

THE CARNIVAL

125 YEARS OF THE PENN RELAYS



A high jumper in mid-air over a bar, with a large crowd in the background. The jumper is wearing a red singlet with "HOUSTON 1" and white shorts. The background shows a large crowd of spectators and a building with a clock tower.

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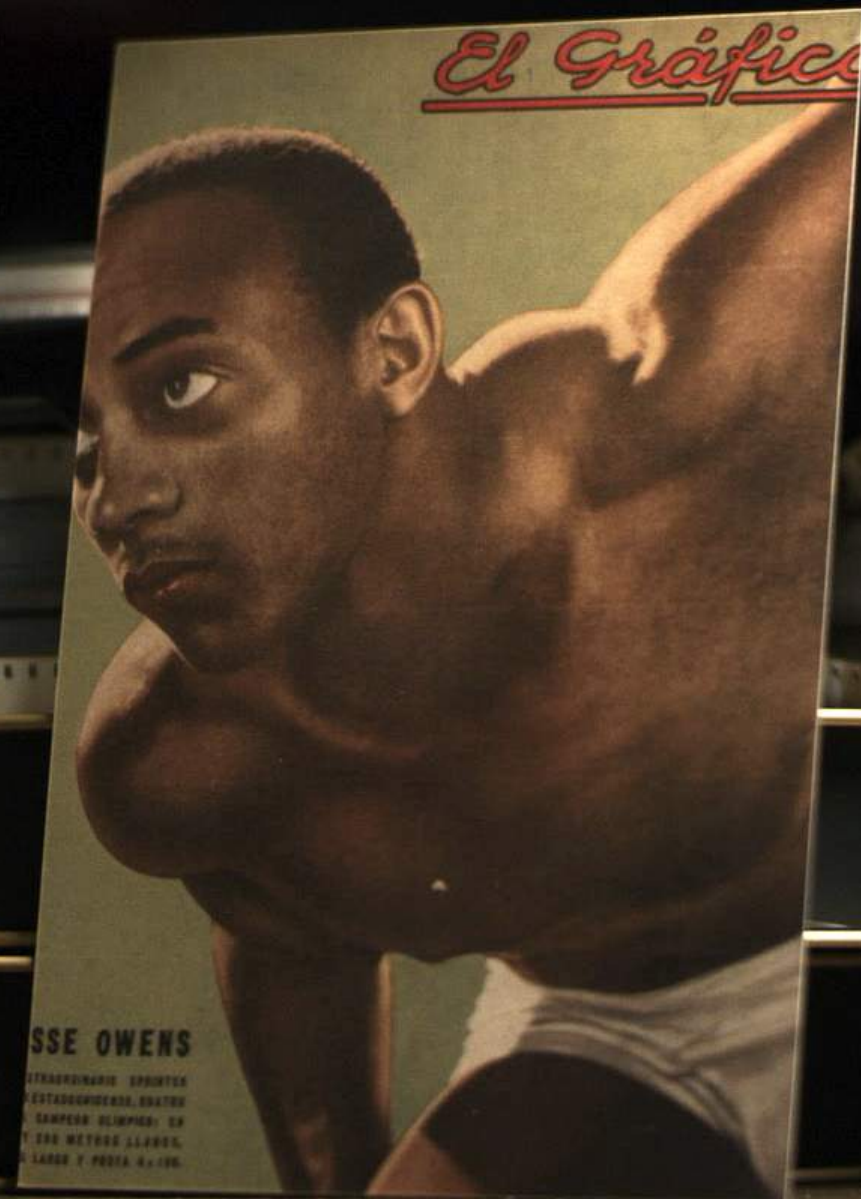
The Carnival: 125 Years of the Penn Relays chronicles the true story of how one event defied the odds for more than a century to become one of the longest running sporting events in history while reshaping the landscape of track and field forever.

76 Minutes | USA | 2020

FROM BREAKING WORLD RECORDS
TO BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS



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SYNOPSIS (LONG)

From Award-Winning Director Justin Jarrett and Executive Producer “JB” James Brown (CBS/Showtime), comes *The Carnival: 125 Years of the Penn Relays*. For more than a century, The Penn Relays have defied the odds on their way to becoming one of the longest running sporting events in history. From breaking world records to breaking down barriers, they have helped revolutionize the sport of track and field while playing host to everyone from World Champions to Olympic icons and creating a legacy that will last forever.



