



BY BLOOD to Premiere on AMERICA REFRAMED
A film by Marcos C. Barbery & Sam Russell

Tuesday, November 15, 2016 at 8 p.m. on WORLD Channel

***BY BLOOD** offers a contemporary and historical account of African American Freedmen of Cherokee descent, and their legal battle to regain tribal citizenship, as well as reclaim part of their history and identity.*

July 6, 2016 – (New York, NY) – Marcos C. Barbery and Sam Russell’s acclaimed documentary **BY BLOOD** will premiere Tuesday, November 15, 2016 at 8 p.m. on WORLD Channel ([check local listings](#)) as part of the fourth season of AMERICA REFRAMED, public media’s newest documentary series hosted by Natasha Del Toro. The broadcast will be followed by streaming for audiences across the U.S. at www.worldchannel.org/americanreframed starting on November 16th.

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BY BLOOD chronicles the ongoing conflict over the issue of tribal rights between the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and the Cherokee Freedmen, descendants of African American slaves. The film explores a largely untold history and the impact of a battle over race, identity, and the sovereign rights of Native American people.

Americans are familiar with the removal of Cherokees in the infamous “Trail of Tears,” but the involvement of African American slaves is far less known. By the time gold was discovered at the dawn of the 19th century, Cherokee slave codes were indistinguishable from those enacted by the rest of the South. When the U.S. Indian Removal Act forced Cherokee and other Native Americans to relinquish their native land and move west, countless slaves followed them into the frontier, bound and shackled.

In the summer of 1866, just months after U.S. lawmakers amended the Constitution to bar slavery, the Cherokee Nation entered into a treaty with the federal government. Among a long list of terms, the treaty granted perpetual freedom and full tribal membership to Cherokee slaves and their descendants—newly minted Cherokee members—the “Freedmen.”

BY BLOOD picks up 150 years later. The Cherokee Nation—a wealthy tribe, with land, casinos and various business holdings—argues that Freedmen descendants are not members of their tribe “by blood” because they descended from the tribe’s former slaves. The Cherokee Nation and another former slave-holding nation, the



Seminole Nation, began denying tribal rights to Freedmen descendants more than a decade ago. **BY BLOOD** documents the rise and fall of African Americans—including Freedmen descendants who identify as Black American Indians—after Oklahoma’s statehood in 1906.

By 1920, Tulsa had become home to many successful black entrepreneurs. Tensions between the city’s white residents over the success of African Americans in Jim Crow Oklahoma grew intense and on June 1, 1921 they erupted into the Tulsa Race Riots. Sparked by a dubious conflict and led by the Ku Klux Klan, it destroyed Tulsa’s then-booming African American community of 30 city blocks including the area known as Black Wall Street. The film examines the region’s present-day lingering racial tensions, particularly on Tulsa’s north side: a predominately African American neighborhood that is also Cherokee Territory and home to many Freedmen who are struggling economically.

The film also examines the extraordinary work by David Cornsilk, a Tulsa-resident and civil rights advocate. Cornsilk is eighth-generation Cherokee. A self-taught genealogist and tribal legal advocate, for nearly a decade Cornsilk fought on behalf of one Freedmen descendant. The film depicts Cornsilk’s David vs. Goliath tribal legal battle that now has reached the U.S. Federal Court.

BY BLOOD chronicles Freedmen descendants Roshon Jones, Sylvia Davis, and Marilyn Vann, as well as civil rights advocates David Cornsilk and Jon Velie, whose roles illustrate tenuous race relations across Oklahoma. Ultimately, the documentary illustrates how federal encroachment over Indian territories led to Oklahoma’s statehood and fueled its violent history, as well as the divisive legacy of racial classification by the one-drop rule.

Film Credits

Directed by: Marcos C. Barbery & Sam Russell

Produced by: Marcos C. Barbery

Media Contact

Journalists and reviewers may contact Neyda Martinez at **917 656 7846** or via email at neyda@amdac.org for interviews and special requests.

About AMERICA REFRAMED

AMERICA REFRAMED curates a diverse selection of films, highlighting innovative and artistic approaches to storytelling portrayed from the lens of emerging and veteran filmmakers. Viewers are immersed in personal stories from towns big and small, to



the exurbs and through country roads, spanning the spectrum of American life. The documentaries invite audiences to reflect on varied topics including culture, healthcare, politics, gun violence, religion and more. Several episodes feature a roundtable discussion moderated by host Natasha Del Toro with special guest commentators and filmmakers.

In 2015, AMERICA REFRAMED won a GRACIE Outstanding Series award, and was nominated for an EMMY award as well as an Independent Documentary Association award for best curated series. In its first season, AMERICA REFRAMED received five 2013 CINE Golden Eagle Awards, and one Imagen Awards nomination.

AMERICA REFRAMED Series Credits

Executive Producers: Justine Nagan, Chris Hastings, Chris White
Series Producer: Carmen L. Vicencio
Host: Natasha Del Toro

AMERICA REFRAMED can be accessed online via
<http://worldchannel.org/programs/america-reframed/>
and,
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AMERICA REFRAMED Co-Producer

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia arts organization dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. AmDoc is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. For more information, visit: www.amdoc.org



The WORLD Channel delivers the best of public television’s nonfiction, news and documentary programming, including original content by and about diverse communities, to U.S. audiences through local public television stations and streaming online at worldchannel.org. WORLD reached 35.8 million unique viewers 18+ last year (55% adults 18-49) and over-indexes in key diversity demographics. Online, the WORLD Channel expands on broadcast topics and fuels dialogue across social media, providing opportunities for broad and diverse audience interaction.

WORLD is programmed by WGBH/Boston, in partnership with American Public Television and WNET/New York, and in association with PBS and National Educational Telecommunications Association. Funding for the WORLD Channel is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Ford Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Kendeda Fund. For more information about The WORLD Channel, visit www.worldchannel.org

