

NEWS

**SUNDANCE AWARD-WINNER *SUGARCANE* TO DEBUT DEC. 9
ON NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AND STREAM NEXT DAY ON
DISNEY+ AND HULU**

**FILM SOUNDTRACK, BY COMPOSER MALI OBOMSAWIN, WILL BE
AVAILABLE FROM DEC. 10**

**ANNOUNCEMENT FOLLOWS HISTORIC APOLOGY FROM U.S.
PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN TO NATIVE AMERICAN BOARDING SCHOOL
SURVIVORS**

**SUGARCANE, Directed by Julian Brave NoiseCat and Emily Kassie and Executive
Produced by Indigenous Actress Lily Gladstone, Investigates the Forced
Separation, Assimilation and Abuse Many Children Experienced at an Indian
Residential School in Canada, Igniting a Reckoning on the Nearby Sugarcane
Reserve**

"A must-see film... both stunning and sobering"
New York Times, Alissa Wilkinson

"A gut-punch of a documentary."
The Hollywood Reporter, Lovia Gyarkye

"Stunning"
IndieWire, Esther Zuckerman

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DOWNLOAD KEY ART [HERE](#)
DOWNLOAD STILLS [HERE](#)**

****Winner – Sundance FF 2024 Directing Award – U.S. Documentary****

****Winner – Full Frame Documentary FF 2024 – Center for Documentary Studies
Filmmaker Award****

****Winner – SFFILM 2024 – Golden Gate Documentary Award****

(WASHINGTON, D.C. – Oct. 31, 2024) Today, National Geographic Documentary Films announced the premiere dates for **SUGARCANE**, the award-winning feature documentary from directors Julian Brave NoiseCat and Emily Kassie. The critically acclaimed film will premiere on National Geographic Monday, Dec. 9, at 9/8c and stream the next day on Disney+ and Hulu. The announcement comes in the wake of President Biden’s historic apology to Native Americans for the government’s role in the U.S. boarding school system. Indigenous actress Lily Gladstone also recently boarded the project as an executive producer, citing her close connection to the subject matter as the granddaughter of a boarding school survivor.

The film’s soundtrack, by composer Mali Obomsawin, will be released by Hollywood Records Tuesday, Dec. 10, the same day the film premieres on Disney+ and Hulu. It will be available wherever music is sold and streamed. Obomsawin (Odanak First Nation) is an award-winning composer and Indigenous musician who was named one of GRAMMY.com’s Top 10 Emerging Jazz Artists To Watch.

Directors Kassie and NoiseCat attended the president’s speech at the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona on Friday, Oct. 25, and said, “The President’s formal apology to survivors and their families is a real testament to the significance of what happened to children at Native American Boarding Schools and Indian Residential Schools in the U.S. and Canada. This is a foundational story for North America so it’s such an honor for **SUGARCANE** to be part of the conversation at this moment, pushing it forward and acting as a catalyst for dialogue.”

The film — from first-time director and TIME100 Next honoree NoiseCat and Emmy® and Peabody-nominated investigative journalist and filmmaker Kassie — won the U.S. Documentary Competition Directing Award at Sundance Film Festival earlier this year. The Kassie Films and Hedgehog Films production, in association with Impact Partners and Fit Via Vi, is produced by Kassie and Oscar® nominee Kellen Quinn.

Following its Sundance world premiere, The Wrap declared: “There wasn’t a dry eye in the house ... as the lights came up ... the audience’s thunderous applause erupted into a standing ovation while filmmakers Julian Brave NoiseCat and Emily Kassie took the stage and embraced through tears.” Variety proclaimed: “**SUGARCANE** is the product of humane and insightful filmmakers who are determined to never let anyone forget, and put their moral outrage to exemplary good use.”

SUGARCANE was released in theaters nationwide and throughout Canada this summer. To date, the film has screened at over 60 festivals globally and won 19 festival awards. The film has been included in the DOC NYC Shortlist as well as the IDA Documentary Awards Shortlist for Best Feature Documentary. It received eight nominations at this year’s Critics Choice Documentary Awards (the most of any documentary), is on the Cinema Eye Honors’ Audience Choice Award Long List and is nominated for Best Documentary Feature at the Gotham Awards.

