



WRITING WITH FIRE

A Film by Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh

**2021 - INDIA - 98 MINUTES
HINDI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES**

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LOGLINE

In a news landscape dominated by men emerges India's only newspaper run by Dalit women. Armed with smartphones, Chief Reporter Meera and her team break traditions on the frontlines of India's biggest issues, redefining the meaning of power.

SYNOPSIS

Reporting from a social environment built to divide based on caste and gender, a fearless group of journalists maintain India's only women-led news outlet. The women of *Khabar Lahariya* ('Waves of News'), all from the Dalit ("untouchables") caste, prepare to transition the newspaper from print to digital even though many of their reporters don't have access to electricity at home. Armed with smartphones, Chief Reporter Meera and her team of investigative journalists confront some of India's biggest issues - exposing the relentless discrimination against women and amplifying the voices of those who suffer from the oppressive caste system. *WRITING WITH FIRE* chronicles the astonishing determination of these local reporters as they empower each other and hold those responsible for injustice to account. Reaching new audiences through their growing platform, the women of *Khabar Lahariya* redefine what it means to be powerful in this timely and inspiring documentary.





DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

India is a deeply complex country. For over 3,000 years, we've had a social hierarchy in place that divides Indian society into four distinct groups of people, known as the caste system. Like racism, it is a system of exclusion but only worse, because caste is invisible. A person is considered a member of the caste they are born into and remains within that caste till their death, caste sticks to the deepest part of your being – your identity. Perhaps the world's longest surviving social hierarchy, this discriminatory practice is officially banned under Indian law but is still strictly practiced in many parts of India. Dalits are a section of Indian society who are considered so 'dirty', that they are not given a place within the caste system. And they continue to endure some of the most brutal forms of oppression and violence witnessed anywhere in the country – a Dalit person can be lynched simply for crossing paths with an upper caste. Now imagine what it might mean to be a Dalit woman – you're literally at the bottom of India's social pyramid, you have no agency, you're absolutely invisible.

This is what interested us in Meera's work, especially when she was transitioning her newspaper from print to digital. We were interested in seeing how Dalit women would employ technology and the internet to amplify their voice; when most print broadsheets in the world were uneasily adapting to the digital medium, we were witnessing rural women strategise to grow in a highly competitive 'upper-caste', male-dominated news landscape; and in their work for justice, they began redefining how Dalit women are perceived in Indian society. All this was playing out in the backdrop of an India that was transitioning from a secular democracy to right-wing nationalism, led by a Hindu majoritarian party that is trying to reinforce the caste system in every aspect of life. So the work of Meera and her journalists becomes even more phenomenal, almost a David versus Goliath narrative, because they are challenging forces much larger than her – where the pen (or in this case the mobile phone) becomes mightier than the sword. In telling this story, we create a narrative that allows the viewer to see Meera's world from within, intimately and respectfully, and experience a story that is as unique, as it is universal.

—RINTU THOMAS & SUSHMIT GHOSH



THE STORY OF *KHABAR LAHARIYA* AND MODERN INDIA

WRITTEN BY RINTU THOMAS AND SUSHMIT GHOSH

Writing With Fire is set in the heart of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state (200 million inhabitants), also a state known for its notorious levels of corruption, violence against women and the brutal oppression of its minorities. What complicates matters further are that many parts of Uttar Pradesh continue to remain media dark regions. It is against this backdrop that we are introduced to the work of *Khabar Lahariya* (KL), India's only digital news agency run by Dalit women, who belong to the lowest caste (characterized as 'untouchable').

Thirty-two-year-old Meera, KL's Chief Reporter, is investigating a brutal rape case and as the story unfolds, the endemic violence and complexities of being a Dalit woman in Uttar Pradesh are brought to the fore. Born into an impoverished Dalit family and married at 14, Meera went against her conservative culture to study and become a journalist with KL. In their fifteenth year of print, we see the paper deciding to increase their reach by shifting to digital news. Meera is entrusted with this move and leads her team of 28 semi-literate, professionally trained reporters, to transform the newspaper into a regional digital news force. As her team experiences its first taste of digital democracy, their video stories on corruption, violence against women, broken roads and inadequate public healthcare begin to become popular, unsettling bigger news agencies that are run by men. In the film, we see this journey – fraught with threats, danger, hopes and sacrifice – through the eyes of our central protagonist Meera and her feisty protégé, Suneeta.

