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***THE AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL (ABFF) AND LIGHTBOX  
ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP TO FOSTER DIVERSITY  
IN DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING***

***Films to be developed and produced by Lightbox and the newly formed ABFF Films division  
and executive produced by ABFF CEO Jeff Friday and Lightbox co-founders  
Simon Chinn and Jonathan Chinn***

***Partnership to begin with an initiative to fund development of feature documentaries,  
sponsored by 21st Century Fox and National Geographic***

*New York, New York, (June 9, 2017)* – Today, The American Black Film Festival (ABFF) and Lightbox, a multi-platform media company focused on creating high quality non-fiction programming for film, television and digital platforms, announced they will collaborate on a new initiative to foster diversity in the feature documentary arena.

This multiyear program will leverage Lightbox’s success in producing award-winning and commercially successful documentaries with the ABFF’s unparalleled pipeline and record of accomplishment for identifying many of the industry’s most promising Black filmmakers.

To jumpstart this initiative, ABFF and Lightbox are announcing the ABFF’s inaugural Feature Documentary Competition and a national ‘call to action’ will be made the week leading up to the start of the 2017 American Black Film Festival, which runs June 14-18 in Miami Beach. The competition will be open to all African-American documentary filmmakers and any documentary filmmakers interested in exploring non-fiction stories and themes that speak directly to the African-American experience.

Selected films will be developed and produced by Lightbox and the newly formed ABFF Films division and executive produced by ABFF Ventures CEO Jeff Friday and Lightbox co-founders Simon Chinn and Jonathan Chinn. The first of the ABFF’s annual Feature Documentary Competition is being co-sponsored by National Geographic and 21st Century Fox, who will fully fund the development of the selected films.

Based in London and Los Angeles, Lightbox has produced several acclaimed documentaries that speak directly to the experience of people of color in America, including ESPN’s “Fantastic Lies” about the 2006 Duke Lacrosse scandal; National Geographic’s “LA 92” that marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the civil unrest in Los Angeles following the verdicts in the Rodney King beating case; and company is currently in production on the only authorized documentary about the life and legacy of the late Whitney Houston.

“We are honored to be partnering with the ABFF to encourage further diversity in the documentary genre.” said Lightbox co-founders Jonathan Chinn and Simon Chinn. “The documentary community has a rich tradition of embracing creative voices from a wide array of demographics and perspectives, but there is clearly more work for us to do to support African-American and filmmakers from minority communities who want to express themselves through the powerful medium of documentary story telling.”

For the past 21 years, ABFF has been deemed as the *nation’s most prominent film festival*, which recognizes and provides a platform for African American filmmakers. This collaboration will help to elevate unique perspectives and vision in the documentary space.

"We're so encouraged by the public's growing appetite for documentary films and are excited to partner with Lightbox, National Geographic and 21st Century Fox Studios to provide this unprecedented opportunity," says Jeff Friday, CEO of ABFF Ventures.

Details of the National Geographic/ 21st Century Fox sponsored competition and submission guidelines can be found at the ABFF’s website: [www.ABFFVentures.com/films](http://www.ABFFVentures.com/films).

Details of the initiative will also be announced following a special screening of National Geographic and Lightbox’s feature documentary “LA 92” in Miami as part of the American Black Film Festival. The film, directed by Daniel Lindsay and TJ Martin, will screen on Friday June 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:45pm at The Miami Beach Cinematheque.

“As we expand our push into premium programming, and especially look for new projects to present under our National Geographic Documentary Films banner, I cannot think of a better opportunity to foster new talent and discover new voices with important stories to tell,” said Tim Pastore, President of Original Programming for National Geographic Channel. “The opportunity to join our parent company in partnering with Jonathan, Simon and the team at ABFF is incredibly exciting. I cannot wait to see what talent we discover.”

Jeff Friday and Lightbox are represented by Creative Artists Agency (CAA).

