



**SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST ANNOUNCES HEADLINER
DEMI LOVATO: DANCING WITH THE DEVIL
TO OPEN SXSW FILM FESTIVAL 2021**

Early Fest Highlights include *Hysterical, Confronting a Serial Killer, The Hunt for Planet B, Luchadoras, Poly Styrene: I Am a Cliché, Jakob's Wife, Recovery, and Violet*

Austin, Texas, January 14, 2021 - South by Southwest® (SXSW®) Conference and Festivals (March 16-20, 2021) announced the World Premiere of YouTube Originals docuseries *Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil* directed by Michael D. Ratner as its Opening Night Headliner to kick off the 2021 Online event, plus a handful of titles to give a taste of the full program that will be announced on February 10, 2021. This year, the acclaimed program will be online, where it will draw thousands of fans, filmmakers, press, and industry leaders to immerse themselves in the smartest, most innovative and entertaining new films of the year, as well as giving access to hundreds of Conference Sessions, Music Showcases, Online Exhibitions, Mentoring, Meetups and Special Events that define the cross-industry event.

Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil explores every aspect that led to Lovato's nearly fatal overdose in 2018, and her awakenings in the aftermath. Director Michael D. Ratner was granted unprecedented access to the superstar's personal and musical journey during the most trying time of her life as she unearthed her prior traumas and discovered the importance of her physical, emotional, and mental health. Far deeper than an inside look beyond the celebrity surface, the docuseries is an intimate portrait of addiction, and the process of healing and empowerment.

"It's impressive and rare to see a pop superstar tell their story so authentically and without pretense," said Janet Pierson, Director of Film. "We're privileged to present this intimate journey told with such vulnerability. Demi Lovato's profound interest in mental health awareness is helping change the landscape of a crucial issue in this year of national and international trauma and loss."

"We are excited to share a handful of films from various sections of the festival (Headliners, Episodic Premieres, Doc and Narrative Spotlight, Midnighters, Global, 24 Beats Per Second, 2020 Spotlight) to give you a taste of the talent, risk-taking, passion, and achievements that we will be announcing in early February and share together online in March," added Pierson.

The complete film festival lineup will be announced Wednesday, February 10. The 2021 online platform with the schedule will launch on February 15.

Highlights from the 2021 SXSW Film Festival (Alphabetical):

Confronting A Serial Killer

Director: Joe Berlinger, Showrunner: Po Kutchins

Joe Berlinger's newest docuseries *Confronting a Serial Killer* follows reporter Jillian Lauren who lures the most prolific serial killer in American history — Sam Little. The series will follow their unsettling and unlikely relationship. (World Premiere) (Episodic Premiere)

Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil

Director/Screenwriter: Michael D. Ratner

Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil is a powerful YouTube Originals documentary event, exploring every aspect that led to Lovato's nearly fatal overdose in 2018, and her awakenings in the aftermath. (World Premiere) (Headliners)

The Hunt for Planet B

Director: Nathaniel Kahn

The Hunt for Planet B follows a diverse group of scientists on a quest to find another Earth among the stars. From the hi-bays of NASA to the edge of the universe and the bottom of the sea, the film offers a way to see our own planet with new eyes. (World Premiere) (Documentary Spotlight)

Hysterical

Director: Andrea Nevins

Hysterical is an honest and hilarious backstage pass into the lives of some of stand-up comedy's most boundary-breaking women, exploring the hard-fought journey to become the voices of their generation and their gender. Featuring Margaret Cho, Fortune Feimster, Rachel Feinstein, Marina Franklin, Nikki Glaser, Judy Gold, Kathy Griffin, Jessica Kirson, Sherri Shepherd, Iliza Shlesinger and more. Available on FX in 2021. (World Premiere) (Documentary Spotlight)

Jakob's Wife

Director: Travis Stevens, Screenwriters: Travis Stevens, Kathy Charles, Mark Steensland

