



**Bungalow Media + Entertainment for CNN Films and HBO Max, in association
with Rolling Stone Films**

present

LITTLE RICHARD: I AM EVERYTHING

Directed by Lisa Cortés

PRODUCERS: Robert Friedman, Lisa Cortés, Liz Yale Marsh and Caryn Capotosto
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Dee Rees, Mike Powers, Anita May Rosentstein, Gus Wenner,
Jason Fine, Amy Entelis, Courtney Sexton

2023 | U.S. | English | 98 minutes

Official Selection

2023 Sundance Film Festival – World Premiere, U.S. Documentary Competition
2023 SXSW Film Festival

FINAL PRESS NOTES

Distributor Contact:

George Nicholis
Rebecca Fisher
Magnolia Pictures
(212) 924-6701 phone
publicity@magpictures.com

Press Contact LA/Nat'l:

Ryan Langrehr
Sara Tehrani
DDA PR
ryan.langrehr@ddapr.com
sara.tehrani@ddapr.com

Press Contact NY/Nat'l:

Lauren Schwartz
Emily Esrig
Cinetic Media
lauren@cineticmedia.com
emily@cineticmedia.com

SYNOPSIS

Produced by Bungalow Media + Entertainment for CNN Films and HBO Max, in association with Rolling Stone Films, director Lisa Cortés' Sundance opening night documentary **LITTLE RICHARD: I AM EVERYTHING** tells the story of the Black queer origins of rock n' roll, exploding the whitewashed canon of American pop music to reveal the innovator – the originator – Richard Penniman. Through a wealth of archive and performance that brings us into Richard's complicated inner world, the film unspools the icon's life story with all its switchbacks and contradictions. In interviews with family, musicians, and cutting-edge Black and queer scholars, the film reveals how Richard created an art form for ultimate self-expression, yet what he gave to the world he was never able to give to himself. Throughout his life, Richard careened like a shiny cracked pinball between God, sex and rock n' roll. The world tried to put him in a box, but Richard was an omni being who contained multitudes – he was unabashedly everything. Directed by Lisa Cortés, **LITTLE RICHARD: I AM EVERYTHING** is produced by Robert Friedman, Cortés, Liz Yale Marsh and Caryn Capotosto and Executive Produced by Dee Rees.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Without Little Richard, would Lizzo exist? Would Lil Nas X? Would the Rolling Stones?

Rock n' roll is the American idiom, our most enduring export, the lifeblood of our pop music. It's also our cultural war zone, from the scandal of Elvis's pelvis to outrage over Lizzo playing James Madison's flute.

As an artist, I seek out projects that expand our collective imagination, illuminating what the mainstream misunderstands. The people I love most have always been the people struggling to be seen. Today, Little Richard's struggles and story are more urgent than ever, as states ban books based on race and queerness, and politicians openly question gay marriage and school integration.

Tracing Richard Wayne Penniman's path from 1930s Macon, Georgia through underground Black drag clubs to segregated concert halls and international fame, the film rejects simplification, giving Little Richard his due both as a revolutionary and as a deeply conflicted artist navigating tensions of race and sexuality more heated today than during his rise.

As Mick Jagger ruefully admits in the film, Little Richard did it first. First to wear mascara; first to strip his shirt off; first to play with gender norms. Little Richard, I Am Everything is as entertaining and thought-provoking as the man himself, and like Richard Penniman, aims to reshape the very culture from which it arises.

– Lisa Cortés

LIST OF INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

Lee Angel
Libby Anthony
John Branca
Newt Collier
Ashon Crawley
Charles Glenn
Fredera Hadley
Ralph Harper
Nona Hendryx
Ramon Hervey
Muriel Jackson
Mick Jagger
Sir Lady Java
Tom Jones
Jason King
Tony Newman
Tavia Nyong'o
Billy Porter
Morris Roberts
Zandria Robinson
Nile Rodgers
Stanley Stewart
Billy Vera
John Waters
Dr. Dewitt S Williams
Keith Winslow

