work on the seminal documentary series, *Eyes on the Prize*, I and II, which has influenced a brand of unflinching storytelling about the protracted fight for civil rights in the United States.

While the march from Selma to Montgomery lives in the collective memory as a high point of the Civil Rights Movement, there was something else blooming in Alabama beyond the terminus of that bridge, just beyond the camera’s eye. Stokely Carmichael—a dynamic, young organizer also from SNCC—used this moment on the sidelines to make connections in the crowd, gathering names and information. For Carmichael and the community whose stories he absorbed, this pivotal moment wasn’t a culmination, but a beginning. Gandbhir’s and Pollard’s incisive documentary, **LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER**, chronicles the strategies, clashes and, ultimately, the endurance necessary to shift the balance of power in an unjust and inequitable society.

The film is a searing testament to agency: As Ella Baker, the veteran organizer and human rights activist, testifies in the film’s early frames, “People have to have faith in themselves. They don’t have to look around and find a great leader to do it for them.”



## **FROM SELMA TO MONTGOMERY TO LOWNDES:**

Just outside of Montgomery, Alabama, stretches the rural and vastly underserved Lowndes County. “There was this lost story about Lowndes,” says Pollard. Known colloquially as “Bloody Lowndes,” that designation was both a descriptor and a warning, earned from a reputation for the unrestrained racist terrorism that white residents inflicted upon Black citizens to maintain the rule of white supremacy. Despite its 80 percent Black population, not a single Black resident was registered to vote. Ultimately, after generations of organized resistance and self-defense, Lowndes became a symbolic epicenter for community-led grassroots organizing, pushing for power, not peace. Lowndes’ Black community founded the Lowndes Freedom Organization, which eventually gave birth to the Black Panther Party. “It was a story that’s never been told [on film,]” says Pollard, “And here we had an opportunity to look at another organization besides the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), that was very impactful during the height of the Civil Rights period.”

Gandbhir and Pollard knew there was an exceptionally pertinent story to tell, especially in a cultural moment when grassroots organizers around both the country and the globe search not only for tools and tactics but strategies for how to persist; to keep moving forward, dreaming of better futures.

“What was illuminating,” says Gandbhir, was “that the people of Lowndes County were already organizing before SNCC came in. They knew what they needed, they knew what they wanted, which was support. In the beginning, they went through both the SCLC and SNCC. And the response from the SCLC was tepid. Apparently, from our interviews we learned that [the SCLC] felt that they really couldn’t make a dent because Lowndes was such a dangerous place,” she reflects. “SNCC came in at great risk to their lives to support the people who were already there. Really to just facilitate. For me that’s the lesson this film is about. The idea for SNCC was, make sure you leave behind a community that has the ability to continue organizing, and outlives your presence.”

The histories of the two organizations certainly played a part in how the Lowndes community received them. The SCLC, formed by Dr. King and others in 1957, was critical to the early, faith-based infrastructure of coordinating peaceful protests against Jim Crow laws. A few years later, in 1960, SNCC was formed by Ella Baker and a number of student activists following the highly successful and publicized Greensboro sit-in, which mobilized Black and white students in the North and South to participate in sit-ins, boycotts, and other protests. Fiercely independent of SCLC and stridently local in their approach, SNCC had their own tactics, were run by younger activists and, once it began organizing in the early 1960s, gave the broader movement a boost in terms of public attention and support. By the time of the voting rights demonstrations of 1965 and despite being largely aligned in overall goals, ideological debates surrounding the notion of nonviolence began causing tension within SNCC.

One of the film’s executive producers, Fred Grinstein, alerted Gandbhir to the richness of the Lowndes saga. “Fred had been working with writer and producer Dema Paxton Fofang,” she explains. Paxton Fofang had been in an extended conversation with journalist Vann R. Newkirk

It from *The Atlantic*, whose 2019 cover story '[The Great Land Robbery](#)' had sparked and inspired Paxton Fofang's thinking about the film, guiding its initial development and direction. "Essentially, they were interested in making a series about Vann's work on the current situation with Black farmers and the land grab that's happening in the South," she says. "The story of Lowndes County was embedded in that. And while I had come across Lowndes while researching some projects about the Civil Rights Movement, it was the one that I think all of us felt never got its due."

