

A woman with dark hair is holding a baby in a striped onesie. They are standing in front of a large, colorful "Happy 1st Birthday" banner. The banner features the name "PARRIS" in large, bold letters. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

in love in memory

A FILM BY SHALON BUSKIRK & DREW SWEDBERG

press kit 2026

in love, in memory

a film by **Shalon Buskirk & Drew Swedberg**

production **Caesura Films**

country **United States**

details

90 minutes | English | closed captions

2K DCP & 5.1 mix | Apple ProRes & stereo mix

online screener available upon request

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links

website www.inloveinmemory.com

social [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [X](#)

downloads [high-resolution stills](#)

logline

An elegiac portrait of a mother's unending commitment to memorializing her son quietly becomes a radical subversion of a dominant documentary genre—true crime.



synopsis

A poetic, collage-like portrait of life in the wake of immeasurable loss, **IN LOVE, IN MEMORY** traces the everyday movements of a mother gathering cherished memories of her family and unearthing interrelated stories of violence in her hometown. Shalon Buskirk's advocacy orbits around her firstborn son, Parris Jerome Lane, whose murder in 2017 marked the end of an unprecedented year of gun violence and housing instability in Allentown, Pennsylvania. To memorialize her son and connect his story to the enduring systemic racism of a post-industrial American city, Shalon collaborates with an intergenerational ensemble of Black women. An artist pens a poem for Parris, a historian sifts through Allentown's haunting legacy of housing discrimination, and an activist struggles to remember her trailblazing battle for fair housing in the 1960s. An impressionistic counter-narrative that refuses to follow the expectations of true crime, **IN LOVE, IN MEMORY** refracts quiet scenes of artistic intervention, collective storytelling, and tender remembrance through a prism of passing time.

Shalon Buskirk *Producer/Director/Co-Editor*



Shalon Buskirk is a community leader in Allentown, Pennsylvania who has dedicated her life to protecting, supporting, and saving young adults from violence in her hometown. After the tragic death of her firstborn son, Parris, she started to work towards a nonprofit that engages youth with the resources they need for success. She was a catalyst behind the first major funding in the city for youth violence prevention. She is a storyteller, a mother of eight children, and the CEO/Founder of the Parris J. Lane Memorial Foundation. She was a Film Independent Documentary Lab Fellow in 2022, a Visiting Fellow at Skidmore College's MDOCS Storytellers' Institute in 2020 and 2022, and the co-author of "United Hearts for Autism: Stories from Caregivers and Self-Advocates," independently published in 2022.

Drew Swedberg *Producer/Director/DP/Co-Editor*



Drew Swedberg is a documentary filmmaker, cinematographer, educator, and film programmer. Through a relational process and poetic approach, his filmmaking orbits around the everyday dreams, rituals, and forces that shape the places he calls home. As a teaching artist based in Eastern Pennsylvania, he designs spaces for aspiring filmmakers to create media-based stories. Drew has led an array of film classes from elementary to college classrooms, most recently as a program facilitator for PBS39's Production U and a visiting instructor in the LVAIC Documentary Storymaking program. He is currently an adjunct professor in Lafayette College's Film and Media Studies Program. He was a Film Independent Documentary Lab Fellow in 2022, Visiting Fellow at Skidmore College's MDOCS Storytellers' Institute in 2020 and 2022, and an Artist-in-Residence for the Cultural Coalition of Allentown in 2019 and 2021.

Nandini Sikand *Producer*



Nandini Sikand is an award-winning filmmaker, dancer-choreographer, published author, and cultural anthropologist. Her interdisciplinary work is informed by the fluidity of working between and within the fields of film and media, and dance and performance, in both India and the United States. Her films have won awards at over 100 film festivals and have screened on PBS. Her work has been recognized by The Jerome Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts, and the Center for Asian American Media. She is a 2018 Guggenheim Fellow, the co-founder and co-director of Sakshi Productions, Associate Director/Choreographer for Harmattan Theater, and has served on the board of directors of Women Make Movies. She is an Associate Professor of an interdisciplinary film and media studies program at Lafayette College.

