



**PHILLY D.A., HIGHLY ANTICIPATED DOCUSERIES INSIDE THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY AND UNAPOLOGETIC REFORMER LARRY KRASNER, TO PREMIERE AT SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL**

**Docuseries from PBS, ITVS and Topic Takes Viewers Inside the Office of the Philadelphia District Attorney Dedicated to Reforming the Criminal Justice System**

(San Francisco, CA) – December 15, 2020 – The docuseries *Philly D.A.* will premiere on February 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Sundance Film Festival. *Philly D.A.* is a multi-part series that details the dramatic work inside the office of Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner as he and his team work to end mass incarceration and transform the criminal justice system from the inside.

In 2017, Krasner, a civil rights attorney who sued the Philadelphia Police Department 75 times throughout his career, mounted a longshot campaign supported by activists and organizers, and ultimately won the District Attorney's seat in a city that has the highest incarceration rate of any large city in the United States. *Philly D.A.* brings viewers inside the emotional, high-stakes work that Krasner and an ensemble of idealistic outsiders from different walks of life take on as they attempt a fundamental overhaul of an expansive, entrenched criminal justice system.

The series follows Krasner's team undertaking this so-called "social experiment" as they push reforms such as prosecuting police misconduct and brutality, rethinking sentencing, probation and parole reform, minimizing the use of cash bail and ending pursuit of the death penalty.

"The District Attorney has arguably more power over the lives of everyday Americans than any other elected official, but its offices are known as the 'black box of the criminal justice system,'" said filmmakers Ted Passon and Yoni Brook. "Through *Philly D.A.*, we are able to bring the public behind the scenes of this pivotal and often opaque institution, and to create a 360-degree portrait of our city in the midst of change. We're thrilled to show the series to audiences for the first time at Sundance."

Verité documentary filmmakers Passon and Brook gained wide-ranging access inside the prosecutor's office, carrying viewers along for the legal and political twists and turns that Krasner and his team face on their mission of change as they encounter political opposition, a stultifying bureaucracy, and a skeptical public. Embedded with Krasner's 2017 election campaign and filmed over the course of three years, the storylines move back and forth from inside the office into the lives of people who are directly impacted by the decisions made there, including those currently incarcerated, and victims of crime.

Through real-time interviews with Krasner, his team, and those who disagree with his approach, including prosecutors in his own district attorney's office, sitting judges, victims of crime, and law enforcement officials, *Philly D.A.* captures a never-before-seen, in-depth look inside the justice system as an old and new guard clash. Over the course of the series, *Philly D.A.* pulls back the curtain on heated meetings, consequential decision-making, and personal moments as key figures grapple with solutions to social issues that are pressing and topical, including police brutality, the opioid crisis, gun violence and mass incarceration. As the movement for criminal justice reform sweeps the nation, electing reform-minded prosecutors in cities like Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles, Philadelphia serves as a tale that is both cautionary and inspiring. The series will make its broadcast premiere later in 2021 on the ITVS flagship, Emmy® Award-winning documentary anthology series, *Independent Lens* on PBS, followed by First Look Media's streaming service Topic.



"The *Philly D.A.* filmmakers earned extraordinary access for this docuseries, and the result is an unforgettable, visceral journey inside of a broken criminal justice system struggling with change," said Lois Vossen, Executive Producer of *Independent Lens*. "We know that documentaries have the power to spark conversations and ignite transformation, and we believe that *Philly D.A.* will immerse audiences in the gripping reality of these issues and help to pave the way for necessary reform."

"We at Topic are incredibly proud to support the nuanced portrayal of Philadelphia's criminal justice system in *Philly D.A.* In telling District Attorney Larry Krasner's story, this series uniquely combines intimate access to high-level power brokers with on-the-ground portraits of the everyday citizens most impacted by the justice system's success and failures," said Executive Producer from Topic, Jeff Seelbach. "This is a remarkable look at an outsider trying to make change from within."

Episodes one and two of *Philly D.A.* will World Premiere virtually as part of Sundance's Premieres section on February 2 at 7pm MT. More information can be found [HERE](#). Assets from the docuseries can be found [HERE](#).

*Philly D.A.* is a production of the Department of Motion Pictures and All Ages Productions, and is a co-production of Independent Television Service (ITVS) with funding provided by Corporation for Public Broadcasting in association with PBS and Topic.

#### **About the Creators:**

##### **Ted Passon**

Ted Passon is an award-winning director and video artist. He has directed episodic series for Netflix and Disney. He is a 2016 Sundance Lab Fellow, a recipient of the Pew Foundation Individual Artist Fellowship Grant and a 2016 Headlands Artist in Residency. He has exhibited his award-winning short films in festivals and galleries around the U.S. and abroad including exhibitions by the Whitney Museum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and 96 Gillespie in London.

