



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

'AFROPOP' TAKES VIEWERS ON THE POLITICAL TRAIL WITH 'WHILE I BREATHE, I HOPE'

Documentary series spotlights film on history-making campaign of CNN pundit Bakari Sellers, a young Democrat fighting for change in the red South

Actress Danielle Brooks hosts, as episode four premieres on Monday, February 11, on WORLD Channel

NEW YORK (January 28, 2019) — The new season of *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange* continues with a revealing look at CNN commentator and attorney Bakari Sellers' courageous quest to become lieutenant governor of South Carolina in *While I Breathe, I Hope*. The documentary takes viewers on an intimate journey from his 2014 campaign in his home state to the devastation of the 2015 Charleston church shooting and Sellers' renewed commitment to helping heal a fractured nation. *While I Breathe, I Hope* premieres on WORLD Channel at 8 p.m. ET (10 p.m. PT) on Monday, February 11. Now in its 11th season, *AfroPoP* is hosted by actress Danielle Brooks (*Orange Is the New Black*), produced by Black Public Media (BPM) and co-presented to public television stations by series distributor American Public Television (APT).

Directed by Emily Harrold and executive produced by Charlamagne tha God, both natives of South Carolina, *While I Breathe, I Hope* takes its name from the state motto of Sellers' beloved birthplace and explores how his family history gave rise to his political aspirations. His father was imprisoned for protesting segregation in what became the 1968 Orangeburg massacre at South Carolina State University, and the fight for justice and racial equality is in Sellers' DNA. He first made headlines when he was elected to the South Carolina state legislature at 22. As Harrold's film opens, Sellers has set his sights on the lieutenant governorship. He has the drive, the ideas and the vigor, but will voters in a traditionally red state be swayed by a young, black Democrat? An absorbing exploration of the political process, *While I Breathe, I Hope* puts viewers in the front seat of the gripping roller coaster ride that is political campaigning and one man's quest to bring healing and hope to his birthplace and an ever-changing American political landscape.

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"I'm thrilled to premiere *While I Breathe, I Hope* on *AfroPoP*. It is especially special because Danielle Brooks, another South Carolinian, is the series host this year," said Harrold. "With this film, I've loved being able to shine a light on an important South Carolina story."

Additional executive producers for *While I Breathe, I Hope* are Marco Williams, Jedd Canty, and Karen Kinney.

New episodes of *AfroPoP*, the nation's only public television series dedicated to contemporary stories of black life, culture and art from around the world, air weekly through February 18 on WORLD Channel. Films will also be available for streaming beginning on the day of their broadcast premiere on all station-branded platforms, including worldchannel.org, PBS.org, and on PBS apps for iOS, Android, Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV and Chromecast. APT will release the series to public television stations across the nation in February.

Other films in the season include *Mama Africa: Miriam Makeba!*, director Mika Kaurismäki's examination of the life of the iconic South African singer and activist (which premiered on January 21); Dieudo Hamadi's ***Mama Colonel*** (January 28), a riveting look at the woman in charge of a special police force dedicated to addressing violence against women and children in the Democratic Republic of Congo; ***The Faces We Lost*** (February 4), director Piotr Cieplak's moving portrait of the survivors, relatives of victims and professional archivists working to use photographs to help keep alive the memories of those lost during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda; and a shorts program (February 18) featuring ***black enuf**** (an animated documentary on identity by filmmaker Carrie Hawks), ***Swimmin' Lesson*** (Shahari Moore and Christine List's film on one young father's account of his son's fate during Hurricane Katrina), and ***Dressed Like Kings*** (an insightful view of a men's fashion pageant in South Africa by Stacey Holman).

AfroPoP co-executive producers are Leslie Fields-Cruz and Angela Tucker. The program is produced and directed by Duana C. Butler with the generous support of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Arts.

To find out more about *AfroPoP*, visit www.blackpublicmedia.org. For viewing information, check local listings or www.APTonline.org.

