Austin Film Festival 2018 - FreeMen

Told through the charismatic voice of inmate Kenneth Reams, FREE MEN is a film about human resilience. In solitary confinement for the last 25 years, Kenneth has pushed back the walls of his cell to become a painter, a poet, the founder of a non-profit, and an art event organizer — while fighting at the same time for justice.

Interview with Writer/Director Anne-Frederique Widmann

Congratulations! Why did you make your film?

Thank you! The moment I met Kenneth Reams and heard his story, I felt it had to be told. Sentenced for a murder he didn’t commit, he has been on Arkansas death row for 25 years now, living in solitary confinement. But his mind is amazingly free. Love and art have freed him from his chains.

Imagine I’m a member of the audience. Why should I watch this film?

This film will make you want to stand up and enjoy life. And it will make you reflect: how can I push back the walls of my own prisons, real or imaginary? You’ll be struck, you’ll be moved – and you’ll even find yourself laughing
How do personal and universal themes work in your film?

Strangely, Free Men is not so much about death row, or prison. It’s a story of hope, love and resilience. It’s as universal as it can get. This film is for all those who have thought, one day, of giving up.

How have the script and film evolved over the course of their development?

In spite of months of preparation and lots of work on the narration, we didn’t know how things would turn out for Kenneth, and if Free Men would have a happy, or a sad ending. You will have to find this out for yourself.

What type of feedback have you received so far?

Incredibly positive. To tell you the truth, I couldn’t believe it! The world premiere in Geneva, Switzerland was an unforgettable moment. People were moved to the core. They keep writing me e-mails to know how
Kenneth is doing, and how to get involved.

Has the feedback surprised or challenged your point of view?

I was surprised by the impact of this story on the audience. They understood right away that the questions raised in this film touch every one of us.

What are you looking to achieve by having your film more visible on www.wearemovingstories.com?

I’d like Kenneth’s story to be widely known here in the U.S. He is an incredible man and the living proof of the power of the human spirit. I also hope that this film can help him in his fight for justice.

Who do you need to come on board (producers, sales agents, buyers, distributors, film festival directors, journalists) to amplify this film’s message?
I need everybody to come on board! Truly all the help we can get is most welcome. We are looking to connect with film festival directors, distributors and sales agent to have the film distributed in the USA and abroad.
What type of impact and/or reception would you like this film to have?

I would like for the people to be moved and questioned by the film. I would like them to feel Kenneth’s positive energy and to reflect on some of the injustices of our legal system.

What’s a key question that will help spark a debate or begin a conversation about this film?

What does freedom mean to you? It’s the first question Kenneth Reams asked me when me met for the first time at Varner Supermax. It’s a very profound question. I’m still thinking about it.

Would you like to add anything else?

Thank you for talking about FreeMen on www.wearemovingstories.com. And please come and watch FreeMen at the Austin film festival, this Friday at 3.45 pm or on November 1 at 7.45 pm!
What other projects are the key creatives developing or working on now?

I just finished a documentary on the migrants’ journey on the deadly routes to Europe, from Niger, Africa, to the Libyan hell and Italy. It was a very heartbreaking and difficult story to shoot and I’m glad I was able to bring this reality to the screen.

Interview: October 2018

We Are Moving Stories embraces new voices in drama, documentary, animation, TV, web series, music video, women's films, LGBTQIA+, POC, First Nations, scifi, supernatural, horror, world cinema. If you have just
made a film - we'd love to hear from you. Or if you know a filmmaker - can you recommend us? More info: Carmela

FreeMen

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Length: 90 minutes

About the writer & director:

Universal questions, human rights & destinies have been at the core of ANNE-FREDERIQUE WIDMANN's work as an investigative journalist and documentary filmmaker. She was nominated for her work in Libya at the Prix Italia and Prix Europa (An Eye for an Eye: The Vengeance of the Gaddafi Clan). In 2018, she accompanied migrants from Niger to Sicily, though the desert and Libyan chaos. Her film, Migrants, Deadly journey to Europe has been nominated for the Europa Prize 2018.

Key cast: Kenneth Reams (himself), Isabelle Watson Reams (herself), Ndume Olatushani (himself)

Looking for: sales agents, buyers, distributors and film festival directors who could help me distribute FreeMen in the USA and abroad.

Social media handles: afwid, annefrederique.widmann, widmanaf
Facebook: FreeMen Movie AND Anne-Frederique Widmann

Twitter: @widmanaf

Instagram: @annefwidmann AND @freekennethreams

Other: https://freekennethreams.org/subscribe

Made in association with: Cineforum, RTS, Lotterie Romande, Globecartoon, Tutator foundation

Where can I watch it next and in the coming month? Friday October 26, 2018 3:45pm - 5:15pm; Alamo Drafthouse Village 2700 W Anderson Ln, Austin, TX 78757, Thursday November 1, 2018 6:15pm - 7:45pm; Galaxy Highland screen 7 6700 Middle Fiskville Rd, Austin, TX 78752; And I hope elsewhere in the following months. Please stay posted on social media!