



LAST CALL
THE SHUTDOWN OF NYC BARS

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

FILM TITLE: LAST CALL: THE SHUTDOWN OF NYC BARS

RUNTIME: 59 minutes

FORMAT: digital, color, 1.78:1 aspect ratio

LANGUAGE: English

TAGLINE: What happens when an entire industry is laid off in a single day?

LOGLINE: Filmed during the height of the pandemic, Last Call explores the social and economic impact of COVID-19 on the NYC hospitality industry.

PRESS ENQUIRIES:

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PRESS STILL:

<https://lastcalldocumentary.com/press>

OFFICIAL WEBSITE:

<https://lastcalldocumentary.com>

OFFICIAL TRAILER:

<https://lastcalldocumentary.com/trailer>

OFFICIAL INSTAGRAM:

<https://www.instagram.com/lastcalldocumentary>

OFFICIAL FACEBOOK:

<https://www.facebook.com/lastcalldocumentary>

SYNOPSIS:

Our story begins with Jena Ellenwood, a bartender in Queens, NY, recounting her experiences moving to New York and finding herself as the newest employee at the Sparrow Tavern, a local Astoria watering hole. We are introduced to Jena's coworkers and close friends, all working within the network of the New York City hospitality and service industries.

In March 2020, business-as-usual comes to a grinding halt as COVID-19 sweeps through New York, quickly establishing Queens as the epicenter of the pandemic in not only the state of New York, but throughout the entire country. Bars and restaurants are ordered to close, leaving thousands of hospitality workers stranded without work and an uncertain future. Jena and her friends vent their frustrations and anxieties, not only surrounding the seemingly hopeless economic uncertainty, but also the deadly virus that threatens their very lives.

Jena and her friends learn to adapt and cope with the reality of life during COVID, finding new sources of income and seizing the opportunity to pursue creative endeavors that might normally be sidelined. Throughout the process of finding a foothold in this "new normal", the anxiety and uncertainty of New York's hospitality industry looms, as 2020 ends with COVID hospitalizations in New York continuing to rise once again.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Born and raised in NYC, Johnny Sweet graduated from Syracuse University in 2003. He was recently nominated for an Emmy for Best Long Sports Documentary for “Quiet Storm: The Ron Artest Story.”

Sweet was an Emmy Award winning feature producer at ESPN for 10 years, primarily covering the NBA and the NFL. In 2016 Sweet directed his first long film, “Vick” which won the Associated Press Sports Editor Award for journalism, his second APSE award. His second film, “Quiet Storm,” a documentary about the life of Ron Artest was released in 2019 on Showtime. The film won the Santa Barbara International Film Festival and Cleveland International Films Festival for Best Documentary and was selected by the Hot Docs and Big Sky Film Festivals.

FILMAKER'S Q&A – JOHNNY SWEET

What were the challenges of filming the doc during the pandemic?

There were several. At the time, we didn't know the extent of just how dangerous this virus was. No matter how much protection I used, was I going to be able to keep both myself and Jena safe? Was I endangering my wife by doing this? How comfortable was she? During the March/April peak, Jena and I stayed very isolated.

How did the no contact interview set help in telling the story of Last Call?

It's the only reason the film was able to be made. If we couldn't protect our interview subjects, there's no shot that we could've produced the documentary. It was the peak of the pandemic in NYC, particularly our area in Queens. Our main concern was to protect the people courageously telling their stories, as thousands were dying in NYC daily. All credit goes to hsc.tv's staff. They figured out how to do this by creating a no contact, manless studio.

Why was it important for you to tell this story?

The first industry I thought of when the pandemic hit was the hospitality industry. I worked at a bar throughout my college days at Syracuse (shoutout former Konrad's bar staff). Arguably the best professional morale I ever experienced was working at Konrad's. So, imagine thousands of those types of mini-professional families having their lives ruined at the same time over something they couldn't control. These businesses and their employees should be recognized.

SUBJECT'S Q&A – JENA ELLENWOOD

Why was it important for you to tell your story for Last Call?

It's important that people hear and see what my industry, my city, and my neighborhood is going through. It has been hard enough to explain to friends and relatives who don't live in areas that are hugely affected, what it feels like to hear nothing but sirens and to feel helpless when your coworkers, regulars, and friend's relatives pass away and you can only mourn virtually. It's equally as hard to explain what it feels like to see your entire industry decimated. Hospitality, the arts, live events—these fields are so often not viewed as “professions” and we very much are. Hopefully by sharing our stories, we can start to bring these issues to the forefront and be heard before more places we love are gone for good.

What was it like telling your story as you were going through it?

