



*FOR
THE
TIME
BEING*

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DOK Leipzig
German
Competition
Documentary Film
2023

Germany, 2023

Length: 90 minutes

Format: color, 25 fps

Aspect ratio: 4:3

Resolution: 2880 x 2160 px

Sound: 5.1.; stereo

Language: English

Subtitles: German, English

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Logline



The Afro-American Michelle fights tirelessly to prove the innocence of her imprisoned husband in order to share a happy family life with him in freedom. An intimate long-term observation of love, devotion and female resilience, amidst the ailing U.S. justice system.

A film by Nele Dehnenkamp & Michelle Bastien-Archer

featuring Michelle Bastien-Archer, Jermaine Archer, Paul & Kaylea Scott

Story

When Michelle married her old friend Jermaine on the bleak visiting floor of a maximum-security prison, she hoped they would soon share a life in freedom. Jermaine claims to be wrongfully convicted. He is serving a sentence of 22 years to life at the notorious Sing Sing prison near New York City. For years, Michelle fights tirelessly to prove his innocence while also caring for her teenage children, Paul and Kaylea, as a single mother.

In a grueling routine of short phone calls, letter-writing and brief visits to the correctional facility, she dreams of an idyllic family life outside of the prison walls. As Paul and Kaylea are about to start their own lives, Michelle's quest becomes increasingly urgent. Then, a new piece of evidence is discovered in Jermaine's legal case, raising her hopes for his immediate release.

Almost a decade in the making, "For the Time Being" is an intimate exploration of female resilience and a timely look at the far-reaching consequences of the ailing U.S. justice system.

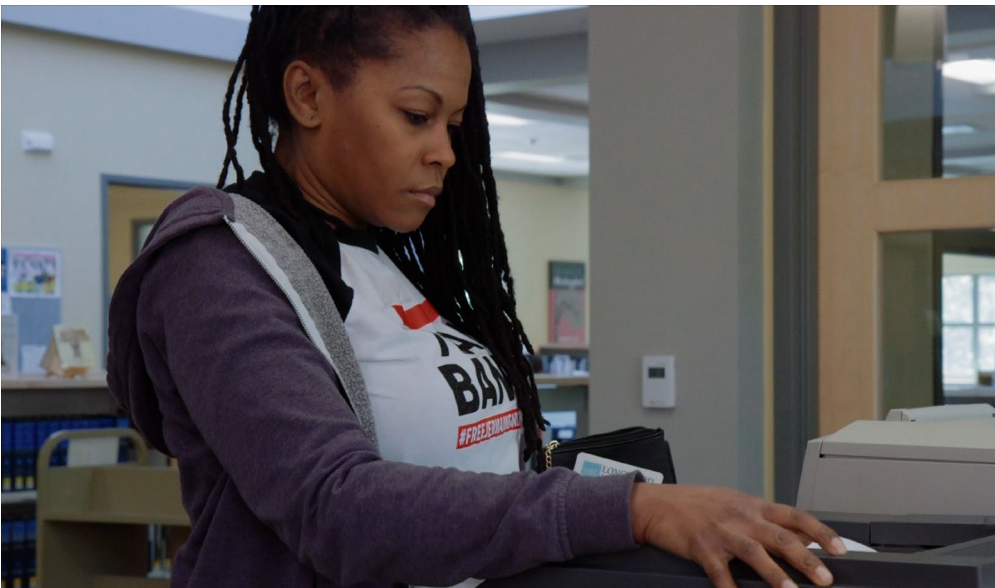


Protagonist

Michelle grew up in Crown Heights, one of the poorest and most crime-ridden neighborhoods in Brooklyn, NY. To provide a better life for her children, the single Afro-American mother moved to a White Suburb, working as a full-time painter, while also raising awareness as an activist about the consequences of wrongful convictions. Most of all, however, she ends up putting her heart and energy to the long-running legal efforts to appeal her incarcerated husband's conviction.

But the justice system delays Jermaine's request. When Michelle realizes that he will have to serve his entire sentence, her life plans fall apart. While the couple struggles to come to terms with the situation, Michelle holds on to the silver linings in their daily lives, one of which is the weekend they have been granted to spend together in a small apartment inside the prison every three months.