Twenty-year-old Suneeta who grew up working as a child laborer in an illegal mine, possesses a passion and bravado she brings directly to her work, that creates many risky situations for her – we see her working as the only woman crime reporter in the region, investigating the region's lucrative illegal mining businesses and the corrupt nexus between the mining mafia and politicians. Her news reporting is incisive, bold and impactful. Meera talks about the great potential she sees in Suneeta as KL's next level of leadership, a hope for the organization's future expansion plans. From a few thousand views on YouTube (when filming started in 2016), KL's new stories are about to cross 150 million views and have created massive impact on ground. As the organisation evolves, we witness Meera's challenge in honing an impetuous Suneeta into an able leader.

On a macro-level, the last six years have seen India hurtle from a vibrant democracy towards right-wing Hindu authoritarianism. For those who have chosen to keep their independent voice, the consequences are drastic. As the risk around their work intensifies, Meera and her team face threats that are reflected in more democracies across the world, from the Philippines to Turkey to Brazil, making their work even more significant.

In this climate of fear, we observe Meera beginning to follow the political rise of 21-year-old Satyam, an upcoming youth leader with a popular Hindu vigilante organisation. At grave risk to herself, Meera gains Satyam's trust and through his story, begins work on a long form journalistic piece that investigates the changing moral and social fabric of India and what its consequences are. We see her follow him into his village, where he wields significant political clout; we witness her calmly engaging with him as he reveals his deepest prejudices; as he shrewdly begins to prepare the grounds for his own ambitions to contest in the national elections. For Meera, Satyam's story is as offensive as tragic and represents the broken dreams of India's youth, as they get sucked into a political discourse of hate and violence – a story that is, yet again, missing from India's mainstream media.

Between doing her risky work and negotiating the editorial hurdles leading KL's digital growth, Meera's personal life is continually challenged. The inherent violence of caste which Meera fights vehemently through her work, is ever-present in her own life. Landlords rarely want to rent to a Dalit ('untouchable') woman, let alone a Dalit woman journalist who works late nights. How does Meera continue to negotiate such systemic inequity and what do we discover about her as we see her raising two young daughters? On the other hand, Suneeta grows in stature and becomes the first KL reporter to travel internationally to deliver a speech at a journalism conclave. She also begins hosting her own crime show on KL's YouTube channel, which soon becomes wildly popular. But at home, the pressure to get married intensifies. Suneeta knows that marriage will be a death-blow to her professional ambitions because prospective grooms do not want a working wife. Will Suneeta fight for her dreams or compromise for her family?

With exclusive access to the personal and rapidly changing professional worlds of Meera and her journalists, we see them negotiate obstacles and inch closer to their dream of becoming a relevant independent regional news agency. But how will Meera re-wire the traditional mindsets of a society that has never experienced the power of a Dalit woman with a smartphone? And with Suneeta at the cusp of making a critical choice, how will Meera raise a next line of leadership? Will KL become a model newspaper for the world, as it redefines the meaning of independent journalism that impacts the lives of millions?

Writing With Fire is a story of our times. It is the first time modern Dalit women will be seen on screen, not as victims of their circumstances but as writers of their own destiny. As India now stands at a pivotal crossroad, the choices we make will define our future as a nation. And Meera and her team have their mobile phones trained on us, interpreting this precious moment in our history as powerful witnesses. In bringing together these different but deeply connected layers, *Writing With Fire* stays close to its characters while exploring a country's deep, complex wounds – the story lies in how our characters are treating these wounds: with compassion and persistence.



FILMMAKERS' BIOS

RINTU THOMAS AND SUSHMIT GHOSH

Director | Producer | Editor | Cinematographer

Rintu Thomas is an award-winning director-producer from India whose work is supported by the Sundance Institute, Chicken & Egg Pictures, IDFA, SFF Film Fund, Doc Society, Tribeca Institute, Finnish Film Foundation and Bertha Foundation, among others. Over the last 10 years, Rintu's films have been used as advocacy tools for social impact, included in the curriculum of universities and exhibited globally in spaces such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference and The Lincoln Center for Performing Arts – becoming catalysts for new conversations.

