



Impact Partners presents
In Association with **Levelground Productions & Ford Foundation**

UNION

Directed By Stephen Maing and Brett Story

****WORLD PREMIERE - U.S. DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION - 2024 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL****



English | 104 mins | United States

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SUNDANCE SCREENINGS

World Premiere - Sun, 1/21 at 11:30 AM at The Library Center Theater

P&I - Mon, 1/22 at 9:30 AM at Holiday 2

Public Screening #2 - Mon, 1/22 at 12:00 PM at Redstone Cinema 7

Public Screening #3 - Tues, 1/23 at 5:00 PM at Broadway Centre Cinemas, SLC

Public Screening #4 - Thurs, 1/25 at 9:00 AM at The Egyptian Theater

LOGLINE

The Amazon Labor Union (ALU) — a group of current and former Amazon workers in New York City’s Staten Island — takes on one of the world’s largest and most powerful companies in the fight to unionize.

SYNOPSIS

On April 1, 2022 a group of ordinary workers made history when they did what everyone thought was impossible: they successfully won their election to become the very first unionized Amazon workplace in America. This feat would be extraordinary for any union, let alone the Amazon Labor Union (ALU), who did it with no prior organizing experience, no institutional backing, and a total budget of \$120,000 raised on GoFundMe. Heralded as the most important win for labor since the 1930s, our documentary captures the ALU’s historic grassroots campaign to unionize thousands of their co-workers from day one of organizing.

Described by ALU President Christian Smalls as the “N.W.A. of the organizing world,” the group’s persona and strategies are highly unconventional: from wearing *Money Heist* costumes at press conferences to distributing free marijuana to workers. A core emotional arc arises out of the journey of our worker-turned-organizers through a series of political battles, pivotal strategic events, and interpersonal tensions that test their commitments and their solidarity. Up against a corporate superpower and with legal protections at a drastic low for workers, all odds are against the ALU. Yet our protagonists remain unswayed in their beliefs in collective action and the dignity and power of the working-class.

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Written by Brett Story

UNION charts the dramatic organizing trajectory of a small band of past and present Amazon workers in Staten Island, New York. Up against the most powerful company in the world, this small group of workers is emblematic of a 21st Century economy in which low-wage workers are increasingly racialized, unorganized, and critical to the global supply chain. The global economy

has undergone a massive transformation since the height of union membership in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of today's young workers do not even remember a time in which unions offered a meaningful path to collective power. Globalization, deindustrialization, and the rise of the global supply chain have decentered traditional union strongholds like coalfields and manufacturing plants in favor of cargo ports and delivery warehouses. Since former President Ronald Reagan famously broke the air traffic controllers strike in 1981, the union movement has been in steep decline. No company better exemplifies the twin economic trends of union-busting and supply chain globalization than Amazon.

As a filmmaker who grew up working-class and who saw my single mother and many neighbors struggle for decent pay and working conditions, I have long understood the stakes of labor organizing. I also know that the state of the union movement is not what it was a half century ago. Indeed, my first film, a feature documentary called *Land of Destiny* (2010), tracked the fall-out of an epidemic of workplace cancers among petrochemical workers in an industrial town in Ontario, Canada. Filming in this community in the mid 2000s, I first thought that I was making a film about workers rising up - a kind of 21st Century companion to Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County USA*. It wasn't until I was deeply embedded in the community that I realized I was actually making an intimate portrait of deindustrialization and obsolescence. All of my films since have focused, in one way or another, on the struggle of ordinary people to feel like they have power.

It is significant that today's insurgent labor battles in the United States are being led primarily by people of color, with Black women in particular at the forefront of multi-racial struggles for better pay and dignified working conditions. Some of these struggles take the form of traditional unionization campaigns, but many do not. Rather than drawing primarily from the history of labor organizing in America, today's most active workplace organizers are taking inspiration - and support - from contemporary movements for Black lives, climate justice, and police abolition. *UNION* begins with the highly anticipated unionization drive in Bessemer, Alabama and the decision, made in the immediate wake of its defeat, by Chris Smalls and his fellow workers to fight a different kind of fight. It will not be easy, but it will be a struggle that the entire world will be watching. *UNION* captures the labor struggle of the 21st century - Black led, multi-racial, and thoroughly without precedent.

