
SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

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SONY PICTURES CLASSICS ACQUIRES HIGHLY ANTICIPATED DOCUMENTARY WEST OF MEMPHIS

NEW YORK (February 29, 2012) - Sony Pictures Classics announced today that they have acquired worldwide rights to Academy Award® nominated filmmaker Amy Berg's (*DELIVER US FROM EVIL*) high profile documentary *WEST OF MEMPHIS*. The film debuted at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival in the Documentary Premiere Section to great critical acclaim. *WEST OF MEMPHIS* is produced by the Academy Award-winning team of Fran Walsh and Peter Jackson, and first time producers Damien Echols and Lorri Davis.

WEST OF MEMPHIS is a powerful documentary that chronicles the new investigation surrounding the "West Memphis Three," which ultimately broke the case open and led to the freedom of three innocent men: Damien Echols, Jason Baldwin and Jessie Misskelley Jr. Beginning with a searing examination of the fatally flawed police investigation into the 1993 murders of three, eight year old boys in the small town of West Memphis, Arkansas, the film goes on to reveal personal insight into Echols' fight to save his own life; how he survived eighteen years on death row and eventually freed himself from the hatred and ignorance of those who had tried to destroy him. The film asks the question that still haunts Echols, Baldwin and Misskelley to this day - what value do we, as a society place on the truth?

"In 2009 Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh and Lorri Davis approached me to make a film which documented the defense's battle to overturn the guilty verdicts in the case of the West Memphis Three. After spending more than two years on the ground filming in Arkansas, the blatant injustice of the case was very apparent; my hope is that *WEST OF MEMPHIS* will lead to full exoneration for Damien, Jason and Jessie. In addition, I hope the film will serve as a platform for a broader discussion about the failures of our criminal justice system nationwide. I'm very excited for this powerful story to be making its way to theaters and know that having Sony Pictures Classics as our partner is the surest way to catapult our film to the widest possible audience," says Director Amy Berg.

Producers Fran Walsh and Peter Jackson add, "We are very proud to be partnering with Sony Pictures Classics on the release of *WEST OF MEMPHIS*. We have been working with Lorri Davis, Damien Echols and his defense team for the past seven years, and during that time we came to understand that this was not just a story of a terrible injustice; it's also a story about hope; about how two people found each other, saved each other, and loved each other through the hardest of times. This is Damien and Lorri's film, and we are very excited to share it with the world."

"We are honored that Sony Pictures Classics will be working with us to bring WEST OF MEMPHIS to the world. We are excited and quite frankly overwhelmed at the chance to tell our own story. Working with Fran, Peter and Amy has been the most powerful and fulfilling of experiences for us. We see this film as a source of inspiration, and it carries our heart and soul with it," say producers Lorri Davis and Damien Echols.

"With DELIVER US FROM EVIL, Amy Berg became a major documentary filmmaker. Seeing WEST OF MEMPHIS at Sundance, we felt Amy had outdone herself with this extraordinary anatomy and investigation of injustice. We look forward to collaborating with her and producers Fran Walsh, Peter Jackson, Damien Echols and Lorri Davis in bringing this exciting and important drama to audiences everywhere," states Sony Pictures Classics.

SPC negotiated the deal with Jackson and Walsh's manager, Ken Kamins, who also serves as the film's Executive Producer. Sony Pictures Classics has previously worked with Kamins on John Boorman's THE GENERAL.

ABOUT SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Michael Barker and Tom Bernard serve as co-presidents of Sony Pictures Classics—an autonomous division of Sony Pictures Entertainment they founded with Marcie Bloom in January 1992, which distributes, produces, and acquires independent films from around the world.

Barker and Bernard have released prestigious films that have won 29 Academy Awards® (25 of those at Sony Pictures Classics) and have garnered 124 Academy Award® nominations (101 at Sony Pictures Classics) including Best Picture nominations for MIDNIGHT IN PARIS, AN EDUCATION, CAPOTE, HOWARDS END, and CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON.

ABOUT SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT

Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE) is a subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America (SCA), a subsidiary of Tokyo-based Sony Corporation. SPE's global operations encompass motion picture production and distribution; television production and distribution; digital content creation and distribution; worldwide channel investments; home entertainment acquisition and distribution; operation of studio facilities; development of new entertainment products, services, and technologies; and distribution of filmed entertainment in more than 100 countries. Sony Pictures Entertainment can be found at www.sonypictures.com.