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MARTHA'S VINEYARD AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2026 AWARD WINNERS

"If I Go Will They Miss Me," "Basement People" and "Black Is Beautiful: The Kwame Brathwaite Story" Take Top Honors at the Festival's 24th Year

OAK BLUFFS, MA August 17, 2026 — ***The Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival*** (MVAAFF) today announced the winners of its 2026 film awards, honoring the year's standout feature, short and documentary storytelling. The honors were presented during the festival's 24th year, which ran August 7–15 at the Martha's Vineyard Performing Arts Center in Oak Bluffs.

BEST FEATURE FILM

"If I Go Will They Miss Me" — directed by Walter Thompson-Hernández

The Watts, Los Angeles-set drama stars Danielle Brooks and J. Alphonse Nicholson and follows a 12-year-old boy trying to reconnect with his father after the man's release from prison, in a story about Black boyhood, fractured families and the hope for healing.

BEST SHORT FILM

"Basement People" — directed by Christine Swanson

The film is an intimate portrait of childhood sensitivity, inherited trauma and unexpected places where protection and belong can be found. The film can be considered for Academy-Award© consideration with the win.

BEST DOCUMENTARY FILM

"Black Is Beautiful: The Kwame Brathwaite Story" — directed by Yemi Bamiro

The documentary traces the career of Harlem photographer and activist Kwame Brathwaite, who spent six decades celebrating the beauty and joy of African American life and helped popularize the "Black Is Beautiful" movement.

ESPN 30 for 30 returned as Presenting Sponsor of the nine-day celebration, with New York Magazine's The Cut as Official Media Partner and Getty Images as Official Photographer. The 2026 festival also featured exclusive brand activations in the Vineyard Lounge, the annual Men's & Women's C-Suite Luncheon, and conversations with leading names in film, television and culture.

About MVAAFF

Founded in 2002 by Floyd and Stephanie Rance, the Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival — "Summer's Finest Film Festival" — screens and promotes feature, documentary and short films produced by and starring African Americans from across the world. MVAAFF is an Academy-qualifying festival in the short film category.

All activities were held at the **Martha's Vineyard Performing Arts Center (MVPAC)** and the Vineyard Lounge (VL)**,** 100 Edgartown Road, Oak Bluffs, MA 02557. For the full schedule and more information, visit **www.mvaaff.com.**

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