



AN A FILM BY AUBERI EDLER AMERICAN PASTORAL

LES FILMS D'ICI MÉDITERRANÉE, ARTE FRANCE & LES FILMS D'ICI PRESENTS "AN AMERICAN PASTORAL" A FILM BY AUBERI EDLER. CINÉMATOGRAPHIE AUBERI EDLER
COSTUME DESIGNER LINDA PERINCIANO. HAIR DESIGNER BARBARA BASCOU. ORIGINAL SCORE SIEGFRIED CANTO. COSTUME DESIGNER GRAZIELLA ZANONI. SOUND EDITOR ELIAS BOUCHEUR
COSTUME DESIGNER NATALIE VIDAL. GRAPHICS DESIGNER SERGE LALOU. EXECUTIVE PRODUCER PERRINETTE MONIER. WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CINEMA AND THE MOVING IMAGE
WITH THE SUPPORT OF PROCEP—PRODUCERS' SOCIETY AND ANGOA. INTERNATIONAL SALES MEDIAMARK RIGHTS. A CO-PRODUCTION BY ARTE FRANCE, LES FILMS D'ICI MÉDITERRANÉE & LES FILMS D'ICI



**"A TIMELY AND TRENCANT OBSERVATION OF
SCHOOL BOARD POLITICS." -VARIETY**

**"REQUIRED VIEWING FOR THOSE STRUGGLING TO MAKE SENSE
OF THE RECENT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION." -SCREEN DAILY**



Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée and Les Films d'Ici
with the collaboration of Arte France
present

An American Pastoral

France, 2024

PRESS NOTES

a film by
Auberi Edler

World Premiere

International Documentary Festival in Amsterdam 2024

International Competition

Best Directing Award for Auberi Edler



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SYNOPSIS

In a quiet Pennsylvania town, a storm is brewing over the soul of its public schools. What begins as a debate over library books quickly reveals a deeper battle – one over religion, democracy, and the future of American education.

Set in Elizabethtown, nestled in the heart of Lancaster County, An American Pastoral follows a high-stakes local school board race as it becomes a flashpoint for a national culture war. With far-right activists pushing a theocratic agenda and longtime public servants stepping down under threat, the town's once-routine school board meetings erupt into scenes of conflict and division.

This gripping documentary captures the voices of citizens fighting to protect their schools – and the fragile promise of secular democracy – one ballot at a time.





© Auberi Edler



© Auberi Edler



© Auberi Edler



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Auberi Edler

Elizabethtown. I discovered the town on a frigid February night. After months of probing from afar, I was finally there. My camera concealed to protect it as much from the drizzle as from potentially hostile passersby, I remember standing on the deserted main street, interrupted only by the occasional pickup roaring through.

For 30 years, my personal and professional life has been closely tied to the United States. Yet the images of the Capitol attack on January 6, 2021 shook me to the core. How could I have lost sight of the despair and anger of a large segment of Americans? How long had I passed over the country's vast countryside, its sleepy small towns and abandoned industrial areas? How had the temptation of theocracy, of conservative values from another era, spread so quickly and taken such deep root?

Etown, as the locals call it, is like thousands of small American towns. It, too, is emblematic of the civil and moral divide now plaguing the United States.

The atmosphere is tense, poisoned by fear of the "other," often just a familiar neighbor. Mistrust has devolved into an all-pervasive paranoia, rendering communication impossible.

That's what I was contemplating that February evening as I looked out over the heart of this small town, awash in rain, where I knew no one, where every door was still closed to me.

It took time – so much time – to allay fears, to work around enduring hatred. It was through exchanging and listening that invaluable connections were made, by offering everyone, from Christian fundamentalists to progressive Democrats, what they can no longer afford each other: respect.

I discovered generosity where I least expected. And the film's completion hasn't changed that.

An American Pastoral is one of those films that leaves its mark on the filmmaker, like a stitch in the side.

A part of me remains in Etown.

Auberi Edler
October 2024

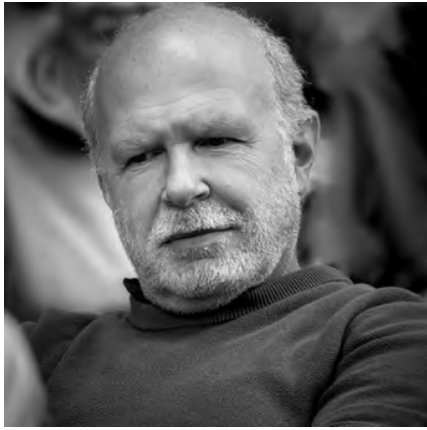
DIRECTOR'S BIO

Auberi Edler is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and cinematographer, based in Paris. Following a career with France's largest public television network, France 2, as a war reporter, New York bureau chief, and co-director of the news department, she chose to dedicate herself fully to documentary filmmaking. For the past 17 years, she has written and directed many documentaries, which have been distributed worldwide. Her films focus on social fractures, world politics as well as cinema and photography.

