



## News Release



### **'AT&T Presents: Untold Stories' to Award \$1 Million to Diverse and Deserving Filmmaker Ahead of 2019 Tribeca Film Festival**

*5 Filmmakers Compete for Top Prize During Live-Streamed Pitch Event April 22*

*2018 Program Winner, 'Lucky Grandma,' to Premiere at Festival on April 28*

NEW YORK, April 17, 2019 – For the third consecutive year AT&T\* and Tribeca will bring one filmmaker's boundary-pushing story to life through AT&T Presents: Untold Stories. AT&T funds the \$1 million prize, and Tribeca provides mentorship from seasoned industry professionals for the deserving filmmaker to develop the pitch into a feature-length film.

To determine the winner, AT&T, Tribeca and the year-round nonprofit Tribeca Film Institute, will host a live pitch event (available via live stream) in New York City on April 22 – a few days before the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival begins. For the 6th straight year, AT&T is the presenting sponsor of the Festival, which runs April 24 – May 5.

Each year, the Tribeca Film Institute chooses 5 talented and diverse filmmakers to present [their story ideas](#) and film scripts to a Greenlight Committee. For the first time in the program's history, the five finalists are all women. Here are the five finalists and the films they'll pitch this year:

- Aslihan Unaldi – "Afloat"
- Kaliya Warren – "Expatriates"
- Kate Tsang – "Marvelous and the Black Hole"
- Maria Victoria Ponce – "Washing Elena"
- Ellie Foubi – "Zenith"

"Our collaboration with Tribeca is a living example of what two brands can do when they come together with purpose to make a difference – in this case, for under-represented filmmakers who might not otherwise see their story brought to life on the big screen," said Fiona Carter, AT&T Communications Chief Brand Officer. "We are proud to shine a light on brilliant creators like Sasie Sealy and Angela Cheng, whose 2018 winning film 'Lucky Grandma,' premieres at this year's Festival."



“AT&T and Tribeca have made it possible to fully support underrepresented filmmakers with Untold Stories through funding, mentorship, and distribution,” said Jane Rosenthal, co-founder and CEO of the Tribeca Film Festival and co-founder and co-chair of the Tribeca Film Institute. “This should be the norm not the exception for our industry and Untold Stories is one example of how to lead the way.”

“At TFI, we provide filmmakers from diverse backgrounds with the essential tools they need to take their projects to the next level: funding, mentorship, and industry exposure,” said Amy Hobby, Executive Director of the Tribeca Film Institute. “AT&T Presents: Untold Stories awards those tools to the winning team. Programs like this shift the paradigm in independent film by helping to launch the careers of artists from underrepresented communities.”

### **Who will win? Watch the pitch event LIVE.**

Viewers worldwide can tune into the live stream at 9 a.m. ET on April 22 and watch “herstory” in the making when the five finalists pitch their stories to the Greenlight Committee. Watch it on Tribeca’s [Facebook page](#). The Greenlight Committee will announce the winner later that day at a luncheon celebrating inclusivity in storytelling, and on Tribeca Film Institute’s website and AT&T’s Newsroom.

The **Greenlight Committee** includes: **Haifaa Al Mansour** (Director and Producer), **Len Amato** (President, HBO Films, Miniseries and Cinemax Programming), **Fiona Carter** (AT&T Communications Chief Brand Officer), **LisaGay Hamilton** (Actor, Director, and Producer), **Katie Holmes** (Actor, Director and Producer) **Mira Nair** (Director and Producer) and **Kal Penn** (Actor, Comedian and Producer)

Learn more about each of them [here](#).

### **The \$1 million prize is just the beginning**

In addition to the \$1 million top prize, AT&T and Tribeca will help with awards submissions, qualifying screenings, advertisements and promotion of the film. This year’s program’s winning film will premiere at the 2020 Tribeca Film Festival and will run across AT&T’s video platform. AT&T will also provide a \$10,000 grant to the other 4 participating filmmakers to help achieve their film goals.

### **AT&T brings fans closer to their passion during the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival**

- **April 24-26:** AT&T Presents TFI Network: a part of the Tribeca Film Festival and the Untold Stories Program. The 3-day networking event for Tribeca Film Institute grantees and other selected filmmakers, will include working sessions and presentations from some of the industry’s most esteemed experts.
- **April 28:** Premiere of “Lucky Grandma,” the second film to come out of the exclusive AT&T Presents: Untold Stories film initiative (selected as prize winners in April 2018).



