

The Ebony Canal Earns Best Short Documentary Nomination at Atlanta's Oscar-Qualifying BronzeLens Film Festival

LeToya Lockett-Coles, Award-winning Director Emmaí Alaquiva, Charles Johnson, Dr. Lamman Rucker, Dr. Zsakeba Henderson and Nzinga Imani on Film Panel Discussion

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, August 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Ebony Canal](#) Earns Best Short Documentary Nomination at Atlanta's Oscar-Qualifying [BronzeLens Film Festival](#)

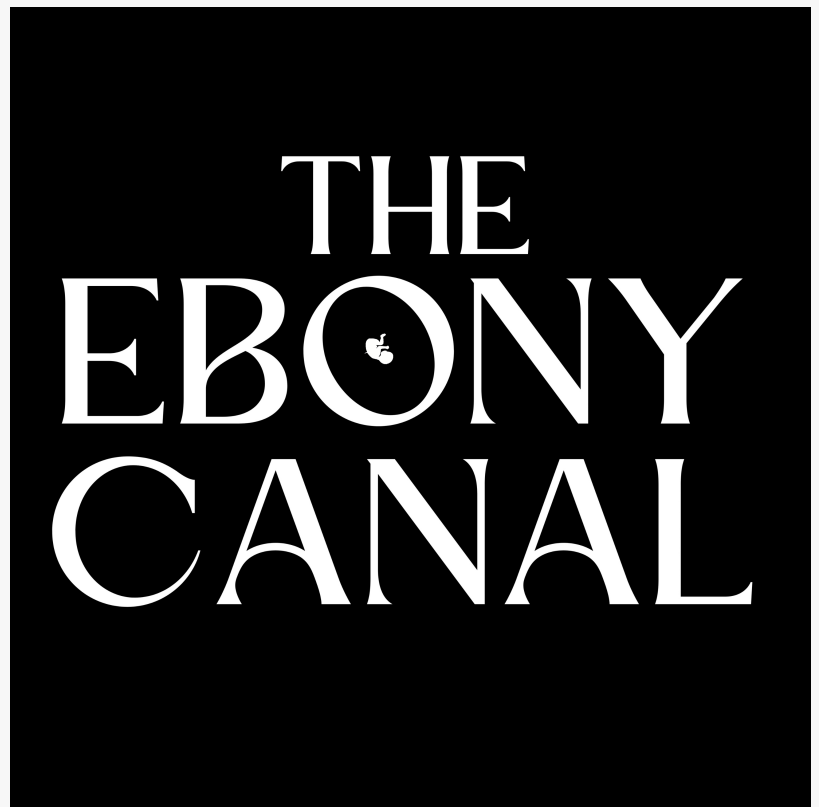
Narrated by EGOT winner Viola Davis and featuring Ms. Tina Knowles, with a post-screening conversation moderated by LeToya Lockett-Coles

The Ebony Canal: A Story of Black Maternal & Infant Health has been nominated for Best Short

Documentary at the 2026 BronzeLens Film Festival. Now in its 17th year, BronzeLens is an Academy Award qualifying festival for short film with more than 150 Official Selections from twelve countries. The film screens Friday, August 28 at the Tara Theatre, followed by a moderated conversation on Black maternal and infant health.

Featuring former Vice President Kamala Harris, Ms. Tina Knowles, birthFUND founder Elaine Welteroth, 4Kira4Moms founder Charles Johnson, and actor Dr. Lamman Rucker, with creative contributions by Keke Palmer, the documentary follows four mothers, Mariah Peoples, Rachel Strader, Alana Yzola-Daly, and Larissa Lane, from pregnancy through their babies' first year.

For Black families, that first birthday is not a given. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Black infants die before their first birthday at twice the rate of infants nationwide. In Georgia, 874 infants died before their first birthday in 2023.



The risk to mothers runs just as high. CDC data shows Black mothers die from pregnancy-related causes at three times the rate of white mothers. The Ebony Canal puts faces and names to those numbers, and shows the care, community, and solutions already changing outcomes.

Ms. Tina Knowles, philanthropist and author of *Matriarch*, speaks in the film about her own experience giving birth and what she has seen other Black women face. “The magic of storytelling is that it gets the word out,” she said. “And once you hear the story, it becomes a more connected experience for everyone.”

That storytelling has traveled. In May, the film took home three top honors at the 2026 Diversity in Cannes Short Film Showcase: Best Documentary, Best First-Time Director, and Best Editing. It does the same work closer to home, screening at universities and community events in partnership with health organizations, where each stop connects audiences to local birth workers.

“

We made this film to help save the lives of Black and Brown mothers and babies, and bringing it to BronzeLens means Atlanta gets to be part of that mission.”

*Emmai Alaquiva -Award
-winning Director, The Ebony
Canal*

That reach is the point. “Either you are a mom or you have a mom, so this work belongs to all of us,” said [Emmai Alaquiva](#), director of *The Ebony Canal*. “We made this film to help save the lives of Black and Brown mothers and babies, and bringing it to BronzeLens means Atlanta gets to be part of that mission.”

