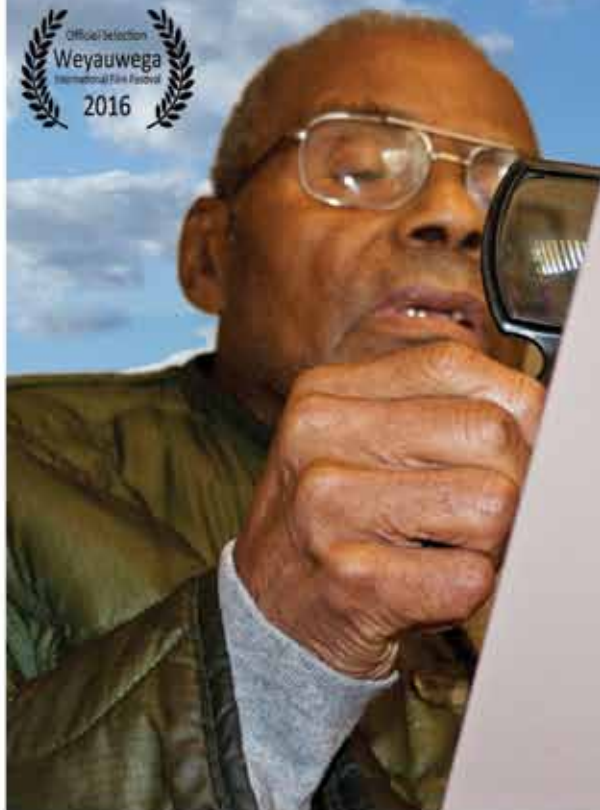


"Just remember... You only come by this way once.  
I haven't talked to nobody been by here twice. All you get is one shot at it!"

# Clarence



A DOCUMENTARY FILM STARRING CLARENCE E. GARRETT  
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY FRANK A. CALARCO • WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY KRISTIN E. CATALANO

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POSTER ARTWORK BY CHRIS CHITLES

# Synopsis

## **TAG LINE**

A regret, a dream... and nearly a century to get there.

## **LOG LINE**

After fifty years of being away from academia, an 85-year-old African-American WWII Vet returns to the University of WI-Milwaukee to fulfill his biggest regret—not earning his Bachelor’s Degree.



## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

After fifty years away from academia, Clarence Garrett, an 85-year-old African-American WWII Vet, returns to the University of WI-Milwaukee to fulfill his biggest regret--not earning his Bachelor's Degree.

While Clarence's drive and determination are idealistic, the reality of his age is undeniable; consequently, when unforeseen medical circumstances thrust Clarence into the emergency room, he is forced to abandon his goal of becoming a college graduate in order to survive an operation with deadly complications.

## **MEDIUM SYNOPSIS**

After fifty years away from academia, Clarence Garrett, an 85-year-old African-American WWII Vet, returns to the University of WI-Milwaukee to fulfill his biggest regret--not earning his Bachelor’s Degree.

As Clarence’s inspirational journey unfolds, his issues with memory, hearing loss, and a lack of basic computer skills swell into even greater adversities concerning pride, health, and age. While plodding around campus proves to be his greatest hurdle, an infection in his leg elevates the challenge when he finds himself in the hospital and behind in his first semester coursework. With positivity, resilience, and determination, Clarence triumphantly recovers with a broadened outlook; his pedantic objectives evolve into mentorships and outreach programs with African-American youth, and his new-found relationships with his classmates mature into solid friendships. Deservingly, Clarence’s community efforts, ambition, and exemplary GPA don’t go unnoticed either; he achieves scholarly awards and notable university publications that are distributed throughout campus. Unfortunately, natural opposing forces extinguish his fiery drive for success, when Clarence finds himself being rushed to the emergency room with intestinal blockage. Directly confronted by his own mortality, while struggling to survive an operation with deadly complications, Clarence’s goal of graduating from college slips out of his control.

# Synopsis

## LONG SYNOPSIS

Clarence was born in Baltimore, Maryland amid the Great Depression era. During WWII, he was drafted and sent to Europe to serve in the segregated U.S. Army. After completing an additional nine years of active duty abroad inside a heavy-trucking company, Clarence relocated to Milwaukee and went into the Army Reserves, where he worked for twenty-seven years and gained a rare promotion (as an African-American) to Chief Warrant Officer, W4.