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Stephen Maing

Our larger economic and institutional structures have always profited from the exploitation of the poor, the minority and vulnerable, a subject I spent seven years exploring in my previous work on discriminatory and data-driven policing resulting in the film *Crime + Punishment*. So when workers in Staten Island decided to unionize I was struck by the troubling familiarity of their complaints like productivity quotas, retaliation and a culture of fear – but also inspired by an exciting and defiant energy of worker-led organizing and activism. The efforts of these radicalized workers felt

like a long overdue chapter in our country's history of collective struggle, the kind of nascent moment I believe sometimes only nuanced long-form cinéma vérité has the capacity to capture.

As a first generation Korean, raised by a single mother long beset by financial and employment challenges, my films have often considered the experiences of race and class within larger economic and institutional structures. Having spent many years collaborating with whistleblowers, leakers and citizen reporters, my work has been informed by many unlikely champions compelled to disrupt these designs.

After three-years of immersive observation, I hope this film shows how the pent up indignation of any group of people can also be a wellspring of collective power. While the insidious nature of capitalism will always fundamentally seek to undermine unionization efforts, the workers in Staten Island proved organizing may get messy, but progress is the result of each individual believing in the power of their voice and vitality.

We are living in a time when the world's ten wealthiest men more than doubled their fortunes, during a pandemic, while the livelihoods of 99% of humanity declined. And the largest international employers, like Amazon, regularly use illegal union busting tactics to suppress worker power. However, at the same time, there is immense energy and public support for unionization.

This film comes at a moment when Amazon workers occupy a strategic position in the labor movement that coal, steel and auto workers once did. Amazon's monopolistic size and ubiquity has placed it at the center of capitalism's distribution and logistics, so to disrupt this is to challenge an entire economic model of hyper-exploitation and worker oppression. Our film is an effort to document this historic crossroads and the colossal challenges Amazon workers face in their campaign to unionize. These efforts could not be more urgent and essential in also defining what the future of work and workplace organizing will look like, and the stakes have never been greater.

I hope viewers feel the indelible sense of urgency and purpose that we did while filming. That for most workers, it is no small decision to challenge one's own employer, let alone a ruthless adversary like Amazon. To create an organization out of nothing, in the face of immense pressure and risk to livelihood, requires great sacrifice, endurance, and sometimes hubris. I will never forget the day the organizers of the ALU won their first election - the feeling was electric, joyful, and a complete relief. And, likewise I will never forget the utter devastation when they lost their next. Seeing many of them learn to organize for the very first time, discover their talents and capacity, and witness their impassioned determination during such a challenging and consequential time fills me with gratitude. I hope viewers feel a bit of their own restlessness, determination and potential for change in the collective efforts of these workers and their historic achievement.

PRODUCER STATEMENT

Mars Verrone, Samantha Curley

Years into a global pandemic which has upended all of our lives, hundreds of thousands of people are quitting their jobs, going on strike, and attempting to organize their workplaces. For the first time in a long time, workers seem to have some political leverage, even while actual union membership is the lowest it's been in over fifty years (50 years ago about a third of U.S. workers were unionized whereas today only 10.3% of U.S. wage and salary workers belong to unions). The "future of work" is a question on everyone's mind, and we may have an unprecedented opportunity to rethink our lifestyles and dismantle structures of power that have long been perpetuated simply by the virtue of being status quo. *UNION* amplifies the complex and moving story of a group of low-wage warehouse workers attempting to establish a worker-led, democratically-run labor organization at one of the most powerful and profitable companies in the world. Whether or not their efforts are successful in this instance, to see Black and brown people assert their agency and claim rights that have long been taken from them is thrilling to say the least. It is high time that we center the perspective of the "essential workers" who have been made to risk their lives throughout the pandemic. And in order to create a more just world, we need tools, visions, and inspiration to imagine beyond the circumstances which we have been given. We need real stories about the power of the people. We need hope for something better.

