HECTIC FILMS PRODUCTIONS / PRESS RELEASE

Award-Winning Documentary KERN OIL Now Available on Amazon Prime Video

Bakersfield filmmaker Rickey Bird Jr. brings the stories of California's oilfield workers and families to a national audience following festival wins and an 8/10 Film Threat review.

BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA | November 2026 — Hectic Films Productions announces that its independent feature documentary *KERN OIL* is now available on Amazon Prime Video. Directed and produced by Bakersfield filmmaker Rickey Bird Jr., the 107-minute film examines California's oil industry through the experiences of the workers, families and communities whose lives are intertwined with it.

From Kern County to a national audience

KERN OIL premiered February 27, 2026, at Bakersfield's historic Fox Theater before an audience of approximately 1,000 people. A Taft premiere followed on April 25, and additional theatrical screenings at Studio Movie Grill in Bakersfield included sold-out showings. The documentary combines interviews with oilfield workers, industry professionals, community leaders and public officials with historical context to explore the relationship between California's energy demands, policy decisions and local livelihoods.

Festival recognition and critical response

The film earned Best Documentary Long at American Golden Picture, Best Documentary at the SoCal Film Awards, and Best Documentary at Rural Reels (Fortean Film Festival). It also appeared at the Indiewood Film Festival at the TCL Chinese Theatres in Hollywood and the Old Towne Film Festival in Orange, California. In November 2026, critic Alan Ng reviewed *KERN OIL* for *Film Threat*, awarding it **8 out of 10**.

Independently made, with creative freedom

KERN OIL was not financed by major oil corporations. The production was independently supported by individuals connected to the industry, while Bird retained creative control. A third-generation oilfield worker with more than two decades of drilling-industry experience, Bird approached the subject as both a filmmaker and someone who knows the community firsthand.

"This wasn't about making a commercial for an oil company," Bird said. "I wanted to make a film about the people — the guys working on drilling rigs, the families who depend on these jobs, and the communities that were built around this industry."

A personal story at its heart

The film also draws on the life of Bird's father, Rickey Bird Sr., whose long oilfield career was followed by extended unemployment and financial hardship. He died by suicide in 2022. His experience gives the documentary a deeply personal dimension and underscores the human impact of economic uncertainty in oil-producing communities.

“Behind every oilfield job is a real person and a family,” Bird said. “These aren’t just numbers on a spreadsheet. These are people’s lives.”

Now streaming on Amazon Prime Video

Following its theatrical and festival run, *KERN OIL* is available to audiences through Amazon Prime Video. Viewers are invited to watch, share their own oilfield stories and join the conversation about California’s energy future.

Watch KERN OIL: Amazon Prime Video — KERN OIL

Film Threat review: filmthreat.com/reviews/kern-oil/

Film website: www.kernoilmovie.com

About Hectic Films Productions

Based in Bakersfield, California, Hectic Films Productions creates independent features, documentaries and original entertainment. Led by Rickey Bird Jr., the company embraces resourceful, do-it-yourself filmmaking and creative freedom, bringing ambitious stories to the screen without Hollywood-sized budgets.

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