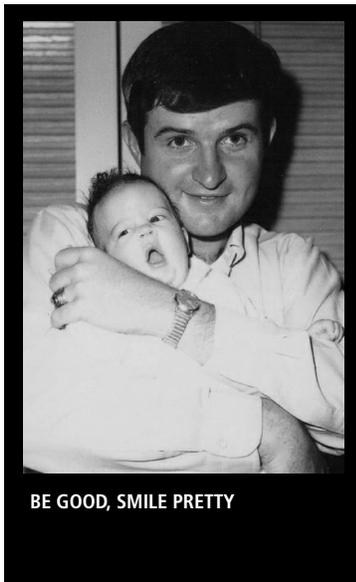


**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Pressroom for more information and/or downloadable images:  
[www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos](http://www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos)  
Program companion website: [www.pbs.org/begoodsmilepretty](http://www.pbs.org/begoodsmilepretty)



**INDEPENDENT LENS's "BE GOOD, SMILE  
PRETTY" CHRONICLES FILMMAKER'S INTENSE,  
PERSONAL JOURNEY TO KNOW HER FATHER...  
THIRTY YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH IN VIETNAM**

—Sheds Light on the Estimated 20,000 Americans whose Fathers  
were Killed in Vietnam — and those Young Americans who  
Continue to Lose Parents in War—

**Film by Tracy Droz Tragos  
Premieres Nationally on "Independent Lens,"  
ITVS's Acclaimed Series on PBS**

**Presented in Association with Kansas City Public Television  
Veteran's Day, November 11, 2003 at 10:30 P.M.  
(check local listings)**

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*"BE GOOD, SMILE PRETTY is simultaneously a woman's search for  
her father and a powerful statement against war. One cannot watch it  
without wishing that Tracy Tragos' quest had never been necessary, and  
that all the young men who go off to war would come home to the little  
girls who wait."*

—AL MARTINEZ, *THE LOS ANGELES TIMES*

*"There have been many films about the Vietnam War, but perhaps  
none as deeply felt or intimate as BE GOOD, SMILE PRETTY."*

—AARON BARNHART, *KANSAS CITY STAR*

(San Francisco, CA)—Back on March 16, 2001, instead of working on a film script she was writing, Tracy Droz Tragos typed her father's name on Yahoo.com and hit "Search." Two and a half years later, the results of



that search are chronicled in **BE GOOD, SMILE PRETTY**, a personal journey by Tragos to find the father she lost over 32 years ago when he was killed in Vietnam at the age of 25. Tracy Tragos was three months old.

What she found on the Web that night was "Death of The 43," a first-person, detailed account by a witness to an ambush in the Mekong Delta that destroyed a Navy swift boat and killed six men, including her father, Lt. Donald Glenn Droz. After waiting two days, Tragos called

her mother to tell her of the article. Thus began a conversation between the two on film, with Tragos gently but insistently probing her mother, Judy Droz Keyes, to dredge up and piece together old memories and to flesh out and give life to the shadowy figure of a daughter's dreams.

They open a long-buried trunk, examining the contents—photographs, champagne bottles, letters, home movies, audiotapes of phone conversations—like shards of pottery and artifacts from some ancient civilization. Who was this man? What was he like? What is his legacy? Many of his letters signed off with "Be Good, Smile Pretty," a closing which Tragos later came to view as something many people do in burying their grief rather than facing it.

Tragos's film odyssey takes her from Berkeley, California to Rich Hill, Missouri, her father's hometown, and then on to the United States Senate, the United States Naval Academy, the cotton fields of Selma, Alabama, suburban Illinois, New York City, Santa Rosa, California and places in between to talk with relatives and her father's comrades from Vietnam. These men (including Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts), now in their 50s and 60s, are the age her father would have been had he survived. Grappling with their own painful memories, they have stories they need to tell about her father, to make a connection, to provide missing pieces of the puzzle.



Haunting, evocative and moving, the film is a testament to the terrible loss that accompanies war, and the grief that continues to resonate for decades to come. But this time, Tragos has rewritten the ending to the story: "While I will always want more, one more second, one more breath, one more anything of him—for the first time in my life, I have just enough of him to remember and love and grieve. He would have been a great father. And when I smile, I have his eyes."

Additional information and/or downloadable photographs from **BE GOOD, SMILE PRETTY** are available at [www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos](http://www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos).



