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## **"KEEP QUIET AND FORGIVE," AN UNFLINCHING LOOK AT THE AMISH COMMUNITY'S SILENCE AROUND SEXUAL ABUSE, PREMIERES MARCH 23 ON INDEPENDENT LENS**

*Director Sarah McClure Investigates Culture of Abuse in  
Ultra-Conservative Minnesota Amish Community, as Told in  
Their Own Words*

(San Francisco, CA) January 19, 2026— An intimate examination of sexual abuse within the Amish community and the code of silence that enables it, "Keep Quiet and Forgive" will premiere March 23, 2026, on PBS's INDEPENDENT LENS. The film chronicles the courageous journey of Lizzie Hershberger, a former Amish woman who breaks her silence about sexual abuse in her community and ignites a nationwide movement among Amish survivors.

Growing up in Amish Bluff Country in Southern Minnesota, Lizzie was immersed in the traditions of her Swartzentruber Amish community, where "forgive and forget" was a guiding principle. However, sexual abuse is widely regarded as an open secret in many Amish communities. While some communities have begun supporting victims, many continue to silence survivors, pressuring them to forgive their abusers publicly and discouraging police involvement in favor of handling abuse internally. The film follows Lizzie as she bravely sets out to challenge this culture of silence.

"We are proud to present 'Keep Quiet and Forgive' because it exemplifies the power of documentary storytelling to illuminate hidden truths and amplify voices that have been silenced for far too long," said Lois Vossen, executive producer of INDEPENDENT LENS. "Lizzie Hershberger's tremendous courage and Sarah McClure's careful storytelling creates an essential space for empathy, accountability, and meaningful conversation. This is exactly the kind of bold, compassionate filmmaking that belongs on public television."

Thirty years after being raped by an Amish farmer and subsequently ostracized, Lizzie steps forward to report her assault. Based on a groundbreaking investigation by director Sarah McClure, "Keep Quiet and Forgive" showcases Lizzie's emergence as a leader and advocate, supporting survivors navigating trauma, suicidal ideation, family estrangement, and

cultural excommunication within one of America's most insular religious societies.

With unprecedented access, the documentary introduces viewers to powerful survivor stories, including: Menno, who lost his family after fleeing his Amish home; Ruth, who faces pressure to drop charges against her abuser; and Dena, who co-founded the survivor support group Voices of Hope alongside Lizzie.

"Keep Quiet and Forgive" will premiere on PBS's INDEPENDENT LENS on March 23, 2026, (check local listings) and will be available to stream on the [PBS app](#).

#### ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

##### **Sarah McClure, Director/Producer**

Sarah McClure is a journalist and filmmaker whose work includes "Radicals Rising," "Frat Power," duPont Award-winning "Death by Fentanyl," and Emmy Award-nominated "Prison Kids: A Crime Against America's Children." She's worked with The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Univision, and Agence France-Presse.

Director	Sarah McClure
Producers	Sarah McClure Joseph Terranova Jamie Boyle Jessie Deeter
Executive Producers	Carrie Lozano Lois Vossen

#### 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, Ford Foundation, Acton Family Giving, Park Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation.

Stream anytime on the PBS app or YouTube. Learn more at [pbs.org/independentlens](https://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](https://itvs.org).

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