



THE CANARY

IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CENSORSHIP, EVERY VOICE COUNTS



A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY CAMILO SILVA

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LOGLINE

As a wave of book bans threatens to shut down her community library, a librarian and mother of a trans child stands up against censorship.

SYNOPSIS

In a climate of mounting censorship threats, *The Canary* captures the resilience of a Michigan librarian and mother of a transgender child as she navigates the imminent closure of her community library amidst fervent book-banning efforts, embodying the fight to preserve the freedom to read in modern-day America.

EXTENDED SYNOPSIS

The Canary is a poignant documentary short portraying a Michigan librarian and mother of a transgender child as she confronts the rising tide of book-banning in her community. Set against the backdrop of her community library's impending closure due to censorship attempts and escalating threats against librarians, *The Canary* intimately explores the personal challenges she confronts, illuminating the profound impact of censorship on her family. Interweaving the imminent loss of the Patmos Library, fervent book-banning efforts, and her personal narrative, the documentary invites audiences to witness contemporary censorship challenges through the eyes of a dedicated library worker.

The Canary transcends mere commentary, emerging as a powerful human-interest story that sparks awareness of the current cultural divide in America and underscores the stakes involved. Metaphorically likening the librarian and her library to a 'canary in the coal mine', the film serves as a vital warning sign in today's America. Through intimate storytelling and historical resonance, *The Canary* documents a pivotal moment in the fight against book-banning, urging viewers to take heed and safeguard intellectual freedom for future generations.

TECHNICAL INFO

TITLE: THE CANARY
GENRE: DOCUMENTARY
PRODUCTION YEAR: 2024
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: CANADA
FILM LOCATION: USA AND CANADA
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
RUN TIME: 19:05 MINUTES
ASPECT RATIO: 16:9
SOUND: 5.1

CREW

D. OF PHOTOGRAPHY: BENJAMIN CHEER
PRODUCER: SONETTA DUNCAN
ADVISORS: NICK HECTOR AND KIM NELSON
CAMERA AND SOUND: IDRISS ASKOUR
PRODUCTION: JOSH DOWLING / LUCA VILLACIS
POST-PRODUCTION: ELLIOTT HALE
GRAPHICS: EMMA FELICIANO

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In 2022, while developing my graduate thesis film, I was drawn to the alarming rise of book bans in the United States, particularly in Michigan, where censorship led to the imminent closure of a community library. Shocked by the willingness of a community to sacrifice such a vital institution, I was compelled to create *The Canary*, a documentary short capturing this crisis.

Set against the backdrop of contentious library board meetings and community debates, *The Canary* traces the story of a library worker and mother of a trans child confronting the impending closure of her local library in the name of censorship. The film highlights her internal conflict and the broader implications of losing libraries, which are essential institutions of freedom and access to knowledge. In today's post-pandemic America, where legislators, activists, and parental rights groups are fueling a resurgence of book bans, the forced closure of a library represents an unprecedented threat to our First Amendment rights.

Through the library worker's personal narrative, *The Canary* emphasizes the importance of the freedom to read. It calls audiences to recognize the existential risks facing libraries, urging us to defend these keystone institutions before it is too late. The film serves as both a tribute to the resilience of librarians—unsung heroes in the fight against censorship—and a powerful call to action, prompting viewers to engage in protecting our shared history and rights. As book banning efforts continue to escalate, *The Canary* aims to raise awareness and set the stage for a feature-length documentary that dives deeper into the urgent battle over intellectual freedom in America.

DIRECTOR'S BIO



Camilo Silva, a Canadian/American documentary filmmaker and travel photographer, delves into the themes of marginalization and loss through his compelling documentaries and captivating photography. He holds an M.F.A in Film and Media Arts from the University of Windsor, Canada, and a B.A. from the University of Southern California, honing his craft to bring poignant stories to life. His debut documentary short, *The Canary*, marks his entry into the world of filmmaking, showcasing his keen eye for storytelling and his commitment to shedding light on overlooked narratives. Currently, Camilo is working a feature length version of *The Canary* that includes a deeper exploration of book-banning efforts in Michigan. Additionally, he is in post-production on another film, *After 68*, a feature-length documentary that meticulously traces the rise and fall of the historic Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Camilo was a fellow at the Latino Producer Academy hosted by National Association of Latino Independent Producers.



LINK TO STILLS AND ASSETS

FAQs

1. What's next?

- We are currently developing a feature-length documentary that builds on *The Canary*, focusing on the lives of several librarians across Michigan who are confronting escalating censorship and book bans. Production is set to begin soon, and we are actively seeking partners, filmmakers, and financiers to collaborate on this project.

2. Where was the film produced?

- *The Canary* was produced in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Most of the filming took place in western Michigan, with additional locations in Detroit, surrounding areas, and Windsor, Ontario.

3. What are you doing for outreach?

- We are actively partnering with organizations like the Michigan Library Association, New York Public Library, and San Francisco Public Library to amplify the film's message and engage communities in meaningful discussions about censorship and intellectual freedom. Our outreach strategy includes targeted screenings, panel discussions, and workshops designed to reach educators, librarians, activists, and policymakers. We are also developing educational resources to accompany the film, making it accessible for schools, libraries, and community groups.

4. Who is the target audience for this film?

- The film targets a broad audience, including educators, students, librarians, activists, and anyone interested in issues of censorship, intellectual freedom, and community engagement. It is also intended for use in educational settings, such as schools and libraries.

5. How can I support the film?

- You can support *The Canary* by attending screenings, sharing the film with your network, and engaging in conversations about the issues it raises. Details on screenings, film festivals, and online availability will be announced soon. Please check our website and social media channels for updates on how and where to watch the film. We also welcome donations and partnerships to help further our outreach efforts and support future projects.

CONTACT

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