ABOUT THE HOST

Danielle Brooks is best known for her role as Tasha "Taystee" Jefferson in the Netflix Emmy-nominated series, *Orange Is the New Black*. For her performance, Brooks was nominated for an NAACP Image Award for Best Actress in a Comedy Series. She was the recipient of the Young Hollywood Award for Breakthrough Actress and has received the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series for *Orange Is the New Black* three years in a row.

Brooks made her Broadway debut in the Tony-winning revival of *The Color Purple*. For her performance, she was nominated for a Tony Award, a Drama Desk Award and an Outer Critics Circle Award; she received a Grammy Award as well as a Theatre World Award for Significant Broadway Debut. Her recent work includes a leading role in the feature film *Clemency*, opposite Alfre Woodard, Wendell Pierce and Aldis Hodge that premiered at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival; a leading role in the independent feature *All the Little Things We Kill*; and a lead role in the feature *Sadie*, opposite Melanie Lynskey. She will also lend her talents to the upcoming TBS primetime animated series *Close Enough* and will begin work on a leading role in the film *Desperados* for Netflix and Good Universe that will film in the spring of 2019.

A champion of body inclusivity, Brooks has been the face of Christian Siriano and Lane Bryant, and has designed her own plus size clothing line. She is currently in the studio working on her debut EP.

Brooks is a native of South Carolina and a graduate of the Juilliard School.

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

ABOUT BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA:

Black Public Media (BPM), formerly the National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC), is committed to enriching our democracy by educating, enlightening, empowering and engaging the American public. The nonprofit supports diverse voices by developing, producing and distributing innovative media about the black experience and by investing in visionary content makers. BPM provides quality content for public media outlets, including, among others, PBS and PBS.org and BlackPublicMedia.org, as well as other platforms, while training and mentoring the next generation of black filmmakers. Founded in 1979, BPM produces the *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange* documentary series and manages the 360 Incubator + Fund, a funding and training initiative designed to accelerate the production of important black serial and interactive content.

ABOUT AMERICAN PUBLIC TELEVISION:

American Public Television (APT) is the leading syndicator of high-quality, top-rated programming to the nation's public television stations. Founded in 1961, APT distributes 250 new program titles per year and one-fourth of the top 100 highest-rated public television titles in the U.S. APT's diverse catalog includes prominent documentaries, performance, news and current affairs programs, dramas, how-to programs, children's series and classic movies. *America's Test Kitchen From Cook's Illustrated*, *Cook's Country*, *AfroPoP*, *Rick Steves' Europe*, *Chris Kimball's Milk Street Television*, *Front and Center*, *Doc Martin*, *Nightly Business Report*, *Midsomer Murders*, *A Place to Call Home*, *Lidia's Kitchen*, *New Orleans Cooking With Kevin Belton*, *Simply Ming*, and *P. Allen Smith's Garden Home* are a sampling of APT's programs, considered some of the most popular on public television. APT also licenses programs internationally through its APT Worldwide service and distributes Create®TV — featuring the best of public television's lifestyle programming — and WORLD™, public television's premier

news, science and documentary channel. To find out more about APT's programs and services, visit APTonline.org.

ABOUT WORLD CHANNEL:

The WORLD Channel tells stories that humanize complex issues. WORLD shares the best of public media in news, documentaries and fact-based informational programming that helps us understand conflicts, movements and cultures that may be distinct from our own. WORLD's original content offers a national platform to makers examining issues too often ignored by mainstream media. These emerging and master filmmakers spotlight a diversity of voices, telling stories not heard elsewhere. WORLD has won a Peabody Award, an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award and numerous national honors — including an RTNDA Kaleidoscope Award, a Media for a Just Society Award, two Lesbian & Gay Journalist Awards, a Gracie and an Asian American Journalists Award. Carried by 154 partner stations in markets representing almost 64% of US TV households, WORLD can also be experienced via WORLDChannel.org and social media platforms.

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