PINIONATED Socially Conscious Films Round-Out Fest

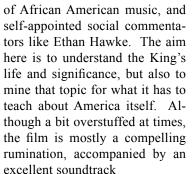


I spent five days last week at the Seattle International Film Festival, sampling an array of what was on offer for Seattle's three-and-a-half week festival. A few of these films will get a theatrical release, and many others will appear in an online platform. I reviewed six films last week; here is the balance of what I saw.

In "The King," documentary director Eugene Jarecki sets out to examine the life of Elvis Presley as a way of ruminating on the current state--or, he would say, decline--of the American experiment. Prone to expansive, well-researched premises (like the rise of the drug war and mass incarceration in "The House I Live In"), Jarecki sets this film in a series of journeys to places significant to the King, largely filmed inside Presley's Rolls Royce. Jarecki is accompanied by a series of passengers-- friends who knew Presley, musicians whom he influenced or who take a critical stance on his influential cultural appropriation



"Silas" is a documentary that follows the determined Liberian activist Silas Siakor as he fights corruption and environmental degradation in his country. It's one of the many socially conscious documentaries and fiction films that were screened this year at the Seattle International Film Festival.



"Silas" is a portrait of a truth teller, Silas Siakor, whose energy, intelligence, and determination to fight corruption and environmental degradation in Liberia seems limitless. Liberia is so rich in resources that it might well be compared to Wakanda, yet it has been plagued by a 25-year civil war and unceasing corruption. This documentary follows Siakor's activism during a five-year period in which a new president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, had swept into office riding high hopes--including Siakor's--that she would clean up the Liberian government. Siakor's relentless commitment to exposing the truth, even with the truth is disappointing, is quite inspiring, as is his

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