BACKGROUND

The Penn Relays are unlike any other sporting event in the world today. With a deeply rooted legacy dating back more than 125 years, it is one of the longest running sporting events in history. A multi-day festival disguised as a track meet that attracts both athletes and fans from more than 36 countries, the Relays are a unique collision of culture, tradition, top-notch athletic competition and generations of people uniting for one purpose, year after year.

With The Carnival, we set out to discover how this event has lasted the test of time to create a legacy that will outlive us all. We sat down with track and field legends like Carl Lewis, Renaldo Nehemiah and Dr. Greg Bell, along with current Olympians like Justin Gaitlin and many others to re-live some of the Relay's greatest moments in its storied history while diving deeper into the cultural impact the Relays has had on the sport beyond the track. We examine how the early pioneers at the University of Pennsylvania broke down racial barriers and roadblocks that allowed the Penn Relays to become one of the lone bright spots during America's darkest hours and how that decision defined the relays for generations to come.

PENN RELAYS



AZ

Independence





WATCH CLIP

-THE FILMMAKERS-

DIRECTOR + WRITER

Justin Jarrett is an award-winning writer, director and entrepreneur based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

From feature-length documentaries to commercial work, Justin is a creative chameleon whose' imaginative storytelling style has allowed him to successfully weave in and out of genres for more than a decade. He has directed projects on four continents, overseen content development for global brands and guided the creative vision and direction of JTWO, an integrated production company, which he co-founded in 2009.



"JB" James Brown
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

James Brown is the current host of "The NFL Today" on CBS and "Inside The NFL" on Showtime. A three-time Emmy Award-winning network broadcaster, Brown has hosted the Super Bowl a record-tying nine times including Super Bowl 53 on CBS. In 2010, SI.com named Brown the Best Studio Host of the Decade. Brown is a Special Correspondent for CBS News and contributes to programs such as "60 Minutes", "CBS This Morning", "CBS Evening News" and "48 Hours". He is also a founding partner of Major League Baseball's 2019 World Series Champion Washington Nationals.

TRAVIS CAPACETE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

As an award-winning Producer and Editor with more than a decade of experience under his belt, Travis has worked with media powerhouses NFL Films, Bravo, NBC, and Warner Brothers while overseeing the business operations for his own production company, JTWO, where he produces projects ranging from feature-length documentaries to television shows.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

It has been nothing short of an honor to be entrusted with the story of the Penn Relays vaunted 125 year history. Living in and working out of Philadelphia, my team and I understand that the Relays are far more than just a track meet. In fact, calling it that would be an incredible disservice to what the Relays are and have been for more than a century.

We spent more than a year peeling back layers of a legacy that only seemed to get richer the deeper we went. From taking a stand against racial segregation to revolutionizing the sport of track and field to the endless tales of athletic feats – the Penn Relays had no shortage of iconic moments both on and off the track.

As a filmmaker, I was immediately drawn to the idea of traveling back in time and examining a point in history which is rarely looked at in sports because at that time the very idea of many major sports was so new. Basketball was invented just a few years earlier and baseball and football were in their early years – all of which were segregated. People might not realize this, but in 1895, the U.S. was only thirty short years from the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves. This is why my team and I felt early on in the process that it was important to lay out the landscape of American culture at that time for the viewer, in order to fully understand just how unique and special it was for an event like the Penn Relays to emerge from that era with equality for all races and ethnicities as its cornerstone.

To me, this was always going to be the heart of the film from day one and I knew this was an area we really wanted to focus on.



