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Pressroom for more information
and/or downloadable images:
itvs.org/pressroom/

Program companion website:
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/shortstack/>

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SHORT STACK: LOST & FOUND A COLLECTION OF FIVE SHORT FILMS

Premieres Nationally on PBS's *Independent Lens*
the Emmy Award-winning Series, Hosted by Edie Falco
Tuesday, December 27, at 10 PM (Check Local Listings)

(San Francisco)—They don't make "buddy movies" like this in Hollywood. *Independent Lens* presents its third annual shorts showcase, featuring five short films that focus on a pivotal moment in a friendship. Using everything from animation to live action, these small gems capture the moments when relationships are transformed—some by a journey, some through humor, some through love, and some even through death.

SHORT STACK: Lost & Found Lineup

AGORA, by Chris Newberry

Shot on location at the Minnesota State Fair, **AGORA** tells the simple tale of a young girl who becomes lost while at the fair. Separated from her mother, the girl must find the courage to help a stranger despite daunting circumstances and bizarre surroundings. The young heroine is portrayed by eight-year-old Mahogany Ellis-Crutchfield; her new companion is played by four-year-old Payton Von Eschen.

JOHN AND MICHAEL, by Shira Avni

JOHN AND MICHAEL pays homage to two men with Down's syndrome who shared an intimate and profoundly loving relationship that deeply affected the filmmaker. Animated with clay backlit on glass, the film shimmers like stained glass in motion. Narrator Brian Davis, also intellectually challenged, brings the men alive with great sensitivity. Through its artistry, the film challenges society's traditional ideas about disability, sexuality and death.

MIRACLE MILE, by Dong Hyeuk Hwang

"Miracle Mile" is a neon sign that stands on a strip of road separating Koreatown from Beverly Hills. For James (Karl Yune), an illegal taxi driver, and Jiyoung (Hana Kim), his passenger, it represents a potential for hope in the lonely and desolate city of Los Angeles. When James and Jiyoung happen to meet at the airport, Jiyoung enlists James's help to find her brother, sent to America 20 years earlier for adoption. As they search, James remembers his own childhood as an adopted child and begins to hope and believe that he is the one she is looking for. Through their journey, the two strangers realize they've discovered a sense of family in each other.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

THE RAFTMAN'S RAZOR, by Keith Bearden

Two teenage boys spend the summer trying to figure out the secret of their favorite oddball comic book hero, the Raftman, who drifts out to sea without food, water, any noticeable superpowers or hope of survival. The Raftman just shaves, thinks the odd philosophical thought and stares at the ocean. Will he be rescued? Use his straight razor on himself? Starve to death? What does it all mean anyway? By summer's end, the boys get their answer, but it's like nothing they ever imagined.

RESERVATION WARPARTIES, by Angelique Midthunder

Based on a true story, **RESERVATION WARPARTIES** springs from the memory of a 10-year-old Lakota boy. It shows what can happen among Native Americans living on a reservation when fun and games turn to danger under the influence of alcohol, yet at the same time offers hope for the future.

The companion website for **SHORT STACK: Lost & Found** (www.pbs.org/independentlens/shortstack/) features detailed information on the films and interviews with the filmmakers as well as links and resources pertaining to the films' subject matters. The site also features a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more

Chris Newberry's (AGORA) 1998 short film *20/20 Vision* enjoyed a national festival run after earning the Best of the Fest designation at the Minneapolis–St. Paul International Film Festival. The film also received considerable attention from the national media when its featured player, wrestling-star-turned-pop-culture-icon Jesse "The Body" Ventura, was elected governor of Minnesota.

AGORA premiered at the 50th Melbourne International Film Festival and was subsequently acquired for the Exemplary Works Collection at the new Australian Centre for the Moving Image. The film made its stateside debut at the Palm Springs International Festival of Short Films and went on to win Best Short awards at a number of film festivals. **AGORA** has received significant exposure, with more than 50 festival and special event screenings and a recent theatrical presentation at Anthology Film Archives in New York City. Newberry, who makes his home in Minneapolis, is currently in postproduction for his fifth short film, *Sweet Caroline*, and is developing a handful of long-form projects. He also works as a producer and designer in the commercial sector.

Born in Petakh Tikvah, Israel, director Shira Avni (**JOHN AND MICHAEL**) was raised in Montreal. An incorrigible doodler with a flair for puppet making, Avni was destined to turn her talents to animation. She graduated from Concordia University in 1998 with a B.F.A. in animation. Her student work earned her the Dean's Award in 1997 and the Cinema Prize the following year. Her first film, *48 Second Blues*, won Best Animated Video at the Montreal World Film Festival's student competition in 1997.



Producer **Michael Fukushima (JOHN AND MICHAEL)** has been directing and producing animation films since 1984, independently, commercially and for the National Film Board (NFB). On the strength of his first auteur film, *Tako*, Fukushima was invited to the NFB's animation studio in 1990. Two years later, he completed the award-winning animated documentary *Minoru: Memory of Exile*. For several years, he also taught at Concordia University in Montreal. Fukushima's credits as an NFB producer reflect the eclecticism and diversity of his own tastes, ranging from abstract animation to kids' animation to documentaries, interactive web productions and more. His most recent productions include the Animation Hothouse project and the experimental *cNote*, by veteran filmmaker Chris Hinton. Fukushima's current productions include a computer generated short on adoption and vegetables and *HA'Aki*, an interactive installation and film co-production with Habitat.

