ZAIRE

A FILM BY IMAN DUPREE

2026 AIMAFF WINNER

Winner
Asian Independent Film Festival
2026

FINALIST
Hoboken International Film Festival
2026

Best LGBT Film
South Film and Arts Academy Festival
May 2026

WINNER
SWEDEN FILM AWARDS
MARCH 2026





AUTEUR'S STATEMENT

IMAN DUPREE, SEPTEMBER 15, 2026



WHAT KEEPS US FROM CONNECTING WITH THOSE WE LOVE?

IS IT US? SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS? OUR PARENTS? RELIGIOUS INDOCTRINATION? FEAR OF BEING OUR VULNERABLE SELVES.. WITH ANOTHER VULNERABLE BEING?

WHATEVER OUR ANSWERS, IN THIS FOUR ACT POEM, I SOUGHT TO EXPLORE A NEW KIND OF ROMANCE. DRAWING FROM THE STRUCTURAL PARALLELS OF FILM NOIR AND BLACK CINEMA OF THE 1960S, THE QUARANTINE LOCKDOWN AND THE HEALING POSSIBILITIES OF POETRY, I CREATED A SUBCULTURAL PICTURE OF GRIEF, AMBITION, FRIENDSHIP AND YEARNING. ALL WITH TWO PROTAGONISTS RARELY SEEN ONSCREEN.

IN A TIME WHERE LONGING PLAGUED THE GLOBE, I DREAMED OF TWO SOULS WHO MIGHT FIND ONE ANOTHER DURING OUR DARKEST HOUR, AND PERHAPS.. NOT LET GO.

MAY ZAIRE CARRY A BATON FROM THE PAST, THAT USHERS IN A NEW WAVE OF UNDERGROUND CINEMA, WHICH EXPLORES MORE LIVING FROM THOSE ON THE MARGINS.



THE LA REBELLION INSPIRED STORY

CAST

CARMEN BANKS
BENJI
VENUS KII THOMAS
IMAN DUPREE
JANICE DAVIS
AARON ALLEN DAVIS
JOHNATHAN MITCHELL-DIXON
MIERA COREY
INDIA FORD

INSIGHT

78 MINUTES
2:39.1 DCP + 4K DIGITAL
1.5X ANAMORPHIC FORMAT
BLACK & WHITE, COLOR
5.1 SURROUND SOUND
PRODUCTION 2025 - 2026
IN WASHINGTON, DC, USA

ARTHOUSE

LAST BUTTON CINEMA, UK
IN ASSOC WITH LAST BUTTON PICTURES LTD.
PRAYTELL@LBCINEMA.CO.UK
WWW.LBCINEMA.CO.UK

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY IMAN DUPREE



ZAIRE



Filmed during DC’s 2025 military occupation, ZAIRE explores the quarantine distance of Covid that united two souls, who longed for human comfort beyond closed doors.

Return to office mandates, capitalist pursuits and family nuances paint a damning landscape for remote workers Zaire and Marcus. While Marcus may resist the summons to show in-person, Zaire longs to lead an 18-month merger across the finish line. But on the eve of the merger's close, marked by a welcoming gala, Zaire's boss has other plans.







When an abounding loneliness amplifies, Zaire and Marcus seek connection online. Swiping left/right endlessly, the two swing one another's way. They dress up to go nowhere - and a time is had. But when a smitten Zaire reciprocates with an invite to a film screening, the disapproving eyes of the world steer Marcus toward hesitation.

ZAIRE



CARMEN BANKS AS ZAIRE

ZAIRE

A SUPPORTER OF HER COMMUNITY.
A CORPORATE EXECUTIVE WHO AIMS
TO EXCEL AT WORK - EVEN IF IT
MEANS PLAYING SMALL.
A NURTURING LEADER WHO
CHAMPIONS THE LENGTHY DELIVERY
OF A TECHNOLOGY MERGER.

BUT WHEN THE SALVE FOR A
DISCRIMINATORY WOUND FALTERS,
ZAIRE SEEKS NEW COMPANY.