Her debut feature documentary, *Writing With Fire*, won two awards at Sundance '21 (Audience Award and Special Jury Award: Impact for Change). Described by The Washington Post as "The most inspiring journalism movie – maybe ever", *Writing With Fire* has played at over 90 festivals and won 17 international awards.

A Sundance and Japan Foundation fellow, Rintu lives between New Delhi and a quaint mountain-town in North India.



Sushmit Ghosh is an award-winning director and cinematographer from India whose work has been supported by the Sundance Institute, Tribeca Institute, Doc Society, SFF Film Fund, IDFA, The Bertha Foundation, Sorfond and the Finnish Film Foundation, among others.

Five years in the making, Sushmit's debut feature documentary, *Writing With Fire* is a double Sundance award winner. Hailed by Indiewire as 'profound', by Hollywood Reporter as 'insightful and inspirational', the film is a festival favourite winning 17 awards, including with 7 Best Documentary Awards through the year.

In 2009 Sushmit co-founded Black Ticket Films, a production company invested in the power of storytelling. With a strong eye on social justice stories, Black Ticket Films' award-winning slate of films are being used as advocacy, impact and education tools by institutions across the world. In his spare time, you'll find Sushmit motorcycling and hiking through the Himalayas.

Five years in the making, *Writing With Fire* is their first feature documentary.

Married for six years, they live between New Delhi and the mountains and, in their spare time, enjoy discovering quaint bookshops.

FILMMAKERS' BIOS

KARAN THAPLIYAL

Co-cinematographer

Karan Thapliyal is a cinematographer based in New Delhi who has shot extensively on short documentaries, branded content and TV series. With over 12 years of visual storytelling, Karan's work has spanned from filming intimate, human interest stories to designing sophisticated sequences for commercial productions. His work has premiered on The National Geographic Channel, Discovery Networks and The History Channel. Karan is an animal lover and is currently filming a Netflix original wildlife documentary in the heart of South India's forests. A regular collaborator on Rintu and Sushmit's projects, *Writing With Fire* is his first feature documentary.

ANNE FABINI

Supervising Editor

Anne Fabini is the editor of the 2019 Oscar-nominated documentary *Of Fathers and Sons* (2018) and also director Talal Derki's previous Sundance World Documentary Grand Jury Award winner *Return to Homs* (2014). Other films she edited, *The Tale* (dir: Jennifer Fox, 2018), *Morris From America* (dir: Chad Hartigan, 2016) and *Houston* (dir: Bastian Günther, 2013), premiered at the Sundance Film Festival Drama Competition. Based in Berlin, she works as a story and editing consultant on documentaries worldwide. She is a member of both the American and European Film Academy and is on the board of governors of the German Film Academy. Her work has won her several nominations and awards for Best Film Editing.



INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKERS

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists

Interview by Anisha Kohli

How did you first encounter Khabar Lahariya, the reporters you follow in the film, and why did you want to make a film about the news outlet?

Rintu: We saw a photo story online that a photographer had done on the work of Khabar Lahariya and the idea of Dalit women running a newsroom sitting in the heart of Uttar Pradesh was just a phenomenal image of a story that spoke to us. We didn't know about their work which is quite surprising to us. They've been around for about 14 years and when we met them, they were at this beautiful cusp of transition. They're unfettered rural women who are aware of the limitations of print and want to grow their impact to draw in more women. Using digital in a smart way and making it their own felt like just the right story. Our interest lies in mostly telling stories about outliers, people who are outside the system and chipping away at it on their own in powerful ways. We love an unlikely protagonist who has something to offer that the world is not expecting from them.

So many things spoke to us. And we realized that this was going to be a long project because up until then, Sushmit and I had been making films in India, and they'd all been nonfiction, but this felt like a story that needed more room to breathe and [for us to] sink our teeth into. So we took off on a journey which we thought would take two years, but it eventually took five, and that's how *Writing With Fire* was born.

Can you tell us more about the media landscape in Uttar Pradesh, and how Khabar Lahariya entered the scene? What does the outlet do that's different?