Event Details

The Ebony Canal Screening and Conversation | 2026
BronzeLens Film Festival | Friday, August 28, 2026 | 1:30
p.m. | Tara Theatre, 2345 Cheshire Bridge Road NE, Atlanta,
GA 30324

17TH ANNUAL **BRONZELENS** PRESENTS
THE **EBONY CANAL**
THE EBONY CANAL
SCREENING + PANEL
Dr. Zsakeba Henderson OB/GYN MOREHOUSE Nzinga Imani ACTOR/ADVOCATE Dr. Lamman Rucker ACTOR/DADVOCATE Charles Johnson AKRAMIOMIS Emmai Alaquiva DIRECTOR THE EBONY CANAL
FRIDAY August 28th, 1:30P **TARA THEATRE** ATLANTA Ga. w/ **LETOYA LUCKETT** Moderator
CLARE PR GLOBAL Kwanzaa PERRY GET PASSES @ BRONZELENS.COM

The Ebony Canale Screening Panel

Audiences can vote for the film toward the festival's Audience Award following the screening.

Tickets and festival passes: bronzelens.eventive.org | bronzelens.com

Moderator

LeToya Luckett-Coles, Grammy Award-winning artist, actress, and entrepreneur

Panelists

Emmai Alaquiva, Director, The Ebony Canal

Charles Johnson, Advocate and Founder, 4Kira4Moms

Dr. Lamman Rucker, Advocate, actor, and educator

Dr. Zsakeba Henderson, CEO of Equity, Safety, and Wellbeing Consultants and Clinical Assistant Professor at Morehouse School of Medicine

Nzinga Imani, Actor and Advocate

About The Ebony Canal

Directed by six-time Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Emmai Alaquiva and narrated by EGOT winner Viola Davis, *The Ebony Canal* examines the Black maternal and infant health crisis through the lived experiences of Black mothers, advocates, and leading healthcare professionals. Featuring appearances by former Vice President Kamala Harris, Ms. Tina Knowles, Elaine Welteroth, Charles Johnson, and Dr. Lamman Rucker, with creative contributions by Keke Palmer, the film calls for systemic change to ensure every Black mother has the opportunity for a safe and healthy pregnancy and birth. Honors include the 2026 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Short Form Documentary, two Mid-Atlantic Emmy Awards, three Webby Awards, and five Telly Awards. Produced by Ya Momz House, Inc. Executive Producers: Brenda Gilbert, Lekha Singh, Sanjay Rawal, and Sam Reiman. Original music by Grammy-nominated composer Bud'da (Stephen Anderson).

About BronzeLens Film Festival

BronzeLens Film Festival of Atlanta, Georgia, is a non-profit organization founded in 2009 that is dedicated to bringing national and worldwide attention to Atlanta as a center for film and film production for people of color. Founded by Kathleen Bertrand, the festival is now in its 17th year and has been an Academy Award qualifying festival in the short film category since 2016. Official Hashtag: BronzeLens2026

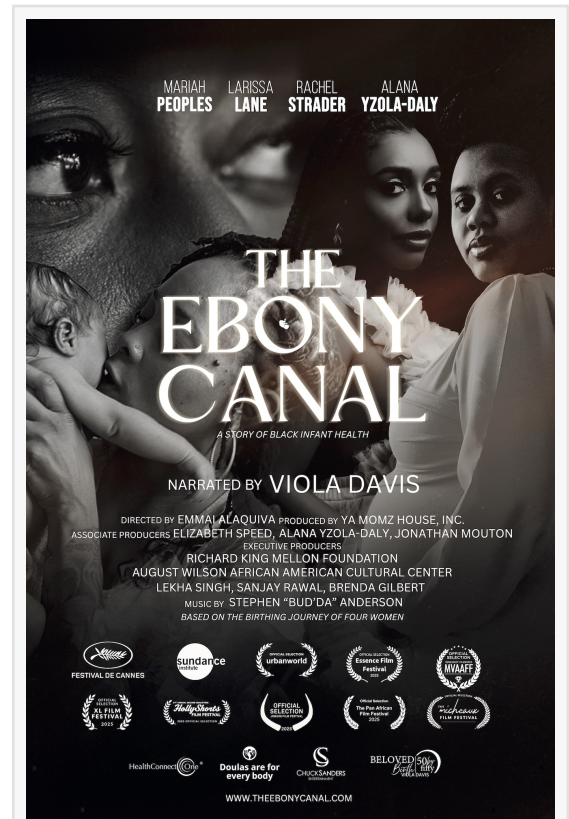
Media Assets

Press Kit: Film Deck, Teaser, Director's Bio, Movie Poster, Synopsis

The Ebony Canal Awards and Impact

Interviews with the director, moderator, and panelists, film stills, and additional materials available upon request.

Media Contacts



The Ebony Canal Award-Winning Film

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