WHAT DAWNS AS A FLEETING
ENCOUNTER, EVOLVES INTO
A FEELING.. THAT LINGERS.

HOW WILL SHE NAVIGATE
CONNECTION IN THE FACE OF
UNCERTAINTY?

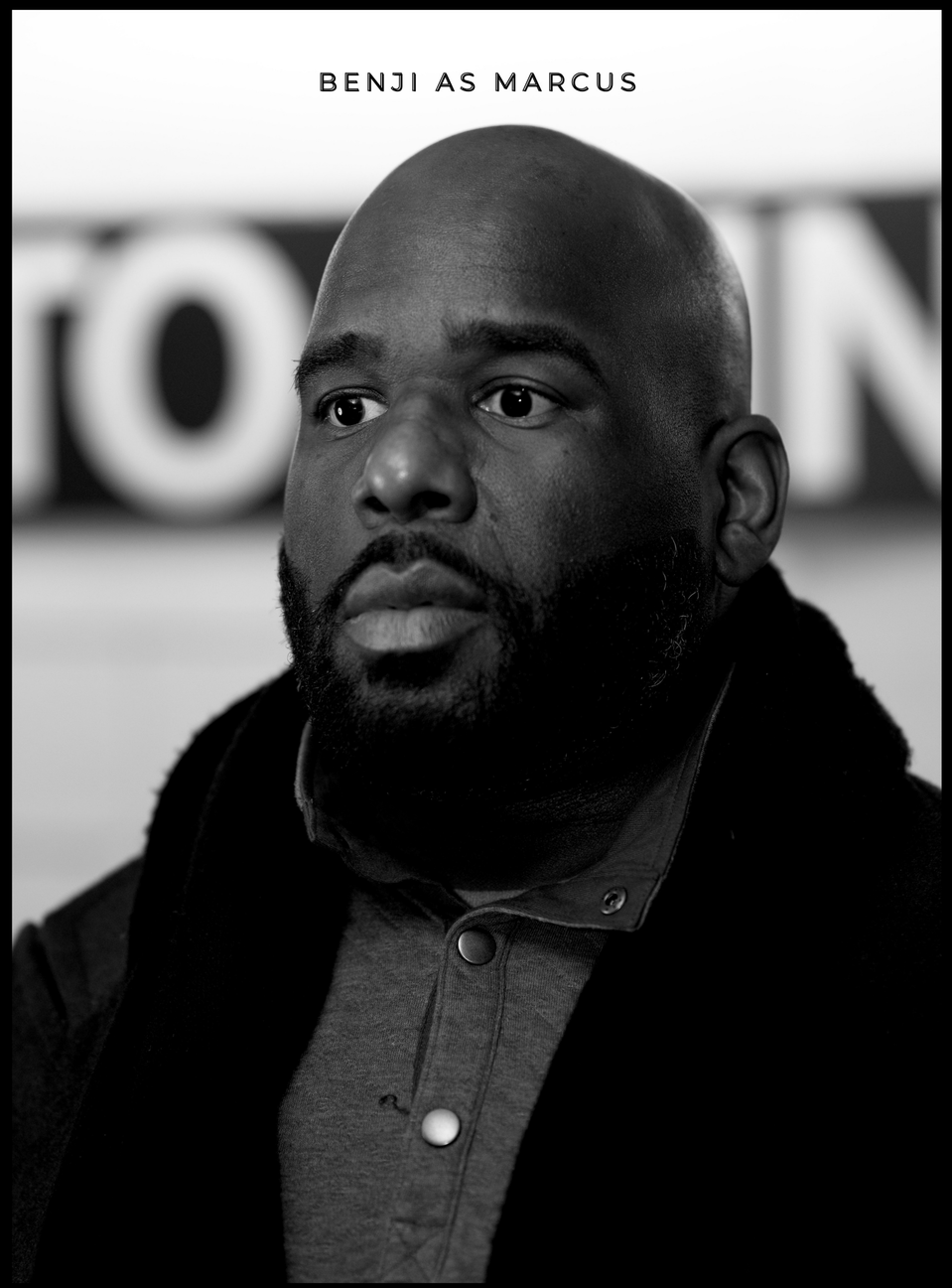
MARCUS

A CURIOUS LONER AND CHARMER.
QUITE THE AMBIVALENT SOUL WHO
LONGS FOR PEACE AMIDST A WORLD
OF CALAMITY. A GRIEVING, YET
GOOFY FUCKBOY WHO FINDS
HIMSELF UNABLE TO MOVE
FORWARD, OR BACKWARD, IN LIFE.

WITH SEEMINGLY NO SUPPORT
SYSTEM, MARCUS LOOKS ONLINE TO
END A LANDLINE'S DEAFENING
SILENCE. HIS LINGERING IN LIMBO
STOPS - IF ONLY FOR ONE NIGHT.

BUT WHEN THE SUN AND SOCIETAL
EXPECTATIONS RISE, SO DOES
DOUBT.

IF HE CAN EVOLVE, WHAT WILL
INSPIRE HIM TO?



BENJI AS MARCUS

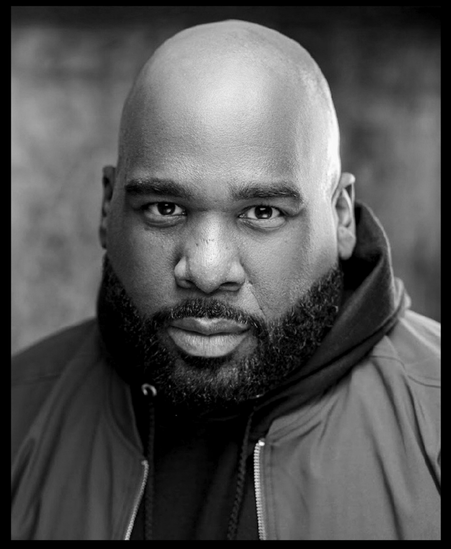
CAST & CREW

ZAIRE



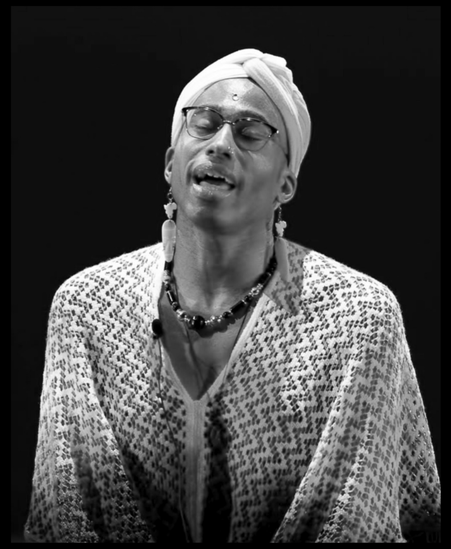