Sushmit: Uttar Pradesh, like much of the country, is a media landscape that is male-dominated, typically upper caste. For context, The Editors Guild of India, which is the most powerful representative body for journalists in the country, has only one Dalit journalist on the panel and that's a Khabar Lahariya woman journalist. Uttar Pradesh, specifically the regions that they work in, the profile of journalists is primarily upper caste men. There are no independent women journalists working there, except the women at Khabar Lahariya. In that sense, that really makes their presence quite prolific because the lens with which they are viewing stories is very, very different from how mainstream media is reporting it.

[Before the] shift from print to digital they were printing about five thousand papers every two weeks, so they calculated their readership to be roughly fifteen thousand a month. Now they're growing exponentially in the millions month by month. [It] speaks for the power of their journalism and the fact that the demographic has expanded. Now they have women who typically would not have access to newspapers who are now on their phones absorbing a lot of this content that Khabar Lahariya is putting out. They're savvy, just like any other news outlet. They've gotten into podcasts [and] they used 2020 as a year where they reinvented themselves.

A lot of their news reportage is about issues that you wouldn't typically expect a man from those belts to be talking about. For instance, Covid health care centers-are they prepared for women? Or the escalating rise in domestic violence that was brought on by Covid, which is a global phenomenon, but nobody was talking about it. So that's essentially their kind of journalism. It's interesting because when we were there for five years in the ground, we didn't see any women journalists operating over there, except women at Khabar Lahariya.

Rintu: They started off as a social experiment. An NGO went in and got a bunch of women together and said, “If you were to create a newspaper that you report on, what would that look like?” So it was a newsletter and they called it “Mahila Dakiya”, which is “post-woman.” The women started telling their own stories in their own local dialect and language and that experience was super powerful for them, so when the NGO moved out, women wanted to continue. Some folks from the NGO broke away and helped them set up Khabar Lahariya which literally translates to, “waves of news.” From there, it grew out to be a newspaper. It started out with one district, expanded out to many, and that’s how they’ve really built their credibility and, and very deep-rooted existence in those parts of Uttar Pradesh, which at that time were actually completely media dark.

What’s the significance of having a media outlet run by Dalit women?

Rintu: I think the question is about the lens. They are questioning what is considered newsworthy? What is news? Who is counted? Who decides that this story should be told? And that’s at the forefront of all the reporting that they have done consistently. The feminist lens is what completely distinguishes them from the clutter that news is at the moment.

Sushmit: Having a diversified newsroom is a global conversation right now. In the west you have middle-aged white men who are essentially leading all decisions around what is considered news and newsworthy or not. But what happens when you let in people of color into positions of organizational leadership? Khabar Lahariya is a unique model because it’s entirely led by women. And these are not just women. These are women who are literally at the bottom of India’s social pyramid. So, what happens when they essentially reclaim this position of power and start rewriting the narrative? What does their lens look like? That’s what a diversified newsroom can do. The fact that they’ve grown exponentially, since they went digital speaks volumes to the power of their work and their popularity in the region.

The film shows the journalists transitioning from print to digital platforms. Can you speak about the digital divide there and the role of technology in Khabar Lahariya’s work?

Sushmit: I think India is one of those peculiar countries where more people are aware of cell phones than they are of books. We have one of the greatest penetrations of mobile phones in the world right now, after China. Internet and data plans are very cheap. The internet is really readily accessible, right from Tik-Tok to Facebook to Twitter. It is a social media market. It’s something that the women essentially decided to pivot to six years ago, quite wisely, in retrospect. It was a global conversation. You had the New York Times debating whether or not they should shut down their hard copy and shift entirely into digital. Parallely, you had Dalit women sitting in an attic in the back of a village in Uttar Pradesh having the same sophisticated debates about readership, volume and stories.

While literacy levels, specifically in Uttar Pradesh, are fairly low, internet penetration is very high. Because the method of delivering news has now become digital, there is greater access to Khabar Lahariya’s own work, which ironically, has led to a significant rise in the popularity of these women journalists.

Rintu: Their own level of confidence has grown manifold, and we’ve watched it from behind the lens. They would report, produce and market all on their own. With the advent of digital people know them by their names. They are popular, they do their own shows. Their formats have diversified and that’s led to a new kind of confidence. Sunita, who is the secondary character in the film, her own body language of how she’s presenting herself, how she’s putting herself in the crowd with a phone camera has dramatically changed and that was quite special to witness.

How do local communities in Uttar Pradesh feel about Khabar Lahariya?

