



**‘POV’ Acquires the 2023 Sundance Film Festival Breakout Hit
King Coal by Oscar®-nominated Filmmaker Elaine McMillion Sheldon**



**The Documentary Will Debut as Part of POV’s 37th Season
Launching Summer 2024**

Brooklyn, N.Y. – December 4, 2023 – American Documentary’s Oscar®, Emmy® and Peabody Award-winning signature series, POV, announced today it has acquired the buzzed about 2023 Sundance Film Festival feature documentary, ***King Coal***, directed by Oscar®-nominated filmmaker Elaine McMillion Sheldon (*Heroin(e)*) and produced by Academy Award®-winners Shane Boris and Diane Becker (*Navalny*) and Peabody Award-winner Peggy Drexler (*My Name is Pauli Murray*). ***King Coal*** will make its national broadcast premiere as part of POV’s upcoming 37th season launching summer 2024. POV is America’s longest running non-fiction series on television.

King Coal, through the personal memories of a 4th generation coal miner’s daughter, meditates on the complex history and future of the coal industry, the communities it has shaped, and the myths it has created. Filmed in Central Appalachia, where McMillion Sheldon was raised and lives, the film documents the cultural roots of coal and its waning impact over a sector of American life, while also making space for a dream of the future to emerge.

"Elaine McMillion Sheldon's **King Coal** is a personal story of resilience and courage set in an often misunderstood part of America," said Erika Dilday, Executive Director, American Documentary and Executive Producer POV & America ReFramed. "As we enter a presidential election year, coal and its impact on climate change will be among the issues discussed on the campaigns. **King Coal** takes viewers into Central Appalachia where communities depend on the coal industry for survival and reveals people caught in the web of transition. These are the types of stories American Documentary likes to support and this film is a terrific addition to our catalog."

"We're so honored to be working with POV who value the voices of independent filmmakers and innovations within the field of nonfiction," director Elaine McMillion Sheldon said. "**King Coal's** cinematic mode — blending observations and dreams — is based on my belief that imagined narratives are just as vital as the ones we can touch. They are, in fact, a deeply human way we create meaning."

The **King Coal** deal was negotiated by Chris White and Erika Dilday for American Documentary | POV and Cinetic Media.

King Coal is a co-production of Drexler Films, Cottage M, Fishbowl Films, and Requisite Media. Production Support Provided By The Peggy and Millard Drexler Family Foundation. Elaine McMillion Sheldon is the director, producer, writer, and co-editor. Shane Boris, Diane Becker, and Peggy Drexler are the producers. The executive producers are Katherine Drexler, Heather A. Baldry, and Erika Dilday and Chris White for American Documentary | POV. The cinematographer is Curren Sheldon and the editor is Iva Radivojević. Shane Boris, Logan Hill, Iva Radivojević, and Heather Hannah are the contributing writers. Curren Sheldon and Molly Born are the co-producers, and Clara Haizlett and Elijah Stevens are the associate producers. Original music is by Bobak Lotfipour.

Credits

Director/Producer/Writer/Co-Editor: Elaine McMillion Sheldon

Producers: Shane Boris, Diane Becker, Peggy Drexler

Executive Producers: Katherine Drexler, Heather A. Baldry, Erika Dilday and Chris White for American Documentary | POV

Participants/Cast: Lanie Marsh, Gabrielle Wilson, Doy Leon Russell, Heather Hannah

Director of Photography: Curren Sheldon

Editor: Iva Radivojević

Co-Producers: Curren Sheldon, Molly Born

Associate Producers: Clara Haizlett, Elijah Stevens

Contributing Writers: Shane Boris, Logan Hill, Iva Radivojević, Heather Hannah

Original Music by Bobak Lotfipour

Running Time: 78 minutes

Country:USA

Year: 2023

About the Filmmakers

Elaine McMillion Sheldon, Director, Producer, Co-Editor, *King Coal*

Elaine McMillion Sheldon is an Academy Award®-nominated, and Emmy and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker. Sheldon is the director of two Netflix Original Documentaries - *Heroin(e)* and *Recovery Boys* - that explore America's opioid crisis. She has been named a Creative Capital Awardee, Guggenheim Fellow, a USA Fellow by United States Artists, and one of the "25 New Faces of Independent Film," by *Filmmaker Magazine*. McMillion Sheldon was raised in West Virginia and lives in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Shane Boris, Producer, *King Coal*