CARMEN BANKS
ZAIRE, EXEC. PROD.
SHE/HER/HERS

CREDITS:
ZAIRE, UNSCENE,
THE MISS PAT SHOW,
WANDAVISION, AND
BET'S THE GAME



BENJI
AS *MARCUS*
HE/HIM/HIS

CREDITS: ZAIRE



VENUS KII THOMAS
AS *OCTAVIA (VOICE)*
XE/SHE/HERS

CREDITS: ZAIRE



AARON ALLEN DAVIS
AS *TROY, EXEC. PROD.*
HE/HIM/HIS

CREDITS: ZAIRE

ALSO SUPPORTED AS
BOOM MIC OPERATOR,
PRODUCTION DESIGN



IMAN DUPREE
AS *JAMAR (VOICE)*
THEY/THEM/THEIRS

CREDITS: ZAIRE

WRITER, DIRECTOR,
CINEMATOGRAPHER,
PRODUCTION DESIGN,
EDITOR, SOUND, COLOR



"GREAT REPRESENTATION WITH A STELLAR CAST.
TOUCHING, FUNNY AND **REAL**. A MUST WATCH!"
-AMIYAH SCOTT

FINALIST
Hobnobben
FILM FESTIVAL
2026

Feature Film of the Month
South Film and Arts Academy Festival
Special Awards May 2026

