

## ***If Beale Street Could Talk***

### **Featurette: Baldwin**

#### **Transcript**

**Tish Rivers:** You ready for this?

**Fonny Hunt:** I've never been more ready for anything in my whole life.

**Barry Jenkins, Director::** Part of Baldwin's power is his reach. He had all these different sort of pockets of experience that he drew from, and he was someone who just told the truth.

**Fonny:** Just remember that I belong to you. Just remember that I wouldn't hurt you for anything in this world.

**Barry Jenkins:** I first read *Beale Street* around 2009. What grabbed me was the love story between Tish and Fonny. It was just so pure.

**Tish:** It was no surprise to me when I finally understood that he was the most beautiful person I had seen in all my life.

**Barry Jenkins:** Baldwin's legacy is very important and very rich. I wanted to bring this book into the world intact.

**Joe Rivers:** How you gonna sit here and act like can't nothin be done? These are our children and we got to set them free.

**Barry Jenkins:** This book was written between '68 and '73. I felt there was a power in the movie taking place in a period 45 years ago and yet still being very relevant today.

**Police officer:** Hmm, I'm taking you down.

**Tish:** No!

**Onscreen text:** "Neither love nor terror makes one blind: indifference makes one blind."

James Baldwin

**Tish:** I hope that nobody has ever had to look at anybody they love through glass.

**Barry Jenkins:** The condition of black life that Baldwin was writing was to illustrate how Tish and Fonny's love is threatened simply by them being alive in America at the time the film is set. I love it when intellectual ideas can be pursued through characters. And I think in this book and now the film these ideas about America, and particularly Black life and Black love, are given life through the characters.

**Sharon Rivers:** We are drinkin' to new life. Tish gonn' have Fonny's baby.

**Ernestine Rivers:** Unbow your head, sister.

**Kiki Layne (Tish):** I feel so, so very blessed because I think a lot of people are unaware that he even wrote something like this. When you read it, it's this beautiful love story but still so very much James Baldwin the way that he describes what's going on in the community and how he interweaves that into the story but it's still a love story.

**Tish:** I called this meeting. Fonny's gonna be a father. We're gonna have a baby.

**Mrs Hunt:** And who's going to be responsible for this baby?

**Tish:** The father and the mother.

**Stephan James (Fonny):** To be able to be entrusted with a story like *If Beale Street Could Talk* is such a humbling, humbling thing. To be able to tell a story like this with Barry Jenkins is really something I have not taken for granted.