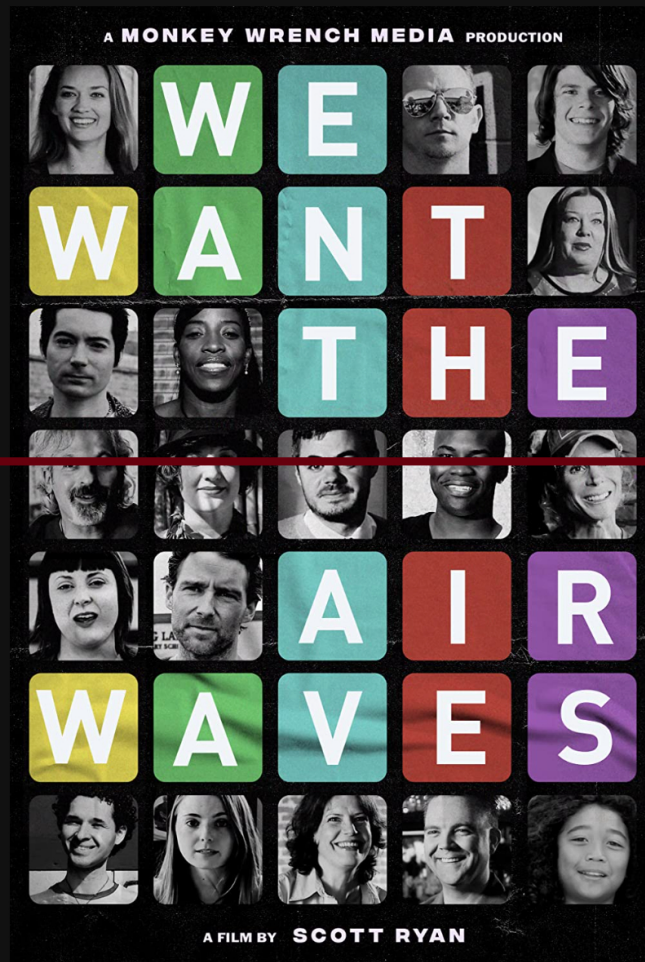




WE WANT THE AIRWAVES



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By Dan Pal Posted July 11, 2022 In Reviews

July 11th, 2022

MOVIE: WE WANT THE AIRWAVES

STARRING: PAULINE ADAMEK, AMBER ARBUCCI, KEVIN CANDIDO

DIRECTED BY: SCOTT RYAN

AMovieGuy.com's RATING: 3 1/2 STARS (Out of 4)

Since I teach in a film and television program at a major university, students often ask for advice on how they can make it big in the entertainment industry. Their dreams are often quite lofty. Many possess a cocky self-confidence and a belief that they will have a career making films or TV shows. The new documentary, We Want the Airwaves, provides an eye-opening and very realistic portrait of what it takes to deal with the Hollywood system and how persistence and self-sacrifice may be the only keys to getting a deal - and even then, there are no guarantees.

Director Scott Ryan uses the space of this film to document the struggles he experienced trying to sell his idea for Manifesto, a TV series featuring real-life activists trying to make a difference in the world. Each episode would focus on one of these go-getters and their cause. Over the course of several years, Ryan, along with his then girlfriend Charmel, kept a video journal of the experience developing and attempting to sell the series. What followed was a series of dashed hopes, disappointments, and rejections which saw their dream (and relationship) begin to crumble.

It's an interesting experience when a filmmaker attempts to document their own previous attempts at producing something. In that sense this is a pretty meta film. Whether Ryan was aware of it at the time or not, he ultimately found a way to get a production out into the world using the video diary footage he had created during his attempts to make Manifesto a full-fledged series. He clearly had a strong vision for Manifesto, and, some years later, developed a very good idea for a documentary. His own persistence and self-sacrifice is clearly on display. He doesn't fail to showcase the financial issues associated with getting a TV series off the ground. Because he had documented his own struggles we see it happening in real time. One can only wonder what it took for Ryan to get this film made and distributed. Perhaps that's another documentary altogether.

Regardless, the present film is nicely edited with not only the aforementioned video journal footage but also stills, home movies, interviews with some of the participants in the production of the Manifesto pilot, and animated recreations of meetings with executives from such companies as Oprah's OWN and ABC. It all makes for a pretty lively journey and one that is not afraid to go where it needs to go to tell this story.

As an educator, I really am glad this film exists for it can show wannabe entertainment creators what it takes to make it through countless meetings and rejections and still not reach intended goals. In that sense, I look forward to screening this film for students. However, this is a document of one specific period in production history. The film, and Ryan's struggles to make *Manifesto*, begins in 2005 which is, if one recalls, the year YouTube was formed. It's unclear why, with the many twists and turns the project took, Ryan hadn't considered the streaming service as a possible outlet for his series. Perhaps the financial possibilities weren't that evident or promising at the time. As a result, Ryan's drive towards getting his project funded and sold seems almost ancient when one considers how easy it became for people to make their names on the YouTube, Instagram, and later Tik Tok, platforms.

Does this limit the reach and relevance of *We Want the Airwaves*? Not really because the film does illustrate how difficult, time-consuming, and ultimately disheartening the entertainment business can be. It shows how strong one has to be in pursuing dreams in the industry. For that, I give Ryan a lot of credit for providing such a detailed and honest portrait of what the experience can truly be like. Whether an average film viewer will get much out of this documentary is questionable. If they're interested in how films and television shows get made, then they'll be witnessing something which is very raw and realistic. Other viewers will just have to latch onto the idea that whatever dreams we might have we need to be aware of the work involved and, perhaps more importantly, how the dream, like life, might evolve into something equally if not more significant.

**WE WANT THE AIRWAVES IS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO STREAM ON AMAZON PRIME AND OTHER ON DEMAND PLATFORMS**

3 ½ STARS

Written by: Dan Pal

[djpal1@aol.com](mailto:djpal1@aol.com)

3.5 (Out of 4), AMBER ARBUCCI, DAN PAL, DOCUMENTARY, KEVIN CANDIDO, PAULINE ADAMEK, SCOTT RYAN



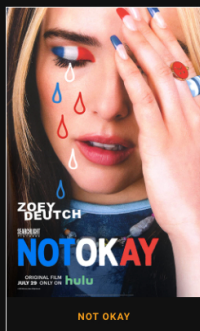
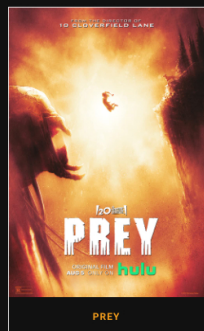
Dan Pal

Dan Pal studied Film at the University of Chicago. He teaches in the School of Cinematic Arts at DePaul University. He has also taught at Moraine Valley Community College where he received Adjunct Professor of the Year in 2015. Dan has reviewed films for WDCB FM and Que4Radio.com He has also programmed and coordinated several film local festivals. Dan is the Writer/Director/Producer of the short films *Scotty Works OUT*, *Scotty & Josh Get Enlightened*, & *Another Party with Scotty*. He also directed and produced the award-winning short *Counting*. His films have played at film festivals throughout the U.S. and Europe. Dan's most recent film is the feature length documentary *Harriet & Her Husbands*.

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