Shane Boris is an Academy Award®-winning and two-time Academy Award®-nominated producer. His films have also won BAFTA, duPont-Columbia, PGA, and Peabody awards, played at the Sundance, Telluride and Venice Film Festivals, and screened in museums including MOMA and The Louvre. His latest films, the Academy Award®-nominated *Fire of Love* and Academy Award®-winning *Navalny*, have collectively received over 40 major industry award nominations. Other films include the Academy Award®-nominated *The Edge of Democracy*, the Emmy® Award-nominated *The Last Crusie*, the Spirit Award-nominated *Stray*, the Golden Gate Award-winning *The Seer And The Unseen*, and the Sundance Award-winning *All These Sleepless Nights*.

Diane Becker, Producer, *King Coal*

Diane Becker is an Academy Award®-winning, Emmy® Award-nominated, BAFTA, duPont-Columbia, PGA, and Peabody Award-winning producer and the co-founder of Fishbowl Films. *Navalny* won the U.S. Documentary Audience Award and the Festival Favorite at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival and went on to win the 2023 Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature Film. Additional credits include *Tina*, *Belushi*, and POV films *Inventing Tomorrow* and *On The Divide*. Diane is a recipient of the 2023 Dear Producer Award and won the 2020 Sundance Institute/Amazon Producer's Award for *Whirlybird*. She is a member of the Producers Guild of America and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Peggy Drexler, Producer, *King Coal*

Peggy Drexler, PH.D. formed Drexler Films, a division of The Peggy and Millard Drexler Family Foundation, in 2017 to educate viewers about iconic figures and critical social issues. Since its inception she has executive or creatively produced five award winning documentaries that have all premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. Among the honors her documentaries have received are the duPont-Columbia and Peabody awards for *My Name is Pauli Murray* (Amazon), *The Fight* won The Special Jury Award for Social Impact Filmmaker at Sundance, and *Ask Dr. Ruth* took best documentary at Hot Docs. For many years, Peggy has also been an investor in a variety of successful socially conscious documentary films, including *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, the highest grossing biographical documentary of all time. Dr. Peggy Drexler is a member of the Producers Guild of America.

Curren Sheldon, Director of Photography, Co-Producer, *King Coal*

Curren Sheldon is an Academy Award® nominated and Emmy®-winning filmmaker. He is the director of photography and producer of the Netflix Original Documentaries *Heroin(e)* and *Recovery Boys*, as well as the co-director of photography for *Phoenix Rising* (HBO) and *Keep This Between Us* (Freeform). His work has been commissioned by *The New York Times*, *Patagonia*, *Oh Boy Records*, and *The Bitter Southerner*. Sheldon was raised in West Virginia and lives in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Iva Radivojevic, Editor, *King Coal*

Iva Radivojevic is an artist residing on the island of Lesbos. Her films have screened at the New York Film Festival, New Directors/New Films, Rotterdam IFF, DocLisboa, and the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). She's the recipient of the Sundance Art of Non-Fiction Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship, and Princess Grace Fellowship. When not working on her own films, Iva collaborates through writing and editing.

Molly Born, Co-Producer, *King Coal*

Molly Born is a journalist and producer based in West Virginia. Molly was associate producer on the U.S. team behind the IDA award-winning Netflix series *My Love*. As a reporter, she has been twice named a finalist for the Livingston Award and was one of the first Report for America fellows in 2018. Her work has been featured in *The Washington Post*, *NPR*, *The New Yorker*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *GroundTruth*, and *Southerly*, among other outlets.