Amazon is a lucid and prominent example of how mega-corporations thrive at the immediate expense of Black and brown Americans, and to the long-term detriment of us all. However, we do not consider Amazon to be an exceptionally bad transnational corporation - and that is the problem. Since long before the pandemic, our society has dehumanized and abused an entire class of people in the name of corporate profit margins and consumer convenience. While this story focuses on one warehouse at one company, we know that it is the story of every worker who has ever tried to improve their own circumstances against the odds. It may sound cliché, but in times of great change, people look to art and media to make sense of it all. And with so many crises and rapid changes happening all around us, audiences are in need of documentaries which elucidate systems of power while uplifting and honoring the ordinary people that exist within them. From upper-class Amazon customers to low-wage workers who resonate directly with the *ALU*, we are confident that this film will move all kinds of people to create powerful change in their own lives and communities. In our current moment of social upheaval, a film like *UNION* has the power to intervene in systemic exploitation and present a vision of what is possible.

Q&A WITH DIRECTORS

Samantha Curley:

I was first introduced to Chris through the local organizing network in LA, right on the heels of the outset of the pandemic when we were doing mutual aid calls to neighbors. One of the people I was working with was a professor who had been in contact with Chris, and interested in what was happening at Amazon, and they brokered an introduction to him.

Mars Verrone:

I had initially heard Chris' story around the time of his walkout and subsequent firing in March of 2020. This was a time when people were banging pots and pans as a way of recognizing essential workers. So I found his actions really impressive; they stood out to me. His story made a few headlines, but then sort of faded away. That summer some friends and I decided to reach out to Chris; we just DMed him on Instagram to explain we were documentary filmmakers interested in his story. He mentioned there was already a producer who had reached out to him, and he said he would put us in touch. That was Samantha.

Samantha Curley:

Around this time, Chris had started an organization called the Congress of Essential Workers, with some people who would now be considered core Amazon Labor Union organizers. They were going around the country, protesting at Jeff Bezos' mansions. Mars and I were both part of organizing an action to protest outside of Bezos' house in Beverly Hills, so we started to get to know Chris better. From the summer of 2020 until spring of 2021, we just focussed on relationship building and starting to imagine what a film about his story could look like. Chris is so charismatic and the ramifications of his experience, what had happened to him at Amazon and what he was doing about it, felt very timely. Eventually we were able to package the project and get initial funding before the ALU even launched their union drive, which allowed us to shoot right from the beginning.

Brett Story:

In winter 2021 I got a cold email from Samantha and Mars saying, "We developed this relationship with Chris Smalls, and we think there might be a film there. We're not sure what it would look like yet...maybe it's co-directed with him, maybe it's about him, we don't know.". I had made a short film for Field of Vision called Camper Force in collaboration with the journalist Jessica Bruder, which was about a particular Amazon employment program targeted at elderly retirement folks. And my first film, *Land of Destiny*, was actually a labor struggle film about workers dealing with globalization and obsolescence. So the project immediately appealed to me because it's one of my bugaboos that there are not that many really essential labor films that are set in the post-Reagan era. They're all these older films about coal miners and automakers. And then of

course, more recently, there was *American Factory*. But I've always been really interested in making a film about what labor struggle looks like now, from a moment of labor decline.

I went to New York to meet Chris and some of the other Congress for Essential workers folks that he was with in Staten Island, and there was all this national attention and all this anticipation around the election campaign in Bessemer, Alabama - which they lost. But in the wake of that loss, Chris and these other folks said, "well, we're gonna start our own union campaign." And I thought, why would a group of people that have no institutional affiliation, in the wake of a major loss somewhere else, decide that their task at hand is to start their own union struggle? And there was this opportunity to be on the ground from day one. So I said to Sam and Mars, "okay, I know we've barely begun here, but can we just jump in? I know some cinematographers, let's just start filming."

