

Filmmaker

Documentary filmmaker Lis Bartlett grew up in Reno, and she'll return home for a few days when her film *Light at the Water* screens at the Nevada Museum of Art, 160 W. Liberty St., on May 18 at 3 p.m. The film follows the story of West Hollywood Aquatics, an openly gay swim team founded in 1982. The film premiered on Logo TV last year and has now screened at film festivals around the world. It's nominated for a Daytime Emmy. For tickets or more information about the Reno screening, visit nevadaart.org.

What's the path from Reno girl to Emmy-nominated filmmaker?

I studied media studies in San Francisco at [University of San Francisco]. And then during that time I had worked with Mike [Albright] on Project Moonshine, a [Reno-based] documentary filmmaking nonprofit that Mike started. It's not around anymore, but the goal was to teach kids how to make documentary films, and, in the process, they would make one. So, in the summers during college, I would help him with that. And in college, I worked for Indie DocFest as an intern, and I got to see a lot of documentaries for free there, and then moved back to Reno because I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. And I bought a video camera with my savings and started making love stories. ... I've always been inspired by positive stories. I think I



do view the world through rose-colored glasses. I like to shine a light on stories of love and hope and inspiration. ... And then I started interning at the city of Reno, working with Sharon Spangler, I started "Know Your City Employee," where we filmed employees at work and then their hobbies outside of work. ... And then a movie came to Reno that was being filmed, *The Motel Life*, starring Emile Hirsch. And I was like, I'll do whatever I need to do to be on set, so I just showed up. So I interned on that. I went every day. It was super fun and awesome for about three or four weeks. And after that, I decided to move to L.A., and because I knew the editing software, I started working as an assistant editor. ... When I moved to L.A., I looked up swim teams, because I've always been a swimmer, and I joined West Hollywood Aquatic. I think I knew intuitively it would feel more like a family, being the LGBT

team. I joined the team as a way to meet people. ... It became my family. It really made L.A. feel like home. And I knew there was a story there.

What about it made you think it would make a good film?

At first, I just wanted to shine a light on this inclusive community. I thought it was so beautiful—I was kind of falling in love with L.A. as I was swimming more, and it seemed like a microcosm of Los Angeles. All of these diverse people from all these different backgrounds coming together in the pool, and we had it in common for an hour that we were swimming. And then everyone goes off into the city and does something very different. But chances are, if you're at the pool, you're probably motivated in your life outside of the pool and doing something interesting. So, I really just wanted to capture that, and I love swimming and wanted to have a love letter to swimming. And then someone told me the history. ... There's so much history here that nobody talks about.

What's some of that history?

All of the loss. They were founded in 1982. There was so much discrimination and all of the loss during the AIDS crisis. It wasn't that long ago. We did our first interview, and at the time of the interview, it seemed like the guy, Jon Bauer, who's in the movie, was realizing during the interview how much swimming meant to him at the time. He actually said during the interview, "Swimming saved my life." □

NOTES FROM THE NEON BABYLON

BY BRUCE VAN DYKE

So much for exonerated

Now, hold on. I said, hold on here for just a minute. WTF is Bill Barr doing having a press conference for the Mueller Report—*without* Bob Mueller? Isn't that *exactly* like having a big presser for the new Stones World Tour, only ... oops ... hey, we forgot to invite Mick and Keith!

When Trump opened his foul hole on March 24 and declared himself to be *exonerated*, 60 percent of us semi-sane Americans knew precisely what he was saying. Oh, Mike Cohen was right. Trump indeed talks in code. But, after two years of Agent Orange's constant rambling bullshit, we now know how to instantly decipher his jive and pick up the *real* message. So when Dum Dum began blathering up a storm about his "complete exoneration," us 60 percenters knew right then that (1) it was the end of his presidency, and (2) he's

fucked. (And how very thoughtful of Don Don to confirm these notions directly!)

So now we can see, and see very clearly—the Mueller Report is to Donald F. Trump's "exoneration" what a six-pack of chocolate eclairs is to your new paleo keto diet. In fact, the reaction to Mueller's masterpiece seems quite similar to what happened this past November. It took a while, but after a couple of weeks, anybody who didn't have his head stuffed up his personal methane dispenser could see that an actual Blue Wave did indeed take place. The exact same mechanism is functioning here. Trump was "exonerated" in much the same way that the Republicans had a super successful election in 2018.

We can now also see that Bill Barr is doing a pretty good job as Trump's Roy Cohn, because what Barr is all about is obfuscation.

He's a pro's pro when it comes to "muddying the water," and *that*, make no mistake, is why he got the gig. He told Trump as much in his job application term paper last summer. All his bullshit about "transparency." Puh-leez. His main gig is to confuse, muddle, send mixed messages, and provide red meat for Fux News. He knows full well how to play the modern game in the court of public opinion—that with a savvy combo of lawyers and media, complemented by slow, stodgy, Kavanated Kourts, delay after delay can be brought into play in order to insure that Individual 1 finishes his bizarre and absurd term of office. And it just may work.

But it looks like there's still an *awful* lot of justifiable hassling about to happen with Putin's favorite bitch boy. Popcorn reload! □



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