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[i]NDEPENDENTLENS 

## PARLIAMENT FUNKADELIC: ONE NATION UNDER A GROOVE FROM DOO-WOP TO FUNK, THE CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF GEORGE CLINTON—A MAN, HIS HAIR AND HIS MUSIC

Debut Episode for Fall Season on PBS's "*Independent Lens*,"  
the Emmy Award-Winning Series Hosted by Edie Falco  
Tuesday, October 11, 2005 at 10 PM (Check Local Listings)

Featuring Ice Cube, De La Soul, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Rick James and Shock G,  
as well as members of the Parliament Funkadelic family including Bootsy Collins,  
Bernie Worrell, the original Parliaments and the very colorful (literally) George Clinton

*"Funk is fun and it's a state of mind. But it's also all the ramifications of  
that state of mind. Once you do the best you can, funk it."*

—George Clinton

(San Francisco)—**PARLIAMENT FUNKADELIC: One Nation Under a Groove** follows the transformation of The Parliaments, a Sixties doo-wop group led by George Clinton, into Parliament Funkadelic, the seminal funk band of the Seventies. The band has had a profound impact on the development of contemporary music and the aesthetic and cultural liberation that accompanied it. The music of Parliament Funkadelic is among the most sampled in the evolution of hip-hop music. This program chronicles the unique alchemy of the musical influences that fed into their singular approach to music; it documents P-Funk's continuing influence on today's creative minds and features an in-depth look at the unique musical and entrepreneurial mastermind that is George Clinton. Celebrating 50 years of music with an anniversary tour and a new CD release this fall, George Clinton is once again riding high. **PARLIAMENT FUNKADELIC** will be broadcast on *Independent Lens*, hosted by Edie Falco, on Tuesday, October 11 at 10 PM (check local listings).



To create a film that reflected the distinctive nature of P-Funk, filmmaker Yvonne Smith turned to animation—both cell and computer generated—to create the animated sequences and virtual environments that reflect the cartoonish nature of the P-Funk aesthetic. Inspired by a P-Funk lyric, she created the “Afronaut,” a cartoon character from outer space who serves as the film’s host and narrator. The Afronaut is given voice by hip-hop comic and actor Eddie Griffin, who co-starred in the popular series *Malcolm and Eddie*, as well as the feature films *Undercover Brother*, *Herbie: Fully Loaded*, and both *Deuce Bigelow* films. The Afronaut descends to earth from a new millennium version of the Mothership, created by CG artist Paul Collins. The Afronaut was brought to vivid life in cell animation from the drawings of Kevin Lofton, a former animation artist on *Beavis and Butthead*.

Interviews with The Parliaments—the late Ray Davis, Calvin Simon, Grady Thomas and Clarence “Fuzzy” Haskins—take place in a virtual barber shop, reminiscent of their early years doing hair and singing in a Plainfield, New Jersey barbershop run by George Clinton. The barbershop, as well as the various environments in which George Clinton appears, was created in digital animation.

In addition to the Parliaments, the film features original interviews with George Clinton, Bootsy Collins, Bernie Worrell, Dawn Silva—one of the Brides of Funkenstein—and other key P-Funk band members and staff. Other musicians interviewed in the film include Rick James, Ice Cube, Flea and Anthony Kiedis of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, De La Soul, Shock G (also known as “Humpty Hump” of the Digital Underground) and Nona Hendryx of LaBelle. Reginald Hudlin, director of *House Party* and *Boomerang*, the new president of entertainment for BET and a P-Funk fanatic, also appears, as does Rickey Vincent, author of *Funk: The Music, the People and the Rhythm of The One*.