Rintu: It ranges from curiosity to mansplaining and derision — as you see in the film — to respect. It's a wide spectrum because people are not used to seeing Dalit women with a camera, asking intelligent question, negotiating smartly, following up on stories and calling out for accountability. That's never happened, and to do it in the most non-violent way, stumps them. That's the range that we've seen amongst their peers.

Initially, people [would] just be like, oh what is she going to do with a phone camera? How can a woman be a journalist? In the communities that they go out to report in, there is a very tacit trust and that really helps. And it's helped us in the five long years of filming because we would just bank on their credibility and tag along. Whatever trust was given to them would automatically be offered to us.

The documentary depicts the journalists' life at home as well as their work in the field. Can you talk about why you decided to focus on the women's personal and professional lives?

Sushmit: I think the newspaper was essentially a trojan horse to talk about the interior lives of these women because whether the newspaper was successful or not was incidental to us. What we were really interested in was the stories of these outliers, really protagonists. It was a David and Goliath story. You would never expect Dalit women living in in these parts of Uttar Pradesh to actually be able to reframe the conversation because the very fact that you have women stepping out of their homes in itself is assigning revolution. The fact that these are women stepping out to work as journalists is something that was unthinkable of, unheard of, and that is what we were interested in.

I think that the negotiations are universal; A mother having to leave her kids behind because she has to report on a story from the ground. A wife being challenged by a husband because she's not at home to cook food because he's hungry. Or the dynamics between women within an organization and how it plays out. These are visuals that are missing from India's mainstream narrative around the Dalit identity. You don't see Dalit women in positions of power and that's something that we were drawn to. We felt that it would be one thing filming them as journalists in the field, but what happens when they go back home in the dark, walking through these allies? How do their families respond to them? What are these negotiations they need to make within the battlefield that they call home, whether that be [refusing] marriage, proposals, or negotiating with your husband about what your boundaries are, or raising two boys, [or being] separated from your husband and [thinking] what will society think of me now?

Those are the conversations that drew us in so the challenge was, how do you stitch their lives inside their homes and their lives outside into a narrative that would make sense to an audience. That fundamentally was something we were resting on right from the beginning and it went on to become one of the biggest challenges to edit. How do you balance out their interior worlds and the very real physical challenges that they face from a day-to-day basis?

Rintu: In a story like this it would be only half told if you don't go inside because these are women reporting on communities that they themselves are a part of and so they are [making] visible issues that they are not only reporting, but that they are a part of. So the personal was very political.

The film also focuses on the rise of Hindu nationalism and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Do you feel that the changing political atmosphere has had an effect on press freedom in the country?

Sushmit: It's a global conversation, to be honest. It's something that you have witnessed from the Philippines, all the way to the U.S. and Trump. I think that it's a challenge the world now faces, the shrinking space for free press. I think this conversation [is] around the importance of the fourth estate to ensure the vibrancy of any democracy on this planet. Wherever you have the rise of the right, the usual pressure points will be artists, writers, historians, journalists, people who have historically presented their own ideas of what democracy is, upheld the values and the importance of dissent. Dissent is core to the functioning of any democracy. One of the core principles of journalism is to be able to constantly question and challenge what the powers-that-be are doing. So, it is a challenging time in India and in any other part of the world to be an independent journalist.

Also, [there's] this whole idea of how the media has been monetized, how big money has been pumped in where there is little space for independent journalism. So, it's a challenge but I think the Khabar Lahariya model is interestingly a counter position to that. I think the women at Khabar Lahariya have redefined what it means to be a journalist. Do you really need to go to journalism school to be a journalist? Do you really need to be working in a large journalistic institution to qualify as a journalist? Do you really need that kind of technology and equipment to be a journalist? Or do you need to be working with the ethos of what journalism is to qualify as a journalist? They've essentially rewritten the script of what journalism could be in the future. The collective power of people who've never been heard now platform themselves, ironically using social media, and are championing the voice of the voiceless right now.

What's next for Khabar Lahariya? How are the journalists faring today? What has been the reception to the film locally?