So we started working on the film. I brought in Martin DiCicco as the cinematographer, and we started filming as the Amazon workers just as they began this campaign. And a few months into the project, it became very clear that it would really be strengthened by a creative collaborator and partner, for a variety of reasons. Steve is someone who immediately came to mind. He's a filmmaker that I have immense respect and admiration for. I love his films. So I cold emailed him. I think I even said in that email, "I don't know that they're gonna win or anything, but here's why I think it's interesting. What do you think?"

Steve Maing:

That was a super exciting email to get from Brett because I was such a fan of *The Prison in Twelve Landscapes*. It was among one of my favorite films I had seen that year. I love Brett's work as a thinker and an artist. So when she mentioned that the producers had reached out to her about this project, and that she was starting to pursue it, but that there were a lot of unknowns still...I really just perked up! This is the exact kind of scenario we hope for; an exciting collaborator on subject matter very relevant to the work I'd been doing. My previous long-form doc about systemic discrimination in the NYPD, *Crime & Punishment*, had me very primed to think further about collective struggle.

When Chris led the walkout in Staten Island, it was really interesting to realize that their complaints had a troubling resonance to those of the participants of my previous film; they were talking about productivity, quotas, retaliation, and a culture of fear, and they were demonstrating this defiant and also exciting energy of activism that was very familiar, but with important differences. I would not have expected that these themes would emerge out of a fulfillment facility in Staten Island. So I decided I would love to work with Brett and the producers, and just dive right in. It was exciting, but also a bit daunting, because there was so much we didn't know. All of us believed so deeply in this mission, but also knew that the project would be a huge commitment when there may not even be a film there. We thought, if they lose, this may all be for naught because the film would demonstrate something that we wouldn't want to put out into the world. If they win, that may be too simplistic of a narrative.

Brett Story:

Even in the early days I wondered, is there a film here? In what way would this have public value? Can this be creatively rendered? For me, the most striking thing for all of us was just being on these Zoom calls and hearing someone like Kevin, a person we hear early on in the film, show up and say, "Hey, I had nowhere else to go. I heard you guys were meeting." And like, "man, I'm just really struggling" and then Chris or Derrick or someone else will say, "all right, we got your back. You're on that shift. We know this person, we got your back." And I think that this is a necessary part of understanding why people show up to political struggle, but it's really fragile. And it's hard to overstate how small and scrappy this group of people we were documenting were. There was tons of heart, and the struggle was righteous. There's so many reasons they needed to be doing what they were doing, but they were doing it in a vacuum of support. And that was, in some ways, part of the motivation. The less support that they had institutionally, the more they were like, "we're gonna show you."

For us as a film team, that was crucial to what we understood was going to be valuable about bringing this story to a public that is typically offered stories about underdogs that win. So, if we are in a situation where we don't know that these underdogs are going to win...what else should keeps us watching them? But there was not one moment on this team where any of us doubted that this story was worth following. Instead, we all thought, it's interesting to watch people try, to honor that what they were doing was really hard. We knew it would be hard, but the intimacy of their struggle, and what it takes for five people to decide to be out at a tent at three in the morning, day in and day out, was replicated in the commitment of the film team to document something outside of the kinds of guarantees of success that we know is rewarded by the mainstream media universe.

Steve Maing:

That was really comforting, knowing that despite the uncertainty, because we had shared political commitments to the issues around this work, this cohort of collaborators did not flinch, at all, throughout the process. It was so invigorating and inspiring, to work together in that capacity. We needed that, because it was also very hard. We encountered things within their labor struggle that we had no idea we would see, that we had no idea would be so hard for the Amazon workers, and in turn hard for us to bear witness to. I think we're all on this journey to find our own kind of radicalization as artists and filmmakers and activists, and to walk that path together with these workers who are doing the same but at a much earlier stage, perhaps, in their journey, to be so close to the collective contemporary American struggle, was the most staggering experience I've had as a filmmaker, to date.

