

IS THE BLACK CHURCH DEAD?

WINNER  
AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD  
INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN  
FILM AND MUSIC FESTIVAL  
2022

Official Selection  
American Black  
Film Festival  
2022

OFFICIAL SELECTION  
San Francisco  
Black Film  
Festival  
2022

# LET THE CHURCH SAY

BYRDIE PRODUCTIONS & STAGE TEN MEDIA PRESENTS "LET THE CHURCH SAY" STARRING JEKALYN CARR DARLENE MCCOY

DR. TERESA FRY BROWN DR. NICHOLE PHILLIPS DR. WALTER FLUKER DR. JAMES ABBINGTON AND PASTOR JOHN ONWUCHEKAWA

ANIMATION DIRECTOR MISHI LEE PRODUCED BY DANIELLE NEBELIUK ADITI SINGH MAHALIA LATORTUE TOM VON DOHEN FATIMA DIALLO EDITOR RAFIQ J. NABALI AND VISHVESH BAKSHI

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MARCUS KYLE WRITTEN BY JAMILLA SILVERA PRODUCED BY NANCY HOWARD BUNNY BURROUGHS PRODUCED BY JOE HOWELL WRITTEN BY RAFIQ J. NABALI DIRECTED BY RAFIQ J. NABALI



# LET THE CHURCH SAY

*Running Time:*

66 minutes

*Directed By:*

Rafiq J. Nabali

*Written By:*

Rafiq J. Nabali

*Produced By:*

Joe Howell  
Rafiq J. Nabali  
Nancy Howard  
Danielle Nebeliuk

*Production Companies:*

Stage Ten Media  
Byrdie Productions

*Cinematographers:*

Vishvesh Bakshi  
Marcus Kyle  
Leo Nguyen

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## LOGLINE

In a time of racial upheaval and a multitude of woes affecting marginalized communities, a young, African American filmmaker journeys to the heart of the Black experience to find the answer to a daunting question: Is the Black church dead?

## SYNOPSIS

In a large cathedral with stained glass windows and mahogany pews stands, Rafiq Jordan, a young, African American filmmaker and Christian. Here, in the oldest Black institution in the U.S., we encounter one of the foundations for the preservation of Black culture in America. Through the years of oppression and sacrifice one thing has remained: The Black church and its impact on Black culture today. Rafiq, familiar with the arguments and conflicts within the church, embarks on a journey to uncover the truth behind the external criticism. He unearths testimonies from Black brothers and sisters, and contributors to this current revolution, in order to see where the church is in all this pain. Through conversations with activists, progressive-thinking pastors, and the most knowledgeable of voices, he discovers where the church has and hasn't been involved.

# SYNOPSIS (cont'd)

Does the institution's involvement or lack thereof give credit to its livelihood or point to its inevitable extinction?

Rafiq navigates through captivating conversations on other significant topics such as church history, politics, race, church culture and the fight for Civil rights.

Where would the Black community be without the Black church? The perspectives of those interviewed will be the evidence of the investigation. This is the true story of the Black American church through the eyes of a Black American. Ultimately, Rafiq's journey ends where it all started, in the heart of an empty church, walking amongst the pews. Is this the end of the Black church as we know it or is it only the beginning?





## **Jekalyn Carr**

Jekalyn Carr is a GRAMMY® Award nominee and GMA Dove Award-winning independent recording artist. She's a profound speaker, entrepreneur, actress, and author. As a top selling recording artist, Jekalyn Carr has earned eight career Billboard #1's before the age of 21, which includes her hit singles, "You're Bigger" and "You Will Win."



## **Darlene McCoy**

Darlene Jenise "McCoy" Jackson, is an American gospel singer, songwriter, author, radio personality, and Christian R&B recording artist. She started her music career, in 2005, with the release of "Fallen in Love" single by EMI Gospel.



## **Rev. Dr. Teresa Fry Brown**

The Rev. Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown is the Bandy Professor of Preaching at Candler School of Theology at Emory University. The Bandy Professorship is a chaired position created in 1986 with a gift from B. Jackson Bandy that is considered by many to be the country's premier chair in homiletics.