Some key building blocks were already set in place: Historian Hassan Kwame Jefferies' seminal work on the era, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt*, provided the team with a necessary foundation. "The book is just an incredible testament," says Paxton Fofang. It also provided an archive documenting an expanded view: "It was a confirmation and conservation of the voices of the people we worked with."

What the Lowndes story arc emphasizes, says Paxton Fofang, is that while the voting rights victory may have been ratified on paper, that legal milestone hadn't shifted the balance of power nor did it alleviate the terror Black residents of Lowndes confronted on a daily basis. "It was a mistake to think the battle was won," says Paxton Fofang. "Actually, it's at this point when you have to be the most vigilant about protecting your rights and really acting upon them."



## **BROADENING THE FOCUS / COMPLICATING THE NARRATIVE:**

As she assembled her team, Gandbhir understood there were implicit sensitivities going in: First, “It was important to *not* make something simply extractive. Second: Representation was important, in that it would honor the people and the community that we’re working with,” she explains. “So we brought on Multitude Films, who I’ve worked with before. They are values-led, they put values first around filmmaking. I just trust them implicitly. They understood the need to have a staff that looks like America, and they deeply care to do the research and understand the politics around it. I knew we would be in good hands.”

What followed was an exercise in recasting old narratives. “We see certain elements of the Civil Rights Movement uplifted consistently, across history, while we see others consistently overlooked or undermined or discredited,” says Jessica Devaney, producer and founder of Multitude Films. “I was really excited to elevate a different story about a movement that people *think* they know.”

As a team, Gandbhir and Pollard began to chart a plan. Gandbhir knew how deeply familiar Pollard was with not just the history, but also the territory and the people with whom he had cultivated ties, some of whom he had encountered in past projects over the span of decades. This meant they wouldn’t be starting from scratch. The directors would be able to sink in, go right for the emotional center. “We wanted to feature this community-led movement that had diverged from the original path of the SCLC. Stokely’s style was different. And for all of us, that aspect of the story deserved its own film; its own spotlight,” says Gandbhir. “Here we have this community that had this kind of agency, who had organized themselves as the Lowndes Freedom Party. It was an amazing story for a broad audience that has been overshadowed. “Or...” she speculates, “because it unseats the SCLC framing of a single, charismatic leader. It’s a *spin* on the story that also scares a lot of people. But you know, it’s our job as filmmakers to show the truth even when that truth makes some people uncomfortable.”

For the film’s producers, having both Pollard and Gandbhir at the helm proved a windfall. While Pollard brought his gravitas and deep roots in the community, says Paxton Fofang, “Geeta exhibited this sort of great awareness of the contemporary landscape that the film was going to be viewed in.” As well, they benefited from their dexterity: “Sam and Geeta are also both editors and that shows in storytelling instincts, in their craft, as filmmakers,” says Paxton Fofang. “They are incredibly knowledgeable and know their history. They know a compelling story and how to capture and sustain an audience’s attention and leave them with some real thoughts to consider.”

Layering and broadening the narrative and foregrounding sidelined voices, says Anya Rous, Producer and Vice President of Multitude, was essential. “Geeta was always thinking about what are the parts of the story that the broader audience doesn’t know and needs to know in order to really understand the role of Black Power and the role of women’s voices in leadership. Especially voices from the movement like Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer and Ruby Sales and

the particular lenses those voices brought. Figures that weren't just sages, but incredible warriors too."

There is a frankness to the contemporary interviews that only comes with affinity. Observing Pollard's technique, says Rous, was a master class in conversation: "Whether it was a SNCC veteran or the local Lowndes folks, he immediately connected. You get a real aliveness and intimacy and complexity that somebody who was just walking into it would only scratch a surface level."

For Pollard, it was like tuning into a frequency: "My family is from the South. It's where my roots are. I bring a certain understanding. Someone like a Ruby Sales? A Lillian McGill? They know where I'm coming from, in terms of the history and the emotions. It's like going home to me."