Thirteen years after their wedding, Jermaine has finally served his sentence. Following her tremendous joy about his homecoming, Michelle eventually recognizes what has carried her through *tour de force* that was her everyday life all these years: her own strength.

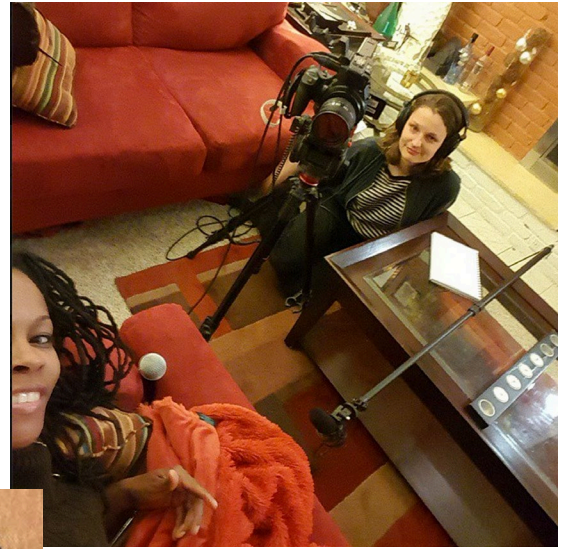




The death of the Afro-American George Floyd, who died at the hands of a White police officer, sparked worldwide demonstrations for the rights of Black people. “For the Time Being” chronicles what was highlighted in these protests – the structural disadvantages that People of Color experience –by using the U.S. justice system as a concrete example. More than 1.6 million people are currently serving prison sentences in the United States, among them a disproportionately high number of young Afro-Americans from poor economic backgrounds.

While the media has primarily spotlighted the experiences of Black men, “For the Time Being” shines a light on the work required of women to maintain a relationship with a prison inmate – a fate that Michelle shares with more than one million other women in the U.S. At the same time, Michelle’s belief in a better future and her unwavering willpower provide an impressive and universal example of female resilience. With “For the Time Being”, we want to encourage *all* women to dream big.

Filmmaking



From 2014 to 2016, director Nele Dehnenkamp lived in New York City. As a trained sociologist, she academically explored the expansive justice system in the U.S. In particular, she researched the challenging everyday lives of women with a loved one behind bars. During her studies, Nele and Michelle met through a non-governmental organization. A friendship developed but also a collaborative approach to filmmaking: "For the Time Being" was made in close cooperation with the protagonist, who also contributed to the film's narrative. The film was produced independently over a period of nine years, without the involvement of broadcasters or film funders. It is Nele's graduation film as part of her directing studies at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg.



Team



Biography Director

Nele Dehnenkamp is a German non-fiction director of films and radio documentaries. She studied social sciences in Berlin and New York City and holds a diploma in documentary directing from the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg. Her mostly observational works explore the multi-layered experiences of dream and trauma, often from the perspective of women. Her films have screened at internationally renowned festivals such as IDFA, DOK Leipzig and Palm Springs, and have won multiple awards, including the Grimme Prize and the IDA David L. Wolper Student Documentary Award. Her most recent short film “Seahorse” qualified for the 2022 Academy Awards. “For the Time Being” is her feature debut.

Filmography

2023 For the Time Being (feature documentary '90)
2020 Seahorse (short documentary '16)
2018 We Will Survive (short documentary '29)

Team

Directing, Cinematography & Editing	Nele Dehnenkamp
Producing	Nele Dehnenkamp, Christine Duttlinger
Additional Camera	Florian Kroker
Assistant Directing	Stefan Zierock
Original Sound	Nele Dehnenkamp, Stefan Zierock
Original Music	Martin Kohlstedt
Re-Recording Mixing & Sound Supervision	Sirius Kestel
Dialogue Editing	Julius Hofstätter, Sirius Kestel
Sound Design	Johanna Roth
Color Grading	David Holfelder
Motion Design & Artwork	Jakob Werner

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