Mars Verrone:

There was a running conversation around these uncanny similarities between our team and the ALU, and at times when conflict or uncertainty arose on the film, we would say, "well what did the ALU do in a similar situation?" That wasn't conscious, in terms of how we structured the filmmaking process, but this film depicts group dynamics in a pressure cooker, and that dynamic applies to organizing, and to filmmaking - it applies to so many different experiences where you have a group of people who have never worked together before doing something really hard, without a playbook to follow.

Brett Story:

Yes, there were a lot of parallels between our team, in the process of making this film, and this union, in the process of being formed. One of the things I love most about this film team, is that we - I mean Steve, Martin, the producers, our Editors Blair and Malika, everybody - demonstrated an unflinching commitment to this project without knowing how it was going to end. And we all know how challenging that is in the documentary environment, where we're constantly asked to bet on a sure thing, to know how something is going to end, and take very few risks. *Union* is a very collaborative project and it was evident from the beginning that there was a shared ethos to model a different way of making films that doesn't create or reify hierarchy and reward certain ways of being or ways of doing.

Samantha Curley:

The film industry is so hierarchical and capitalism creates a scarcity model. It's really hard for a brand new group of people to come together and actually be able to pull that off. But there's a lot of honor in the attempt, and we all really feel it was a beautiful experience. However, it would be false for me to say that our collaboration was perfect and without conflict, when in reality it was truly similar to what ALU went through. We really made a counter-cultural effort within our industry, and it was really hard, and we learned a lot. And there is value in the effort.

Brett Story:

It is really hard to keep going when there's an economy of scarcity on all levels, including just a scarcity of respect. That is something we would talk about on the film team, when we'd watch folks fight or have internal challenges. All of the workers were so committed to the struggle, but also operating in this space of total fragility because there's no buffer, no room for failure, no room for risk. There's a scarcity of respect for their labor. And that can cause all sorts of internal tensions that I think are absolutely recognizable for anyone, even outside of a labor struggle.

Steve Maing:

And it's amazing that employers at these powerful corporations don't see more clearly that unions are actually like a balancing factor within their particular corner of capitalism. If workers felt well

paid, enough that they can care for their families and cover their healthcare expenses, they would be less likely to be angry, and less likely to revolt. And if they were to give the workers a little bit of representation, as opposed to this draconian process of dehumanization and the breakdown of individualized power and identity, they could avoid so much trouble for themselves. Instead these institutions at large are creating huge swaths of desperate people who feel like they have nothing left to lose and thus are actually the most dangerous threat to our existing structures and systems.

There's this kind of fiction of choice that we create for consumers and workers within neoliberalism, like, "if you don't like your job or you don't like this product, just go elsewhere." And that is such a false narrative, because actually, there is no other choice. And this directly touches into why this unionization project was so difficult; because coupled with that limitation of choice is a palpable sense of fear, the sense that there is an existential threat in even considering pushing back against one's employer. That was one of the earliest challenges we observed as the workers tried to build community. How do you just, break through that fear?

Brett Story:

There's so much I want to say about this because it's so important. One of the things that's really hard to pinpoint is the way in which disposability is not only built into the very business model of a company like Amazon, but also narrated to workers as self-empowerment. So what they're hearing is, "yeah, you're not here for a career. You're not a coal miner who's meant to identify with this work." And they create a narrative about the way in which you're, like, building a nation through your mining. You're not an auto worker who's got a job for life, you are a gig worker who is gonna be here for just six months. It's a stepping stone to your entrepreneurial progress toward becoming the next Jeff Bezos. That insidious, violent re-scripting of disposability as self-empowerment is something that we saw happening in real time among workers who were resistant to signing a card or joining a union. This false narrative is woven into the fabric of why unions are at their lowest levels in 60 years.