In 1953, in conjunction with his employment in the reserves, Clarence enrolled in The Milwaukee Vocational and Adult Schools, which is known as MATC today. At the age of 33, he began his initial quest to earn his high school diploma. Upon graduation, he strove forward, majoring in Industrial Technology, while concurrently enrolling in The University of WI, Milwaukee Extension Division.

But during 1958, the life goals of Clarence Garrett came to a halt. As his college courses became more demanding and time-consuming, money became tighter, and now that he and his wife had a family on the way, he could no longer think about himself. After the birth of their first child, Clarence altered his ambitions; he dedicated his life to providing his offspring with the best college-level education available—the education that he never received.

After fifty years away from academia, and now 85-years-old, Clarence returns to the University of WI-Milwaukee to fulfill his biggest regret—not earning his Bachelor's Degree. As his inspirational journey unfolds, his issues with memory, hearing loss, and a lack of basic computer skills swell into even greater adversities concerning pride, health, and age. While plodding around campus proves to be his greatest hurdle, an infection in his leg elevates the challenge when he finds himself in the hospital and behind in his first semester coursework. With positivity, resilience, and determination, Clarence triumphantly recovers with a broadened outlook; his pedantic objectives evolve into mentorships and outreach programs with African-American youth, and his new-found relationships with his classmates mature into solid friendships. Deservingly, Clarence's community efforts, ambition, and exemplary GPA don't go unnoticed either; he achieves scholarly awards and notable university publications that are distributed throughout campus. Unfortunately, natural opposing forces extinguish his fiery drive for success, when Clarence finds himself being rushed to the emergency room with intestinal blockage. Directly confronted by his own mortality, while struggling to survive an operation with deadly complications, Clarence's goal of graduating from college slips out of his control.

# Director's Statement

The first time I met Clarence, I was about 8-years-old. I was sweeping the floors at our family grocery business, where Clarence worked as a part-time truck mechanic. I didn't like sweeping the floors and made it very apparent. I remember Clarence asking me if I was getting paid, and when I informed him of my measly earnings, he stopped me from elaborating and said, "Come on. You make more than that." I shook my head, no; I knew he would understand why I didn't like the task at hand. Again, he assured me that I made more than I claimed, and then left me feeling very confused. It wasn't until much later in life that I understood what he meant.



Post our "experience conversation," the only thing Clarence would ever ask me about was school. He wanted to know what I was learning, how my grades were, and what I aspired to be. These conversations led into my adulthood, where I floundered and repeatedly changed my mind in regards to my major in college and my choice of career. But with Clarence, it seemed like as long as I was in school and working towards something, I was okay. "Education is key," was his most infamous line.

When I was at UCLA earning my Master's Degree in Screenwriting, I took a documentary class, which triggered my change of focus. Here was something that you could do on your own; you didn't need a bunch of money or people helping you; you didn't need someone to tell you the script you were creating was or wasn't marketable enough to proceed... You could simply turn your camera on, learn as you go, and create a story. I was never taught how to be a camera operator or an editor, and so I will forever be a perpetual amateur with the technicalities, but I always knew how to tell a story.

After I completed my first short documentary for class, and after I had already graduated with my MFA, I knew it was time to set my sights on something bigger: my first feature documentary film. And I can honestly say that the only person who entered my mind was Clarence. His character, his passion, his personality, his experience... His existence. He was my subject.

I hadn't seen or spoken to Clarence in a while, because I was living in Los Angeles, so I wrote him a letter. Next came the phone calls. Then the visits to Milwaukee. Then the life-altering move: I relocated from Los Angeles back to my hometown of Milwaukee to make a film on Clarence Edward Garrett, age 85.

# Director's Statement

The concept of the film occurred naturally during an initial interview on one of my preliminary visits. I had asked Clarence what his biggest regret was. I expected him to say that he didn't have any, because that's the type of person Clarence is: everything you do is chalked up to experience and learning. But, to my surprise, and without hesitation, he said, "Never finishing school." He continued to tell me that he was seriously thinking about going back — returning to UW-Milwaukee, and that he had been looking at the brochures... That's when I stopped the interview. I had my story.