BIOGRAPHIES

Lisa Cortés – Director

Lisa Cortés is an Academy Award® nominated and Emmy-winning producer and director. In 2020, Cortés co-directed *All In: The Fight For Democracy*. Her upcoming film directing credits include *Little Richard: I Am Everything*, a documentary about the transgressive rock ‘n’ roll icon, which will premiere in the U.S. Documentary Competition section at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival. Also premiering at Sundance is the film *Invisible Beauty*, produced by Cortés, which tells the story of Bethann Hardison, a fashion revolutionary and racial justice trailblazer in her industry for over five decades. In 2020, Cortés co-directed *All In: The Fight For Democracy*, tracing the violent history of the voting rights struggle. Emmy-winning HBO documentary, *The Apollo*, (2019) which Cortés produced, explores African American cultural and political history through the story of the legendary Apollo Theater. The film *Precious* (2009), which she executive produced, received the Sundance Audience Award and Grand Jury Prize for best drama. *Precious* was nominated for six Academy Awards® and won two. Her film productions have received over 80 international awards and nominations. Cortés's early career as a music executive was launched at the iconic Def Jam label and Rush Artist Management; she also was VP of Artist & Repertoire at Mercury Records and founded the Loose Cannon label. Cortés is a member of the Producers Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She serves on the Boards of Film at Lincoln Center; Independent Television Services (ITVS); Yaddo, the celebrated artists' community in Saratoga Springs; the Trajal Harrell Dance Company; and the DGA Focus on Women Committee.

Dee Rees – Executive Producer

Dee Rees is an Oscar and Emmy nominated filmmaker known for her unflinching and bold character portrayals. Her first three films — *Pariah* (Focus Features, 2011), *Bessie* (HBO, 2015) and *Mudbound* (Netflix, 2017) — earned the writer/director enthusiastic, sweeping critical praise and dozens of major awards (detailed list below). Her Academy Award nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay for *Mudbound* made her the first ever African American woman to be nominated in that category. Most recently, she directed the political thriller *The Last Thing He Wanted* (Netflix, 2020) starring Anne Hathaway that was based on the novel by Joan Didion. In June 2021, the trailblazing auteur was the first ever African American woman to have a film in the prestigious Criterion Collection when her first feature film, *Pariah*, was included in this cinematic canon. Also, a director for several television series, Rees wrote and directed an episode of the critically-acclaimed sci-fi fantasy *Electric Dreams* (Amazon Studios, 2018). Rees was born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee, holds a Master of Business Administration from Florida A&M University, a Master of Fine Arts from New York University's film school and currently lives in New York with her wife, author Sarah Broom.

Robert Friedman – Producer

Bungalow was founded by CEO Robert Friedman, a 30-year entertainment veteran, who has held an array of senior executive positions including President of Radical Media & Entertainment; President of AOL, Interactive Marketing, TV & Ad Sales; Co-Chairman of New Line Cinema in charge of worldwide Theatrical Marketing and Licensing and President of New Line Television, which he launched for the company. Among the New Line Cinema content included *Lord of the Rings*, *Austin Powers*, *Rush Hour*, *Dumb & Dumber*, *Shine* as well as a wide array of television and documentary projects. Friedman was an original member of the start-up team at MTV.

Friedman, an Emmy-award winning documentary TV and film producer, has recently produced series including *Serving the Hamptons* for Discovery+, *It Couldn't Happen Here* for SundanceTV and AMC+, the four-part mini-series *Surviving Jeffrey Epstein* for Lifetime, the five-part mini-series *The Preppy Murder* for AMC/Sundance, *The Panama Papers* for EPIX, and *Roswell: The First Witness* for History. Additional credits include Emmy-Award winning *GIVE* for NBC, *Corvette Heroes* for the History Channel, *Landmarks Live in Concert* for PBS, *36 Hours with the New York Times* for Travel Channel, and scripted dramas *APB* on Fox, Netflix's *Insatiable*, and Amazon's *Modern Love*. Bungalow has also produced the feature documentaries *The Devil Made Me Do It* for Discovery+, *Spring Broke* on Showtime, *We the People: The Market Basket Effect*, and the Clive Owen's feature film, *The Confirmation*, as well as *Paradise Lost III*, *Iconoclasts*, *Oprah's Master Class*, and Paul Simon's *Under African Skies*.

His industry honors include being named "Media Man of the Year" by ADWEEK, named one of the top 100 marketers in the country by AdAge, and most recently an inductee into the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame where he was also distinguished with the Chairman's Award. Friedman serves on the Board of International Radio and Television Society (IRTS), The International Academy of TV Arts and Sciences and the TV industry's NATPE association. He has been a member of Young Presidents' Organization (YPO/WPO) for over two decades. Friedman also serves on the boards of AccuWeather, Mount Sinai Health System, and Columbia Graduate School of Business. At Columbia Business School, Friedman serves as an adjunct professor for the Corporate Governance Program and as a mentor for Sheena Iyengar's Think Bigger Class. He is a Trustee Emeritus of Vassar College and was the 2009 Commencement Speaker at the Business School commencement.