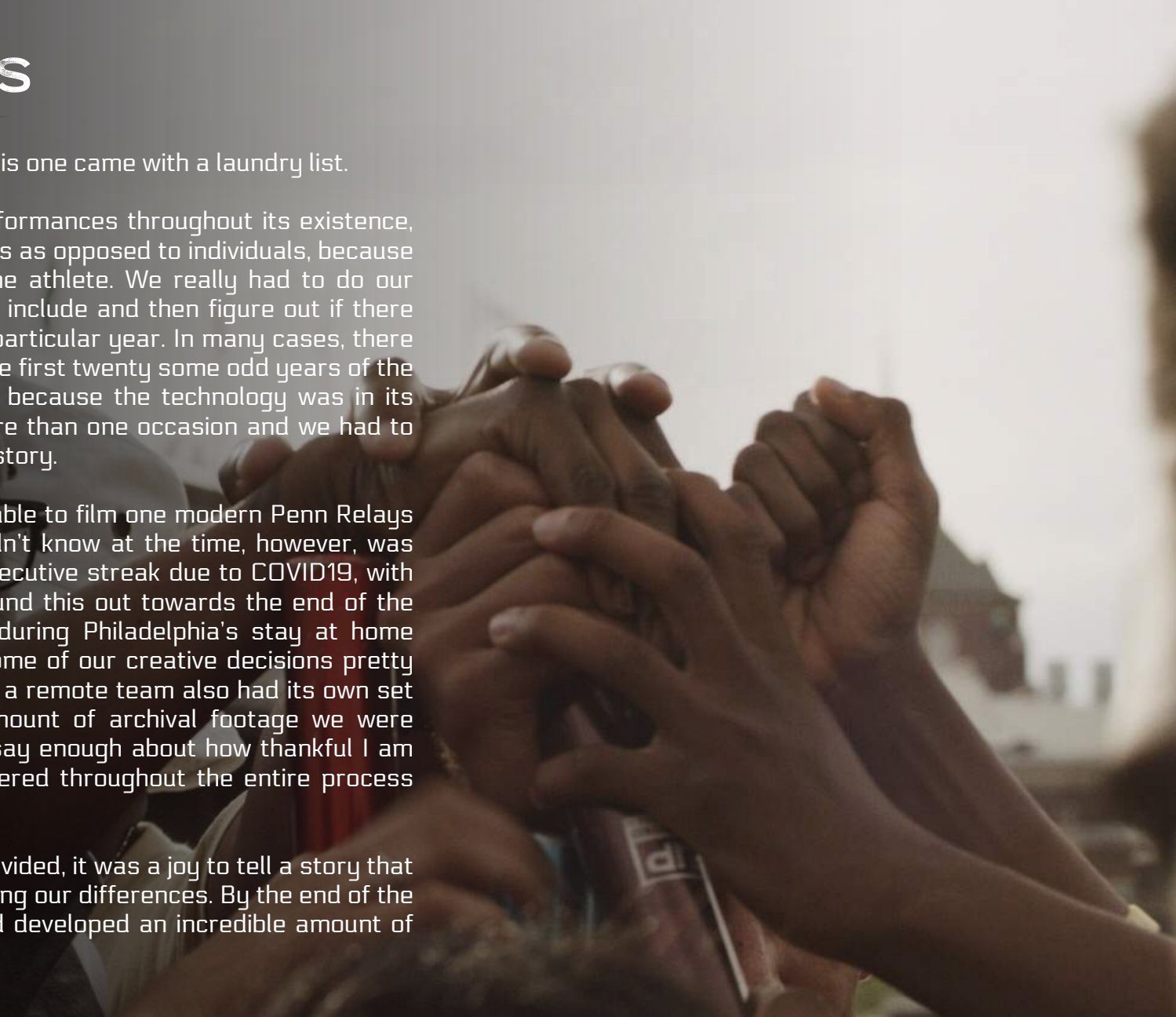
DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Every film has its own set of challenges, but this one came with a laundry list.

With so many iconic moments and great performances throughout its existence, we really had to hone in on overarching themes as opposed to individuals, because the Relays have always been larger than one athlete. We really had to do our research to pick and choose which stories to include and then figure out if there was archival footage or photography of that particular year. In many cases, there wasn't. Especially in the early years. During the first twenty some odd years of the relays, film footage of the event didn't exist because the technology was in its infancy. This proved to be a challenge on more than one occasion and we had to find other mechanisms to tell that part of the story.

