

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Latresha Richards  
[lrichards@thepeoplesfilmfestival.com](mailto:lrichards@thepeoplesfilmfestival.com)



# “THE BLACK SPADES”

## Documentary Receives a Standing Ovation

at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual People’s Film Festival - Music Edition

[New York, NY – May 31, 2021] – **The Black Spades** documentary received a standing ovation following its screening at the **10<sup>th</sup> Annual People’s Film Festival – Music Edition**, Sunday May 30, 2021 at the AMC Magic Johnson Theater in Harlem, NY.

Several attendees were brought to tears as they watched the film and the audience stood up at its conclusion and gave a resounding applause. **Guru**, founder of the Black Spades who started the organization in 1968 at the mere age of 14 years old, gave a passionate teary-eyed speech and vowed to support **TBS New Direction**, the non-profit organization founded by **Executive Producers David L. Baughan & Marion Frampton**—who are also members of the Black Spades, that is designed to stamp out gang violence. “We are all still here guys” Guru said, “and it will be my mission to ensure that we begin the conversation to put away our differences”. Other cast members who were in attendance included; **Khalef Ali and Fat Mike of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, Riley—22<sup>nd</sup> Division, Cholly Rock—22<sup>nd</sup> Division & Black Spades historian and original B-Boy, John president of the 14<sup>th</sup> Division and 17<sup>th</sup> Division Warlord, Monk-Supreme leader, House—Connecticut Division, DJ Phase—Baby Spades & Black Spades DJ, Queen Eva—18<sup>th</sup> Division, 8 Ball 22<sup>nd</sup> Division, and Wildman 22<sup>nd</sup> Division.**

**NY State Assemblyman Al Taylor of Harlem** presented the filmmakers with a Proclamation for “The Black Spades Documentary” and congratulated TBS New Direction for the work that they were doing in the community. “As a Harlem native, born, bred and raised,” Taylor said, “I often ask, how do we celebrate our brothers and sisters 30 years from now who are still on the corners selling poison to each other and killing each other by the dozens?” He stated that “we can’t police or legislate our way out of this, we are going to need this community of Black Spades and all that they’ve gone through to do it”. He further shared his brief encounter with the gangs and touched on his own personal experience growing up during the drug era. “I never thought in a million years that it would be possible for me to become a New York State Assemblyman and yet I stand before you today”. The audience erupted into applause once again.

The Black Spades documentary, directed by **Veronica Keitt** and **Executive Producers David L. Baughan & Marion Frampton**, tells the story of how a few young teens created the Black Spades organization in response to the growing crime, drugs, and violence that began to take over their neighborhood. This film also recounts the racial tension and discrimination in the Bronx that existed between the white youth gangs *and white residents* who didn’t want them in their neighborhoods or schools. Director Veronica Keitt, who is also the founder of The People’s Film Festival, stated that one of the biggest challenges she faced creating the film was in how to tell a 50+ year old story in 98 minutes. “When executive producers David L. Baughan & Marion Frampton first came to me to help them create this film I knew it was going to be a huge undertaking”, says Veronica, “however, I also realized that this was an amazing story of survival because these young men have been through a battlefield in the Bronx, New York”. Veronica states her goal was to humanize this story by peeling back all of the layers (negative included) and getting to the root of their individual stories. Who were

they? Who were their parents, and what motivated them to become a part of this gang? The Black Spades were considered one the largest, most feared gangs in the Bronx. At its peak they had over 100,000 members.

The People's Film Festival will run through June 6, 2021, online at Eventive.org and at the AMC Magic Johnson Theater, Thursday June 3, 2021. For More information about the festival line up, schedule and events, please visit [www.thepeoplesfilmfestival.com](http://www.thepeoplesfilmfestival.com).

#### **MORE ABOUT THE FESTIVAL**

**The People's Film Festival** is an initiative of The People's Media, Music & Arts Foundation (TPMMAF)—which is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to provide venues and promote awareness in independent music, media, and art across the globe while encouraging those—particularly in the Harlem New York area, to develop a greater appreciation and understanding for cultural diversity in film.

To keep track of all **2021 People's Film Festival** announcements, follow us on **Twitter** and **become a friend on Facebook**. [INSTAGRAM](#) [FACEBOOK](#) [TWITTER](#) [YOUTUBE](#)

HASHTAGS: #tpff2021 #thepeoplesfilmfestival

FILM | ART | CREATIVITY | TECH | STORY | THE PEOPLE'S FILM FESTIVAL | HARLEM