Then there is this automation and technology and alienating environment in which you can't even get a person on the phone to say, "I have to come in late because my kid is sick." That was one of the frustrations that we heard over and over and over again, and one of the reasons people would show up at the tent or show up on the Zoom calls was just to say, "My mom was sick with Covid and I couldn't call in. I tried to tell them, but then I kept being put on a shift until I was fired, because of the automation."

Steve Maing:

It's an interesting labor story in comparison to, say, the one shown in *Harlan County, USA*. In the 20th century, organizing revolved around industries like coal and steel and the manufacturing of automobiles; that was the key narrative within the labor movement. And *Harlan County* was an important document of that era. But the culture of society has not shifted towards understanding that today, it is people like the Amazon workers who occupy the new most important strategic

position. Amazon in particular is in a central role within capitalism's distribution and logistics, which is so easily proven when you look at the profits that Amazon gained during the pandemic. It was one of few corporations to rake in tens and tens of billions and to triple or even quadruple their margins as a corporation.

Brett Story:

The union, and the film, are in some ways a product of a moment that has laid certain truths a little more bare - the covid moment in which essential workers were given a name and also left to die on the front lines. But it's also really important to understand that this struggle is part of this resurgence in labor organizing as a product of the new Gilded age. The other thing that Amazon represents for the figure of Jeff Bezos is just how rich people are allowed to get in this economy. We exist in a culture in which unions themselves have been increasingly delegitimized in the post Reagan era, but people still understand themselves as exploited. It's very clear to people when they're told that there's no money for healthcare, there's no money for PPE, and they see the boss of their company become the richest man on earth and fly into space, that something is wrong. I think it's really important to put this movement historically within the context of Occupy and the mainstreaming of the idea of the 99% versus 1%, and also Black Lives Matter, where people understand that it's working people of color that are at the highest risk of premature death. And that might happen in a standoff with police, or that might happen at the workplace, and it is happening at the workplace.

Mars Verrone:

As a global community, we are living through a time of multiple crises where the stakes could not be higher. So there's a contradiction in that we have to pursue the seemingly impossible in order to have any hope of making things better. And the only way to begin to approach the daunting work of transformative change is as a collective. As filmmakers, we wanted to show a model of a collective experiment and to demonstrate that work that is very important and necessary can also feel insurmountable. We often spoke about the tension between how this kind of collective organizing is completely crucial, and yet also, not always truly achievable. One of the goals of the film is to hold that tension, because it is useful for people to understand and be prepared for these challenges. And we want the film to be a useful and inspiring tool for the labor movement (and all movements for social justice) - not in a didactic or educational way, but through the lens of human experience - showing what it is like to navigate a complex group dynamic with David vs. Goliath odds against you.

Steve Maing:

I think in this film, there is a relationship between what's seen and unseen in the material. Before and after every observable scene is a conversation that occurred between filmmakers and participants. As a cinematographer, every time something has happened, you put the camera down and you continue to just hang out. In some ways a lot of hanging out was sort of a central

theme with this group. Because the task at hand required them to be at a tent at all hours. And I know that was indicative of the kind of footage we were able to get when we were just staying present. It is like the ghost story that Jonathan Oppenheimer used to talk about. That behind the visible is the story of the experience that no one will ever see, but perhaps it can be felt, and I always remember these moments of interaction in all of the space in between all of the scenes that inform the intimacy. That is what allowed the camera to be eight inches from someone's face as we watch a very difficult moment unfold. There is no secret to that - it's just about the time spent together.