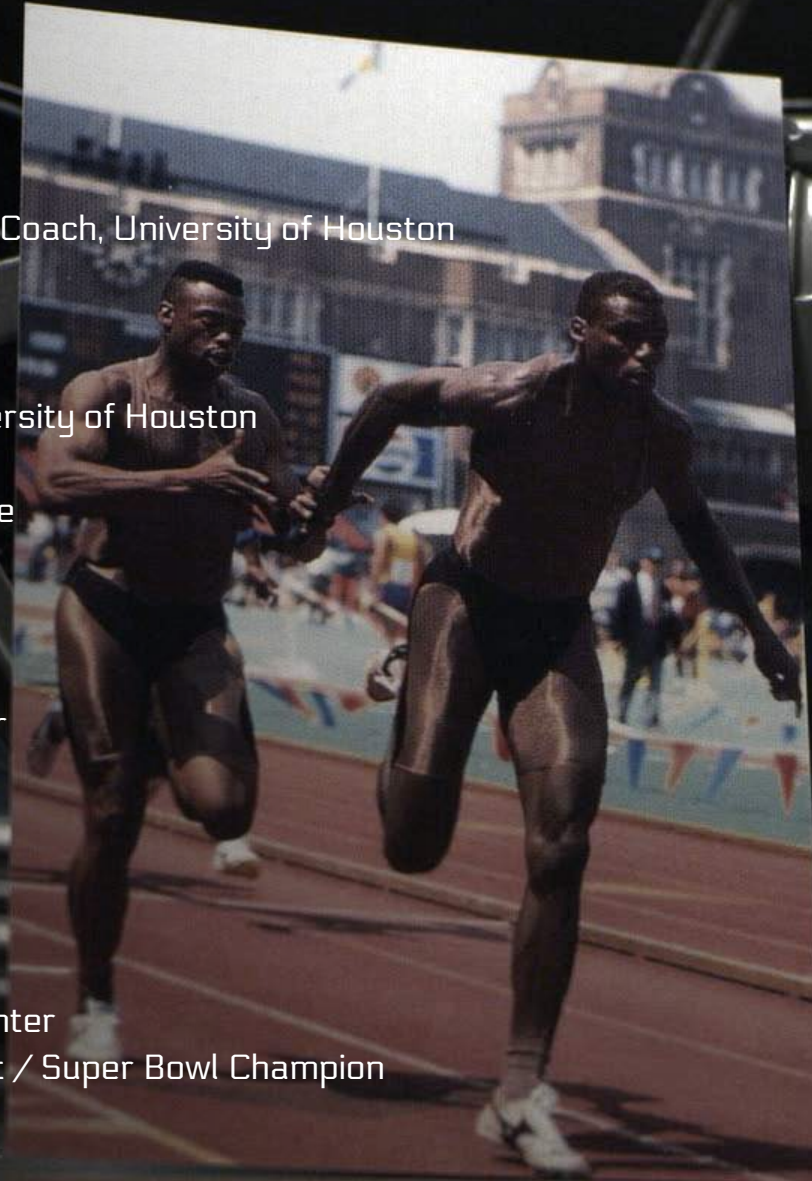
From a production standpoint, we were only able to film one modern Penn Relays - last year's 125th anniversary. What we didn't know at the time, however, was that it would be the end of the 125 year consecutive streak due to COVID19, with the 126th running canceled. We actually found this out towards the end of the post-production process (which took place during Philadelphia's stay at home order). This resulted in us having to adjust some of our creative decisions pretty late in the game. Needless to say, working as a remote team also had its own set of unique challenges, especially with the amount of archival footage we were dealing with throughout the process. I can't say enough about how thankful I am for such a great team and how they persevered throughout the entire process under incredible circumstances.

In a time when our country couldn't be more divided, it was a joy to tell a story that involved bringing people together and embracing our differences. By the end of the project, I had such a beautiful experience and developed an incredible amount of admiration for the way sports can unite us.



