

**FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**

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## ACCLAIMED DOCUMENTARY “NATCHEZ” PREMIERES MAY 11 ON INDEPENDENT LENS

*Suzannah Herbert Captures a Mississippi Town Reckoning  
with Its Complicated Past Amid Antebellum Tourism*

(San Francisco, CA) March 25, 2026—Winner of the Best Documentary Feature at the 2025 Tribeca Film Festival and named one of the National Board of Review’s Top Five Documentaries of the Year, “Natchez” will premiere May 11, 2026, on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS. From director Suzannah Herbert, a Memphis-born documentary filmmaker, the character-driven “Natchez” captures an unsettling clash between history and memory in a small Mississippi town reliant on antebellum tourism to survive.

For generations, Natchez, Mississippi, has marketed an idyllic vision of the Old South. Now, the town is reckoning with a romanticized past, an uncertain future, and its responsibility towards the descendants of enslaved people. An exploration of a tourist town at a crossroads, “Natchez” immerses viewers in the lives of an array of historic homeowners, activists, and tour guides (whose livelihoods depend on its carefully curated past) caught between preserving tradition and confronting the realities buried beneath it.

What begins as a portrait of a charming Southern tourist destination slowly reveals deeper fault lines. With moments that are tense, darkly humorous, and unexpectedly intimate, Herbert’s film becomes something more unsettling and urgent: a window into the ongoing struggle over who has the right to share America’s story.

“Writer Stephen Saito called Natchez ‘one of the great documentaries of the 21st Century and the 19th Century as well’ for its candid reveal of a contemporary American city alongside its history of antebellum mansions and one of the largest slave markets in our country,” said Lois Vossen, an INDEPENDENT LENS Founding Executive Producer. “Current residents struggle with how to memorialize Natchez’ history of enslaved African Americans, and director Suzannah Herbert asks us to question if a city—and our country—can be great until we reckon with the past?”

At the center of “Natchez” are the residents who bring the town’s past to life for tourists every day and shape the city’s public narrative.

Rev, a preacher, former county commissioner, and full-time tour guide, leads visitors through the city's overlooked history of enslavement, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow. Tracy, who performs as a "Southern belle" for Garden Club mansion tours, navigates the emotional dissonance between the romantic fantasy she embodies and the realities unfolding in her own life. David opens the doors of his meticulously preserved antebellum home, sharing stories of inherited china and family lineage. Debbie, the first Black member of the Pilgrimage Garden Club, invites guests into her bed-and-breakfast, a former slave dwelling where the past feels impossible to ignore.

Together, these Natchezians are performers, historians, and witnesses, each grappling with how their community tells its story, and who gets to tell it.

"Natchez" will premiere on PBS's INDEPENDENT LENS on May 11, 2026, (check local listings) and will be available to stream on the [PBS app](#) and [PBS Documentaries](#) YouTube channel.

#### ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

##### **Suzannah Herbert, Producer/Director**

Herbert's "Wrestle" earned two News and Documentary Emmy® nominations, was named a top five documentary of 2019 by the National Board of Review, and was hailed as a New York Times Critic's Pick. Herbert's second INDEPENDENT LENS collaboration, "Natchez," won Best Documentary Feature at the 2025 Tribeca, Middlebury, and Sidewalk film festivals.

##### **Darcy McKinnon, Producer**

Darcy McKinnon produces documentaries; her most recent release is Suzannah Herbert's "Natchez," which premiered at Tribeca 2025, scheduled for broadcast on INDEPENDENT LENS in 2026. Other credits include "A King Like Me," "Roleplay," "Commuted," "Algiers," "America," "Under G-d," "Look at Me: XXXTENTACION," and "The Neutral Ground."

#### CREDITS

Director & Producer	Suzannah Herbert
Producer	Darcy McKinnon
Executive Producers	Carrie Lozano Lois Vossen

Royd Chung  
Sam Pollard  
Cindy Meehl  
Ted Haddock  
Jacqueline Glover  
Mari Nakachi

#### **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. Funding is provided by the Action Circle for *Independent Lens* with major funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Acton Family Giving, Ford Foundation, and Jonathan Logan Family Foundation, with additional support from Artemis Rising Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, Park Foundation, Brandt Jackson Foundation, the deNovo Initiative, and RandomGood Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

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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