The program's interactive companion website at [www.pbs.org/begoodsmilepretty](http://www.pbs.org/begoodsmilepretty) features detailed information about the film, including an interview with the filmmaker, as well as links and resources pertaining to the film's subject matter. The site also features a "talkback" section for viewers to share their ideas with one another, preview clips of the film and much more.

In addition to the film's broadcast and its companion website, several community engagement events will be held in locations throughout the country through ITVS's Community Connections Project (CCP). ITVS-CCP is a public education and outreach project that transforms timely social issue independent film and public television broadcasts into tools that educate and engage communities and support ongoing positive action—both locally and nationally. National outreach partners working with ITVS on **BE GOOD, SMILE PRETTY** include the Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Sons and Daughters in Touch and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

More information about ITVS-CCP and downloadable resources for **BE GOOD, SMILE PRETTY** are available online at [www.itvs.org/outreach](http://www.itvs.org/outreach). [Available September 2003]

**BE GOOD, SMILE PRETTY** is produced in association with the Independent Television Service (ITVS) and KCPT-Kansas City Public Television, with additional funding provided by the Women in Film Foundation Finishing Fund.

## FACTS

- The Vietnam War was the longest military action in U.S. history.
- Over 2.8 million Americans were sent to Southeast Asia.
- Over 58,000 of them were killed.
- An estimated over 20,000 American children lost their fathers.

## BE GOOD SMILE PRETTY Credits

WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND CO-PRODUCER  
CO-PRODUCER  
EDITOR

**Tracy Droz Tragos**  
**Chris Donahue**  
**Kat Tragos**  
**Chris Tragos**  
**Jenna McFeely**

## AWARDS

Documentary Feature Jury Prize, Los Angeles Film Festival

President's Award for Excellence in Documentary Film, Vietnam Veterans of America

Inaugural Excellence in The Arts Award, Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

TRACY DROZ TRAGOS (Writer/Director/Producer) started her career at DreamWorks, SKG, where she rose through the ranks from an assistant to a writer/producer on story-based CD-ROMs. She holds a BA in English from Northwestern University and an MFA in Cinema/Television from the University of Southern California.

**BE GOOD, SMILE PRETTY** is her first film.

Droz Tragos is also founder and president of Orphans of War Foundation, whose on-going purpose is to increase awareness and understanding of the impact of the Vietnam War on those who lost a parent there and to stimulate and support innovative programs whereby those impacted by the Vietnam War can tell their stories and express their loss and grief.

She is currently writing a book, and developing both narrative and documentary projects through her new production company, Dinky Pictures, named after her father.

CHRIS DONAHUE (Executive Producer) divides his time between narrative film, documentaries and teaching. He is currently serving as executive director for the Humanitas Prize, an annual writer's award that celebrates films and television shows that not only entertain, but also enrich the viewing public. His most recent feature film, *Straight Right*, premiered at the 2000 Los Angeles International Film Festival and aired on the Sundance Channel. In 1998, he was honored with an Academy Award for the Best Live Action Short Film, *Visas and Virtue*. He has taught at the American Film Institute and Loyola-Marymount University. He was co-producer on the feature film *Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story*, starring Moira Kelly and Martin Sheen available through Warner Home Video.

Donahue serves as a trustee for the Humanitas Prize, is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and holds graduate degrees from the American Film Institute and the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California.

KAT TRAGOS (Director of Photography and Co-Producer) has worked as an art director since 1986. At Young & Rubicam, she contributed to the creative strategy of brand accounts Jell-O, Adidas, Colgate, Kentucky Fried Chicken and others. Tragos holds a BFA in Graphic Design from Washington University and a certificate from the Miami Ad School, where she won several awards for her filming and editing work, including third prize at the Kurz & Schon International Film Competition. She is also Tracy Droz Tragos's sister-in-law.

CHRIS TRAGOS (Co-Producer) has worked as an executive producer on such programs as *Night Bites* (a one-hour special for WE), *Willie's World* (a half-hour reality pilot for E! Entertainment), *Mall or Nothing* (a half-hour game show pilot for the Style Network) and *What's Your 20?* (a reality series on COX CABLE). Tragos started his career in entertainment as a management associate at Sony Pictures Entertainment. He then went on to head up marketing at Paramount Digital Entertainment. Chris has a BA from Duke University and a masters degree from Northwestern's Kellogg Graduate School of Management. He is also happily married to Tracy Droz Tragos and is her producing partner in Dinky Pictures.



