

International Black Film Festival to Screen *The Tennessee 11*, a Builders Documentary, at 19th Annual Festival

Documentary features 11 Tennesseans from across the political spectrum who courageously put aside partisan positions to address gun violence

September 26, 2024 (Nashville, Tennessee): [The Tennessee 11](#), a [Builders](#) documentary, has been accepted into the 19th annual [International Black Film Festival](#) (IBFF), a powerful vehicle for truth-telling and story preservation held in Nashville. The feature-length film, which will screen on **Thursday, October 3, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. CT at the Scarritt Bennett Center**, follows eleven ideologically diverse strangers as they try to find common ground on one of the country's most divisive issues: gun rights and safety.

Set in a state with the [11th highest firearm death rate in the nation](#) in the wake of the Covenant School shooting, the film depicts how these citizens – who call themselves the Tennessee 11 (TN11) – were able to work together to develop concrete solutions to gun violence despite their different positions on guns. The TN11's productivity and hard-earned respect for one another is juxtaposed against the state legislature's stalemate on the same issue, culminating in a chaotic special session that took place only 20 miles away from where the film was shot.

Embodying this year's festival theme, **"Who's Gonna Tell Them: Breaking Barriers Through Knowing Your Story,"** The Tennessee 11 share their personal stories on the big screen for the first time. In so doing, they inspire viewers to listen to others' stories and understand how their life experiences uniquely inform their opinions.

"While school shootings rightfully reignite calls for change, *The Tennessee 11* expands the conversation to include the recurring gun violence that plagues communities like mine and gives voice to those who are too often asked to accept the status quo," **said Alyssa Pearman, a Jackson-based high school educator and cast member.** "I hope everyone watches it and then has the courage to have the uncomfortable, but necessary conversations required to holistically address this issue."

Following the screening, celebrated author and activist [Leon Ford](#) will lead a panel discussion on the power of building bridges between unlikely communities, including those that have not always gotten along. In 2012, Ford was mistakenly shot five times by a police officer at a traffic stop, leaving him physically paralyzed. A decade later, he joined forces with the former Pittsburgh Bureau of Police to bridge the gap between residents, community leaders, and law enforcement. Today, he passionately works to address disparities and build a compassionate and just society.

The screening and panel discussion coincide with the one-year anniversary of [Citizen Solutions](#), an award-winning civic experiment by Builders that gives citizens the power to co-create solutions to issues suffering from hyper-partisan gridlock. It was primarily shot during a three-day "solution session" hosted in collaboration with [Convergence Center for Policy Resolution](#). It also features

footage from the Tennessee 11's visit to the State Capitol during the 2024 legislative session, where they presented their solution proposals to a bipartisan group of lawmakers.

"In today's polarized climate, we need films that inspire us to step beyond our echo chambers and engage with new ideas with curiosity, compassion, and courage," **said William Green, a board member of the International Black Film Festival and cast member.** "The Tennessee 11 showcases the opportunities that come when we embrace our differences."

Five proposals created by the Tennessee 11 received majority support after tens of thousands of Tennesseans weighed in on them during a public feedback period. Since then, a bipartisan bill resembling one of their proposals was [signed into law](#). The group continues to mobilize behind their proposals, with the goal of holding political leaders accountable to the will of the people.

To receive updates on The Tennessee 11 screening at IBFF, visit Tennessee11.com. Tickets are available on [IBFF's website](#) under "Special Features." To follow the TN11's progress or to suggest your state for a solution session, visit citizensolutions.us.

About Builders

[Builders](#) is a nonpartisan movement equipping people worldwide to overcome toxic polarization and extremist thinking to solve our toughest problems. Builders does this by illuminating the causes and effects of toxic polarization, demonstrating the power of citizens working together across lines of difference, and activating people from all walks of life with the skills to become more effective problem solvers. In addition to more than three million followers, Builders is supported by nearly 300 ideologically diverse leaders across sectors from business, entertainment, academia, faith, sports, journalism, technology, and national defense. It is a project of Builders Network, Inc.

About Citizen Solutions

[Citizen Solutions](#) is a civic experiment that gives citizens across the ideological spectrum the power to co-create solutions to divisive issues. Led by [Builders](#), a nonprofit working to overcome toxic polarization and extremist thinking, in collaboration with [Convergence Center for Policy Resolution](#), an organization dedicated to bringing people together across differences to solve tough problems, *Citizen Solutions* offers a new model for people to discover common ground and drive policy change. The project is live in Tennessee on the topic of gun rights and safety and in Wisconsin on abortion and family well-being. To learn more, visit www.citizensolutions.us.

About the International Black Film Festival

Through the art of film, the [International Black Film Festival](#) (IBFF) celebrates rich, diverse, and creative storytelling for the cultural enrichment, progress and education of communities worldwide. With "Defining Our Stories, Transforming the Image" as its organizational theme, IBFF strives to ensure culturally accurate depictions in film with special emphasis on providing a forum

for unheard, unseen, and unknown viewpoints and showcasing the multitude of experiences presented in local, national, and international communities of color. To browse their upcoming festival program and purchase tickets for film screenings and events, visit www.ibffevents.com.

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