Highlights of the documentary’s award wins include the following:

- 2024 Sundance – U.S. Documentary Competition Directing Award
- 2024 Full Frame – Center for Documentary Studies Filmmaker Award
- 2024 Sarasota Film Festival – Best Documentary Award
- 2024 Minneapolis St Paul International Film Festival – Winner, Jury Award Documentary Competition
- 2024 SFFILM – Jury Winner, Best Documentary Film Award
- 2024 Margaret Mead Film Festival – Filmmaker Award

- 2024 SIFF – Official Competition Special Jury Prize
- 2024 Mountainfilm – Best Documentary Film Award
- 2024 IFF Boston – Special Jury Prize Winner
- 2024 Provincetown International Film Festival – John Schlesinger Documentary Award
- 2024 Doc Edge – Best International Feature
- 2024 Nashville Film Festival – Winner Documentary Feature Competition

Alongside the film’s theatrical release, the filmmakers conducted a screening tour of First Nations and Tribal communities across North America. These [“Rez Tour” screenings](#) offer Indigenous communities an accessible, intimate, and safe way to watch the film prior to its streaming release. Each screening is organized in coordination with First Nations and Tribal community leaders and highlights local or regional resources and health support for Indigenous Peoples and families who have been impacted by residential schools in Canada and Indian boarding schools in the United States. The **SUGARCANE** “Rez Tour” began just weeks after the Department of the Interior released its most recent [Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report](#), which found that nearly 1,000 children died at the more than 400 schools funded by the U.S. federal government — three-times as many as operated in Canada.

A stunning tribute to the resilience of Native people and their way of life, **SUGARCANE** is an epic, nuanced and sensitive cinematic portrait of a community during a moment of international reckoning. Set amidst a groundbreaking investigation into abuse and death at an Indian residential school in Canada, the film empowers participants to break cycles of intergenerational trauma by bearing witness to painful, long-ignored truths and the love that endures within their families.

The director of photography for **SUGARCANE** is Christopher LaMarca, and the cinematographer is Emily Kassie. The film was edited by Nathan Punwar and Maya Daisy Hawke, with music by Mali Obomsawin. Executive producers for the film are Lily Gladstone, Bill Way, Elliott Whitton, Jenny Raskin, Geralyn White Dreyfous, Nina Fialkow, Tegan Acton, Emma Pompetti, Grace Lay, Sumalee Montano, Sabrina Merage Naim, Douglas Choi, Adam and Melony Lewis, Meadow Fund, JanaLee Cherneski and Ian Desai, David and Linda Cornfield, Maida Lynn, and Robina Riccitiello. The co-executive producers are Kelsey Koenig, Lauren Haber, Meryl Metni and Jennifer Pelling. Carolyn Bernstein serves as executive producer for National Geographic Documentary Films.

Since its inception in 2017, National Geographic Documentary Films has been lauded around the world for telling timely, gripping and globally relevant stories. It released the Academy®, BAFTA and seven-time Emmy Award-winning film “Free Solo,” the Academy Award-nominated and Peabody Award-winning “Bobi Wine: The People’s President,” the Academy and BAFTA Award-nominated and Peabody and DGA Award-winning “Fire of Love,” and the Academy Award-nominated and Emmy-winning film “The Cave.” In recent years, the film banner’s slate has also included the duPont-Columbia Award and two-time Sundance Award winner “The Territory,” BAFTA nominees “The Rescue” and “Becoming Cousteau,” Emmy Award winners “The First Wave,” “LA 92” and “Jane” and many other critically acclaimed features and shorts.

About composer Mali Obomsawin

Mali Obomsawin is a bassist, singer and composer from Odanak First Nation, and one of GRAMMY.com’s top ten emerging jazz artists to watch this year. Her debut album “Sweet Tooth” (Out of Your Head Records, 2022) garnered international acclaim and was named in ‘best of the year’ lists from The Guardian, NPR, and JazzTimes upon its release. Evocative and thunderous, “Sweet Tooth” delivers a gripping and dynamic performance, seamlessly melding chorale-like

spirituals, folk melodies, and post-Albert Ayler free jazz. Obomsawin's ensemble occupies a musical universe completely their own, bringing skronk and reverence to every stage.

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About National Geographic Documentary Films

National Geographic Documentary Films, part of a joint venture between The Walt Disney Company and the National Geographic Society, is committed to bringing the world premium feature documentaries that cover timely, provocative and globally relevant stories from the very best documentary filmmakers. Its award-winning and critically acclaimed films reach 300 million people worldwide in 180 countries and 33 languages across the global National Geographic channels and direct-to-consumer platforms Disney+ and Hulu. Recent films include Oscar® nominated *Bobbi Wine: The People's President*, Oscar- and BAFTA-nominated *Fire of Love*, three-time Emmy-Award winner *The First Wave*, two-time Sundance Award winner *The Territory*, BAFTA nominees *The Rescue* and *Becoming Cousteau*, and Oscar- and BAFTA winner *Free Solo*. For more information, visit films.nationalgeographic.com, or find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).

Media Contacts

Felicia Wong, fwong@clucollective.com

Marcus Cammack, marcus.cammack@natgeo.com