



# OWN THE ROOM

## "OWN THE ROOM" PRODUCTION NOTES

### DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

While making "Science Fair," we spent months with an incredible cross-section of brilliant and quirky high school students. One of the most inspiring things about making that documentary was seeing how kids were tackling big issues many adults are either in denial about or have completely dropped the ball on. It really struck a nerve with us that while many of our leaders are behaving like children in the face of big global challenges, here were these kids who were stepping up and taking the future into their own hands. This is the story of that same kind of kid after they go off to college and try to launch their own start-up. Half of all new businesses fail in their first five years, so starting your own company takes a lot of grit (not to mention a lot of hard work). Small businesses are the economic engines that create the vast majority of jobs and economic growth in our world. Still, in a world dominated by behemoth multinational corporations, being the little guy isn't always easy. Our film is a love letter to all the small business owners and underdog entrepreneurs out there who have made the brave decision to strike it out on their own. The students featured in **OWN THE ROOM** couldn't be from more disparate backgrounds—across Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America—and yet they all share a common goal of addressing real problems by building their own companies from the ground up.

- *Cristina Costantini & Darren Foster*



## FILMMAKER BIOS

### **Cristina Costantini & Darren Foster (Directors)**

Cristina Costantini and Darren Foster co-directed and produced the Emmy® Award-winner "Science Fair," a feature documentary that follows high school students from around the globe on their journey to compete at the international science fair. The film also won the 2018 Sundance Festival Favorite and the Audience Award at SXSW, Sun Valley Film Festival, Portland International Film Festival and the Tumbleweeds Film Festival. Cristina and Darren were named best first-time directors by the Critics' Choice Awards, and "Science Fair" is currently being adapted into a narrative feature by Elizabeth Banks and Universal Pictures.

Cristina and Darren previously partnered on a duPont Award-winning documentary called "Death by Fentanyl." Cristina recently directed the Netflix Original documentary "Mucho Mucho Amor" about the beloved Puerto Rican Astrologer Walter Mercado. Born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Cristina is a graduate of Yale University and has worked for Univision, Fusion, ABC News and The Huffington Post. Darren is currently directing a feature about the origins of the opioid epidemic, a continuation of his groundbreaking reporting on the crisis that began with "The OxyContin Express," which won a Peabody Award, a Television Academy Honor and an Emmy nomination. He is an executive producer for National Geographic's documentary series "Trafficked with Mariana van Zeller."

Cristina and Darren, along with Producer Jeffrey Plunkett, are partners at Muck Media, a production company based in Los Angeles.

### **Jeffrey Plunkett (Producer)**

Jeffrey Plunkett has been nominated for two Emmys, won an Overseas Press Club award and premiered films at Sundance, SXSW and Tribeca. He was a producer and writer on "Science Fair," a feature documentary that won audience awards at Sundance and SXSW. In 2016, he followed the presidential election for Showtime's weekly documentary series "The Circus: Inside the Greatest Political Show on Earth." Previously, he directed "The Opposition," a documentary for ESPN's "30 for 30" series about the collision of soccer and politics after Chile's 1973 coup, and "Borderland," a four-part series for Al Jazeera America about the realities of undocumented immigration. During his tenure on Current TV's Vanguard documentary series, he embedded with the far-right English Defense League to illustrate Europe's growing fear of Islam, traveled to the hills of Oaxaca to explore the roots of America's immigration problem, posed as a soccer agent in Ghana and France to understand the



illegal trade in young African players, and was thrown out of a tobacco industry conference in Jakarta while documenting Big Tobacco's aggressive push into the developing world. He was also a consulting producer on the short-listed feature documentary "Keep on Keepin' On."