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LANDMARK FILM DIGITAL RELEASE TO COINCIDE WITH U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISION

New York, N.Y.—“Home of the Brave,” a powerful, award-winning 2004 documentary about murdered civil rights activist Viola Liuzzo will be released digitally as the U.S. Supreme Court considers overturning critical aspects of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the ground-breaking legislation that outlaws discriminatory voting practices. SundanceNow and New Video have scheduled widespread digital distribution with dates that overlap with this significant Supreme Court decision being made in June.

“The most potent weapon in fighting discrimination at the ballot box is before the Supreme Court in a case that weighs the nation's enormous progress in civil rights against the need to continue to protect minority voters,” says Stockard Channing, narrator of “Home of the Brave.” “Viola Liuzzo’s story needs to be part of America’s social consciousness for many reasons, but is especially critical now, as the Supreme Court justices make their decision this June.”

The lawsuit from Shelby County, Ala. addresses Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and says that federal oversight of elections is no longer needed. Section 5 requires 16 states with a history of racial discrimination in voting, primarily in the South, to clear election-related changes with the federal government. Section 5 is widely regarded as the most effective provision of the country’s most important civil rights law.

“She wanted equal rights for everyone, no matter what the cost!” 14-year-old Tommy Liuzzo, 1965

Viola Liuzzo

Liuzzo, the 39-year-old wife of a Detroit Teamster and mother of five, joined thousands of civil rights protesters in Selma, Ala. for the Voting Rights March in 1965, only to be gunned down in a drive-by shooting on a deserted highway as she shuttled marchers back and forth to the airport. The murderers were members of the Ku Klux Klan, one of whom, Gary Thomas Rowe, was an FBI informant. Despite a slanderous investigation headed by J. Edgar Hoover, Liuzzo’s death – the only white woman killed during this long struggle – became the catalyst for President Lyndon Johnson’s push to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Many Americans have never heard Liuzzo’s name or story, making “Home of the Brave” extremely timely and relevant. The film will be released on May 7 via the Sundance Institute Artist Services program and will be available on Amazon Instant Video, Sony Entertainment Network, Microsoft Xbox, VUDU, YouTube and SundanceNOW. The documentary's release will expand to include Netflix, SnagFilms and Hulu on June 7. The educational distributor Bullfrog Films, Inc., a long-time advocate for the film, is actively promoting the documentary to their broad list of libraries and universities.

“The entire struggle of that era was about the Voting Rights Act,” says Mary Lilleboe, daughter of Viola Liuzzo. “American citizens have and had the Constitutional right to vote. All the bloodshed, tears and lives lost were in a struggle to get the federal government to ensure this right was not tampered with by anyone in any way. This movie is about the struggle to exercise our right, the cost to guarantee it and the people who paid the price. The very attempt to repeal this legislation forewarns of the danger in doing so and tears at the hearts of those who lived through it.”

“Home of the Brave” premiered in competition at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival. The film was distributed theatrically by Emerging Pictures and on television by Court TV. Image Entertainment handled DVD sales and Bullfrog Films distributes to the educational market, including schools and museums. The critically acclaimed documentary was short-listed for the 2005 Academy Awards. The film won the Chicago International Film Festival Silver Lion Award as well as the Social Justice Award at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival. It also received a Writer’s Guild nomination for Best Documentary Screenplay, Best Documentary Award at the Port Townsend Film Festival, Best Feature Documentary nomination for the 2004 International Documentary Association Awards, the Joan Phillips-Sandy Award for excellent film with social message in Maine and 1st runner-up for the Audience Choice at the Cleveland International Film Festival.

TRAILER: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0389009/>

INTERVIEWS WITH STOCKARD CHANNING, NARRATOR OF “HOME OF THE BRAVE,” PRODUCER NANCY DICKENSON, DIRECTOR PAOLA DI FLORIO AND THE LIUZZO FAMILY AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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