In the music industry, George Clinton was known as much for his innovative business practices as for his music. Ultimately, Clinton morphed his core band members into multiple groups on multiple record labels, something no one had ever done. As a teenager, he organized a doo-wop group called The Parliaments, who harmonized while working in a barbershop in New Jersey, scoring their first hit, “I Wanna Testify” in 1967. When he lost the right to The Parliaments’ name due to problems at Revilot Records, Clinton transformed the doo-wop group into Funkadelic, a psychedelic band that he signed to Westbound Records. The band became known for its unusual fusion of rock and R&B along with a stage show that was, literally, out of this world. The unusual sound of the band owed a lot to the keyboard work and arrangements of Bernie Worrell, a classically trained musician and the late Eddie Hazel, whose psychedelic guitar sounds were the centerpiece for the Funkadelic classic, “Maggot Brain.”

**THE IMPORTANCE of P-FUNK'S  
ASCENSION**



In 1975, Clinton resurrected The Parliaments without the “s” and signed Parliament to the Casablanca Record label, the home of KISS and The Village People. He recruited bassist Bootsy Collins to join the band, who brought along other sidemen he’d played with in The James Brown Band. Bootsy brought the concept of “the one” from James Brown, which became the rhythmic underpinning of the Parliament sound. The stage was now set for what was to become known as the Parliafunkadelicmentthang, the P-Funk Empire.

What set P-Funk apart from other bands was that they created an alternate reality in which young P-Funk fans, especially African American males, could imagine themselves. Complete with a special vocabulary, hand signs, chants and tribal rituals, it was a secret society open to all who wanted a release from the restrictive mores of society. To enter, all you had to do was dance: “Free your mind and your ass will follow!” (*Free Your Mind*).

George Clinton created a mythology about “brothers” from another planet who came to liberate earth from the restrictions of Puritanical morality. It was a concept that allowed P-Funk’s fans to transcend the confines of their neighborhood and imagine themselves as citizens of a much larger universe. This mythology was realized in highly theatrical stage shows which Clinton called “funk operas,” that featured elaborate and outlandish costumes and the landing of a space ship onstage—the Mothership—from which Clinton would emerge as Dr. Funkenstein, dressed like a pimp from outer space. Black audiences had never seen anything like this.

At a time when young African American men had no comic book heroes to identify with, Clinton gave them Starchild, pitted against the villainous Sir Nose D’Voidoffunk in the cosmic showdown between good and evil, between letting your hair down and staying uptight. This battle was immortalized in the Parliament hit “Flash Light,” which is featured prominently in the film.

The visuals always kept pace with the concept. Starting with the Funkadelic album covers of artist Pedro Bell and continuing with Overton Loyd’s covers for Parliament, P-Funk became known for their groundbreaking album art. They even included an original cartoon inside the *Funkentelechy* album featuring Starchild and Sir Nose in pitched battle.

The P-Funk empire, facing changing times and regimes at the record companies, eventually became so large and complicated that it collapsed under its own weight. Many people wrote Clinton off, but he came back with a vengeance with the 1981 hit “Atomic Dog.” Like “One Nation Under a Groove” and “Flash Light” before it, “Atomic Dog” became an urban anthem. Artists as disparate as Prince, David Byrne, Public Enemy and Outkast have acknowledged the importance of P-Funk to their creative processes. In recognition of their contributions to contemporary music, Parliament Funkadelic was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on May 6, 1997.

Continuing to funk into the new millennium, George Clinton is the Duke Ellington of the modern age, keeping his band together and restlessly pursuing the latest sound. While their original fan base of African American baby boomers is still funk-ing, the P-Funk audience has expanded beyond cultural and generational barriers to become a true melting pot. The P-Funk All Stars’ new CD, *How Late Do You Have 2 B B 4 U R Absent?* is slated for worldwide release on September 6, 2005 with a national tour celebrating George Clinton’s 50 years in music.

**CREDITS**

The **PARLIAMENT FUNKADELIC** interactive companion website ([www.pbs.org/independentlens/parliamentfunkadelic/](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/parliamentfunkadelic/)) features detailed information on the film, a history of the band and 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 and opinions, preview clips of the film and more.