Getting up close allowed the filmmakers to explore—not just methodologies but the very foundation of teamwork, adds Devaney: "We were focusing of course on SNCC and the folks in Lowndes County and that particular moment in history, but it was also a way to show the debates *between* different schools of thought in the Movement. And that really becomes a model. We can critique each other within movements and keep going forward toward a goal of liberation. And that critique is fruitful and not oppositional."



#### **MAKING THE PAST-TENSE PRESENT:**

An inherent challenge for the team was how to bring a sixty-year-old story alive: What or who might be hidden in plain sight? Moreover, says Gandbhir, "There was an urgency of time. Because a lot of the folks who participated in the movement from Lowndes County and also from the SNCC side of things are elders. We wanted to make sure to preserve that legacy and

those stories.” From summer to fall of 2021, they traveled as a team to Washington D.C., Alabama, and Virginia — “We would talk to anyone who would talk to us,” says Gandbhir. That chorus of vivid voices, sharing a complex story in 360 degrees, would ultimately recreate the weight and rush of working in a collective, in community: *Not one, but many*. “They were so sharp and astute. We knew we were so lucky to be able to bear witness to their stories and their testimony,” says Gandbhir.

“If you go back now and you watch *Eyes on the Prize*, I and II,” says Pollard, “The thing that made that series come to life was the fact that you had first-person storytellers, who were experienced in those different moments in our history. Fortunately, we had Courtland Cox and Judy Richardson and others who had been part of SNCC. We were able to find people in the community like Lillian McGill and Ruby Sales who had been part of the Lowndes County Freedom Party.” That was gold, “Because if you don’t have that, you can still make a film, but it’s tougher. A lot tougher. To be able to bring those voices in, that’s what makes things come to life”.

Equally crucial, says Gandbhir, was post-production fine tuning: “We had an incredible editor, Viridiana Lieberman (*Back on Board: Greg Louganis Nothing Left Unsaid: Gloria Vanderbilt and Anderson Cooper*) She and I had worked together on a couple of films. We both very much have a first love in verité. So it was very much about ‘show-and-not-tell’ if possible. It was important to us to not have a film where people are just talking, then it becomes less emotional, less urgent.”



### **SETTING A MOOD: THE GIFTS OF THE ARCHIVE**

Creating a compelling atmosphere meant sinking the viewer into time and place. The team knew this required recreating more than simply the look and feel of the Deep South of the



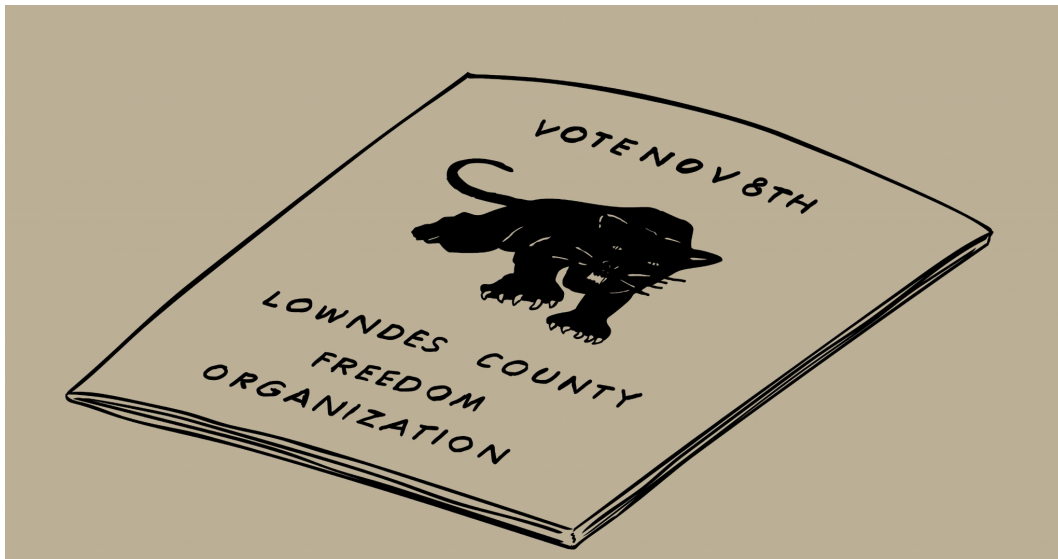
1960s—not just the tension and threat of violence but the electricity of possibility, the power of self-directed change.