Following a red carpet opening and premiere of the film, the film's cast, including winning filmmakers Sasie Sealy and Angela Cheng, will join attendees at an after party.

- "Lucky Grandma," directed by Untold Stories winning filmmakers Sasie Sealy and Angela Cheng, set in New York City's Chinatown, the film follows an ornery, chain-smoking Chinese grandma who goes all in at the casino, landing herself on the wrong side of luck... and in the middle of a gang war.
- May 3: AT&T's Free Film Friday gives fans the chance to see exclusive film screenings for free. For more details, go to [TribecaFilm.com/ATTFreeFilmFriday](http://TribecaFilm.com/ATTFreeFilmFriday).

Stay up-to-date on this year's festival news by downloading the official Tribeca Film Festival mobile app, presented by AT&T, through [iTunes](#), [Google Play](#) or your app store today.

### **AT&T Presents: Untold Stories III Selected Projects and Filmmakers**

*For more information on each of the filmmakers and their projects, please go to: [TribecaFilm.com/ATTUntoldStories](http://TribecaFilm.com/ATTUntoldStories). (Photos available upon request)*

#### **Afloat**

Written and Directed by Aslihan Unaldi, Produced by Izabella Tzenkova:

Before he is thrown in prison for exposing government corruption in his latest book, Turkish journalist Yusuf convinces his ex-wife and adult daughters to reunite for a sailing trip on the Aegean coast. As soon as they leave the marina, tensions rise, old resentments surface and new secrets are revealed.

#### **Expatriates**

Written and Directed by Kaliya Warren, Produced by Marttise Hill, Julius Pryor and Tim Wu:

An adventurous biracial American woman is on a travel photography project in East Africa, when she falls for a playboy volunteer doctor on assignment in Ethiopia. Together, they embark on a life-altering motorcycle road trip from Sudan to South Africa. EXPATRIATES explores the West's relationship with contemporary East Africa and Neocolonialism in the Millennial age.

#### **Marvelous and the Black Hole**

Written and Directed by Kate Tsang, Produced by Carolyn Mao:

Teenage delinquent Sammy Ko teams up with a surly children's party magician on a bizarre adventure to navigate her tumultuous home life and inner demons. A coming-of-age comedy that touches on unlikely friendships, grief, and finding hope in the darkest moments.

#### **Washing Elena**

Written and Directed by Maria Victoria Ponce, Produced by Vanessa Perez:

Set in Richmond, California, WASHING ELENA follows 31-year-old Indalia's struggle to solve the mystery surrounding her best friend Elena's sudden death. To find answers, Indalia must confront the realities of Elena's surprising conversion to Islam, leading Indalia to challenge her own biases, vices and lingering guilt.

#### **Zenith**

Written and Directed by Ellie Foubji, Directed by Joseph Mastantuono:

An adopted Black Mennonite woman leaves the rural white community she was raised in and travels to an inner-city neighborhood in Philadelphia to find her biological mother. ZENITH explores how we choose to construct our identities through race, faith and family.



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**About the Tribeca Film Festival:**

The Tribeca Film Festival, presented by AT&T, brings visionaries and diverse audiences together to celebrate storytelling in all its forms, including film, TV, VR, gaming, music, and online work. With strong roots in independent film, Tribeca is a platform for creative expression and immersive entertainment. The Festival champions emerging and established voices; discovers award-winning filmmakers and creators; curates innovative experiences; and introduces new technology and ideas through premieres, exhibitions, talks, and live performances.

The Festival was founded by Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal, and Craig Hatkoff in 2001 to spur the economic and cultural revitalization of lower Manhattan following the attacks on the World Trade Center. Now in its 18th year, the Festival has evolved into a destination for creativity that reimagines the cinematic experience and explores how art can unite communities. The 18th annual edition will take place April 24 - May 5, 2019. [www.tribecafilm.com/festival](http://www.tribecafilm.com/festival)

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\*\*Based on analysis by Ookla® of Speedtest Intelligence® data average download speeds for Q1 2019.

\*\*\*According to America's biggest test as announced by Global Wireless Solutions last fall.

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