Her most recent filmography includes *1968, Photographic Acts*, exploring the enduring symbolism and politics captured in iconic images from that pivotal year, *Clean Torture: An American Fabrication*, awarded an Etoile de la SCAM in 2020, which reframes the atrocities committed during the War on Terror within a 70-year history of state-sanctioned experimentation, *American Laundry*, awarded an Etoile de la SCAM in 2024, set in a predominantly Latino, working-class suburb of Chicago, exploring the themes of immigrant life, labor and the pursuit of the American Dream. Her latest film, *An American Pastoral*, chronicles the struggle within a rural central Pennsylvanian community over the future of their public schools, where a vitriolic debate over books cloaks a more fundamental question: the future of American secular democracy.

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

- 2024 - *An American Pastoral*
- 2022 - *American Laundry*
- 2019 - *Clean Torture: An American Fabricatio*
- 2018 - *1968, Photographic Acts*
- 2018 - *Cathy at War*
- 2018 - *Jacquotte et les dockers*
- 2015 - *Il était une fois... Rosetta*
- 2014 - *Land of Dust*
- 2014 - *Il était une fois... Le Havre*
- 2013 - *Il était une fois... Une Séparation*
- 2012 - *L'Équation de l'amour*
- 2011 - *L'île*



PRODUCER

Serge Lalou

After studying veterinary medicine and traveling extensively, Serge Lalou joined the team at Les Films d'Ici in 1987. Since then, he has produced over 500 documentaries and feature films, some of which have won awards at major festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, and Venice. In 2014, Serge Lalou founded Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée with Anne-Marie Luccioni, a production company based in Montpellier, dedicated to discovering and supporting emerging regional talent, producing and co-producing their work to promote them both in France and internationally.

Feature documentaries

2024 - *An American Pastoral* - Auberi Edler
2021 - *Notturmo* - Gianfranco Rosi
2020 - *Yiddish* - Nurith Aviv
2018 - *Dead Souls* - Wang Bing
2016 - *Fuocoammarre* - Gianfranco Rosi
2015 - *Between Fences* - Avi Mograbi
2015 - *Chacun sa bonne* - Maher Abi Samra
2014 - *We're Still Alive* - Carmen Castillo
2013 - *La Maison de la Radio* - Nicolas Philibert
2013 - *Once I Entered a Garden* - Avi Mograbi
2011 - *Michel Petrucciani* - Michael Radford
2011 - *Translating* - Nurith Aviv
2010 - *We Were Communists* - Maher Abi Samra
2010 - *Nénette* - Nicolas Philibert

Fiction features

2023 - *They Shot the Piano Player*
Fernando Trueba, Javier Mariscal
2020 - *Josep* - Aurel
2020 - *Last Words* - Jonathan Nossiter
2019 - *I Do Not Care If We Go Down
in History as Barbarians* - Radu Jude
2018 - *Una questione privata*
Paolo et Vittorio Taviani
2017 - *Orpheline* - Arnaud des Pallières
2014 - *Le vertige des possibles*
Vivianne Perelmutter
2013 - *Michael Kohlhaas* - Arnaud des Pallières
2008 - *Waltz with Bashir* - Ari Folman
2009 - *Burried Secrets* - Raja Amari
2009 - *Parc* - Arnaud des Pallières
2003 - *Adieu* - Arnaud des Pallières



AN AMERICAN PASTORAL

A film written and directed by
Auberi EDLER

Cinematography
Auberi EDLER

Sound
Lumia PERNICIARO

Editing
Barbara BASCOU

Produced by
Serge LALOU

Associate Producer
Perrine FEMINIER

Original Music
Siegfried CANTO

Sound Mixing
Nathalie VIDAL

Color Grading
Graziella ZANON

LES FILMS D'ICI MÉDITERRANÉE

Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée is a production company founded in Montpellier in 2014. Born from the vision of Serge Lalou and Anne-Marie Luccioni, partners at Les Films d'Ici in Paris, its mission is to discover, produce, and co-produce projects led by authors living and/or working in Occitanie or Mediterranean basin countries.

Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée seeks to support these creators locally in France and internationally. From documentary to fiction and animation, the aim is to foster a diverse and rich range of creative works. This company also aims to contribute to the development of skills and production resources to produce regional works that stand alongside the best in national and international production.

ABOUT MEDIAWAN RIGHTS

A Paris-based independent distribution company, Mediawan's catalogue offers hundreds of hours of high quality and diversified documentaries, with a strong focus on History, Arts & Culture and Current Affairs programs. They distribute, finance and co-produce programmes for the international market and are looking for ambitious and compelling projects with a global appeal. Their recent titles include *Soundtrack to a Coup D'Etat* directed by Johan Grimonprez, *Flavor of Iraq* directed by Léonard Cohen, and *Nuclear Now* directed by Oliver Stone.

