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## INDEPENDENT LENS BRINGS STORIES FOR JUSTICE TO PBS

*Documentary storytelling pipeline will support increased understanding about the inequities of our justice system and inspire local civic dialogue about reform*

**(San Francisco, CA) February 5, 2021** — INDEPENDENT LENS, the Emmy- and Peabody-winning PBS documentary series presented by ITVS, announced today it will partner with PBS to bring 20+ documentary films and docuseries to 60 million Americans through the Stories for Justice public media partnership. With the bold storytelling of diverse independent filmmakers and the reach and civic engagement mission of public broadcasting, Stories For Justice programming will spark community conversations and boost the work of people on the front lines of criminal justice reform throughout the country.

“Storytellers in this initiative come from the towns they cover and go deep within communities to expose the long-term impacts of our local and national decisions,” says Lois Vossen, Executive Producer of INDEPENDENT LENS, “and the result is an immersive, human story with all the journalistic standards we need to have meaningful conversations that inspire community-led solutions.”

The partnership is anchored by multiple docuseries that offer groundbreaking scope, rare access, and a deep dive into the inner workings of the criminal justice system. Beginning in April, the ITVS and PBS co-production PHILLY D.A. goes behind the scenes in Philadelphia, where District Attorney Larry Krasner and his staff try to rewire the system against a backdrop of police brutality, the opioid crisis, gun violence, mass incarceration and a racial reckoning.

A second docuseries, tentatively scheduled for 2022, will fan out through the city of Dallas, TX and the interconnected lives of a community affected at every level of the local justice system. Over the multi-year efforts, INDEPENDENT LENS will also present Stories for Justice films such as WOMEN IN BLUE directed by Deidre Fishel and DOWN A DARK STAIRWELL directed by Ursula Liang and short docs that explore other issues and communities, together forming a kaleidoscopic vision of the lived experience of the criminal justice system in today’s America.

“PBS is proud to partner with INDEPENDENT LENS to air Stories for Justice, a programming initiative that shines an important light on criminal justice reform and the inequalities that exist,” said Sylvia Bugg, PBS Chief Programming Executive and General Manager, General Audience Programming. “At PBS, we believe in programming that inspires and educates – and Stories for Justice is at the intersection of that, while elevating civic dialogue in communities across the country.”

A cornerstone of the Stories for Justice work will be community-led conversations to solve local problems related to the INDEPENDENT LENS programming. A participatory feedback platform developed by ITVS, [DocSCALE](#), will help gather insights from audiences in their own words,



engaging communities while surfacing data that documents the evolution of understanding, dialogue and civic decision-making at the local level.

Stories for Justice is made possible with the generous support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Ford Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation and Park Foundation.

For more information, visit [itvs.org/storiesforjustice](http://itvs.org/storiesforjustice).

### **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, Acton Family Giving, the Ford Foundation, 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](http://facebook.com/independentlens) and on Twitter @IndependentLens

### **About PBS**

[PBS](#), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS's broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirms that PBS's premier children's media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV—including a 24/7 channel, online at [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org), via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](#). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pbs.org/pressroom) or by following [PBS Pressroom on Twitter](#).

### **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)