For weeks straight, Johnny was the only person I saw in person. Some days, it felt cathartic, others, more invasive. I didn't know if what I was saying or doing would be important enough to share, or, if just the sheer act of living was enough to share. I wrote every day and sat for interviews but honestly, it's still surreal. I'm glad there is a time capsule of those first few months, but the story as we all know, doesn't end there. We are all still “walking through a collective trauma” together, but everyone's landscapes are a little different.

What do you want people to know about the film?

I want people to know that Last Call is very much real, and as hard as it is to watch, there are also moments of joy, of creation, of laughter. I wouldn't be who I am today without this industry, and my friends and neighbors interviewed in this film.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

BRYAN TWZ BROUSSEAU – PRODUCER/DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Bryan has been a director, associate producer and cinematographer for numerous documentaries and projects that have gone on to win National Sports Emmy Awards, the Edward R. Murrow Award for Video Feature, and a New York Press Award. These pieces include the opening tease “Dream On: Stories of Boston’s Strongest,” “The Courage Game,” a short documentary about 12-year-old gay lacrosse player Braedon Lange, and “Tragic State,” the story of boxer Magomed Abdulsalamov. His most recent Director of Photography projects include, the Emmy nominated “Quiet Storm: The Ron Artest Story” that aired on Showtime, “The Return,” an award-winning short documentary about former Pittsburgh Steeler running back and Army veteran Rocky Bleier’s return to Vietnam, and the feature documentary “When New York was One: The Yankees, The Mets & The 2000 Subway Series.”

PIER DE SANCTIS – PRODUCER/EDITOR

Pier is in charge of hsc.tv’s post-production department with over seventeen years of experience in the field. As one of the company’s founders, Pier has had to wear many hats over the years, but the most consistent roles he fills are that of Animator and Creative Director. Pier’s designs and animations have helped create show packages for History, CNBC, ESPN and ABC. Pier has also worked on corporate and marketing projects with some of the biggest brands in the world such as Coca-Cola, BNP, Jeep and IBM.

LISA EDWARD – PRODUCER

Lisa is a coordinator, production manager and producer with over a decade of experience managing various levels of production exclusively for hsc.tv. She is a two-time Emmy award-winning Associate Producer on E:60’s primetime, hour-long special “Dream On: Stories of Boston’s Strongest”, dedicated to the first anniversary of the Boston Marathon bombings. Most recently in documentary film, Lisa has contributed her services to the Emmy-nominated, “Quiet Storm: The Ron Artest Story” released by Showtime in 2019 as well as the 2020 releases of “When New York Was One: The Yankees, The Mets & The 2000 Subway Series” on Fox Sports and “My Name is Ada Hegerberg” streaming exclusively in the U.S. on ESPN+.

JASMINE RAO – PRODUCER/EDITOR

Jasmine grew up taking pictures, going on to win awards for her work in media and graduating Magna Cum Laude with a BA in Film and Media Arts and Psychology from American University. Over the past 10 years, Jasmine has written, produced and edited diverse content across many categories including the documentary short “Madagascar’s Mysterious Fossa” for National Geographic, the psychological thriller feature “Mirror Game” released on Netflix and the Emmy-nominated documentary “Quiet Storm: The Ron Artest Story” now playing on Showtime. The cinematic portrait “100 Years, 100 Women” that she edited to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of women’s suffrage, was covered by Vogue and will be permanently archived at the Park Avenue Armory. The “Kalin” episode she edited for Bleacher Report’s “B/REAL” Season 2 won the 2020 Edward R. Murrow Award for Sports Reporting.

CREDITS:

Written, Directed and Produced by Johnny Sweet

Director of Photography: Bryan TwZ Brousseau

Executive Producers: Bryan TwZ Brousseau & Pier De Sanctis

Producers: Pier de Sanctis, Lisa Edward, Jasmine Rao, Bryan TwZ Brousseau

Editors: Pier De Sanctis & Jasmine Rao

Graphics: Daron Nealis & Autumn Nakamura Neal

Colorist: Rosie Nakamura

Poster Art: Autumn Nakamura Neal

Sound Editor: Hans Erik Erickson

Consulting Producers: Melissa Bessaha & Amy Dash

Production Manager: Lisa Edward

Post Production Supervisor: Joe Anton

Camera Operators: Bryan TwZ Brousseau, Justin Stokes, Bob O'Reilly

Assistant Camera: Rick Elders & Brian Reilly

Location Sound Mixers: Justin Stokes & Rick Elders

Assistant Editors: Rosie Nakamura & Joe Neal

Music: Firstcom Music, Inc.

Songs By: Skech185



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