



## CONTACT

Tanya Leverault, ITVS  
Adrianna Paidas

415-356-8383  
646-762-8704

tanya.leverault@itvs.org  
adrianna.paidas@beckmedia.com

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## INDEPENDENT LENS TO IMMERSE VIEWERS INSIDE FIREBRAND DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE WITH EIGHT-PART DOCUSERIES *PHILLY D.A.*, PREMIERING APRIL 20, 2021

*Docuseries set in the office of the Philadelphia District Attorney over course of three years follows unapologetic reformer Larry Krasner and his team as they transform the criminal justice system from the inside*

*“Philly D.A.” marks INDEPENDENT LENS’ most ambitious episodic project to date*

(San Francisco, CA) – February 5, 2021 – PBS’s Emmy-Award winning documentary anthology series INDEPENDENT LENS today announced that “Philly D.A.”, a groundbreaking docuseries from PBS and ITVS, will premiere on April 20, 2021. The eight-part series takes viewers into the office of Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner as he and his team work to transform the criminal justice system from the inside.

“Philly D.A.” is the most expansive docuseries INDEPENDENT LENS has premiered to date, with new episodes airing over the course of seven weeks. In the vein of *Knock Down the House* and *Flint Town*, “Philly D.A.” brings viewers behind the scenes, giving them a vivid, firsthand look at a District Attorney’s office attempting to transform the future of mass incarceration, the culture of prosecution and the fundamental meaning of justice.

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. From Krasner’s win in 2017 up to the present moment, “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 strive to overhaul an entrenched criminal justice system while grappling with detractors, political opposition and a skeptical public.

Verité documentary filmmakers Ted Passon and Yoni Brook secured wide-ranging access to the District Attorney’s office, embedding themselves on a near daily basis for the last three years. This unfiltered access captures Krasner’s dramatic first year in office and documents the day-to-day struggles of trying to change the entrenched criminal justice system. Krasner and his team drew national headlines as they pushed for reforms such as prosecuting police misconduct and brutality, rethinking sentencing, reforming probation and parole, minimizing the use of cash bail, and ending pursuit of the death penalty.

“The District Attorney’s office is an opaque institution, but integral to local policymaking, and has



1435 Folsom Street  
San Francisco CA 94103  
T. 415 356 8383  
F. 415 356 8391  
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a profound effect on how citizens live in any community," said Passon and Brook. "Krasner is just one of a growing number of progressive prosecutors taking office around the country, and so we hope this behind-the-scenes portrait of a city in the midst of change will help inform the public about this movement. "Philly D.A." highlights the nuts and bolts of a public institution and prompts questions around the culture that it's built on, so there's no more fitting platform to present it on than INDEPENDENT LENS and PBS, where it will be accessible to everyone around the country, and will hopefully provoke the rigorous conversations we should be having around our criminal justice system."

While crime, punishment and policing have been subjects intensely explored through film and television, the District Attorney's office has been an entity largely inaccessible to the public eye until now. Though much of "Philly D.A." is shot inside the D.A.'s office, the series also takes to the streets of various neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia and into the lives of people who are directly impacted by the decisions made downtown. Each episode moves back and forth between the D.A.'s office and personal stories from those affected, including those currently incarcerated, victims of crime, political opponents, activists and concerned residents. Through real-time interviews with Krasner, his team and those who disagree with his approach, including prosecutors in his own 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 old and new guards clash.

"These enormously talented filmmakers have accomplished something incredibly rare," said Lois Vossen, executive producer of INDEPENDENT LENS. "They have used their extraordinary access to the District Attorney's office in Philadelphia to tell a complex and nuanced story of national scope and importance that feels as contemporary as today's headlines, with all the high stakes of a procedural drama, and they've constructed it across multiple episodes. It is a privilege to present such a powerful docuseries as "Philly D.A." on INDEPENDENT LENS."

"Philly D.A." is the first multi-part series to premiere as part of a five-year pipeline of criminal justice content presented by INDEPENDENT LENS under its Stories for Justice public media partnership. Through a groundswell of more than 20 documentary films and docuseries about the racial inequities of the criminal justice system, the public media partnership aims to increase understanding and inspire local communities to support reform.

Earlier this month, "Philly D.A." debuted episodes one and two at the Sundance Film Festival to praise: *Variety* called the series "compelling ... empowering ... an eye-opening exploration inside a powerful big-city government" and *The Hollywood Reporter* lauded the series as a "nuanced and provocative look at American urban justice." Additionally, co-creator and producer Nicole Salazar received the 2021 Sundance Institute | Amazon Studios Producers Award for Nonfiction Filmmaking. Next up, the series will be the first ever docuseries featured in the Berlin International Film Festival.

Acclaimed electronic musician Dan Deacon composed an original score for the series.



In addition to airing on INDEPENDENT LENS beginning April 20, "Philly D.A." will also be available to stream on the PBS Video App and PBS Passport. Episode one will also be available on YouTube.

#### **About the Filmmakers:**

##### **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 at JZB Projects. 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.

#### **Credits:**

Created by

Ted Passon  
Yoni Brook  
Nicole Salazar

Directed by

Ted Passon  
Yoni Brook

Produced by

Ted Passon  
Yoni Brook  
Nicole Salazar  
Josh Penn  
Michael Gottwald

Cinematography by

Yoni Brook

Original Score by

Dan Deacon



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Executive Producer	Dawn Porter
Executive Producers for Independent Lens	Sally Jo Fifer Lois Vossen
Executives in Charge for PBS	Erin O'Flaherty 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



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

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