“We wanted to make sure that we gave you a sense of the space and this place,” says Pollard, “What was it like to live in a community like that, where there was a majority of Black people, but yet we had no power. But people had the focus and the determination to make change—political change, social change—and all that they had to confront.”

They wanted, especially, to honor that lineage, adds Rous, the risk takers and the high stakes: “Ruby Sales wanted us to remember the specificity of the Black Southern freedom struggle, that it was the work of descendants of enslaved Africans. Lowndes residents didn’t identify as activists. They were citizens. Their story emphasizes what it means to work for real power. Not just a seat at the table, but a role in shaping the fate and the experience of the daily lives of the community.”

Because **LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER** centers a different set of protagonists in the civil rights struggle, so too must its imagery reflect that reframing. Needless to say, Pollard was well-versed in the visual record of that period: “If you look at the still that is the opening for *Eyes on the Prize*, that’s from that Selma to Montgomery march, so even I didn’t know if there was really any footage in Lowndes. From what we see, the cameras shadowed the movements of King in those critical years and that’s what has served for decades to tell the broad-strokes story. Fortunately, we have a wonderful archival producer, Lizzie McGlynn, who *really* did a tremendous amount of work and used a lot of sweat equity to find stuff I had never seen before,” says Pollard. “Seeing some of the footage of people who were out campaigning for the Lowndes County Freedom party with the Black Panther logo—that was extraordinary. And she’d even found some of Stokely even I hadn’t seen before.”

In setting contemporary footage against the archival finds, says Gandbhir, they worked meticulously to match them with contemporary evocative footage and animation. “We had an incredible DP, Henry Adebajo, but there was still nothing quite like the archive to really plant you in that time.”



### THE LOWNDES LEGACY

This long march back to a not-so-distant, deeply unresolved past has only helped to clarify complexity of the present. Lowndes is both a legacy and a lesson.

Moreover and tellingly, says Paxton Fofang, “The area around Selma is still to this day incredibly impoverished. This is why it’s important to look to see where these national narratives of linear progress digress from the lived realities of Black Americans. **LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER**, in some ways, I think, better describes our history than the sort of conventional stories we tell from the era.”

What the people of Lowndes and the lessons from SNCC illuminate is that this is what might appear to be push-back or the unraveling of generations-long work: “Isn’t a backlash, at all says Gandbhir, “it’s a consistent strategy; it’s like the second garden that you have to constantly weed.”

Adds Pollard: “The fight never stops for racial justice and racial equity in this country. Yes, people have been emboldened. And yes, here we go, it’s 2022, and we still have these conversations. And, yep. It’s a damn shame. But this struggle continues.”

You stay attuned. On watch. “Change doesn’t happen without vigilance and strategic and sustained organizing,” says Rous. What she hopes the legacy of Lowndes grants us is a deeper understanding that advocating for change is ongoing. “We need to understand the full capacity of what Ruby Sales call a ‘*leader-ful*’ movement. We need to recognize that, if Lowndes County folks could to do what they did, and the way that they did, with the stakes that they were up against, the obstacles that they were up against, then really, we have no excuse to not be fully taking on our institutions, our communities, our country, our government in the service of real liberation.”

