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THE LIFE OF NOBEL-WINNING PIONEER OF MODERN GENETICS EXPLORED IN “CRACKING THE CODE: PHIL SHARP AND THE BIOTECH REVOLUTION,” PREMIERING ON INDEPENDENT LENS ON OCTOBER 6

*Narrated by Mark Ruffalo, “Cracking the Code” Chronicles
Phil Sharp’s Journey From Rural Roots to Architect of the
RNA Revolution*

(San Francisco, CA) August 18, 2025— Narrated by Mark Ruffalo, “Cracking the Code: Phil Sharp and the Biotech Revolution,” an inspiring story of vision, perseverance, and the power of science to transform modern medicine, will premiere on INDEPENDENT LENS on October 6, 2025. The documentary feature chronicles the life and career of Phil Sharp through his groundbreaking RNA biology discovery that redefined how we understand genes and genetic disorders.

“Cracking the Code: Phil Sharp and the Biotech Revolution” tracks Sharp’s journey from his early days in a shack with no indoor water or electricity on a Kentucky tobacco farm to winning the Nobel Prize for his discovery of RNA splicing, which kick-started the global biotechnology revolution.

Narrated by Mark Ruffalo and weaving interviews with Nobel laureates into insights from journalist and biographer Walter Isaacson, “Cracking the Code” showcases the ability of a creative thinker with an entrepreneurial passion to transform science globally.

Born into a family that went bankrupt during the Depression, to parents who never attended high school, and challenged with severe dyslexia, Sharp’s determination fueled his path to Caltech and MIT. There, his discovery of how DNA makes RNA would overturn decades of dogma in biology, shed new light on how genes work, and reveal novel insights into the root causes of disease.

Sharp and his colleagues then transformed these insights into life-saving therapies, founding companies that created new treatments for diabetes, multiple sclerosis, leukemia, and countless other diseases, ultimately transforming the world for patients. In 2024, an estimated 7.4 billion people

benefited from biotechnology-based drugs—life-saving treatments now central to modern medicine. As of 2025, the biotechnology field employs 4.5 million people globally.

“Cracking The Code: Phil Sharp and the Biotech Revolution” premieres on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS on October 6, 2025, at 10 p.m. ([check local listings](#)). The film will also be available to stream on the [PBS app](#) and [PBS YouTube](#).

Visit the [“Cracking the Code”](#) page on INDEPENDENT LENS to learn more about the film.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Bill Haney, Director

Bill Haney is an award-winning filmmaker, inventor, and entrepreneur. His documentary accolades include the Gabriel Prize, a Silver Hugo, and a Pare Lorentz Award. His portfolio as a filmmaker includes award-winning documentaries on socially important subjects such as cancer research, coal mining, and worker exploitation.

Carina Chavda, Producer

Carina Chavda is an award-winning producer whose work spans social impact documentaries, sports television, and narrative shorts. Her documentaries and short films have screened at several prominent international film festivals.

Maura Haney, Executive Producer

Maura M. Haney is a writer, musician, and entrepreneur. She is co-founder of Skyhawk Therapeutics and a founding employee of Dragonfly Therapeutics. She is a producer at Uncommon Productions, helping develop several documentary films. Maura is the author of *The Poisoner*, a play inspired by the Flint Water Crisis.

CREDITS

Written, Produced and Directed by Bill Haney

Produced By Carina Chavda
Maura Haney



Executive Producers

R. J. Cutler
Tim Disney
Jennifer Eplett
Sean Reilly

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

Independent Lens is an award-winning documentary series that fosters understanding, seeks to build empathy, and encourages a more united society. Produced by ITVS, *Independent Lens* documentaries have premiered on PBS for 25 years and streamed on YouTube, helping Americans foster deeper connections between communities and themselves. From the Oscar-nominated *I Am Not Your Negro* to the Peabody-acclaimed docuseries *Philly D.A.* and the Emmy® award-winning *The Invisible War*, *Independent Lens* provides viewers with in-depth, nuanced storytelling reflecting the experiences of people from a variety of voices and communities. *Independent Lens* is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting: a private corporation funded by the American People, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Acton Family Giving, Park Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation.

Stream anytime on the PBS app or YouTube. Learn more at pbs.org/independentlens

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years the San Francisco nonprofit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS app. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Park Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org

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