## **DIRECTOR,** RAFIQ J. NABALI

Rafiq Nabali is a gifted filmmaker and founder of Brydie Productions. As a visionary, Jordan's passion for current cultural events inspires him to create stories that explore the viewpoints of unsung heroes.

Uncompromising and indefatigable, Jordan crafts films with insight, deep emotion, and enlightening perspectives. He grew up in the church, & finds his faith strengthening and growing every day. In this project, Jordan will combine his deep commitment to Christianity with his ambitious skills as a filmmaker. His journey into the heart and history of the Black church will provide a personal view of the vital connection between race & religion.

Nabali earned a B.F.A. in Film & Television from Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Atlanta, GA in 2020, graduating Summa Cum Laude.



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## PRODUCER, JOE HOWELL

Joe Howell is the Managing Director of Stage Ten Media. He has worked as a filmmaker, engineer, music producer, director and writer for over 20 years. He directed the music documentary "All Natural", which was nominated for Best Short Doc at the 2019 Bronze Lens Film Festival. He has worked for ABC TV in video editing and in NYC's Sony Studios and the Hit Factory, as a recording engineer. His music publishing work is showcased on projects for LaFace/Arista Records and Bad Boy/Universal Records.



## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, NANCY HOWARD

Nancy B. Howard is the Founder of The Big Picture Film & Video Foundation and the BigPictureCon Film & Technology Conference. She is a film producer with well over two decades of production experience. As Executive VP of Kiss The Limit Productions, Nancy produced the short film, *The Promise*, featuring Melissa McBride of *The Walking Dead*.



## CINEMATOGRAPHER/EDITOR, VISHVESH BAKSHI

An aspiring cinematographer, Vishvesh worked his way up in the Indian Film Industry from a video intern with *Glitch, Mumbai*, to a cinematographer and editor on multiple award-winning productions. He graduated from SCAD Atlanta with an M.F.A. in Film and Television Production in 2020, where he worked on projects that won the Student Emmy, and short films which have been selected at Atlanta Film Festival and New York International Film Awards.





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## PRAISE

“ It’s **gorgeous**. It’s **smart**. It’s **emotional**. The music is **tremendous**. Animation is **inspired** as is use of Atlanta street art. The writing is **terrific**, with a presence that is **authentic and intimate**. “

– *Jennifer Hyde, Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD)*

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“ The showcase of academics alongside recording artists, pastors, spoken word artists & activists sharing their stories makes for **a truly powerful film**. ” *Lorna Blake, Author/Speaker*

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“ Fueled by youthful queries and **passion** for social change, it’s **refreshing, unique, exquisite**, and **beautifully done**. ”

-*Nichole R. Phillips, PhD & Assoc. Professor of Black Studies, Emory Univ.*

## AWARDS:

WINNER 2022 Audience Choice Award, Documentary, International Christian Film Festival (ICFF)

NOMINEE 2022 Best Director and Best Documentary, ICFF

NOMINEE 2022 Best Documentary, American Black Film Festival (ABFF)



# CAST/ INTERVIEWEES

Jekalyn Carr

Darlene McCoy

Rev. Dr. Teresa Fry Brown

Walter Earl Fluker

Dr. Rosetta Ross

Pastor John Onwucheka

Christopher Bruce, Esq.

Dr. Nichole Phillips

Dr. James Abbington



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# CREDITS

*Directed by:*

Rafiq J. Nabali

*Written by:*

Rafiq J. Nabali

*Produced by:*

Joe Howell  
Rafiq J. Nabali  
Danielle Nebeliuk

*Associate Producers:*

Mahalia Latortue  
Aditi Singh

*Cinematography by:*

Vishvesh Bakshi  
Marcus Kyle  
Leo Nguyen

*Unit Production Manager:*

Danielle Nebeliuk

*Executive Producers:*

Nancy Howard  
Bunny Boroughs



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## CREDITS (cont'd)

*Editor:* Vishvesh Bakshi

*Sound:* Sebastian Haid

*Camera Operator:* Kai Hunte

*1st Assistant Camera:* Jackson Laurie  
Jacob Trauscht

*Grips:* Dennis Albert  
Zoe Gherman  
Andre Wynter

*Animator:* Mishi Lee

*Location Manager:* Tom von Dohlen

*EPK:* Nancy Howard

## CONTACT US



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