## **TIMELINE OF HISTORICAL EVENTS**

1830	Lowndes County seat established in Haynesville
1940-46	Ella Baker organizes NAACP chapters in the South
Feb. 1960	Greensboro Sit-ins
April 1960	Founding of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Voter
Summer 1962	Registration efforts expand in Southwest Georgia and Mississippi
August 1963	March on Washington
October 1963	Freedom Day in Selma
April 1964	Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) founded by Fannie Lou Hamer with organizing led by Ella Baker
Summer 1964	Freedom Summer
August 1964	MFDP Challenge at Democratic National Convention
Spring 1965	Selma, Alabama Voting Rights Campaign
March 1965	Bloody Sunday
March 1965	SNCC makes contact in Lowndes County
March 19, 1965	Lowndes County Christian Movement for Human Rights (LCCMHR) founded
August 8, 1965	President Johnson signs Voting Rights Act
August 20, 1965	White organizer and seminarian Johnathan Daniels murdered by Tom Coleman in Lowndes
1965-66	SNCC's voter education efforts in Lowndes
April 1966	Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) founded
May 1966	Stokely Carmichael elected as SNCC's chair, taking over from John Lewis
June 6, 1966	Stokely Carmichael delivers Black Power speech during Meredith March against fear from Memphis to Jackson.
October 1966	Marxist-Leninist Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP) founded by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale
November 1966	LCFO runs candidates, losing by narrow majorities. They all received well above 20% of the vote, making LCFO eligible to become a political party. The organization changed its name to the Lowndes County Freedom Party (LCFP) as a result.
November 1970	John Hulett wins sheriff election on National Democratic Party of Alabama ticket
1978	Stokely Carmichael changes name to Kwame Ture
January 1980	LCFP member John Jackson elected mayor of White Hall

## **ABOUT THE TEAM:**

### **Geeta Gandbhir | Director**

Geeta Gandbhir is an award-winning director, producer and editor with over twenty-five years of experience in the film industry. She started her career in narrative film under Spike Lee and Sam Pollard. After working for 11 years in the edit room in scripted film, with filmmakers including Merchant Ivory, the Coen Brothers, Robert Altman, she branched into documentary film.

As director, her most recent film, **LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER** will premiere at the 2022 Tribeca Film Festival. She also recently directed and show-ran a four-part series for HBO titled *Black and Missing*, which is currently airing on HBO and won a 2022 NAACP Award for Best Directing, a 2022 Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary Series and a 2022 ATAS Honors Award. She also recently directed *Apart*, with Rudy Valdez for HBO Max which was nominated for an NAACP Award. Her 2020 short film with Topic Studios, *Call Center Blues*, was shortlisted for a 2021 Academy Award®, and she directed an episode of the five-part series of the *Asian Americans* for PBS, which won the 2021 Peabody Award. Other projects include directing the six-part series *Why We Hate* for Jigsaw Productions and Amblin Entertainment for Discovery, the feature documentary *I Am Evidence* for HBO which won a 2019 Emmy, DuPont and ATAS Award, and the film *Armed with Faith* for PBS which won a 2019 News and Documentary Emmy. In 2017 she directed an episode of the Netflix series *The Rapture* featuring rap artist Rapsody. In 2016 her feature documentary, *Prison Dogs*, which she co-directed with Perri Peltz, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival, and her film *A Journey of a Thousand Miles: Peacekeepers* premiered at the 2015 Toronto Film Festival and later aired on PBS as part of the series *Women, War and Peace*. She also co-directed and co-produced the series *A Conversation on Race* series with The New York Times Op-Docs, which won an Online Journalism Award for Online Commentary, an AFI Documentary Film Festival Audience Award for Best Short and garnered a MacArthur Grant. She was also a co-producer on the HBO film *The Sentence*, directed by Rudy Valdez which won a 2019 Emmy. As an editor, her films have won one Academy Award®, two Emmy Awards and five Peabody awards.

### **Sam Pollard | Director**

Sam Pollard is a veteran feature film and television video editor, and documentary producer/director. Between 1990 and 2010, he edited a number of Spike Lee films: *Mo' Better Blues*, *Jungle Fever*, *Girl 6*, *Clockers*, and *Bamboozled*. Pollard and Lee co-produced a number of documentary productions for the small and big screen, including *Four Little Girls*, a feature-length documentary about the 1963 Birmingham church bombings which was nominated for an Academy Award® in 1998 and *When The Levees Broke*, a four-part documentary that won numerous awards, including a Peabody and three Emmy Awards. Five years later in 2010 he co-produced and supervised the edit on the follow up, *If God Is Willing And Da Creek Don't Rise*.