JENNA MCFEELY (Editor) is a writer, director and editor who originally hails from the Bay Area. After receiving her BA in art history from Princeton University, she moved to Los Angeles to attend USC, receiving an MFA in film production in 1999. Her work as a film director includes the short films *Insomnia* and *Late Harvest*, which screened at several film festivals in 1999 and 2000, respectively. Last summer she made her theatrical directing debut with *Collision Theory* at Theatre of Note in Hollywood. Her work as a writer took her to Villa Montalvo in Saratoga, California where she was an artist in residence during the summer of 2000, researching a script based on the life of southwestern landscape photographer Laura Gilpin. Recent editing work (other than **BE GOOD, SMILE PRETTY**) includes projects for Essential Entertainment, including their television documentary series, *Go Jane Doe*. McFeely is currently developing shorts and feature projects as a member of Big W Productions.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

**(in order of first appearance – including off-camera sound bites)**

Kurt Ziegler, an artist from California whose father was killed a month before his tenth birthday (audio only).

Christine Ferguson, a single mother from Louisiana whose father was killed the day before she was born (audio only).

T. Scott Nalley, a heating/air-conditioning contractor from Virginia whose father was killed on his last day of service when Scott was nine months old.

Layna McConkey Pelter, whose father, Wayne Allen McConkey, was killed in Vietnam.

Florence Torres, whose father, Walter J. Carney, was killed in Vietnam.

Lewis R. Robinson, whose father, William Joseph Cahill, was killed in Vietnam.

Sherrie Bradie, whose father, Charles William Dornin, was killed in Vietnam.

Robert Howard, a regional sales manager for T-Mobile, whose father was killed when he was four years old.

Tracy Droz Tragos, filmmaker.

Judith Droz Keyes, Don Droz's widow and Tracy's mother, who was nationally recognized for her involvement in the anti-war movement. For over 25 years, she has been practicing law, and is currently a partner of Morrison & Foerster in San Francisco.

David Keyes, Judy's second husband and Tracy's adoptive father. He is a Unitarian Universalist minister.

Paul Droz, a pecan farmer and Don Droz's younger brother.

Dorothy Droz, a retired third-grade school teacher from Rich Hill, Missouri and Don Droz's mother. Dorothy died before the film's completion in October 2002 at the age of 85.



Janie Droz Nunn, an elementary school teacher and Don Droz's baby sister.

Frank Droz, a Korean War veteran and Don Droz's first cousin. Frank is a pecan farmer in Missouri.

United States Senator John Kerry, a fellow swift boat skipper and friend of Don Droz. John was one of the early leaders of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. He is running for President in 2004.

Bill Ogden, a classmate of Don Droz's at the Naval Academy.

Ronald Magnuson, a classmate of Don Droz's at the Naval Academy.

James Beesley, one of Don Droz's roommates at the Naval Academy.

Charles Pfeifer, a classmate of Don Droz's at the Naval Academy. Charles was also a swift boat skipper and injured in an ambush in Vietnam.

Patrick Sheedy, a classmate of Don Droz's at the Naval Academy. Patrick was also a fellow swift boat skipper, and a friend of Don Droz's in Vietnam.

Skip Barker and Bill Zaladonis, the swift boat skipper and sailor who rescued Don Droz's body on April 12, 1969. Skip is a lawyer and cotton farmer in Selma, Alabama.

Tedd Peck, a swift boat skipper, who went to the violent Mekong Delta in Don Droz's place.

Bill Rood, a swift boat skipper and one of Don Droz's best friends in Vietnam. Bill is an editor at the *Chicago Tribune*.

Peter Upton, the UDT officer and author of "The Death of PCF 43," who was on Don Droz's boat when he was killed.

Steven Hayes, a swift boat skipper who was with Don Droz the night before he was killed (audio only).

Chuck Mohn, the skipper of PCF 103, who was part of the battle on April 12, 1969 when Don Droz was killed.

Bill Shumadine, the swift boat skipper of one of the two boats who came to Don Droz's rescue on the day he was killed.

Steven Carroll, a swift boat skipper who trained under Don Droz in An Thoi, Vietnam.

Jesse Schowengerdt, who added the words "father" and "husband" to Don Droz's headstone.

## ABOUT *INDEPENDENT LENS*

*Independent Lens* is a weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history, which prompted Nancy Franklin in *The New Yorker* to write "Watching *Independent Lens* ... is like going into an independent bookstore—you don't always find what you were looking for but you often find something you didn't even know you wanted." Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites, and national publicity and community outreach campaigns. Further information about the series is available at [www.pbs.org/independent-lens](http://www.pbs.org/independent-lens). *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS.

## ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting [www.itvs.org](http://www.itvs.org). ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People.



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