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## AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL HONORS ANNOUNCES 2020 “MOVIE OF THE YEAR” AWARD NOMINEES

*VIP Fan Experience Presented by American Airlines Offers Opportunity to Attend Gala*

**LOS ANGELES, CA, December 18, 2019** – The American Black Film Festival Honors, the preeminent awards event celebrating Black culture and artists who have made distinguished contributions to the entertainment industry either through their work or as champions of diversity and inclusion in Hollywood, today announced the nominees for the “**Movie of the Year**” award.

The ABFF Honors’ “**Movie of the Year**” award is a competitive award presented to the best feature length film of the year directed by and/or starring a lead actor or actress of African descent.

This year’s nominees are ***Black & Blue***, directed by Deon Taylor, starring Academy Award-nominee Naomie Harris and Tyrese Gibson; ***Dolemite Is My Name***, directed by Craig Brewer, starring Academy Award-nominated Eddie Murphy, Keegan-Michael Key, Mike Epps, Craig Robinson, Tituss Burgess, and Wesley Snipes; ***Harriet***, directed by Kasi Lemmons and starring Golden Globe and SAG Award nominee Cynthia Erivo, who - as previously announced - is set to receive the 2020 ABFF Honors’ “Rising Star” Award, which has previously been presented to Tiffany Haddish (*Kids Say the Darndest Things*), Issa Rae (*Insecure*) and Ryan Coogler (*Black Panther*); ***Just Mercy***, directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, starring Michael B. Jordan and Academy Award-winner Jamie Foxx; ***The Last Black Man in San Francisco***, directed by Joe Talbot, written by and starring Jimmie Fails; ***Queen & Slim***, directed by two-time Grammy Award-winner Melina Matsoukas, starring Daniel Kaluuya and Jodie Turner-Smith; and ***Us***, written and directed by Jordan Peele, starring Academy Award-winner Lupita Nyong'o.

“These films collectively represent the diversity and complexity of the African American experience in America,” said ABFF Ventures CEO, Jeff Friday. “This has been a phenomenal year for black content and we are excited to celebrate its universal appeal and the community of creators behind it.”

2020 “**Movie of the Year**” Award Nominees:

***BLACK & BLUE*** – An action thriller about a rookie cop (Naomie Harris) who inadvertently captures the murder of a young drug dealer on her body cam. After realizing that the murder

was committed by corrupt cops, she teams up with the one person from her community who is willing to help her (Tyrese Gibson) as she tries to escape both the criminals out for revenge and the police who are desperate to destroy the incriminating footage.

***DOLEMITE IS MY NAME*** – Eddie Murphy portrays real-life legend Rudy Ray Moore, a comedy and rap pioneer who proved naysayers wrong when his hilarious, obscene, kung-fu fighting alter ego, Dolemite, became a 1970s Blaxploitation phenomenon.

***HARRIET*** – Based on the thrilling and inspirational life of an iconic American freedom fighter, *Harriet* tells the extraordinary tale of Harriet Tubman's (Cynthia Erivo) escape from slavery and transformation into one of America's greatest heroes. Her courage, ingenuity, and tenacity freed hundreds of slaves and changed the course of history.

***JUST MERCY*** – After graduating from Harvard, Bryan (Michael B Jordan) might have had his pick of lucrative jobs. Instead, he heads to Alabama to defend those wrongly condemned, with the support of local advocate Eva Ansley (Brie Larson.) One of his first, and most incendiary, cases is that of Walter McMillian (Jamie Foxx,) who, in 1987, was sentenced to die for the notorious murder of an 18-year-old girl, despite a preponderance of evidence proving his innocence and the fact that the only testimony against him came from a criminal with a motive to lie. In the years that follow, Bryan becomes embroiled in a labyrinth of legal and political maneuverings and overt and unabashed racism as he fights for Walter, and others like him, with the odds-and the system-stacked against them.

***THE LAST BLACK MAN IN SAN FRANCISCO*** – A young man (Jimmie Fails) searches for home in the changing city that seems to have left him behind.