ABOUT THE TEAM

BRETT STORY - Director + Producer

Brett Story is an award-winning filmmaker and writer based in Toronto. Her films have screened in theatres and festivals internationally, including at CPH-DOX, SXSW, True/False, and Sheffield Doc/Fest. She is the director of the award-winning films *The Prison in Twelve Landscapes* (2016) and *The Hottest August* (2019), and author of the book *Prison Land: Mapping Carceral Power Across Neoliberal America*. *The Hottest August* was a New York Times Critics' Pick and was called one of the ten best documentary films of 2019 by over a dozen publications, including *Variety*, *Rolling Stone* and *Vanity Fair*. Brett has held fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Sundance Institute, and was named one of *Variety's* 10 Documentary Filmmakers to Watch. In 2020 she was nominated for a Cinema Eye Award for Best Director. She holds a PhD in geography and is currently an assistant professor of Media Praxis at the University of Toronto.

STEPHEN MAING - Director, Cinematographer, Editor, Producer

Stephen Maing is an Emmy-award winning filmmaker based in New York. His feature documentary *Crime + Punishment*, which he directed, filmed and edited, won a Special Jury Award at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival, an Emmy Award for Outstanding Social Issue Documentary and was shortlisted for the Academy Award for Best Documentary. His previous films, *High Tech, Low Life*, which he directed, filmed and edited over five years, and *The Surrender*, have screened internationally and were released on P.O.V. and *Field of Vision*, respectively. Maing is a 2021 United States Artists Fellow, Sundance Institute Fellow, NBC Original Voices Fellow, John Jay/Harry Frank Guggenheim Reporting Fellow and a recipient of the IDA's prestigious Courage Under Fire Award shared with the whistleblowers of the NYPD12. He is a frequent visiting artist and educator based in Ridgewood, Queens.

SAMANTHA CURLEY - Producer

Samantha Curley is an award-winning film producer and creative entrepreneur based in Los Angeles. In 2013, she Co-Founded Level Ground Collective, a 501(c)3 artist collective and production incubator creating experiments in empathy. In 2021, she Founded Level Ground Productions which she runs with her creative partner Chase Joynt. Her first feature, *Framing*

Agnes (Kino Lorber) won the NEXT Innovator Award and NEXT Audience Award at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival, as well as a 2023 GLAAD Media Award. Samantha is a graduate of Northwestern University and the Kellogg School of Management. She is an Impact Partners Producing Fellow, NBC Original Voices Fellow and a PGA Create Fellow.

MARS VERRONE - Producer

Mars Verrone is a filmmaker and musician from Los Angeles, CA, currently based in Brooklyn, NY. They graduated magna cum laude from Brown University with honors in Modern Culture and Media (Production) and Phi Beta Kappa membership. Mars is a 2022 NBC Original Voices fellow, Brown Girls Doc Mafia Sustainable Artist fellow, and PGA Create fellow.

MARTIN DICICCIO - Cinematographer, Producer

Martin DiCicco is a cinematographer and director whose work includes All That Passes By Through a Window That Doesn't Open, Here There is No Earth, Girls Got Game, Searchers, The Hottest August, Landfall, and forthcoming films by Angelo Madsen Minax, Timothy George Kelly, and Jem Cohen.

BLAIR MCCLENDON - Editor

Blair McClendon is a New York based writer, film editor, and filmmaker. His films have screened at Sundance, Cannes, Tribeca, and TIFF, and include Aftersun, After Sherman, The Assistant, Mr. Soul!, Give Up the Ghost, and Walk for Mehas. Blair's writing has been published in n+1, the New Republic, the New York Times Magazine, and elsewhere.

MALIKA ZOUHALI-WORRALL - Editor

Malika Zouhali-Worrall is a British/Moroccan editor and director based in New York. She most recently edited THROUGH THE NIGHT (2020), which was a New York Times and Hollywood Reporter Critics' Pick, and named as one of The Guardian's Best Documentaries of 2020. An Emmy Award-winning director, Malika's directing credits include CALL ME KUCHU (2012), THANK YOU FOR PLAYING (2015), and VIDEO VISIT (2022). Her films have screened at the Berlin Film Festival, Tribeca Film Festival, True/False, AFI Festival, Blackstar and SXSW, and broadcast on Netflix, the BBC, The New York Times, ARTE and PBS. Malika is a 2020 Sundance Momentum Fellow, a 2020 William Greaves Award recipient, and a 2021 Adobe Women at Sundance fellow.