FEATURING

- Bob Shoudt, High School / College Track and Field Coach
- Bob Hersh, Former Senior VP of IAAF
- Carl Lewis, Olympic Gold Medalist / Assistant Track & Field Coach, University of Houston
- Denis Elton Cochran-Flkes, Penn Relays Official
- Edward Koch, Penn Relays Associate Chief Clerk
- John Haines, Sr, Penn Relays Chief Umpire
- Leroy Burrell, Olympian / Head Track and Field Coach, University of Houston
- Paul Poiesz, Penn Relays Associate Chief Starter
- Vicki Huber Rudawsky, Olympian / Penn Relays Wall of Fame
- Todd Abraham, Penn Relays Chief Clerk
- Tom Jennings, Flash Results
- Karl Thornton, Penn Relays Line Clerk
- Kendra Chambers, Team USA Sprinter
- Larry Rawson, Emmy Award-Winning Track & Field Commentator
- Norm Ogilvie, Head Track and Field Coach, Duke University
- Raevyn Rogers, Team USA Sprinter
- Shelton Rose, U.S. Business Development Manager, Grace Foods
- Betsy Reed, Penn Relays Referee / Master Official
- Dr. Greg Bell, Olympic Gold Medalist
- Herman Frazier, Olympian / Penn Relays Referee
- Justin Gatlin, Olympic Gold Medalist / World Champion Sprinter
- Renaldo Nehemiah, Olympian / Congressional Gold Medalist / Super Bowl Champion
- Walter Murphy, Track & Field Journalist
- Dave Johnson, Director of the Penn Relay Carnival



FAQS

Q: How long did it take to complete the documentary?

A: A little over one year.

Q: Who is the production company?

A: JTWO Films is an integrated video production company with offices in both Philadelphia and Chicago.

Q: Was anything improvised that was not pre-determined in the film?

A: We actually had to improvise a lot because there was about 20-30 years where archive footage and photos simply didn't exist.

Q: When creating/shaping the overall flow/structure of the documentary, how did you approach such a big undertaking?

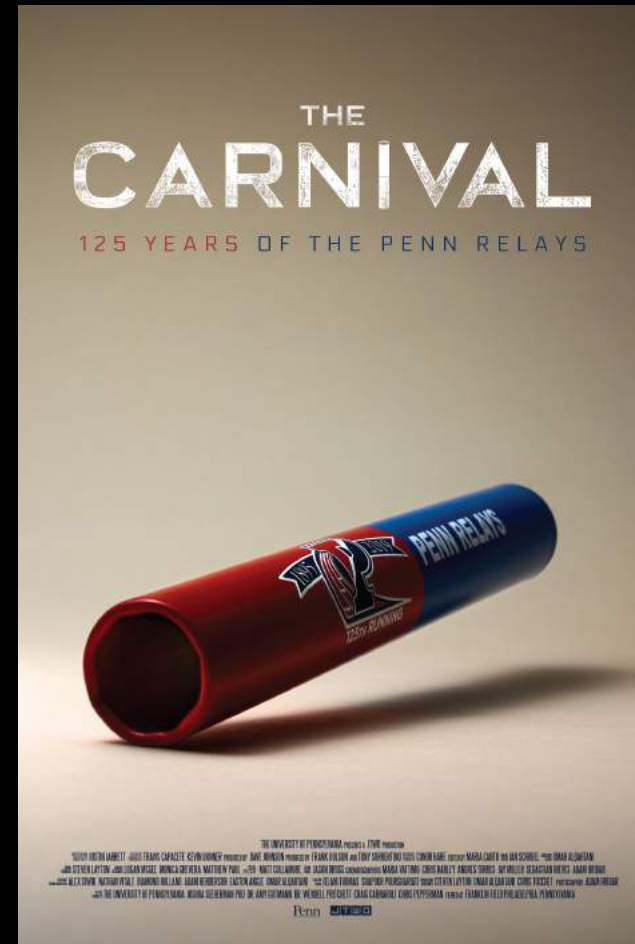
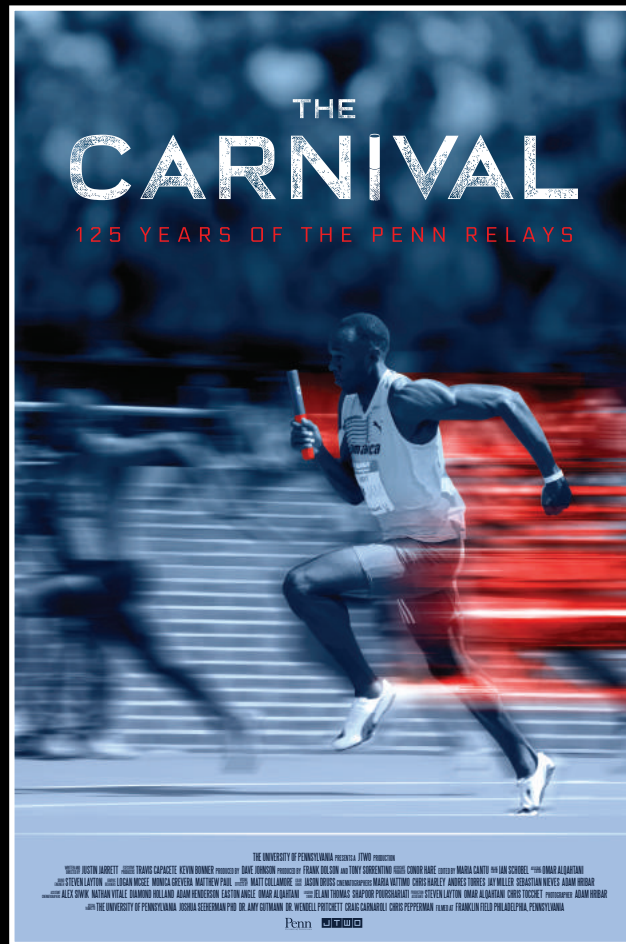
A: We knew early on that we wanted to play with time a bit and jump around to keep it interesting for the viewer as opposed to a straight linear story structure. This also allowed us to work in pieces and story elements that we specifically filmed at the 2019 Relays.