Writer/Director	Yvonne Smith
Producer	Harlene Freezer
Co-Producers	Yvonne Smith Sharon P. Davis
Line Producer	Ellin Baumel
Associate Producer	Alan Roth
Voice of Animated Character/Narrator	Eddie Griffin
Editors	Sikay Tang Scott Doniger Susan Skoog
Director of Photography	Henry Adebajo
Animated Character Design	Kevin Lofton
CG Animation	Paul Collins
Digital Artist	Gary Leib

Funding for this program was provided by the New York State Council on the Arts and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

**PARLIAMENT FUNKADELIC: One Nation Under a Groove** is a co-production of Brazen Hussy Productions, Inc., and the Independent Television Service (ITVS) in association with the National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC). Major funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

**PARTICIPANTS  
(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)**

**George Clinton**, Producer/Songwriter  
**Calvin Simon**, The Parliaments  
**Harvey McGee**, Drummer, United Soul  
**Cecil Holmes**, Casablanca Records  
**Fuzzy Haskins**, The Parliaments  
**Grady Thomas**, The Parliaments  
**Ray Davis**, The Parliaments (deceased)  
**Billy "Bass" Nelson**, original Funkadelic Bassist  
**Reginald Hudlin**, Director and President of Entertainment at Black Entertainment Television (BET)  
**Armen Boladian**, Westbound Records  
**Wayne Kramer**, Guitarist, MC5  
**Cordell "Boogie" Mosson**, Bass and Rhythm Guitar  
**Ron Scribner**, Manager (1969–1973) (deceased)  
**Nona Hendryx**, Musician, LaBelle  
**Garry Shider**, Guitar/Lead Vocals  
**Ricky Vincent**, Author, *Funk: The Music, the People, and the Rhythm of the One*  
**Rick James**, Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter (deceased)  
**Cholly Bassoline**, Manager (1974 – 1979)  
**Bootsy Collins**, Bass/Composer  
**Bernie Worrell**, Keyboards/Composer/Arranger  
**Ice Cube**, Rap Musician/Actor

**ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

**Shock G**, Digital Underground  
**Pedro Bell**, Funkadelic Album Artist  
**Overton Loyd**, Parliament Album Artist  
**Ronald "Stozo" Edwards**, P-Funk Album Artist  
**Bob DeDeckere**, Road Manager (1976–1981) (deceased)  
**Jeannette Washington**, Vocalist, Parlet  
**Dawn Silva**, Vocalist, Brides of Funkenstein  
**Tom Vickers**, Minister of Information  
**Ron Dunbar**, Director of A&R, Thang, Inc.  
**Anthony Kiedis**, The Red Hot Chili Peppers  
**Flea**, The Red Hot Chili Peppers  
**Posdnuos**, De La Soul  
**Trugoy the Dove**, De La Soul  
**Pacemaster Mase**, De La Soul

**Yvonne Smith** (Writer/Director)

A producer, director and writer, Smith has in-depth experience documenting political, social and cultural histories. She brings her unique cultural honesty to bear on films about the prime movers and shapers of the African American experience. Smith produced and directed *Motown 40: The Music Is Forever*, a two-hour documentary broadcast nationally on ABC, and produced, wrote and directed *Make It Funky*, an episode on funk music, for PBS's Emmy-nominated, Peabody Award-winning series, *Rock And Roll*. Smith's film about the controversial Congressman, Adam Clayton Powell, which she produced with Richard Kilberg for *The American Experience* (PBS), was nominated for an Academy Award. In addition, it was awarded the Eric Barnouw Prize by the Organization of American Historians, the National Educational Film & Video Festival's "Best of Festival" prize, the CINE Golden Eagle and the Ohio State Award.

Smith was the writer, director and co-producer of *Mo' Funny: Black Comedy In America* for HBO. It was given an "A" rating by *Entertainment Weekly*, won a Cable ACE Award for excellence in cable programming and a CINE Golden Eagle. She also wrote, directed and narrated *Ray Charles: The Genius Of Soul* for American Masters (PBS). Smith also produced and directed *Jewels In A Test Tube*, a profile of biochemist Lynda Jordan for the WGBH mini-series *Discovering Women*. During her six-year tenure at *Great Performances* (WNET/Thirteen/PBS), she developed and produced the documentary *Miles Ahead: The Music Of Miles Davis* and *The Gospel At Colonnus*, a rousing musical drama with a cast of 60, featuring Morgan Freeman, the Five Blind Boys of Alabama and the Soul Stirrers. Other credits include the musical variety show *Ellington: The Music Lives On* and several film and tape dramas for *American Playhouse*, including *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow Is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange.