When Clarence was ready to embark on his journey is when the camera truly started rolling. I followed him for over two years, recording his every move. I captured over two-hundred hours of footage, which would take me years to sort out. I am convinced that I learned more during Clarence's college years than he did, and not just about "making a documentary."

In the classroom, Clarence was a student, but in my world, he was a teacher, a mentor, and my best friend. During the countless days we spent together, he taught me how to be focused, determined, and relentless. He taught me that sometimes you have to dig deep inside of yourself to find the guts to do things you would normally shy away from. He taught me that everyone exists for a reason, and that life is about finding that purpose and sharing it with the world. And he frequently reminded me, in both his actions and his words, that "You only come by this way once. I haven't talked to nobody been by here twice. All you get is one shot at it!"



# Crew Bios

## **KRISTIN E. CATALANO**

(Writer/Director/Camera/Editor/Producer)

Kristin Catalano was born and raised in Milwaukee, WI. She moved to Los Angeles to attend UCLA's Professional Program in Screenwriting, and then to follow, UCLA's MFA Screenwriting Program, where she emerged with her Master's Degree. In addition, she has received screenwriting awards, including the Jay Grossman Comedy Writing Award and the Larry Thor Memorial Award. Storytelling is Kristin's passion, and although writing is her forte, she consistently takes on many roles in order to bring her vision to life.



## **FRANK A. CALARCO**

(Original Music Composer)

With two WAMI nominations for "Best Guitar Player," Frank Calarco has made a name for himself in and outside of Milwaukee, WI. Frank has consistently played in bands since he was an adolescent, most notably, The Lazarus Effect and The Liam Ford Band, with whom he currently strums for on lead guitar. Additionally, Frank has been recording his own original music, with his emotional compositions most recently being showcased in the documentary film, Clarence, by Kristin Catalano.



# Crew Bios

## **CHRIS CHUZLES**

(Music Recording Mixer/Visual Effects)

While known internationally for his beloved role as The Hitchhiker in the hit Troma film "Blood Junkie," Chris Chuzles spends most of his time at a computer creating motion graphics and websites for Fortune 500 Companies. As an interactive designer in Milwaukee, Chris has won numerous awards for web design within the advertising industry and has shared his passion while teaching at a regional Technical College. Chris retains whatever "punk rock credentials" he thinks he ever had by fronting the Milwaukee mainstay, Hot Coffin.



## **NICOLE (BROWN) DOCTA**

(Additional Camera)

Nicole Docta has been working on documentaries since 2006. She specializes in documentary producing and cinema verite videography. She was most recently the co-producer, videographer, sound mixer, and assistant editor on the News and Doc Emmy-nominated feature documentary "As Goes Janesville," which aired on PBS's Independent Lens series in 2013. Nicole is currently freelancing and looking for her next big project.



## **DANIEL ALVARADO**

(Technical Advisor)

Dan Alvarado graduated from the University of California Los Angeles School of Theater, Film and Television with an M.F.A. in Screenwriting. Unwilling to compromise his literary integrity in Hollywood (aka unable to get representation and sell a screenplay), he bought a Mac and taught himself how to edit. He was surprised to discover how his training in writing complemented the editorial process... actually, he wasn't surprised at all, he knew it all along. Dan has worked for the last five years cutting projects for several reputable names in the music industry including Madonna, Eric Clapton, Lady Gaga, Mary J. Blige and New Kids on The Block.



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# Film Info

## FILM TRAILER

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## CREDITS

Writer/Director/Camera/Editor/Producer

Original Music

Music Recording Mixer/Visual Effects

Additional Camera

Additional Footage

Technical Advisor

Principal Subject

Kristin E. Catalano

Frank A. Calarco

Chris Chuzles

Nicole (Brown) Docta

WI Public Television

Daniel Alvarado

Clarence Garrett

## STATISTICS

Release Date

April 15, 2015

Runtime

01 hr : 15 min : 53 sec

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