As a producer/director, since 2015, his credits include: *Slavery By Another Name*, (2015) a 90-minute documentary for PBS that was in competition at the Sundance Festival; *August Wilson: The Ground On Which I Stand*, (2015) a 90-minute documentary for American Masters; *Two*

*Trains Runnin*, a feature length documentary, which premiered at the Full Frame Film Festival in 2016; and *Sammy Davis Jr., I've Gotta Be Me* for American Masters premièred at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival. In 2019, he co-directed the six-part series, *Why We Hate*, which premiered on The Discovery Channel. In 2020 he was one of the directors on the 2020 HBO Series Atlanta's *Missing and Murdered: The Lost Children*. Also that year, he completed *MLK/FBI*, which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival and was also featured at the New York Film Festival.

### **Anya Rous | Producer**

Anya Rous is a Brooklyn-based producer and Vice President of Multitude Films. In addition to producing *LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER*, presented by Participant (Peacock); Emmy-nominated *PRAY AWAY*, executive produced by Ryan Murphy and Blumhouse (Netflix); and *APART*, the Emmy-winning episode of the series *THROUGH OUR EYES* (HBO Max), she co-executive produced the Oscar®-shortlisted *CALL CENTER BLUES* (TOPIC), and *CALL HER GANDA* (Tribeca 2018, POV) and co-produced Sundance Award-winning and IDA-nominated *ALWAYS IN SEASON* (Independent Lens 2020) and Livingston Award-winning *THE FEELING OF BEING WATCHED* (Tribeca 2018, POV), which was dubbed “a real-world conspiracy thriller” by *Variety*. Anya also advises on impact strategy for films produced by Multitude and leads a movement orientation within the company’s producing model where films are drivers of culture change. Anya was a 2019–2020 Sundance Creative Producing Fellow, a 2019 Impact Partners Documentary Producing Fellow, a 2020–2021 DOC NYC 40 Under 40 filmmaker, and a 2021 Gotham/Cannes Producers Network Fellow.

### **Dema Paxton Fofang | Producer**

Dema Paxton Fofang is a writer and documentary producer based in Los Angeles. Dema’s directorial debut narrative short film, *The Swim Instructor*, screened as an official selection as part of the 2015 Austin Film Festival and Portland Film Festival. His screenwriting is represented by Nina Soriano at Anonymous Content and Jacob Perlin at Iconoclast. Before **LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER**, he previously developed TV series for *Viceland*, Vice Media's TV Channel, collaborating with Spike Jonze on their original programming slate. From 2018 to 2020 Dema worked as Director of Development for non-fiction at Anonymous Content, working with partners including The New York Times and The Atlantic Magazine, and most recently developed Maisie Crow’s documentary feature, *At The Ready*, which premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival.

### **Jessica Devaney | Producer**

Jess Devaney is a Brooklyn-based producer and Founder & President of Multitude Films. Her latest films include *LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER*, presented by Participant (Peacock); Emmy-nominated Netflix Original *PRAY AWAY*, executive produced by Ryan Murphy and Blumhouse; Oscar-shortlisted *CALL CENTER BLUES* (Topic Studios); and *APART*, a NAACP- and Emmy-winning episode of the series *THROUGH OUR EYES* (HBO Max). She also produced Sundance Award-winning *ALWAYS IN SEASON* (Independent Lens), *THE FEELING OF BEING WATCHED* (POV), dubbed “a real-world conspiracy thriller” by

Variety, Critics' Choice Documentary Award-nominated SPEED SISTERS (Netflix), and Peabody-nominated ROLL RED ROLL (POV, Netflix), among others. Her films have been programmed at top festivals including Sundance, SXSW, Tribeca, BlackStar, and Telluride. Jessica founded QueerDoc and was a Sundance Institute Documentary Edit and Story Lab fellow, Women at Sundance fellow, and Sundance Institute Creative Producing Lab advisor. She received DOC NYC and Topic Studios' inaugural 40 Under 40 Award, Cinereach Producers Award, and Doc10's inaugural Vanguard Award.