Join the conversation on social media by visiting ABFF’s multiple social media platforms:

Twitter	@ABFF
Facebook	<a href="#">American Black Film Festival</a>
Instagram	@AmericanBlackFilmFestival
YouTube	<a href="#">American Black Film Festival</a>
Hashtags	#ABFF2017 #WeAreABFF
Website	<a href="http://www.ABFF.com">www.ABFF.com</a>

#### **ABOUT LIGHTBOX:**

Headquartered in London and Los Angeles, Lightbox is a multinational media company focused on creating high quality non-fiction programming for film, television and digital platforms. It was founded

in 2014 by Academy Award and Emmy winning producers and cousins Simon Chinn and Jonathan Chinn. Simon and Jonathan's partnership represents a seamless melding of two distinct but compatible backgrounds and a strongly shared creative sensibility. Since its founding in 2014, Lightbox has produced many notable projects including documentary films *Atari: Game Over* and *The Thread*, for Xbox Entertainment Studios; an ESPN 30 for 30 film about the 2006 Duke Lacrosse scandal entitled *Fantastic Lies*; as well as several series for both the UK and US markets such as *The Traffickers* for Fusion, *Inside British Vogue* for BBC, *The Runner-Up* for Esquire, *War Child* for Channel 4 and the groundbreaking *Captive* for Netflix. Lightbox recently released its first theatrical feature documentary *LA 92*, about the 1992 LA Riots for National Geographic's Documentary Films Division, and is currently in production on the first and only authorized documentary about legendary pop icon Whitney Houston, which is slated to hit theatres in 2018. Prior to co-founding Lightbox, Simon Chinn became one of the world's most successful feature documentary producers with two Academy Award-winning documentaries, *Man on Wire* and *Searching for Sugar Man*, to his credit. His other prior producing credits include *Project Nim*, *The Imposter*, *The Green Prince*, *My Scientology Movie*. Jonathan Chinn co-founded Lightbox on the heels of a successful career as one of the most respected non-fiction television showrunners in the US, winning an Emmy for *American High* (Fox/PBS) and the Television Academy's prestigious Honors Award for *30 Days* (FX), the latter of which went on to become FX's highest rated unscripted series. Other producing credits include *Kid Nation* (CBS), *Push Girls* (Sundance) and *Hotel Hell* (FOX).

#### **ABOUT ABFF:**

The American Black Film Festival (ABFF) is an annual event dedicated to showcasing quality film and television content by and about people of African descent. It supports emerging artists to foster a wider range of images, stories and storytellers represented in the entertainment industry. The festival is committed to the belief that Black artists and content creators deserve the same opportunities as their mainstream counterparts. ABFF founder Jeff Friday conceived the festival in 1997 as a vehicle to promote diversity in the motion picture industry, and strengthen the Black filmmaking community through resource sharing, education, artistic collaboration and career development. Today, the ABFF is recognized as the preeminent pipeline to new Black talent, both in front of and behind the camera, and is regarded as one of the leading film festivals in the world. The ABFF is a property of ABFF Ventures, a multifaceted entertainment company specializing in the production of live events, television and digital content targeted to upscale African American audiences.

#### **ABOUT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PARTNERS, LLC:**

National Geographic Partners LLC (NGP), a joint venture between National Geographic and 21st Century Fox, is committed to bringing the world premium science, adventure and exploration content across an unrivaled portfolio of media assets. NGP combines the global National Geographic television channels (National Geographic Channel, Nat Geo WILD, Nat Geo MUNDO, Nat Geo PEOPLE) with National Geographic's media and consumer-oriented assets, including National Geographic magazines; National Geographic studios; related digital and social media platforms; books; maps; children's media; and ancillary activities that include travel, global experiences and events, archival sales, licensing and e-commerce businesses. Furthering knowledge and understanding of our world has been the core purpose of National Geographic for 128 years, and now we are committed to going deeper, pushing boundaries, going further for our consumers ... and reaching over 730 million people around the world in 171 countries and 45 languages every month as we do it. NGP returns 27 percent of our proceeds to the nonprofit National Geographic Society to fund work in the areas of science, exploration, conservation and education. For more information visit [natgeotv.com](http://natgeotv.com) or [nationalgeographic.com](http://nationalgeographic.com), or find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Google+](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Pinterest](#).

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