



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Three ITVS-Funded Documentaries Win Peabody Awards**

(San Francisco, CA, April 18, 2018) — ITVS is pleased to announce that three of its funded films have won Peabody Awards in the Documentary category: *Deej*, *Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise*, and *Newtown*. Honoring the “most powerful, enlightening and invigorating stories in television, radio and digital media,” the 77th Annual Peabody Awards ceremony will be held on Saturday, May 19 at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City.

"It's truly exciting to see the talented filmmakers of *Deej*, *Newtown*, and *Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise* recognized for their outstanding work by being named as recipients of the George Foster Peabody Award," said Noland Walker, ITVS vice president of content. "Each of these films challenges you as the viewer to get outside of yourself, see life through someone else's experience, and to genuinely ask, 'What would I do in that situation?' ITVS is proud to fund and co-produce such vital and compelling independent work for the Public Television system. Along with the filmmakers, we are gratified to know that these films clearly resonate with people at some deep level."

*Newtown* premiered on the PBS series, *Independent Lens*, which is presented by ITVS. "Working with Kim to fund and co-produce *Newtown* was a deeply rewarding experience," said Lois Vossen, *Independent Lens* executive producer. "Incisive without ever being exploitative, *Newtown* shows the impact of trauma on a community, the grief gun violence causes and how we begin to heal and move forward."

More information on the winning films follows:

*Deej* by Robert Rooy (*America ReFramed*)

Abandoned by his birth parents and presumed incompetent, DJ Savarese ("Deej") found not only a loving family but also a life in words, which he types on a text-to-voice synthesizer. As he makes his way through high school and dreams of college, he confronts the terrors of his past, society's obstacles to inclusion, and the sometimes paralyzing beauty of his own senses.

*Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise* by Bob Hercules and Rita Coburn Whack (*American Masters*)

The full story of the eloquent poet, writer, and performer Maya Angelou, from the depths of her hardscrabble roots in the Depression-era South to her finding international fame as one of our greatest authors and social commentators.

*Newtown* by Kim A. Snyder (*Independent Lens*)

On December 14, 2012, a disturbed young man committed a horrific mass shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, that took the lives of 20 elementary school children and six educators. Filmed over the course of nearly three years, *Newtown* uses deeply personal, never-before-heard testimonies to relate the aftermath of the deadliest mass shooting of schoolchildren in American history, documenting a traumatized community still reeling from the senseless tragedy, fractured by grief but driven toward a sense of purpose.



**itvs.org**

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## **About ITVS**

ITVS is a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization that has, for over 25 years, funded and partnered with a diverse range of documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning films and then airs them for free on PBS via our weekly series, *Independent Lens*, as well as on other PBS series and through our digital platform, OVEE. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. For more information, visit [itvs.org](http://itvs.org)

## **About Independent Lens**

*Independent Lens* is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 PM. The acclaimed series, with Lois Vossen as executive producer, features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit [pbs.org/independentlens](http://pbs.org/independentlens). Join the conversation: [facebook.com/independentlens](https://facebook.com/independentlens) and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](https://twitter.com/IndependentLens).

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