



I Am Not Your Negro

Directed by: Raoul Peck

©: Velvet Film Inc, Velvet Film S.A.S.,

Artémis Productions, Closeup Films,

Arte France Cinéma, RTS, RTBF

A co-production of: Velvet Film Inc.,

Velvet Film S.A.S., Artémis Productions,

Close up Films, Arte France Cinéma, RTS, RTBF,

Shelter Prod., Independent Television Service (ITVS)

Presented by: Velvet Film Inc., Velvet Film (France),

Artémis Productions, Close up Films, Arte France

Cinéma, Independent Lens

In co-production with: Radio Télévision Suisse,

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National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée, MEDIA

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With the support of: Cinéforum, Loterie Romande

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Programming Consortium (NBPC), with funding

provided by the: Corporation for Public

Broadcasting (CPB)

Foreign Sales Representative: Wide House

Produced by: Rémi Grellety, Raoul Peck,

Hébert Peck

Co-produced by: Patrick Quinet, Joëlle Bertossa,

Gloria Karefa-Smart

With the full support and collaboration of the

James Baldwin Estate: Eileen Ahearn

Production Manager: Desirée Jellerette

Post-production Manager: Julien Melebeck

Consulting Producer: Audrey Rosenberg

Archival Research: Marie-Hélène Barberis,

Nolwenn Gouault

Additional Archival Footage Research:

Prudence Arndt

James Baldwin material compiled and edited by:

Raoul Peck

Written by/Text by: James Baldwin

Directors of Photography: Henry Adebonojo,

Bill Ross, Turner Ross

Digital Imaging Technician: Trevor Cohen

Grip: John Guillen

Graphics: Michel Blustein

Animation: Michel Blustein

Edited by: Alexandra Strauss

Consulting Editor: Sam Pollard

Make-up: Jacen Bowman

Music Composed by/Original Score by: Alexei Aïgui

Music Performed by: Ensemble 4'33

Sound Design: Valerie Le Docte, David Gillain

Sound: Sergio Da Costa

With the voice of: Samuel L. Jackson

USA-France-Belgium-Switzerland 2016©

94 mins

Digital

TEAR THIS BUILDING DOWN: JAMES BALDWIN ON FILM

HIDDEN TRUTHS: JOHN PILGER AND THE POWER OF DOCUMENTARY

I Am Not Your Negro

John Pilger's call to 'break the silence' at the Power of the Documentary Festival in Sydney

The term 'documentary' was coined by the Scottish director John Grierson. 'The drama of film,' he said, 'is on your doorstep. It is wherever there is exploitation and cruelty.'

I like those words: 'on your doorstep'.

What they say is that the blood, sweat and tears of ordinary people have given us the art form that is the documentary film.

A documentary is not reality TV. Political documentary is not the consensual game played by politicians and journalists called 'current affairs'.

Great documentaries frighten the powerful, unnerve the compliant, expose the hypocritical. Great documentaries make us think, and think again, and speak out, and even take action.

The festival will show a remarkable film entitled *I Am Not Your Negro*, in which the writer James Baldwin speaks not only for African-Americans but for those who are cast aside everywhere, and these include the First Nations people of Australia, still invisible in the country that is unique only because of them.

John Pilger, 28 November 2018 (full transcript at johnpilger.com)

Raoul Peck on 'I Am Not Your Negro' and James Baldwin

I started reading James Baldwin when I was a 15-year-old boy searching for rational explanations to the contradictions I was confronting in my already nomadic life, which took me from Haiti to Congo to France to Germany and to the United States of America. Together with Aimée Césaire, Jacques Stéphane Alexis, Richard Wright, Gabriel García Márquez and Alejo Carpentier, James Baldwin was one of the few authors that I could call 'my own'. Authors who were speaking of a world I knew, in which I was not just a footnote. They were telling stories describing history and defining structure and human relationships which matched what I was seeing around me. I could relate to them. You always need a Baldwin book by your side.

I came from a country which had a strong idea of itself, which had fought *and* won against the most powerful army of the world (Napoleon's) and which had, in a unique historical manner, stopped slavery in its tracks, creating the first successful slave revolution in the history of the world, in 1804.

I am talking about Haiti, the first free country of the Americas. Haitians always knew the real story. And they also knew that the dominant story was not the real story.

The successful Haitian Revolution was ignored by history (as Baldwin would put it: *because of the bad niggers we were*) because it was imposing a totally different narrative, which would have rendered the dominant slave narrative of the day untenable. The colonial conquests of the late 19th century would have been ideologically impossible if deprived of their civilizational justification. And this justification would have no longer been needed if the whole world knew that these 'savage' Africans had already annihilated their powerful armies (especially French and British) less than a century ago.

So what the four superpowers of the time did in an unusually peaceful consensus, was to shut down Haiti, the very first Black Republic, put it under strict economical embargo and strangle it to its knees into oblivion and poverty.

And then they rewrote the whole story.