Katherine Drexler, Executive Producer, *King Coal*

Katherine Drexler graduated from Dartmouth College with a B.A. in Fine Arts. In 2014, she was awarded the W. David Dance 1940 Fine Arts Award for excellence on her printmaking work. Katherine worked in the visual arts for four years before joining Drexler Films in 2021, doing development, ideation, and behind the scenes support on current and upcoming projects.

Heather A. Baldry, Executive Producer, *King Coal*

Heather A. Baldry grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee. She is the founder of Narrow Vision Endeavors, LLC which funds films with a social impact.

Elijah Stevens, Associate Producer, *King Coal*

Elijah Stevens is a documentary filmmaker and producer. He was the associate producer of the Oscar®-nominated documentary *Fire of Love*. Other feature documentaries include *Hollywoodgate*, *The Seer and the Unseen*, and the Academy Award®-shortlisted documentary short *Los Comandos*. His work has been supported by The Gotham, DOC NYC, DOK.Forum, DocsBarcelona, and Ji.hlava IDFF, amongst others.

Clara Haizlett, Associate Producer, *King Coal*

Clara Haizlett is a documentary filmmaker from West Virginia and an associate producer on *King Coal*. Clara has directed, shot and produced several short documentaries for outlets like the Smithsonian Institution and NPR member stations. She gravitates toward stories that explore folklife, cross-cultural dialogue and the natural world.

Bobak Lotfipour, Composer, *King Coal*

Bobak Lotfipour is an Iranian/Mexican American composer and performance artist from Denton, Texas, who currently lives in Los Angeles. He is best known for his handmade, experimental, percussive sounds using both traditional and nontraditional instruments and unconventional objects manipulated with effects. He also continues to create solo work that can be described as ambient, meditative, experimental, and haunting.

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About POV

Produced by American Documentary, POV is the longest-running independent documentary showcase on American television. Since 1988, POV has presented films on PBS that capture the full spectrum of the human experience, with a long commitment to centering women and people of color in front of, and behind, the camera. The series is known for introducing generations of viewers to groundbreaking works like *Tongues Untied*, *American Promise*, *Minding The Gap* and *Not Going Quietly*, and innovative filmmakers including Jonathan Demme, Laura Poitras and Nanfu Wang. In 2018, POV Shorts launched as one of the first PBS series dedicated to bold and timely short-form documentaries. All POV programs are available for streaming concurrent with broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org) and the [PBS App](#), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](#) website.

POV goes “beyond the broadcast” to bring powerful nonfiction storytelling to viewers wherever they are. Free educational resources accompany every film and a community network of thousands of partners nationwide work with POV to spark dialogue around today’s most pressing issues. POV continues to explore the future of documentary through innovative productions with partners such as *The New York Times* and The National Film Board of Canada and on platforms including Snapchat and Instagram.

POV films and projects have won 47 Emmy® Awards, 27 George Foster Peabody Awards, 15 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards® and the first-ever George Polk Documentary Film Award. Learn more at [pbs.org/pov](https://www.pbs.org/pov) and follow [@povdocs](#) on social media.

About American Documentary, Inc.

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia 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.

Major funding for POV is provided by PBS, the Open Society Foundations, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Wyncote Foundation, Reva & David Logan Foundation, Park Foundation, and Perspective Fund. Additional funding comes from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the *Chasing the Dream* and *Peril and Promise* public media initiatives of The WNET Group, Chris and Nancy Plaut, Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee and public television viewers. POV is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KQED San Francisco, WGBH Boston and THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG.

About PBS

[PBS](#), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS's broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirm that PBS's premier children's media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV – including a 24/7 channel, online at [pbskids.org](#), via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](#), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](#). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](#) or by following [PBS Communications on Twitter](#).

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