

# Feature Doc 'Baristas vs Billionaires' Set as Opening Night World Premiere of 2025 Buffalo International Film Festival

*Union-Busting at Starbucks Gets Spotlight in Documentary from Oscar-Nominated Filmmakers Premiering at Buffalo's historic North Park Theatre Oct. 10*

BUFFALO, NY, UNITED STATES, September 30, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning director Mark Mori and a team of accomplished filmmakers recently announced the doc "[Baristas vs Billionaires](#)" will enjoy its world premiere at the 2025 Buffalo International Film Festival (BIFF).

The event includes a post-screening Q&A with film team including Alec Baldwin. Tickets are available via [BuffaloFilm.org](#).



This eye-opening documentary, narrated by Oscar-winner Susan Sarandon, is a fast-paced investigation exposing Starbucks' illegal union-busting tactics. Buffalo baristas and their struggles to form a national Starbucks union are at the center of the film's conflict.

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Even though the Starbucks Workers' fight for a living wage was so public, I had no idea of the twists and turns, and heartbreak connected to their struggle.”

*Susan Sarandon*

As captured by Mori's team, baristas take action and explain in their own words how they're waging their campaign for their union—Starbucks Workers United (SBWU)—and their livelihoods! [Watch the trailer here.](#)

Director/writer/producer Mark Mori, p.g.a., assembled a team including Emmy-winning

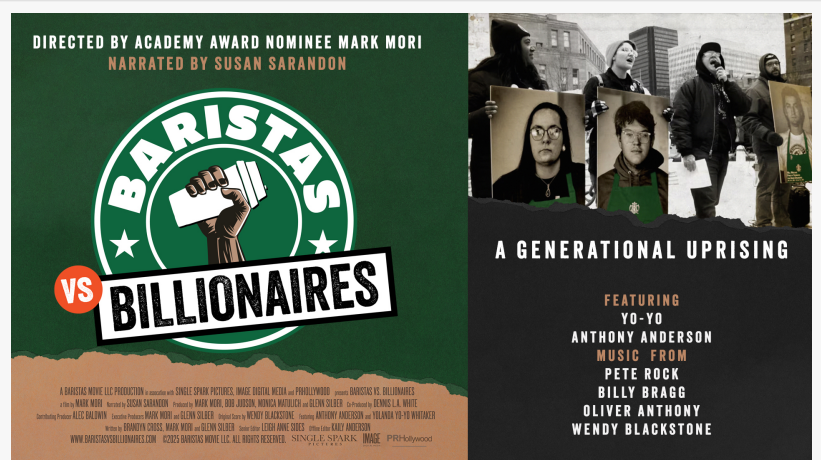
producer/cinematographer Bob Judson, p.g.a., producer and creative executive Monica Matulich, p.g.a., Academy Award nominee and Emmy-winner Glenn Silber as writer and producer, writer Brandyn Cross, Emmy-winning Leigh Anne Sides as editor, co-producer Dennis L.A. White, associate producer Cat Miller, and Roberta Bryant as resource producer. Emmy Award-winning actor Alec Baldwin is a contributing producer to the film.

The documentary centers on the young Starbucks baristas at the Elmwood Avenue store in Buffalo, N.Y. The first to unionize in Dec. 2021, they sparked a nationwide movement among working-class Millennials and Gen Z, challenging the powerful billionaire, three-time CEO, Howard Schultz.