2026
AIMAFF
WINNER

Best LGBT Film
South Film and Arts Academy Festival
May 2026

Best Lead Actress
South Film and Arts Academy Festival
May 2026

WINNER
SWEDEN
FILM AWARDS
MARCH
2026

Best Director
South Film and Arts Academy Festival
May 2026

Best Cinematography
South Film and Arts Academy Festival
May 2026

Winner
Asian Independent
Film Festival
2026

Best Production
South Film and Arts Academy Festival
May 2026

Official Selection
Nepal America
International Film
Festival
NAIFF2026

ZAIRE



DECORATIONS

ZAIRE

FESTIVAL	LOCATION	DATE
NOMINATED FOR BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE AND FOR THE JEN LYNN LGBT FILM AWARD ***HOBNOBBEN FILM FESTIVAL***	Fort Wayne, Indiana, US	10/2026
OFFICIAL SELECTION ***NEPAL AMERICA INT'L FILM FESTIVAL***	Greenbelt, Maryland, US	6/2026
6 FILM AWARDS: BEST LGBT FILM, BEST DIRECTOR, BEST LEAD ACTRESS, FILM OF THE MONTH, BEST PRODUCTION, AND FOR BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY AWARD ***SOUTH FILM & ARTS ACADEMY FESTIVAL***	Rancagua, Chile	5/2026
BEST LGBT FILM AWARD ***ATHENS INT'L MONTHLY FILM FESTIVAL***	Athens, Greece	5/2026
BEST LGBT FILM AWARD ***ASIAN INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL***	Kolkata, India	4/2026
BEST LGBT FILM AWARD ***SWEDEN FILM AWARDS***	Norrbottens län, Sweden	3/2026



PRESS

“FILMMAKER IMAN DUPREE SHOT THEIR DEBUT FEATURE UNDER MILITARY OCCUPATION IN WASHINGTON, AND SET TWO RULES THAT CHANGED HOW A BLACK TRANS WOMAN GETS TO MOVE ON SCREEN.”