### **Jeff Skoll | Executive Producer**

Inspired by the belief that a well told story can change the world, Jeff founded Participant in 2004. Today it is the world's leading entertainment company focused on advocacy and social impact, having produced more than 100 full-length feature films. On the narrative side, their films include *Spotlight*, *Contagion*, *A Fantastic Woman*, *Lincoln*, *The Help*, *Roma* and *Good Night and Good Luck*. Participant's documentary films include *The Look of Silence*, *Food Inc.*, *He Named Me Malala*, *Waiting for Superman* and *An Inconvenient Truth*. These films have collectively garnered 82 Academy Award® nominations and 21 wins, including Best Picture for *Spotlight* and *Green Book*, Best Foreign Language Film for *Roma* and *A Fantastic Woman* and Best Documentary Feature for *American Factory*, *The Cove*, *CITIZENFOUR* and *An Inconvenient Truth*.

In addition to Participant, Jeff's innovative portfolio of philanthropic and commercial enterprises includes the Skoll Foundation and Capricorn Investment Group – all coordinated under the Jeff Skoll Group umbrella.

### **Diane Weyermann | Executive Producer**

Diane Weyermann, Chief Content Officer at Participant, had long been the engine behind the company's documentary film and television slate. Her work at Participant has defined the company since it was founded in 2004 by Jeff Skoll. She championed and shaped Participant's history and breathed life into Jeff's vision that a good story, well told, can change the world.

Collectively, Weyermann's projects have earned 10 Academy Award® nominations and four wins, eight Emmy® nominations and three wins, three BAFTA nominations and one win, five Spirit Award nominations and three wins, highlighting issues spanning climate change to government surveillance, the plight of refugees to the dignity of work. But the care she took to bring the most urgent social issues to life extended beyond what was shown on the big screen.

Prior to joining Participant in 2005, Weyermann was the director of the Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program. During her tenure at Sundance, she was responsible for the Sundance Documentary Fund and launched two annual documentary film labs, the Edit & Story Lab and the Documentary Composers Lab which she co-created with Peter Golub, both focused on the creative process.

Before her time at Sundance, she served as the director of the Open Society Institute New York's Arts and Culture Program where she launched the Soros Documentary Fund (which later

became the Sundance Documentary Fund). Weyermann was a member of the Documentary Branch Executive Committee of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences from 2012-2018. She served on the Foreign Language Film Award and International Feature Film Award Executive Committees from 2016-2020 and co-chaired the committees from 2018-2020. She was also a member of the Television Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the European Film Academy.

*Weyermann passed away in October 2021*

### **Fred Grinstein | Executive Producer**

Fred Grinstein is a film/ television maker and executive producer based in Playa Vista, CA. Most recently, he served as Executive Producer & Head of Non-Fiction Programming at Steve Golin's Anonymous Content where projects include the HBO true crime series *Undercurrent: The Disappearance of Kim Wall*, directed by Erin Lee Carr, *At the Ready* from filmmaker Maisie Crow, Official Selection in the 2021 Sundance Documentary Competition, and an untitled social justice feature film for Shopify Studios, helmed by Geeta Gandbhir.

In 2020, Grinstein entered a first look co-venture with Anonymous Content for his newly formed non-fiction label Terremoto Content, focusing on producing Filmmaker and IP-driven documentary films and TV series. Upcoming projects an upcoming mini-series for ABC News/ Hulu produced with Story Syndicate, an arthouse feature doc partnered with Bona Fide Films, as well as an all-access political feature doc in collaboration with XTR.

Previously Grinstein played a key role in the launch of Viceland, collaborating with Filmmaker and Creative Director Spike Jonze to start up the youth-skewing channel, projects include *Weediquette*, *Flophouse*, *Hamilton's Pharmacopeia*, *Twiz and Tuck* and Ondi Timoner's *Jungletown*. He was also a Senior Director of Programming at A&E for 5 years where he was responsible for hit series *Storage Wars*, *Crazy Hearts: Nashville*, *Dogs of War*, *Dog the Bounty Hunter*, and *Psychic Kids*.