The disappearance of a young woman threatens to change the beige and banal lives of Anne Fedder (Barbara Crampton) and her pastor husband Jakob Fedder (Larry Fessenden) forever. *Cast List: Barbara Crampton, Larry Fessenden, Bonnie Aarons, Mark Kelly, Sarah Lind, Robert Rusler, Nyisha Bell, Phil Brooks* (World Premiere) (Midnighters)

Luchadoras (Germany)

Directors: Paola Calvo, Patrick Jasim, Screenwriters: Patrick Jasim, Paola Calvo, Phillip Kaminiak

Luchadoras portrays the courageous female wrestlers of Ciudad Juárez, a city known for its high murder rate against women — who fight in the ring and in their daily lives to redefine the image of what it means to be a woman in Mexico. (World Premiere) (Global)

Poly Styrene: I Am a Cliché

Director: Celeste Bell, Paul Sng, Screenwriters: Celeste Bell, Zoë Howe, Paul Sng
The death of punk icon and X-Ray Spex frontwoman Poly Styrene sends her daughter on a journey across the world and through her mother's archives to reconcile their fraught relationship. (North American Premiere) (24 Beats Per Minute)

Recovery

Director: Mallory Everton, Stephen Meek, Screenwriters: Whitney Call, Mallory Everton
Two directionless sisters brave a cross-country road trip to rescue their grandmother from a COVID outbreak at her nursing home. *Cast: Whitney Call, Mallory Everton, Anne Sward Hansen, Julia Jolley, Baylee Thornock, Jessica Drolet, Stephen Meek, Tyler Andrew Jones, Tori Pence, Dora McDonald* (World Premiere) (Narrative Spotlight)

Violet

Director/Screenwriter: Justine Bateman

A film development executive realizes that the "guiding voice" inside her head has been lying to her about everything. *Cast List: Olivia Munn, Luke Bracey, Justin Theroux* (World Premiere) (2020 Spotlight)

Film Stills can be found at: <http://fif.sxsw.com/media>

Publicists for projects in program: [Publicists List](#)

Numerous film and television entertainers and executives were among yesterday's [Conference announcement](#), which included Featured Speakers Samantha Bee, Sir Richard Branson, Nicholas Britell, Dave Burd (aka Lil Dicky), The Chainsmokers, Chiquis, Laurieann Gibson, Taraji P. Henson, Barry Jenkins, Matthew McConaughey, Queen Latifah, LL COOL J, and more. SXSW has also released over 230 sessions sourced from the community and curated by SXSW staff. Check out the sessions that are part of our programming theme, [Transforming the Entertainment Landscape](#) or a full list of sessions can be found [here](#).

In addition to film festival screenings, passholders also have access to the full range of content available during SXSW Online including Conference Keynotes, Featured Speakers, Mentor Sessions, Networking Meet Ups, Music Showcases, Comedy Festival Showcases, Online Exhibitions and Professional Development. In mid-February, SXSW Online will open its doors so registrants can get a head start on networking. For more information on everything SXSW Online has to offer, please visit sxsw.com.

About SXSW Film Festival

Now in its 28th year, SXSW Film Festival brings together creatives of all stripes over nine days to experience a diverse lineup and access to thousands of SXSW Conference sessions with visionaries from all corners of the entertainment, media, and technology industries.

About SXSW

SXSW dedicates itself to helping creative people achieve their goals. Founded in 1987 in Austin, Texas, SXSW is best known for its conference and festivals that celebrate the convergence of the interactive, film, and music industries. In 2021, the event moves to a digital format. SXSW Online offers conference sessions, music showcases, film screenings, exhibitions, and a variety of networking and professional development opportunities. An essential destination for global professionals, SXSW Online 2021 will take place March 16 - March 20. For more information, please visit [sxsw.com](https://www.sxsw.com). To register for the event, please visit [sxsw.com/attend](https://www.sxsw.com/attend).

SXSW Online 2021 Platinum Partners are White Claw, High Grade Hemp Seed, and *The Austin Chronicle*.

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Editor's Note: Media Registration for SXSW is open until Wednesday, February 17, 2021. Please go to <https://www.sxsw.com/press-center/press-accreditation> to apply.

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