

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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For downloadable images, visit [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pbs.org/pressroom)

For the program companion website, visit [pbs.org/independentlens/dirt-the-movie](http://pbs.org/independentlens/dirt-the-movie)

**ENTERTAINING AND EYE OPENING, *DIRT! THE MOVIE* TELLS THE STORY  
OF THE GLORIOUS AND UNDERAPPRECIATED STUFF BENEATH OUR FEET**

*DIRT! The Movie Premieres on the PBS Series Independent Lens,  
Tuesday, April 20, 2010*

(San Francisco, CA)—Just one teaspoon of dirt contains an amazing *billion* organisms, all working in remarkable balance to maintain and sustain a series of complex, thriving communities that impact our daily lives. Inspired by William Bryant Logan's acclaimed book *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth*, *Dirt! The Movie* deftly combines science and humor as it digs into the history and current state of the living organic matter from which we come from and where we will one day return. An eclectic group of passionate dirt lovers ranging from biologists to Rikers Island convicts, and from activists to Nobel Laureates offer answers to problems and inspire us to clean up the mess that we've created.

Directed by Bill Benensen and Gene Rosow, *Dirt! The Movie* is narrated by award winning actress, author, and social activist, Jamie Lee Curtis and will air nationally on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Maggie Gyllenhaal, on Tuesday, April 20, 2010 at 10 PM (check local listings).



*Scenes from Dirt! The Movie, coming to Independent Lens April 2010.*

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*Dirt! The Movie* delves into the fascinating history of this most lowly substance, explaining how four billion years of evolution have created the dirt that recycles our water, gives us food, provides us shelter, and can be used as a source of medicine, beauty, and culture. But people have become greedy and careless, endangering this vital living resource with destructive methods of agriculture, mining practices, and urban development. This abusive behavior has yielded catastrophic results: mass starvation, drought, floods, and global warming. But as the film shows, times are changing — brown is the new green. The filmmakers traveled to more than 20 locations around the world, visiting renowned global visionaries who are discovering new ways of thinking as they come together to repair this natural resource with practical, viable solutions.

The journey leads us to farmers and agronomists who are rediscovering sustainable agriculture, tiny villages who are standing up for their right to feed their families, scientists who are discovering connections with soil that can help reduce global warming, including ways to generate electricity from soils and sediments, inmates finding inner peace and job skills in a prison horticulture program, and children discovering the secrets of soil fertility and the joys of local food from edible schoolyards. *Dirt! The Movie* uncovers the surprising ways we can repair our relationship with dirt and create new possibilities for all life on earth. As filmmaker Bill Benenson says, “This film is not about environmental disasters — it’s about environmental potential. There are a variety of solutions to the problems we face. There’s a lot of hope for the future, if we come back into balance with dirt.”

To learn more about the film and the issues involved with it, visit the companion site for *Dirt! The Movie* at [pbs.org/independentlens/dirt](http://pbs.org/independentlens/dirt). Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmaker, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section where viewers can share their ideas and opinions. *Dirt! The Movie* is more than a film, it is a call to action. The filmmakers invite viewers to visit their website at [DirtTheMovie.org](http://DirtTheMovie.org) and Get Dirty with the community gardeners, urban farmers, soil scientists and environmentalists who have been inspired by this film to work together to heal the earth beneath their feet.

### **About the Filmmakers**

**Gene Rosow (director/producer)** is an accomplished filmmaker who has written, directed, and produced more than 20 documentaries during his 30-plus years in the industry, including *Doctora* for England’s Channel 4, *Routes of Rhythm with Harry Belafonte* for PBS, and *Knights* for Canal + France. Rosow’s feature film producing credits include *Silent Tongue*, *Zeus and Roxanne*, *Britney Baby One More Time*, and others. Rosow has a Ph.D in history from the University of California at Berkeley where he also taught, and he spent a year doing post-graduate work at the University of Southern California in ecology, biochemistry, cellular physiology, and parasitology.

**Bill Benenson (director/producer)** is an award-winning filmmaker. In over 30 years of producing and directing, he has made several documentaries including *The Marginal Way* about the fishing and artist community of Ogunquit, Maine, and *Diamond Rivers*, a first-person account of diamond prospecting in northeastern Brazil. Both were PBS specials broadcast on New York’s WNET. With Benenson Productions and its predecessor, BBZ Films, Benenson was a development executive, producer, or executive producer on several feature films, including *Under the Volcano*, *The Lightshi*, and *A Walk On The Moon*. In addition, Benenson was executive producer on *Mister Johnson*.

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**Laurie Benenson (executive producer)** Laurie Benenson is a writer, editor and journalist. She founded *Movieline* magazine in 1985 and went on to write about film and television for the *New York Times* Sunday Arts and Leisure section. An avid environmentalist, Benenson is on the action forum of the Natural Resources Defense Council and is also involved with Rainforest Action Network and Conservation International, among other environmental groups. Laurie has written a screenplay about pioneering environmentalist Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring* and is currently working on a rewrite of her romantic comedy *Genie*. *Dirt! The Movie* is her debut as a producer.

**Jamie Lee Curtis (narrator)** Jamie Lee Curtis has demonstrated her versatility as a film/TV actress with starring roles in such acclaimed films as the blockbuster *True Lies* opposite Arnold Schwarzenegger (for which she won a Golden Globe Award, as well as an American comedy Award), and *Trading Places* with Eddie Murphy and Dan Aykroyd, for which she earned a British Film Academy Award (BAFTA) for Best Supporting Actress. In television, among other credits, Ms. Curtis co-starred opposite Richard Lewis in the acclaimed sitcom *Anything But Love*, which earned her both a Golden Globe and People's Choice Award. Jamie will next be seen in the Disney comedy film *You Again* which is set for release in 2010.

Ms. Curtis has also written several children's books, is an AIDS activist, and is mother to Annie, age 22, and Thomas, age 13. She has been married to actor/director Christopher Guest for 25 years.

#### **About *Independent Lens***

*Independent Lens* is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. Further information about the series is available at [www.pbs.org/independentlens](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens). *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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