

How Covid Placed Chicago's Hospitality on Life Support – But Met its Match

“The heartbeat of Chicago are the women and men who stand on their feet for countless hours to feed our appetites”

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Southpaw Authentic Announces **86'd**, The Untold Pandemic Story of Chicago's Bars & Restaurants

Chicago, IL, June 19 — Southpaw Authentic, a Chicago-based film production company, announces **86'd**, a ground-level documentary capturing the stories of those responsible for Chicago's world-renowned culinary culture, and their trek through the COVID-19 Pandemic.

When the pandemic hit, it brought Chicago's restaurant industry to a grinding halt. In one of the world's most food-centric cities, bars and restaurants shuttered overnight, and more than three hundred thousand hospitality professionals suddenly found themselves without work or a clear path forward. **86'd** explores the emotional, psychological, and economic cost of the pandemic and its residual effects also expressed when key decision makers were interviewed.

“I think it's one of the most monumental and horrific experiences that we've ever went through, because it touched everyone.”

Former Mayor Lori Lightfoot

“Independent restaurants are the heart and soul of our 77 neighborhoods here in Chicago,” said Sam Toia President & CEO of The Illinois Restaurant Association, underscoring the local and cultural importance of these gathering spaces.

Referring to a menu item that's been cut off or discontinued, the restaurant slang “**86'd**”, transports viewers to a time when everyone equally faced the many unknowns of a deadly advisory. The documentary gives Chicago's badly bruised restaurant industry time for recollection, and reconciliation. The voices of the survivors are unmistakably Chicago, tough, proud, and resilient. But **86'd** also speaks to a broader, universal uncertainty that culinary workers around the world felt as they kept cities fed in a time of crisis.

“This film isn't about restaurants as businesses It's about celebrating the city's habit of reinvention, and its people's refusal to be defeated,” said the film's director. ***“The heartbeat of Chicago are the women and men who stand on their feet for countless hours to feed our appetites.”***

Produced by two left-handed brothers and Chicago natives, Southpaw Authentic makes its documentary debut this summer, with plans for a fall film festival run and special industry screenings across Chicago's neighborhoods bringing the film back to the people whose stories built it.

For press inquiries, screening access, or interview opportunities, please contact:

Southpaw Authentic

southpawauthentic@gmail.com

773.263.2362

www.86chicago.com