Dong Hyeuk Hwang, director, writer and editor of **MIRACLE MILE** was born and raised in Seoul, Korea. After he graduated from the Seoul National University with a BA in Communications, he wrote and directed numerous short films including *Our Sad Life* and *A Puff of Smoke*.

Accepted into the prestigious film production program at the University of Southern California, Dong moved to Los Angeles where he completed a Masters of Fine Arts degree. His studies culminated in his thesis film **MIRACLE MILE** which earned him several awards including the esteemed student Director's Guild Award and a College Television Award for Best Drama. He is in development on several scripts including *K-Town*, a crime-drama based on his successful short film **MIRACLE MILE**.

Born and raised in Toronto, producer **Christina Piovesan (MIRACLE MILE)** came to Los Angeles in 2000, where she earned an M.F.A. in film production from the University of Southern California. While at USC, she produced half a dozen short films and won a College Television Award for her work on **MIRACLE MILE**. After graduation, Piovesan worked at the William Morris Agency, then in development for producers Gina Matthews and Grant Scharbo at their company, Roundtable Entertainment. Returning to Toronto, Piovesan founded her production company, First Generation Films, and recently set up her first feature project at Focus Features. She has several other projects in development.

Keith Bearden (THE RAFTMAN'S RAZOR) is an award-winning screenwriter, journalist, television writer and producer. He was head writer on VH1's long-running *Where Are They Now?* He has co-produced segments for the Independent Film Channel's *Split Screen* and written specials for the Children's Television Workshop. His previous 16mm short, *Inertia*, was called "odd and hilarious" by *The Seattle Times* and was given four stars in *Film Threat*. He has written about film and pop culture for publications as varied as *Gourmet*, *Time Out*, *Seattle Weekly*, *Slant* and *Psychotronic*.

Angelique Midthunder (RESERVATION WARPARTIES) began her career in the film industry on a whim when she answered an ad in the paper for a "girl who can gallop on a horse bareback." This open call landed her a lead role in a Japanese feature film. From there, Midthunder went on to travel extensively in Japan, working as an actor, dancer and model. Upon returning to the United States, Midthunder turned her sights on casting, enjoying the experience of selecting actors to play characters, then watching the scenes come to life. Midthunder worked in casting for seven years, booking talent for movies (as diverse as *Tigerland*, *Jeepers Creepers* and *Hidalgo*) and for television (for such major networks as NBC, HBO and FOX), focusing on a combination of creative selection and cultural realism in her work.

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

A humanitarian and conservationist at heart, Midthunder turned her sights toward documentary filmmaking, believing that education through entertainment is key to reaching the masses. Her first nationally released documentary, a companion to Disney's feature film *Hidalgo*, was *America's First Horse*. For that she teamed with actor/artist/activist Viggo Mortensen and veteran screenwriter/producer and fellow Spanish Mustang preservationist John Fusco (*Young Guns*, *Thunderheart*, *Spirit*, *Hidalgo*) to spotlight the rare Indian war horse. Midthunder followed that up with directing and producing the short film *The Horse Is Good*, again in partnership with Mortensen.

Most recently, Midthunder started her own production company and has taken on the task of producing a series of PSAs for the preservation of wild horses, featuring a host of different celebrities. **RESERVATION WARPARTIES** is her first narrative film.

A film festival in your living room, *Independent Lens* is an Emmy Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. Hosted by Edie Falco, the acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of independent producers, which has prompted *Television Week* to call it "entertaining as hell and better than any other documentary series around."

Presented by Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and community engagement campaigns. Further information about the series is available at 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.

ABOUT ITVS

ITVS funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since ITVS's inception in 1991, its programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing television audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting www.itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the CPB, a private corporation funded by the American people.

ABOUT PBS



PBS, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, is a private, nonprofit media enterprise owned and operated by the nation's 349 public television stations. Serving nearly 90 million people each week, PBS enriches the lives of all Americans through quality programs and education services on noncommercial television, on the Internet and through other media. More information about PBS is available at www.pbs.org, the leading dot-org Web site on the Internet.

The images found in this release and more are available to the press as high resolution downloadable photos with captions and credits at www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos/

PAGE 1:

Left: James (Karl Hahn) waits at the airport for his next fare in MIRACLE MILE.

Photo: Cat Deakins / ITVS

Center: Mahogany Ellis-Crutchfield and Payton Von Eschen in a scene from Agora.

Photo: Sarah Newberry / ITVS

Right: The Raftman shaves.

Photo: Tim Lane & Sharon Eagan / ITVS

PAGE 2:

Left: Still from JOHN AND MICHAEL.

Photo: Shira Avni and Michael Fukushima / ITVS

Center: Two bored small-town kids looking for a good time in the RAFTSMAN'S RAZOR.

Photo: Trent Siegel / ITVS

Right: A scene from Reservation Warparties.

Photo: Tristan Barnard / ITVS



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