Rintu: The film has not been shown in India yet. We're still forming our India release, but when they themselves saw the film right before the Sundance World Premiere, they were very emotional. Seeing themselves through the eyes of somebody else, five years of their lives, was very special. The film captures a very important moment in their personal lives, the lives of the newspaper and also of the country. That has been our biggest reward, the fact that the film speaks to them in a powerful way. The film was born right in the heart of Covid and Khabar Lahariya has had its busiest two years. They've made new collaborations with organizations that want grassroots journalists reporting from the ground. They have always been a link between communities that have been disadvantaged and the administration. During Covid they just intensified that work, questioning the administration on access to healthcare. They've diversified. Because they're such pros at using the digital medium, they've now started an online course, hiring and training more young women journalists from across the country. I'd say they totally used Covid in a very constructive way to expand, to experiment and to express themselves in absolutely new ways.



KEY CHARACTERS

Meera Chief Reporter, KL
Suneeta Reporter, KL
Shyamkali Reporter, KL

CREDITS

Directed by:
RINTU THOMAS & SUSHMIT GHOSH

Cinematography:
SUSHMIT GHOSH & KARAN THAPLIYAL

Editing:
SUSHMIT GHOSH & RINTU THOMAS

Supervising Editor:
ANNE FABINI

Produced by:
SUSHMIT GHOSH & RINTU THOMAS

Executive Producers:
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HALLEE ADELMAN

Co-producers:
JOHN WEBSTER
TONE GRØTTJORD-GLENNE

Associate Producers:
BHUMIKA TIKHATRI
SUMIT SHARMA

Original Score:
TAJDAR JUNAID

Sound Design:
SUSMIT 'BOB' NATH

Final Sound Mix:
JANNE LAINE

Colorist:
SIDHARTH MEER

LETTER TO PRESS

Dear Journalist,

Over the course of the last few months, there has been a massive clamp-down on freedom of speech in India, with journalists and artists being specifically targeted by the Indian government.

Recent events (including cases that show we have moved into the dangerous realms of 'thought crimes') have prompted us to be even more cautious with the language around our film, *Writing With Fire*, in such a way that minimises all possible risk for the characters, who are journalists working in one of the most dangerous regions in India, Uttar Pradesh.

We're sharing a few cases to give you context to this:

1. **Amazon Original:** An Amazon Original fiction series, *Taandav*, which is set in Uttar Pradesh has been criminally booked by the Indian government for 'hurting religious sentiments of Hindus'. Arrest warrants have been issued against the Head of Amazon Original India, the show's director, producer, and actors.
2. **Supreme Court judgment:** The Supreme Court of India has refused to grant the makers of *Taandav* protection from arrest, shockingly claiming that the right to freedom of speech is not absolute.
3. **Sedition:** Multiple criminal cases (including sedition) were filed against a set of senior journalists (belonging to established, respected news institutions) for tweeting.
4. **Thought crime:** A stand-up comic was arrested from his stage of performance for a joke that he didn't make. There was only a 'perception' of religious mockery. He's in jail now, without any recourse to bail, for a crime he didn't commit.

We'd request that while reviewing the film, if you could please be mindful of not referring explicitly to their political work that could position them as 'anti-establishment', anti-Hindu or 'anti-Government'. There is a strong structure of Governmental surveillance now and anything viewed as critical of the Indian Government, especially in the international press, can lead to dangerous consequences for those of us in India.

While we completely understand the irony here while making this request to journalists, we're looking at being mindful of the times for the safety and security of our characters. Your considered support will really help us protect this timely, global and relevant story while also spotlighting the work of our intrepid women journalists.

With warmth,
Rintu & Sushmit

ABOUT MUSIC BOX FILMS



Music Box Films is the award-winning North American distributor of acclaimed international, independent, and documentary feature films. Recent releases include Evgeny Ruman's ***Golden Voices***, Sebastien Lifshitz's ***Little Girl***, and Pablo Larrain's ***Ema***. Since 2007, Music Box Films has positioned itself as a prestige label for renowned films like ***Ida*** (Academy Award winner for Best Foreign Film), ***Meru*** (from Oscar-winning filmmakers Jimmy Chin and E. Chai Vaserhelyi), and as the North American home for acclaimed foreign films like Christian Petzold's ***Transit***, the popular Swedish comedy ***A Man Called Ove*** and the original ***The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*** starring Noomi Rapace. Music Box Films, along with their OTT platform Music Box Direct, are independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates the Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premier venue for independent and foreign films.

For more information, visit www.musicboxfilms.com.



