



## BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

### **DRIFT (15)**

Director: Anthony Chen

Starring: Cynthia Erivo, Alia Shawkat, Honor Swinton Byrne

UK/France/Greece, 2023, 1 hour 33 minutes, English

At first glance, Cynthia Erivo's Sundance drama *Drift* appears to be the latest in a long line of call-to-action refugee stories, set in Europe and focused on those who've left Africa, only to encounter resistance once they reach unfamiliar shores. Turns out, while there are certainly overlaps with recent films like *Mediterranea* and *Fire at Sea* — which are deserving social-issue movies to be sure — *Drift* doesn't have anything like the same agenda. Rather than serving to indict European indifference, as refugee films so often do, Singaporean director Anthony Chen's moving feature uses the fictional journey of Erivo's character, Jacqueline, as an unlikely ode to healing and human connection. – **Variety**

Cynthia Erivo: The thing that I really felt was important was to make sure that we didn't lose her humanity, we didn't lose the will that she had to live, and we didn't lose her dignity. My mother was an immigrant. She came over from Nigeria and she was also a part of the Biafran War. The thing that we don't get to see when these people are portrayed on film or TV is dignity. Yes, we see their circumstance, we see what they're going through, we see how much they need, but we lose the fact that they still are people who want to present themselves in a certain way. The wonderful thing about Jacqueline is that she still wants to present. She still wants to be as together as she possibly can with whatever little that she has. – **Vanity Fair**

Lead actress/producer Erivo exclusively told IndieWire that she was attached to the adaptation of *Drift* for years, with late actor/director Bill Paxton originally set to helm the film. Paxton's widow encouraged the film still get made, with Erivo producing. "I was in with *Drift* pretty early on. I got the script in 2015, 2016. I was still doing 'The Color Purple' on Broadway. It was originally supposed to be directed by Bill Paxton, and he passed away, sadly, and after that, I kind of thought [the film] was dead. I thought it was not coming back again. I didn't think we'd have a chance to do it," Erivo said. "But then his wife kindly extended her permission to continue to make the film and she said that he would want it to be made. That's when we started our conversations to make sure that we kind of knew what we wanted with the film. We sort of adjusted and changed the script a little bit, but it still felt really, really special." Erivo added, "I was in from the very beginning as just an actress and when I came back again, it felt appropriate to be both, as a producer." – **IndieWire**

Preview courtesy of Metfilm

Notes compiled by Holly Dennison

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