



DEEJ

A film by Robert Rooy

**TV Broadcast Premiere on AMERICA REFRAMED
Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at 8 p.m. on WORLD Channel**

“Every time the world changes, someone has to go first. It's hard to go first. DJ knows this better than most. But DEEJ makes one thing very clear--he's going to bring all of us along with him.” — Julie Bascom, Executive Director, Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)

MEDIA RELATIONS

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September 26, 2017 – (New York, NY) – **DEEJ** is the story of DJ—David James Savarese—a gifted, young writer and advocate for nonspeaking autistics who once was a “profoundly disabled” foster kid, on a fast track to nowhere. In the film, we meet DJ as a first-year college student who insists on standing up for his peers: people who are dismissed as incompetent because they are “neurologically diverse”. Will DJ be able to find freedom for himself and others like him?

DEEJ, the feature documentary by Robert Rooy (director and producer) and DJ Savarese (narrator and producer), will have its national television broadcast premiere on [AMERICA REFRAMED](#) on Tuesday, October 17, 2017, at 8 p.m. on WORLD Channel ([check local listings](#)). The documentary series is dedicated to highlighting intimate stories by emerging and veteran filmmakers who are chronicling an ever-changing America. Free online streaming of the documentary starts October 18th on www.americareframed.org

No ordinary coming-of-age story, **DEEJ** showcases a young man’s resolve and creativity as he confronts society’s misperceptions about Autism with the loving support of his parents, his extended family, and a community of close friends. As he makes his way through high school and dreams of college, DJ confronts the terrors of his past, society’s obstacles to inclusion, and the



sometimes paralyzing beauty of his own senses. With unflinching candor, the film reveals what it takes to make the goals of “inclusion” and “disability rights” a reality.

DJ believes that being included is every student’s right, and he sets his sights on Oberlin College, an institution he notes has a progressive history of inclusion, and becomes their first non-speaking autistic student. As he moves to Ohio and the Oberlin campus, he is exposed to the gawking of strangers. Poetry helps DJ gain control over his emotions and deep breathing calms his nerves. Vivid animation by Em Cooper weaves throughout the film to bring the audience into DJ’s poetry and imagination.

In this first-of-its kind collaboration between a veteran filmmaker and a nonspeaking autistic, Robert Rooy and DJ Savarese share editorial control as they navigate the challenges of representing autism on film. In his advocacy on behalf of nonspeaking autistics, DJ embraces filmmaking and poetry and discovers what having a voice can truly mean.

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Media Contacts

For interviews and special requests, journalists and reviewers may contact Neyda Martinez at **917-656-7846** or via email at neyda@amdoc.org.

Film Credits

Director and Producer: Robert Rooy
Producer and Commentator, DJ, David James Savarese

About AMERICA REFRAMED

AMERICA REFRAMED is a co-production of the WORLD Channel and American Documentary, Inc.

AMERICA REFRAMED curates a diverse selection of films highlighting innovative and artistic approaches to storytelling from emerging and veteran filmmakers alike. Viewers will be immersed in personal stories from the streets of towns big and small to the exurbs and country roads that span the spectrum of American life. The documentaries invite audiences to reflect on topics as varied as culture, healthcare, politics, gun violence, religion and more.



An award-winning documentary series, AMERICA REFRAMED is the recipient of a Christopher, a GRACIE, and several Telly and Cine Golden Eagle Awards, as well as nominations for an EMMY, Independent Documentary Association, and Imagen Award.

AMERICA REFRAMED Series Credits

Executive Producers: Justine Nagan, Chris Hastings, Chris White
Series Producer: Carmen L. Vicencio

AMERICA REFRAMED can be accessed online via
<http://worldchannel.org/programs/america-reframed/>
and,
<https://www.facebook.com/WorldChannel>
<https://www.facebook.com/AmericaReFramed>

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AMERICA REFRAMED Co-Producers

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia arts organization dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. AmDoc is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. For more information, visit: www.amdoc.org

The WORLD Channel delivers the best of public television's nonfiction, news and documentary programming, including original content by and about diverse communities, to U.S. audiences through local public television stations and streaming online at worldchannel.org. WORLD reached 35.8 million unique viewers 18+ last year (55% adults 18-49) and over-indexes in key diversity demographics. Online, the WORLD Channel expands on broadcast topics and fuels dialogue across social media, providing opportunities for broad and diverse audience interaction.

WORLD is programmed by WGBH/Boston, in partnership with American Public Television and WNET/New York, and in association with PBS and National Educational Telecommunications Association. Funding for the WORLD Channel is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and The Kendeda Fund. Additional support for America ReFramed is provided by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Wyncote Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).



For more information about The WORLD Channel, visit www.worldchannel.org