Jessica Beshir *Executive Producer*



Jessica Beshir is a Mexican-Ethiopian writer, director, producer and cinematographer based in Brooklyn. Her feature debut, *Faya Dayi*, premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival and won the Grand Jury Prize & Fipresci Award at Visions du Reel, the Audience Award at Hot Docs, the Grand Jury Award and the emerging artist award at the Full Frame Film Festival among others. Her short films, *Hairat*/Criterion, *He Who Dances on Wood*/PBS and *Heroin*/Topic have played in festivals and museums around the world including at IFFR, IDFA and the Eye Film Museum. Beshir has been honored with grant support from the Sundance Film Institute, the Doha Film Institute, NYSCA and the Jerome Foundation.

Tiffany E. Barber *Consulting Producer*



Dr. Tiffany E. Barber is a prize-winning, internationally-recognized scholar, curator, and critic whose writing and expert commentary appears in top-tier academic journals, popular media outlets, and award-winning documentaries. Her work spans abstraction, dance, fashion, feminism, film, and the ethics of representation, focusing on artists of the Black diaspora working in the United States and the broader Atlantic world. Dr. Barber is currently Assistant Professor of African American Art at the University of California-Los Angeles as well as curator-in-residence at the Delaware Contemporary. She has completed fellowships at ArtTable, the Delaware Art Museum, the University of Virginia's Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies, and the Getty Research Institute. Dr. Barber is the recipient of the Smithsonian's 2022 National Portrait Gallery Director's Essay Prize.

Ash Goh Hua *Consulting Editor*



Ash Goh Hua is a filmmaker working between New York and Singapore. Utilizing both documentary and narrative forms, Ash tells personal stories that reveal the inherently embodied politics of relation, society and culture. Named one of the 25 New Faces of Film by Filmmaker Magazine in 2022 and a 2024 Berlinale Talent, Ash has been supported by institutions such as Sundance, Jerome Foundation, and ITVS. Their 2020 documentary *I'M FREE NOW, YOU ARE FREE* (distributed by PBS POV Shorts) has screened and won awards at film festivals internationally. Ash's 2022 film is the Oscar®- qualifying *THE FEELING OF BEING CLOSE TO YOU* (distributed by The New Yorker). Ash is currently working on their first narrative short *FULL MONTH*.



directors' statement

Parris Jerome Lane was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania on December 19th, 1997. The impact of his life and the reverberations of his death are at the center of our film, as we tell a story of enduring grief that begins with Shalon's recollections of her firstborn son and seeps into the legacies of loss in her hometown.

In 2017, Parris' death marked the end of an unprecedented year of gun violence in Pennsylvania's third largest city. While this immeasurable personal loss shook the local community, a smaller story from that same year felt obscured from view: at the beginning of 2017, eleven months before Parris was killed in the parking lot across from City Hall, Allentown was reported to have the highest rent-to-income ratio in the United States, the direct result of an aggressive, decade-long revitalization campaign in the heart of the city.

Since these two stories were never reported together, the film intervenes by formally engaging these urgent national topics – gun violence and housing justice – as parallel stories that affect our sense of home, our safety, and our access to memories. Prior to becoming co-directors on this film in 2019, we connected through community organizing work in Allentown. Many of the questions we were asking in those spaces laid the foundation for the film's central inquiries.

The documentary's genesis in organizing spaces shaped our decision to intertwine the narratives of gun violence and housing justice. It also empowered us to craft an ethical foundation that takes seriously the risk of retraumatization and the necessity of centering the desires of Parris' family over the profit-driven demands of true crime, one of the most prevalent and lucrative genres in American media. Two frameworks emerged for us – an abolitionist politic and a solidarity ethic. The first is an approach that refuses to give legitimacy to criminality as a “stabilizing narrative”, which Pooja Rangan and Brett Story identify in “[Four Propositions on True Crime and Abolition](#)”, while the latter is an ethical engagement that heeds the urgent industry-wide shift Sonya Childress identifies in “[Beyond Empathy](#)”, troubling the notion that empathy should be the central impulse for documentary filmmaking.

Within these local questions and formal frameworks we rendered IN LOVE, IN MEMORY – a counter-narrative that centers the persistent dreams that Shalon has for her son and her city, and ultimately troubles true crime as the dominant narrative for telling stories of traumatic loss.

– Shalon Buskirk & Drew Swedberg