Flash forward. I remember my years in New York as a child. A more civilized time, I thought. It was the sixties. In the kitchen of this huge middle-class apartment in the

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TEAR THIS BUILDING DOWN: JAMES BALDWIN ON FILM

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Mon 21 Oct 20:30; Fri 22 Nov 18:10 (+ intro)

If Beale Street Could Talk Tue 22 Oct 14:30;

Fri 22 Nov 20:40; Sat 30 Nov 17:50

I Heard It through the Grapevine

Thu 24 Oct 20:40; Sun 3 Nov 13:30

A Raisin in the Sun Sat 26 Oct 15:30;

Sat 9 Nov 18:10; Thu 28 Nov 20:30

I Am Not Your Negro Sat 26 Oct 20:35;

Sat 9 Nov 15:30; Thu 21 Nov 18:30

Color Adjustment

Fri 1 Nov 20:55; Mon 4 Nov 18:10

James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket

Fri 8 Nov 18:15; Mon 18 Nov 20:35

With thanks to

Special thanks to the African Odysseys steering committee, whose support has enabled audiences to enjoy 17 years of Black film programming at BFI Southbank

HIDDEN TRUTHS: JOHN PILGER AND THE POWER OF DOCUMENTARY

Seniors' Free Talk: The Quiet Mutiny + intro and Q&A with author Anthony Hayward

Mon 28 Oct 11:45

Seniors' Free Matinee: The Last Day + intro with author Anthony Hayward Mon 28 Oct 14:00

The Pilger Effect Mon 28 Oct 18:15

The War You Don't See

Mon 28 Oct 20:35; Sat 16 Nov 18:10

Death of a Nation: The Timor Conspiracy +

Palestine Is Still the Issue Sat 2 Nov 15:00

The Golden Dream La Jaula De Oro

Tue 5 Nov 20:45; Thu 14 Nov 18:10; Sun 24 Nov 15:30

Lousy Little Sixpence + Utopia Sun 10 Nov 14:50

Year Zero: The Silent Death of Cambodia +

Breaking the Silence: Truth and Lies in the War on Terror Mon 18 Nov 18:10

Burp! Pepsi v Coke in the Ice Cold War + Flying the Flag: Arming the World Sat 23 Nov 17:45

The Coming War on China

Sat 23 Nov 20:10; Fri 29 Nov 18:15

The Ballymurphy Precedent Tue 26 Nov 18:10 (+

intro by director Callum Macrae); Sat 30 Nov 12:20

The documentaries in this season contain distressing scenes of both violence and racism related to the events they cover

With thanks to

John Pilger, Jane Hill, Sam Pilger, Christopher Hird, Matt Hird, David Boardman, Marcus Prince

Programme texts compiled by John Pilger, Jane Hill, Sam Pilger, Christopher Hird, Matt Hird, David Boardman, Maggi Hurt and David Somerset

Selections from Hidden Truths can be found on **BFI Player**

For more information about John Pilger's films go to johnpilger.com

former Jewish neighbourhoods of Brooklyn, where we lived with several other families, there was a kind of large oriental rug with effigies of John Kennedy and Martin Luther King hanging on the wall, the two martyrs, both legends of the time.

Except the tapestry was not telling the whole truth. It naively ignored the hierarchy between the two figures, the imbalance of power that existed between them. And thereby it nullified any ability to understand these two parallel stories that had crossed paths for a short time, and left in their wake the foggy miasma of misunderstanding.

I grew up in a myth in which I was both enforcer and actor. The myth of a single and unique America. The script was well written, the soundtrack allowed no ambiguity, the actors of this utopia, Black or white, were convincing. The production means of this Blockbuster-Hollywood picture were phenomenal. With rare episodic setbacks, the myth was strong; better, the myth was life, was reality. I remember the Kennedys, Bobby and John, Elvis, Ed Sullivan, Jackie Gleason, Dr Richard Kimble and Mary Tyler Moore very well. On the other hand, Otis Redding, Paul Robeson and Willie Mays are only vague reminiscences. Faint stories 'tolerated' in my memorial hard disk. Of course there was *Soul Train* on television, but it was much later, and on Saturday morning, where it wouldn't offend any advertisers.

Medgar Evers died on 12 June 1963.

Malcolm X died on 21 February 1965.

And Martin Luther King Jr died on 4 April 1968.

In the course of five years, these three men were assassinated.

These three men were Black, but it is not the colour of their skin that connected them. They fought on quite different battlefields. And quite differently. But in the end, all three were deemed dangerous. They were unveiling the haze of racial confusion.

James Baldwin also saw through the system. And he loved these men. These assassinations broke him down.

He was determined to expose the complex links and similarities among these three individuals. He was going to write about them. He was going to write his ultimate book, *Remember This House*, about them.

I came upon these three men and their assassination much later. These three facts, these elements of history, from the starting point, the 'evidence' you might say, form a deep and intimate personal reflection on my own political and cultural mythology, my own experiences of racism and intellectual violence.

This is exactly the point where I really needed James Baldwin. Baldwin knew how to deconstruct stories. He helped me in connecting the story of a liberated slave in its own nation, Haiti, and the story of the modern United States of America and its own painful and bloody legacy of slavery. I could connect the dots.

I looked to the films of Haile Gerima. Of Charles Burnett. These were my elders when I was a youth.

Baldwin gave me a voice, gave me the words, gave me the rhetoric. All I knew through instinct or through experience, Baldwin gave it a name and a shape. I had all the intellectual weapons I needed.

For sure, we will have strong winds against us. The present time of discord and confusion is an unavoidable element. I am not naive to think that the road ahead will be easy or that the attacks will not be at times vicious. My commitment to make sure that this film will not be buried or sidelined is uncompromising.

We are in it for the long run. Whatever time and effort it takes.

Raoul Peck