

Emmy-Winning Director Taj Paxton Returns with 'The Rise' on Peacock, Capturing the Evolution of Women's Sports

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, January 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Taj Paxton, a five-time Emmy-winning director, writer, and producer known for her innovative storytelling in documentary filmmaking, returns to direct "WNBA 2024: The Year That Changed Everything" for Hello Sunshine's groundbreaking series "The Rise." The first WNBA 2024 film premiered on December 15, 2025, with additional installments planned for release throughout 2026. This five-part

documentary series explores women's professional sports, spotlighting key athletes, historic championships, record-breaking performances, and cultural shifts driven by societal changes, media coverage, and advocacy that influence the industry.



WNBA 2024

“

The significance of 'The Rise' lies not just in chronicling events but in capturing a transformative moment within our cultural landscape,”

Taj Paxton, Emmy-winning director, writer, and producer

Produced in collaboration with Ally and the Lyda Hill Philanthropies' If/Then Initiative, "The Rise" offers an unprecedented look at how women athletes have captured global attention. The docuseries covers pivotal moments across various sports disciplines, highlighting personal narratives that resonate beyond athletics.

A key feature within this transformative series is "WNBA 2024: The Year That Changed Everything," which takes viewers deep into a season where women's basketball

shattered records—selling out arenas and setting new benchmarks in merchandise sales and social media engagement. This segment includes compelling game footage and exclusive interviews with notable figures, including Candace Parker—who also serves as executive producer—alongside Napheesa Collier, Courtney Williams, Terri Jackson, Jane McManus, Khristina Williams, and Monica McNutt.

"The WNBA's story isn't just about triumphs on court; it's an emblematic reflection of societal shifts," said Taj Paxton, Emmy-winning director, writer, and producer. "In documenting these milestones through authentic voices like those featured here—including our own team—we're capturing history as it unfolds."

Paxton shares executive production credits for "WNBA 2024" alongside Patty Ivins Specht and Azon Juan Juaquin Cambron, while talent producer Melissa Chusid ensures the presence of influential personalities throughout each narrative arc. Patty Ivins Specht also directed "The New Moneyball," which premiered on December 15, 2025.

The remaining three films — The Inaugural Season of the PWHL, The Gold Medal Girls of X Games, and The Women of NASCAR — are slated to premiere on Peacock in 2026.



Hello Sunshine's Reese Witherspoon, Sara Rea, Zoe Fairbourn, Sue Kinkead, Lyda Hill, Ty O'Neil, and Nicole Small will serve as executive producers for all projects, with Ashlyn Harris serving as a consulting producer across all five documentaries.

ABOUT TAJ PAXTON

Taj Paxton is a five-time Emmy-winning director, writer, and producer whose work blends cinematic storytelling with powerful social resonance. Documentaries she's produced—United Skates (HBO), Out of Iraq (MTV), The IF Project (MTV), Kevyn Aucoin: Beauty & Beast (MTV), and Light in the Water—have screened at the United Nations, U.S. Congress, over 50 international film festivals, and toured globally with the U.S. State Department to foster cross-cultural understanding. She received an early Humanitas Prize for producing Green Dragon, a feature film honored for its message of human dignity and freedom.

Taj has spent over 15 years as a leading LGBTQ voice in entertainment. Rooted in a rich Southern storytelling tradition, Taj brings emotional depth, cultural nuance, and lyrical vision to her directorial work. Her award-winning short A Fat Girl's Guide to Yoga was inspired by her experience teaching yoga in marginalized communities. My Brother's Keeper, a recent dramatic short, offers an intimate and poetic meditation on Black masculinity and fatherhood.

Taj recently directed the documentary WNBA 2024 for Hello Sunshine & Peacock and is now in development on Whale Whisperer, a documentary film set in Bahia that explores the extraordinary bond between a woman who communicates with whales and the urgent messages

they send to humanity.

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