##### **Yoni Brook**

Yoni Brook is a twice Independent Spirit-nominated cinematographer and producer. As a director, his films have screened at the Berlinale, New York and Toronto Film Festivals, True/False, and IDFA. His previous Sundance credits include *Menashe* (A24, dir. Joshua Z Weinstein) and *Valley of Saints* (World Dramatic Audience Award, dir. Musa Syeed). For PBS's POV series, Brook co-directed *Bronx Princess* (with Musa Syeed). Brook co-directed *The Calling*, a four hour series about young religious leaders for *Independent Lens*. His directorial debut, *A Son's Sacrifice*, won Best Documentary Short at the Tribeca Film Festival and IDA's Best Documentary Short, and broadcast on *Independent Lens*.

##### **Nicole Salazar**

Nicole Salazar is a documentary filmmaker and journalist who has worked on investigative and breaking news stories in the US and internationally for over a decade. She was a producer for the Emmy Award-winning investigative series, *Fault Lines* on Al Jazeera. Credits include *Guatemala's Disappeared*, *Lost in the System*, *Undocumented in Trump's America* (Headline Award Winner), and worked as a producer and journalist for the award winning independent daily news program *Democracy Now!*. She was also a field producer on the documentary short *Los Comandos*, which was shortlisted for an Academy Award.

**Credits:**

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|---|---|
| Created by                                      | Ted Passon<br>Yoni Brook<br>Nicole Salazar                                  |
| Directed by                                     | Ted Passon<br>Yoni Brook  |
| Produced by                                     | Ted Passon<br>Yoni Brook<br>Nicole Salazar<br>Josh Penn<br>Michael Gottwald |
| Executive Producer                              | Dawn Porter   |
| Executive Producers for <i>Independent Lens</i> | Sally Jo Fifer<br>Lois Vossen   |
| Executive Producers for Topic                   | Ryan Chanatry<br>Gena Konstantinakos<br>Jeff Seelbach                       |
| Executives in Charge for PBS                    | Erin O’Flaherty<br>Pamela Aguilar   |
| Executive Producer                              | Patty Quillin   |
| Co-Executive Producers                          | Nion McEvoy and Leslie Berriman   |

**About All Ages Productions:**

All Ages Productions is an award-winning creative film and video production company based in Philadelphia. AAP creates episodic short form and long form projects, as well as commercials, for outlets such as: NBC/Universal, Disney, Netflix, and others. They have also produced music videos and projects with artists such as: St. Vincent, Blood Orange, Kurt Vile, Spank Rock, Tierra Whack, Iggy Pop, and others. All Ages was founded in 2011 by Ted Passon and David Dunn.

**About the Department of Motion Pictures:**

The Department of Motion Pictures produces narrative and documentary features and series, with a focus on ambitious, cinematic, and emotionally resonant storytelling. Over the years, members of the DMP have produced *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Patti Cake\$*, *Monsters & Men*, the Vimeo season of *High Maintenance* and *Wendy*, as well as non-fiction work like *Western*, *A Thousand Thoughts* and *Bloody Nose*, *Empty Pockets*. Their work has premiered at festivals ranging from Sundance to Cannes and Telluride, and been distributed by companies such as ESPN, Neon, Searchlight Pictures and Paramount. The Department premiered three projects at Sundance 2020 and will premiere three more at Sundance 2021: *Philly D.A.*, *Users*, and *7 Sounds*.

**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](#), via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [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](#) or by following [PBS Pressroom on Twitter](#).

**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, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit [pbs.org/independentlens](#). Join the conversation: [facebook.com/independentlens](#) and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](#).

**About Topic:**

[Topic](#) is the new streaming service from [First Look Media](#), curated for a curious and engaged audience seeking smart, provocative and meaningful entertainment. Topic features North American premieres and programming from around the world, complemented by a diverse slate of originals including scripted comedies and dramas, talk shows, documentaries, features and more. Topic is available to US and Canadian audiences on [topic.com](#), AppleTV & iOS, Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Android, and Amazon Prime Video Channels, with more coming soon. Currently streaming on Topic is the original series [What's Your Ailment?!](#) hosted by comedian Maria Bamford; the festival darling documentary short [Broken Orchestra](#), and the 2020 IDA Shortlisted [Call Center Blues](#), while Venezuela's selection for the 2021 Academy Awards, [Once Upon A Time in Venezuela will soon stream exclusively on Topic at the end of 2020](#).

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