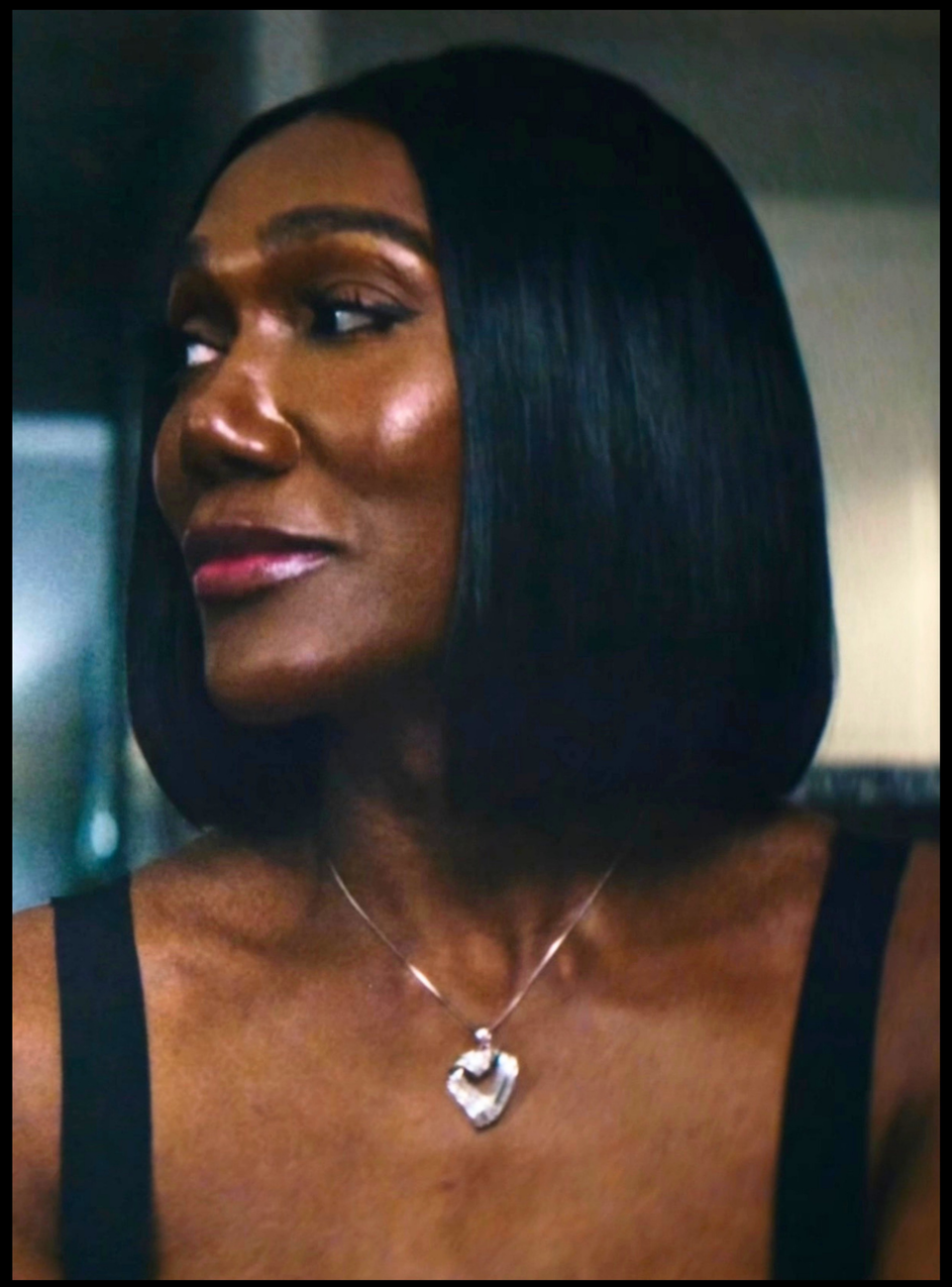
POLISH MEDIA

“HOW ‘ZAIRE’ TURNS ISOLATION, INTIMACY AND IDENTITY INTO A QUIETLY URGENT STORY OF CHANGE“

INQUISITIVE CARTER

“BALTIMORE FILMMAKER IMAN DUPREE TAKES HOME BEST LGBT FILM FOR ‘ZAIRE’ AT SWEDEN FILM AWARDS“

BLEX MEDIA



PRESS (CONT'D)

ZAIRE

TRANS LOVE, NOIR AND "ZAIRE"
POLISH MEDIA *(JULY 18, 2026)*

HOW 'ZAIRE' TURNS ISOLATION, INTIMACY AND IDENTITY INTO A QUIETLY URGENT STORY OF CHANGE
INQUISITIVE CARTER, *MAY 22, 2026*

OFFICIAL SELECTION OF THE 2026 NEPAL AMERICA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
NEPAL AMERICA FILM SOCIETY, MAY 18, 2026

'ZAIRE' SCORES BEST LGBT FILM AT APRIL 2026 ATHENS INT'L MONTHLY FILM FESTIVAL
AIMFF, ATHENS, GREECE, MAY 6, 2026

BALTIMORE FILMMAKER IMAN DUPREE TAKES HOME BEST LGBT FILM FOR 'ZAIRE'
BLEX MEDIA, MAY 4, 2026

'ZAIRE' WINS "BEST LGBTQ" FILM AT 11TH SEASON ASIAN INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL
AIFF, KOLKATA, INDIA, MAY 2, 2026

'ZAIRE' WINS "BEST LGBT" FILM AT THE MARCH 2026 SWEDEN FILM AWARDS!
SWEDEN FILM AWARDS, APRIL 28, 2026



ARTHOUSE:
LAST BUTTON CINEMA, UK

ZAIRE

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