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NONSPEAKING WOMAN WITH AUTISM FINDS HER VOICE IN REMARKABLE STORY, “BURIED UNDER YEARS OF DUST,” PREMIERING JANUARY 11, 2027, ON PBS’S EMMY AWARD-WINNING SERIES INDEPENDENT LENS

*Marta Kauffman-Produced Documentary Follows Family’s Journey
to Communicate with Daughter for the First Time*

San Francisco, CA (October 15, 2027)—“Buried Under Years of Dust,” a remarkable and deeply intimate documentary short film that follows a family’s 25-year journey to communicate with their daughter, who is nonspeaking and autistic, will premiere on PBS’s acclaimed series INDEPENDENT LENS on January 11, 2027.

For the first 25 years of her life, Emily struggled to communicate, while her parents searched for ways to help her express herself. As she grew older, her frustration increasingly surfaced through emotional and physical outbursts. After an incident with a caregiver brought the police to their home, her parents explored alternatives to traditional therapies, including applied behavior analysis, and turned to an assisted-typing method that had long been dismissed.

For the first time, Emily found a way to communicate—not just in single words, but in sentences, essays, and poetry. Her words offered a new understanding of her inner life and transformed how she and her family saw what was possible.

“‘Buried Under Years of Dust’ is a powerful story of resilience, communication, transformation, and familial love,” said Lois Vossen, a founding executive producer of INDEPENDENT LENS. “By inviting us into Emily’s home and seeing her childhood through her perspective, the film challenges us to reconsider what it means to communicate—and, more importantly, what it takes to truly connect with and understand one another.”



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[PBS.ORG/INDEPENDENTLENS](https://pbs.org/independentlens)

Based on Emily Grodin's memoir, "I Have Been Buried Under Years of Dust", co-written with her mother, Valerie, the film tells Emily's story in her own words through interviews, contemporary footage, and reenactments. Now a student, journalist, and author, Emily reflects on her childhood while watching home movies with her parents and explores the gap between her inner world and how others perceived her.

"Buried Under Years of Dust" received Open Call funding from ITVS. The film premieres January 11, 2027, on PBS's INDEPENDENT LENS (check local listings) and will stream on the [PBS app](#) and [PBS Documentaries YouTube Channel](#).

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Sophie Sartain, Producer/Director

Sophie Sartain is the co-director and producer of "Seeing Allred," which premiered at Sundance and is on Netflix. Among Sartain's credits is her ITVS-funded film "Mimi and Dona," named one of the best TV shows of the year by The New York Times. She is a member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences and New Day Films.

Marta Kauffman, Producer

Prior to "Grace and Frankie," Netflix's longest-running series, Kauffman was best known for co-creating the hit show "Friends." She has produced several documentaries including "Seeing Allred" for Netflix. Kauffman has received the Paddy Chayefsky Laurel Award for Lifetime Achievement in Television Writing and the Humanitas's Kieser Award.

Robbie Tollin, Producer

Tollin is an Emmy® Award-winning TV and film producer, and currently the producing partner of Marta Kauffman at Okay Goodnight. The company has produced Netflix's "Grace and Frankie," and "Seeing Allred," about civil rights attorney Gloria Allred. The company has several TV and film projects in development for a variety of streamers and networks.

Hannah KS Canter, Producer

After joining Okay Goodnight, Canter developed “Grace and Frankie” and produced “Seeing Allred.” She and Marta Kauffman have also co-written a feature and several pilots, including the comedy “DINKS” for Amazon, on which she serves as co-creator and co-showrunner. Canter has held posts at StudioCanal, Katahdin Foundation, and Tollin Productions.

Molly Arkin, Co-Producer

Arkin joined Okay Goodnight in 2017. She was an associate producer on “Grace and Frankie” and worked with the team on the feature documentary “Seeing Allred” for Netflix. Arkin covers Okay Goodnight’s slate of passion-driven development projects, including the improv-comedy pilot “DINKS” for Amazon, on which she is a co-producer.

Director	Sophie Sertain
Producer	Sophie Sertain Marta Kauffman Robbie Tollin Hannah KS Canter
Co-Producer	Molly Arkin
Executive Producers	Carrie Lozano Lois Vossen Royd Chung



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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