Caryn Capotosto – Producer

Caryn Capotosto is an award-winning documentary producer known for *WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?*, a feature documentary about Mister Rogers that won a 2019 Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary as well as a Producers Guild Award and Critics' Choice Award for Best Documentary. She received a 2016 News and Documentary Emmy Award for her role as co-producer on *BEST OF ENEMIES* and she was associate producer on the Academy Award and Grammy Award-winning documentary, *20 FEET FROM STARDOM* (2013). Other projects include the Emmy-winning *FEELS GOOD MAN*, which won a Special Jury Award at Sundance 2020 (Producer), *THE THIEF COLLECTOR* (2022) and the Emmy-nominated Netflix series *UGLY DELICIOUS* and *BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER* (Executive Producer 2019-2020). Upcoming projects include *LITTLE RICHARD: I AM EVERYTHING*, slated for a 2023 Sundance Film Festival premiere.

Mike Powers – Executive Producer

Mike Powers is a 20-year veteran of production and development. Mike's career started at MTV where he wrote, produced and directed a number of series and events. From 1999 through 2001, Mike oversaw "Total Request Live" as it became a cultural phenomenon. From there he went on to Executive Produce the first two seasons of MTV's Emmy Award winning series "Made". In 2003, Mike helped launch MTV's East Coast Development department and shepherded shows like "Run's House", "The X-Effect", "Maui Fever" and "Life of Ryan" onto the air. In 2008, Mike became an independent producer and was an EP on a number of series including "College Life", "Sex with Mom And Dad", "The Buried Life" and "World Of Jenks" - which, at the time, was the highest rated series premiere in MTV's history.

In 2011, Mike joined Tony DiSanto and Liz Gateley as they launched DiGa, eventually becoming SVP of Current Series. While at the company, Mike oversaw series and pilots for History, Oxygen, MTV, Logo and Lifetime.

Before joining Bungalow Media + Entertainment in 2015, Mike was an independent Showrunner on projects for Bravo, Oxygen, H2 and A&E.

Liz Yale Marsh – Producer

Liz Yale Marsh is an Emmy-winning documentary film and television producer and the producer of *Little Richard: I Am Everything*. Liz serves as Executive Producer on the critically acclaimed true crime anthology series *It Couldn't Happen Here*, now in its second season on Sundance Channel/AMC+. Previous work includes producing the award-winning 4-part Lifetime documentary *Surviving Jeffrey Epstein*, and *The Preppy Murder*, a 5-part documentary for Sundance/AMC, both series directed by Ricki Stern and Annie Sundberg. Liz served as Co-Executive Producer on the feature documentary film *The Panama Papers*, directed by Alex Winter and the Emmy-winning NBC series *GIVE*. Liz is newly under an overall deal at Universal Television Alternative Studio to spearhead documentaries for the studio. Liz, in addition to her Bungalow credits above, was formerly the Head of Documentaries & Premium Series for Bungalow Media + Entertainment, where her additional credits included *Spring Broke* (directed by Alison Ellwood) and the series *36 Hours with the New York Times*. Liz spent five years at Radical Media, where she worked on Joe Berlinger's *Paradise Lost III*, and the series *Iconoclasts* and *Oprah Presents: Masterclass*. Liz is a Founding Board member of UNICEF's Next Generation and is the Founder of the WestFlix Film Festival in Los Angeles.

CREDITS

Directed By:

Lisa Cortes

Produced By:

Robert Friedman

Produced By:

Caryn Capotosto

Lisa Cortes

Liz Yale Marsh

Executive Producers:

Mike Powers

Anita May Rosentstein

Executive Producer:

Dee Rees

Executive Producers:

Gus Wenner

Jason Fine

Executive Producers:

Amy Entelis

Courtney Sexton

Lead Editor:

Nyneve Minnear

Editor:

Jake Hostetter

Original Score:

Tamar-kali

Music Supervisor:
Jonathan Finegold

Cinematography:
Keith Walker
Graham Willoughby

Co-Producer:
Jarobi Moorhead