CREDITS

Impact Partners Presents
In Association with Level Ground Productions
In Association with JustFilms | Ford Foundation
A film by Brett Story and Stephen Maing

Featuring (in order of appearance)

Christian Smalls	Natalie Monarrez	Mat Cusick
Angelika Maldonado	Nilah Smalls	Karen Ponce
Connor Spence	Gianni Smalls	Justine Medina
Derrick Palmer	Jeremiah Butler	Josiah Morgan
Jason Anthony	Madeline Wesley	Julian Mitchell-Israel
Brett Daniels	Cassio Mendoza	Michael Aguilar
Gerald Bryson	Josiah Maldonado	Brima Sylla
Armani Bryson	Aaron Novik	Nannette Plascencia
Jordan Flowers	Tristian Martinez	

Directed and Produced by
Brett Story
Stephen Maing

Produced by
Samantha Curley, p.g.a.
Mars Verrone, p.g.a.

Produced by
Martin DiCicco

Cinematography by
Martin DiCicco
Stephen Maing

Edited by
Blair McClendon
Malika Zouhali-Worrall

Edited by
Stephen Maing

Music by
Robert Aiki Aubrey Lowe

Executive Producers

Jenny Raskin

Lauren Haber

Geralyn White Dreyfous

Executive Producers

The Villa Family

Executive Producers

David Levine

Jessica Grimshaw

Nick Shumaker

Dawn Olmstead

Co-Executive Producers

Kelsey Koenig

Barbara & Eric Dobkin

Paula Froehle & Steve Cohen

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Natasha & David Dolby

Meryl Metni

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Post-Production Consultant: Ben Garchar

Associate Producers: Hana Elias, Wyatt Winborne

Research Consultant: Alex Press

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Project Supervisor: Samuel Gursky

Assistant Editor: Madz Smith-Ledford

Post Assistant: Alicia Renda

DI Facility: Nice Dissolve

Colorist: Natacha Ikoli

DI Supervisor: Pierce Varous

Post-Production Sound Services: Nocturnal Sound

Sound Designer: Eli Cohn

FX Editor: Jack Sasner

Post-Production Sound Services: Parabolic Sound

Supervising Sound Editor: Tom Ryan

Dialogue Editor / Re-Recording Mixer: Vinny Alfano

Assistant Sound Editor: Zac Swanner

Titles & Additional Graphics: Version Industries

Titles: Caspar Newbolt

Additional Graphics: Josiah Newbolt

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Closing Credits Song

“Kinfolk”

Performed by Mereba

Written by Marian Mereba & Samuel Hoffman

Courtesy of Universal Music Group

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Additional Materials

Blue Origin First Human Flight Webcast - New Shepard Mission NS-16

Blue Origin New Shepard Mission NS-19 Webcast

NBC News Special Report Blue Origin First Human Flight

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New York Times, "Amazon Workers on Staten Island Vote to Unionize in Landmark Win for Labor,"

Karen Weise and Noam Scheiber, April 1, 2022

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This film is dedicated in memory of Poushawn Brown.

Amazon denies any responsibility in connection to the death of Poushawn Brown. Her sister Christina Brown has appealed the dismissal of an initial federal lawsuit. Amazon asserts Poushawn Brown volunteered for a role assisting fellow employees with COVID testing and that employees in this role were required to wear PPE.

Further, in response to a request for comment, an Amazon spokesperson stated Chris Smalls was fired for violating Amazon's COVID-19 protocols.

They denied racial and gender inequity in pay and promotions.

They denied surveilling union activity.

They denied targeting ALU organizers or supporters for discipline or firing.

They issued the following statement: "Our employees have the choice of whether or not to join a union. They always have. Our focus remains on working directly with our team to continue making Amazon a great place to work."

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