**Harlene Freezer** (Producer)

Freezer has had extensive experience in television, film and theatre for more than 15 years, as a producer, programmer and production executive. She had a long tenure with WNET, the largest producing station in the PBS network, where she was senior producer for six seasons of *American Masters*, PBS's award-winning arts biography series. The series has won numerous Emmy, Peabody and DGA awards as well as an Academy Award. Freezer personally received an Emmy Award as the co-producer of *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*, and an Emmy nomination for *Harold Lloyd: The Third Genius*. Other PBS series on which she has worked include *Great Performances*, *In Performance At The White House*, *The History Of Rock & Roll* and *Civilization And The Jews*.

Freezer is also an executive producer of the upcoming feature documentary *Paradise Behind Bars*, a Palestinian American filmmaker's odyssey to find and understand his family's roots in the West Bank and Israel and to confront the stereotypes of the Western media. She was the director and programmer for First Look, a project of Robert De Niro's Tribeca Film Center and Eastman Kodak Company. First Look was a highly selective and competitive screening series created as a distribution platform and talent showcase for promising new American independent films and filmmakers. Freezer was also a past president of New York Women in Film and Television, a professional association that numbers more than 1,500 members including Emmy and Academy Award winners working in all areas of the film and television industry.

Most recently, she co-founded The Green Room Company Limited Partnership, a unique theatrical production and investment fund created to invest in multiple productions in the United Kingdom. The two initial investments for the fund are Andrew Lloyd Webber's new musical *The Woman in White* and *Billy Elliot: The Musical*, with a score by Elton John. In 2003, Freezer co-produced three shows in London's West End: *Absolutely (perhaps)* directed by Franco Zeffirelli, an all-male production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Ragtime*.

A film festival in your living room, *Independent Lens*, is an Emmy Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. Hosted by Edie Falco, the acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of independent producers, which has prompted *Television Week* to call it "Entertaining as hell and better than any other documentary series around."

Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites and community engagement campaigns. Further information about the series is available at [www.pbs.org/independentlens](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens). *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 and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 PM 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 [itvs.org](http://itvs.org). ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People.

The National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC) is a non-profit national media arts organization committed to the presentation, funding, promotion, distribution and preservation of positive images of African Americans and the African Diaspora. NBPC sets the standard for and is one of the leading providers of historically accurate programming about the African American experience on American public television.

## ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

## ABOUT ITVS

## ABOUT NBPC

## ABOUT PBS



PBS, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, is a private, nonprofit media enterprise owned and operated by the nation's 349 public television stations. Serving nearly 90 million people each week, PBS enriches the lives of all Americans through quality programs and education services on noncommercial television, the Internet and other media. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org), the leading dot-org Web site on the Internet.

The images found in this release and more are available to the press as high resolution downloadable photos with captions and credits at [www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos/](http://www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos/)

### PAGE 1:

**Left:** Bootsy Collins

Photo: John Engelman/ITVS

**Center:** Parliament (top L-R) - Grady Thomas, Ray Davis (bottom L-R) - Calvin Simon, Clarence "Fuzzy" Haskins

Photo: Seth Neblett/ITVS

**Right:** George Clinton

Photo: Tar / ITVS

### PAGE 2:

**Left:** Shock G, Digital Underground

Photo: Leroy Hamilton / ITVS

**Center:** Eddie Griffith, voice of the Afroman

Photo: Courtesy of Phillip Rodriguez / ITVS

**Right:** Yvonne Smith (Writer/Director/Co-Producer) of PARLIAMENT FUNKADELIC.

Photo: Arlene Sandler/ Lensgirl.com / ITVS



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