### **Linzee Troubh | Executive Producer on behalf of The Atlantic**

Since its founding as an abolitionist journal in 1857, *The Atlantic* has built a reputation for reporting and disseminating transformative ideas — and for challenging the status quo. We aim to bring transparency and original thinking to questions of consequence, on topics ranging from politics, the economy, and global affairs to technology, science, and culture. As the third-longest-running magazine in America, we find ourselves at a remarkable moment: one of both continuation and transformation, of upholding our legacy while continuously reinventing ourselves for the future

*The Atlantic* has long considered the ideas that shape a changing nation — and how they shift the globe at large. As our world rapidly changes under a pandemic, we're leading our audience and partners into the future. We reach an average of 30 million unique readers a month, and have 8 million followers across our social platforms. At the height of the pandemic, we averaged 1000 new paying subscribers a day. Last year, *The Atlantic* won its first Pulitzer Prize, and we

recently won our second Pulitzer, as well as the National Magazine Award for General Excellence, the top award given each year by the American Society of Magazine Editors.

### **Vann R. Newkirk II | Consulting Producer on behalf of The Atlantic**

Vann R. Newkirk II is a senior editor at The Atlantic, and the host and co-creator of the Peabody Award-winning Floodlines, a narrative podcast about Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. For years, Newkirk has covered voting rights, democracy, and environmental justice, with a focus on how race and class shape the country's and the world's fundamental structures. Vann is a 2022 Andrew Carnegie fellow, and was a 2020 James Beard Award Finalist, a 2020 11th Hour Fellow at New America, and a 2018 recipient of the American Society of Magazine Editors' ASME Next Award.

### **About Participant**

Founded in 2004 by Chairman Jeff Skoll and under the leadership of CEO David Linde, Participant ([www.participant.com](http://www.participant.com)) is the leading global media company dedicated to content that unites art and activism to create positive change. Participant's films have earned 85 Academy Award® nominations, including 2022's historic triple nomination for *FLEE*, and 21 wins, including Best Picture for *Spotlight* and *Green Book*; Best Documentary Feature for *An Inconvenient Truth*, *CITIZENFOUR*, *The Cove* and *American Factory*; and Best Foreign Language Film for *Roma* and *A Fantastic Woman*. Participant also has earned 44 Emmy® Award nominations and 11 wins, including two wins for the groundbreaking *When They See Us*.

A pioneer of socially conscious storytelling, Participant partners with key nonprofits and NGOs to drive real-world impact and awareness around today's most vital issues on a global scale, and is the only major US entertainment company whose social and environmental impact has earned a [B Corp Certification](#). Participant believes that diversity is a source of strength, that inclusion is essential to progress, and that equity is an imperative for impact. Follow Participant on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

### **About Multitude Films**

Multitude Films is a queer-and women-led independent production company dedicated to telling nonfiction stories by and about historically excluded and underrepresented communities. Multitude's critically-acclaimed films have been programmed at dozens of festivals internationally including Sundance, Tribeca, SXSW, Telluride, and IDFA and distributed by Netflix, Topic, POV, Independent Lens, and HBO Max among others. Oriented by a representational storytelling approach, the company prioritizes equity on screen and behind the camera. Their team has been recognized with the inaugural Doc10 Vanguard Award, Doc NYC 40 Under 40 Award, Cinereach Producers Award, and SIMA Vital Voices Award. Recent releases include Peacock Original *LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER*, presented by Participant; Emmy-nominated Netflix Original *PRAY AWAY*, executive produced by Ryan Murphy and Blumhouse; *APART*, an Emmy-winning and NAACP Image Award-nominated episode of *THROUGH OUR EYES* on HBO Max; Sundance Award-winning and IDA-nominated *ALWAYS IN SEASON*; and Livingston Award-winning *THE FEELING OF BEING WATCHED*. [multitudefilms.com](http://multitudefilms.com)



**CREDITS:**

A PEACOCK ORIGINAL

PARTICIPANT PRESENTS  
A MULTITUDE FILMS PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
THE ATLANTIC

A FILM BY  
Geeta Gandbhir & Sam Pollard

LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE ROAD TO BLACK POWER

DIRECTED BY  
Sam Pollard & Geeta Gandbhir

PRODUCED BY  
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SET CAR OPERATORS

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DRONE PILOT

Douglas Bell

DRONE CAMERA OPERATOR

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RE-RECORDING MIXER Filipe Messeder

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