Q: Did any directors/filmmakers' styles influence you before, during, and after the documentary? If so, how did those influences change throughout?

A: As a team, we generally focus on documentaries, but we are always inspired by narrative filmmakers such as Spike Lee, Christopher Nolan and the team that created HBO's 24/7.

Q: Are there any underlining messages or stories within the film?

A: We really wanted to focus on the power of sports to bring us together. Despite everything that was going on in the world in 1895 and the way that black athletes were being treated in most of the country, the Relay committee made a choice to include everyone no matter their race or ethnicity because it was simply the right thing to do and that was really powerful. If anything, we want the audience to walk away with that message.

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Full res poster files available upon request

BEHIND THE SCENES



THE
CARNIVAL
125 YEARS OF THE PENN RELAYS

GEAR + EQUIPMENT

CAMERAS:

- RED Weapon Helium 8k
- RED Weapon Dragon
- RED Gemini 5k
- Sony FS7

LENSES:

- Cooke MiniS4/i 135mm T2.8
- Cooke S4/i Prime 25mm T2
- Cooke S4 Primes (18mm T2, 14mm T2, 32mm T2, 40mm T2, 50mm T2, 75mm T2, 100mm T2)
- Angenieux EZ-1 (S35/30-90) (FF/45-135) Zoom
- Angenieux Cine Zoom - EZ-1 45-153mm/T3
- ZEISS CP.3 T2.1 Compact Prime Lenses

POST-PRODUCTION:

- Adobe Creative Cloud (Premiere Pro, After Effects, Audition, Photoshop, Illustrator)
- DaVinci Resolve 16
- Promax Online 2000 10GB Fiber Server (10G Base-T)
- Apple iMac 27"
- PC - Ryzen Threadripper 1950X 3.4 GHz 16 Core TR4 Boxed Processor, ROG X399 ZENITH EXTREME TR4 eATX AMD Motherboard (RAM CORSAIR Vengeance LPX 64GB (4 x 16GB) 288-Pin DDR4 SDRAM DDR4 3200 (PC4 25600) Desktop Memory Model CMK32GX4M2D3200C16

CREDITS

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The University of Pennsylvania

PRODUCED BY

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