***QUEEN & SLIM*** – Slim (Daniel Kaluuya) and Queen's (Jodie Turner-Smith) first date takes an unexpected turn when a policeman pulls them over for a minor traffic violation. When the situation escalates, Slim takes the officer's gun and shoots him in self-defense. Now labelled cop killers in the media, Slim and Queen feel that they have no choice but to go on the run and evade the law. When a video of the incident goes viral, the unwitting outlaws soon become a symbol of trauma, terror, grief and pain for people all across the country

***US*** - In order to get away from their busy lives, the Wilson family takes a vacation to Santa Cruz, California with the plan of spending time with their friends, the Tyler family. On a day at the beach, their young son Jason almost wanders off, causing his mother Adelaide (Lupita Nyong'o) to become protective of her family. That night, four mysterious people break into Adelaide's childhood home where they're staying. The family is shocked to find out that the intruders look like them, only with grotesque appearances.

Each year, the nominees are determined by a jury from the ABFF's Entertainment Journalist Committee (EJC), who then vote in conjunction with national consumers to determine the winner. Voting for the general public is available via an online ballot at [www.ABFFHonors.com/vote](http://www.ABFFHonors.com/vote). **Voting begins on December 28, 2019 and runs through January 15, 2020.**

For the second year, American Airlines will sponsor the ABFF Honors "VIP Fan Experience," which is an opportunity for one consumer to attend this exclusive event and celebrate Black excellence among the most influential artists, executives, and stakeholders in the entertainment industry. One fan will be randomly selected by the ABFF organization from the pool of individuals who vote for the "Movie of the Year", and receive two (2) tickets for the ceremony, two (2) round trip domestic economy-class tickets on American Airlines, hotel accommodations and a chance

to walk the “red carpet” on the night of the ceremony. The announcement will be made on or about January 20, 2020.

Presented by **ABFF Ventures**, the 2020 ABFF Honors will be hosted by Emmy-nominated comedian and actor Deon Cole, taking place on Sunday, February 23, 2020 in Los Angeles. Sponsors include American Airlines, Cadillac and Hilton (Red Carpet), and Prudential Financial and Sony Pictures Entertainment (Supporting).

**ABOUT ABFF HONORS:**

ABFF Honors is an annual awards season gala dedicated to saluting excellence in the motion picture and television industry. The ceremony celebrates Black culture by recognizing artists who have made distinguished contributions to American entertainment through their work, as well as those who champion diversity and inclusion. Individual recognition awards include Hollywood Legacy, Lifetime Achievement, Rising Star, Industry Visionary and Pro Hollywood. Recognition of outstanding content awards include Movie of the Year and Classic Television Award. Previous honorees and presenters include Denzel Washington, Don Cheadle, Robert Downey, Jr. Regina King, Will Packer, Ryan Coogler, Ava DuVernay, Tiffany Haddish, Issa Rae, Viola Davis, Cicely Tyson, Octavia Spencer, Armie Hammer, the late Diahann Carroll and more. To learn more about ABFF Honors and to stay up-to-date on upcoming announcements for the 2020 ceremony, visit [www.ABFFHonors.com](http://www.ABFFHonors.com)

**ABOUT ABFF VENTURES:**

ABFF Ventures LLC (ABFFV) is a multifaceted entertainment company specializing in the production of live events and branded content. Its mission is to entertain and inspire communities of color while promoting diversity in Hollywood. Headquartered in Los Angeles, ABFFV was formed to stimulate business growth through expansion into other events and services. Its tent-pole properties are the American Black Film Festival (ABFF), cited by *MovieMaker* magazine as “One of the Coolest Festivals in the World;” and “ABFF Honors,” an annual awards gala saluting the top stars of film and television. In creating ABFF Ventures, CEO Jeff Friday channeled his passion for film and television, as well as his discomfort with the underrepresentation of people of color in Hollywood, into an organization with the ultimate goal of advocating for diversity within the entertainment industry. Through his vision and perseverance, ABFF Ventures has become a highly respected enterprise, generating goodwill throughout the Hollywood and corporate communities.

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**CONTACT:**

MPRM Communications

[abff@mprm.com](mailto:abff@mprm.com)

323-933-3399