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"The Apollo" is a new documentary about the cultural anchor in Harlem since 1934 and the legendary African American artists who have passed through its doors over the past nine decades.

New Documentaries

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audience reeling entirely too good and not forced to confront their complicity in oppression of black folks in their city. That said, I'm happy to know about this particular Seattle community leader. I suspect the film won't have a theatrical release, but may find a place to land online.

One of the best docs I saw was "One Child Nation," an expose' of the one child policy that was in force in China for 35 years, from 1979 through 2015. Most people in the U.S. know little about the policy, beyond the resultant heightened favored status of male heirs which led to a generation of "little emperors" and a wave of unwanted baby girls who were later adopted, including by Americans. Not only does this film lift the veil on a host of much more troubling human rights violation attendant to the policy, but it also provides an occasion to witness director Nanfu Wang's own awakening. She notes that, having grown up under the policy, she did not question it until becoming a parent herself in the U.S. An important part of the journey the film makes is to document how a practice or policy with devastating consequences can be so woven into daily life that we don't think to question its effects. This film documents what it can mean to wake up and follow where the questions lead. It will open theatrically in August.

"Midnight Traveler" means to wake us up, to the plight of asylum-seekers and the struggles they encounter to build a stable life away from home. Here, a young Afghan couple, both filmmakers, document their own journey out, aiming to escape pressure and death threats from the Taliban. They leave with their two young daughters, first to Tajikistan and then on foot through Turkey, Bulgaria, and Serbia as they make all the ways they attempt to make the best of their circumstances. The film has garnered attention and awards on the festival circuit and is scheduled for a theatrical release in September.

"The Apollo" exhaustively mines the history of the legendary Apollo Theater in Harlem, which has been a showcase for African Observer.

American talent since the 1930s. Its stage has been the host and often launching ground for a virtual who's who of African American entertainers ranging from Billie Holliday and Louis Armstrong to Gregory Hines to the Supremes-and this film invites them to share war stories about what they were paid, how they were received, and how hard they work. It also lingers on the open of a play based on Ta-Nehisi Coates' book, "Between the World and Me," an occasion to reflect more deeply on black pride and freedom of expression. It's essential viewing for any student of African American history and an occasion to savor the cultural riches hosted here. The film premieres on HBO this fall.

"Fly Rocket Fly" tells the story of the first private space company and its founder, Lutz Kayser, a sort of Elon Musk of space travel. Kayser founded his company in 1975 as an alternative to national space organizations, thinking he could do it better and more cheaply. Maybe so, but there were some flaws in the execution; since rocket-building was prohibited in Germany after World War II, Kayser moved his operation to Zaire and cobbled together an ill-conceived process enlisting local folks in protecting the operation, and after much chaos and a tragic accident, the experiment was shut down. The film is weirdly interest, but their way to the European Union. also not wholly successful. It It's a harrowing journey, caught serves up a lot of questions about on their cellphones, and the film what Kayser was doing without gives a sense of the dangers and shedding much insight into why uncertainty they face, along with things broken down and whether there was another way to make them work. No American release has been set as of yet.

Darleen Ortega is a judge on the Oregon Court of Appeals and the first woman of color to serve in that capacity. Her movie review column Opinionated Judge appears regularly in The Portland

