



ART HOLLIDAY AND STORYSMART® ANNOUNCE FINISH-LINE PARTNERSHIP FOR JOHNNIE BE GOOD DOCUMENTARY

Film Examines the Life & Legacy of Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Pianist Johnnie Johnson

ST. LOUIS, MO, UNITED STATES, July 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Veteran journalist, filmmaker, and Hall of Fame broadcaster Art Holliday has entered a finish-line producing partnership with

STORYSMART® to complete and release *Johnnie Be Good*, a feature-length documentary about Rock and Roll Hall of Fame pianist Johnnie Johnson.

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More than two decades in the making, *Johnnie Be Good* explores the extraordinary life, music, military service, and complicated legacy of Johnson, whose piano playing

helped shape the sound of early rock and roll.

“Johnnie Johnson helped create the soundtrack of rock and roll,” said Holliday. “The more I learned about his life, the more I became convinced that his story deserved to be told.”

While Johnson spent decades performing alongside Chuck Berry and contributing to some of the most influential recordings in music history, many fans remain unaware of his profound impact on the development of rock and roll.

“This project has been a labor of love for more than two decades,” said Holliday. “I’m excited to partner with Ron Watermon and STORYSMART as we work to bring this film to audiences.”

The film is the culmination of 22 years of research, filming, and production by Holliday, who recently retired after a 46-year career at KSDK-TV in St. Louis.

“Art has spent more than twenty years preserving an important piece of American music history,” said Ron Watermon, Film Producer & Founder of STORYSMART. “We’re honored to support Art’s vision while helping bring this remarkable film to global audiences.”

Over the last two decades, Holliday conducted approximately 50 interviews, assembled more than 110 hours of footage, and documented the story of a musician revered by fellow artists but

often overlooked by history.

“What impressed me most was not only the quality of material Art has assembled, but his commitment to see this story through,” Watermon said. “Johnnie Johnson’s influence can be heard through rock and roll, yet many people haven’t heard his name.”

Johnnie Be Good features interviews and appearances by Chuck Berry, Johnnie Johnson, Frances Johnson, Keith Richards, Eric Clapton, Bonnie Raitt, Bob Weir, Bo Diddley, Joe Perry, Michael McDonald, Taylor Hackford, Buddy Guy, Bruce Hornsby, Paul Shaffer, John Goodman, Malcolm McDowell, Chuck Leavell, John Sebastian, Eddie Money, Lou Gossett Jr., and many others. The film is narrated by both Goodman and McDonald.

The film examines Johnson’s remarkable journey from leading his own trio in St. Louis, to hiring an unknown guitarist named Chuck Berry for a New Year’s Eve performance in 1952, to becoming one of the most influential yet under-recognized musicians in American music history.

Under the partnership, STORYSMART will serve as Executive Producer and strategic producing partner, helping guide the project through completion, fundraising, post-production, rights clearances, audience development, and distribution planning.

The partnership reflects STORYSMART’s broader commitment to supporting independent filmmakers and helping exceptional documentary projects reach completion through its emerging finish-line partnership model.

Currently in post-production, Johnnie Be Good has an estimated running time of approximately 95 minutes. The filmmakers anticipate completing the project in late 2027 and pursuing a festival premiere before broader release in 2028.

The film also explores Johnson’s service as one of the historic Montford Point Marines, his role in breaking racial barriers in the military, his long partnership with Chuck Berry, his rediscovery by Keith Richards in the 1980s, and the ongoing debate surrounding his contributions to some of the most iconic songs in rock and roll history.

Additional information, project updates, and opportunities to support the film will be announced soon. Visit jjthefilm.com

ABOUT ART HOLLIDAY

Art Holliday recently retired following a 46-year career at KSDK-TV, where he served as sportscaster, anchor, reporter, executive producer, storyteller, and news director. A member of four halls of fame, Holliday is an award-winning journalist and documentary filmmaker whose previous documentary, *Before They Fall Off the Cliff: The Ripple Effect of Schizophrenia*, screened

at multiple film festivals and was utilized by mental health organizations and law enforcement training programs.

ABOUT STORYSMART®

Founded by filmmaker, author, and media entrepreneur Ron Watermon, STORYSMART® develops and produces true-story intellectual property across film, television, publishing, and emerging media. Through STORYSMART® STUDIOS, the company develops documentary and narrative projects while helping creators preserve ownership collaboratively. For more information, visit storysmart.net/johnnie.

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