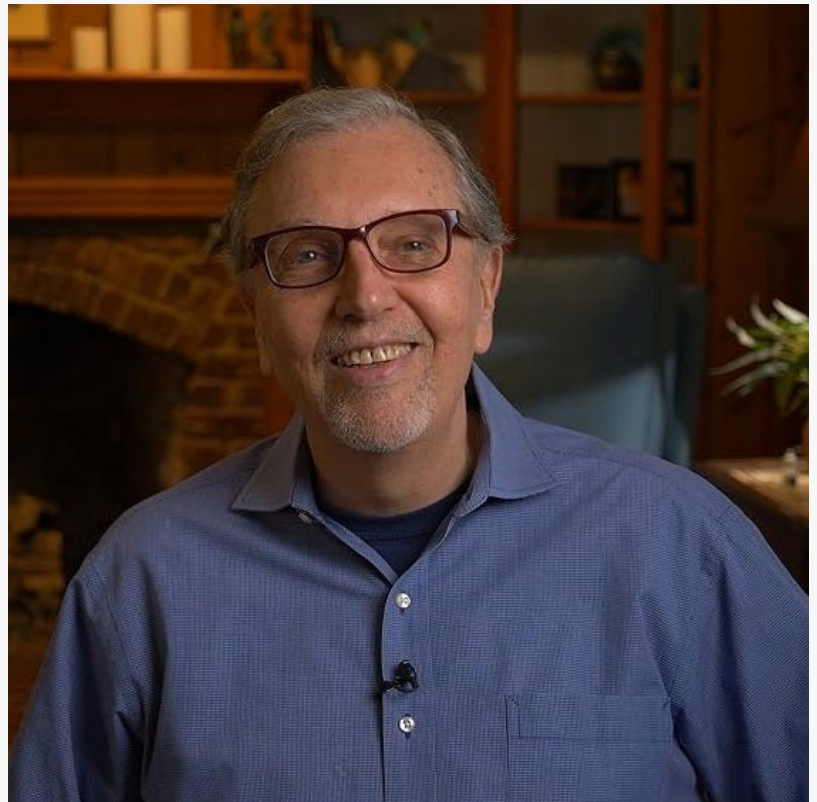
Over the four-year labor conflict, more than 700 complaints were filed with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) accusing Starbucks of unlawful labor practices, such as firing union supporters, spying on workers, and closing stores during Labor campaigns, according to U.S. News & World Report.

Still, the young baristas are not backing down. So far, they've organized more than 650 Starbucks stores, representing 12,000 employees who've been unionized in 40 states in every region of the country. But after four years of organizing and negotiations, Starbucks still refuses to reach a fair national contract agreement with Starbucks Workers United.

"I've viewed the struggles of the baristas up close, and have witnessed the constant, unjust resistance they've faced," said director-producer, Mark Mori, himself a former Steelworkers Union member. "I just can't help but see larger issues, like wealth inequality and the disappearance of America's middle class, come sharply into focus. This union campaign led by these young baristas is an important story, and the time to tell it is NOW."



Banner for "Baristas vs Billionaires"



Mark Mori, director/writer/producer of "Baristas vs Billionaires"



As narrator for "Baristas vs Billionaires," Academy Award winner and activist Susan Sarandon lends her voice to guide the story with clarity, compassion, and urgency.

"Even though the Starbucks Workers' fight for a living wage was so public, I had no idea of the twists and turns, and heartbreak connected to their struggle," said Sarandon.

"I'm honored to participate in Mark's powerful film about the Starbucks union drive," said Baldwin, contributing producer to the film. "This is one of the most important labor battles of our time, and I'm proud to help bring this story to the screen."

Former barista and SBWU union organizer, Gianna Reeve, was just 19 years old when she stood up to former Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, urging him to sign the union's Fair Election Principles. Reeve is now an organizer for the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. She will also participate in the Q&A on stage after the Buffalo World Premiere screening of "Baristas vs Billionaires."

Fired barista Victoria Conklin, a Starbucks Workers United organizer, will also attend the screening and participate in the Q&A on stage after the screening. Conklin is now an organizer with the Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU).



Alec Baldwin, contributing producer, "Baristas vs Billionaires"



Susan Sarandon, narrator for "Baristas vs Billionaires"

Senator Bernie Sanders confronted billionaire Howard Schultz, the interim Starbucks CEO, and

its largest shareholder, during a Senate Hearing (3/23/2023) noting that, "The National Labor Relations Board has ruled that Starbucks violated Federal Labor laws 100 times during the past 18 months, far more than any other corporation in America.

"Over the past 18 months, Starbucks has waged the most aggressive and illegal union busting campaign in the modern history of our country," Sanders added.

To follow the film's journey in social media, visit Instagram @baristasvsbillionaires, Facebook Baristas vs Billionaires, X: @BaristasVsBill or for support of SBWU use Instagram / Facebook / X: @SBWorkersUnited

Since 2006, Buffalo International Film Festival (BIFF) is a nonprofit championing regional, national and international films that push the limits of independent cinema, presenting quality films from around the world to WNY residents and visitors. To learn more visit BuffaloFilm.org, <https://www.buffalofilm.org/>.

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