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Program companion website:
www.pbs.org/independentlens/trudell/

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[i]NDEPENDENT LENS

**TRUDELL TO PREMIERE ON INDEPENDENT LENS, HOSTED BY EDIE FALCO
ON TUESDAY, APRIL 11, AT 10 PM (CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS)**

**HEATHER RAE'S PORTRAIT OF SEMINAL NATIVE AMERICAN ACTIVIST/ARTIST JOHN TRUDELL
REVEALS A COMPLEX MAN WHOSE ART, LIFE AND WORK HELPED SHAPE THE CONTEMPORARY
INDIAN EXPERIENCE**

*"I'm not looking to overthrow the American government—
the corporate state already has." —John Trudell*

"He's extremely eloquent ... therefore extremely dangerous." —FBI Memo

(San Francisco)—Heather Rae's acclaimed TRUDELL follows the extraordinary life and work of the complex and influential Native American poet/activist John Trudell. TRUDELL will premiere on PBS's Emmy Award-winning series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Edie Falco, on Tuesday, April 11, at 10 PM (check local listings).

TRUDELL begins in the late 1960s when John and a community group, Indians of All Tribes, occupied Alcatraz Island for 21 months, bringing the American Indian cause to the attention of the world and giving birth to the contemporary Native American movement. From Alcatraz we follow John's political journey as the national spokesman for the American Indian Movement (AIM), which made him one of the most visible political activists of the 1970s and so effective that he earned the distinction of having one of the longest FBI files in history, consisting of more than 17,000 pages.

In 1979, while protesting the government's American Indian policies, John burned an American flag on the steps of the FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C. Within a matter of hours, his pregnant wife, three children and mother-in-law were killed in a suspicious arson fire on a Nevada reservation. This devastating, incomprehensible loss ended forever his involvement in organized politics. He spent the next four years driving around the country in a car given him by his friend and fellow activist, Jackson Browne. From his pain, Trudell's voice as a poet began to surface, giving him a new way to express his powerful opinions and raw emotions.

Putting his words to music with the help of Browne and Kiowa guitar legend the late Jesse Ed Davis, Trudell's recordings are heralded for their eloquence and power. Refusing to fit into any prescribed dogma, his work is based on his uniquely personal experience as a participant in some of the most turbulent political events of our times. As Native actor Gary Farmer (*Dead Man*) says, Trudell is "the Native people's prophet of these times, our Socrates."

Trudell's musical and film career have led him to work with the likes of Robert Redford (*Incident at Oglala*), Sam Shepard and Val Kilmer (*Thunderheart*), Kris Kristofferson, Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne, Amy Ray and, more recently, Angelina Jolie, who produced his most recent album, *Bone Days*, and executive produced TRUDELL. Combining interviews—with his allies from the entertainment community and the "movement" days and with his friends and family—with archival and concert footage and abstract imagery, TRUDELL is a portrait of a fascinating man and a complex artist whose impact continues to grow with each year.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

The TRUDELL interactive companion website (www.pbs.org/independentlens/trudell) features detailed information on the film, including an interview with the filmmaker and links and resources pertaining to the film's subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.

Heather Rae (Producer/Director) Heather Rae has worked in some producing capacity on more than a dozen documentaries and a half-dozen features through her 15 years in the film industry. She began working on TRUDELL in 1992, and after 13 years, the project is the creative culmination of years of work as a filmmaker and activist. TRUDELL has played in more than 40 film festivals worldwide, garnering accolades such as Best Documentary Feature at the 30th annual American Indian Film Festival and a Special Jury Prize for Best Documentary at the Seattle International Film Festival. For six years, Rae ran the Native Program at the Sundance Institute and was a programmer for the Sundance Film Festival. After leaving Sundance in 2001, she went to work for Winter Films as senior vice president of production. For the past four years, she has worked independently on a number of films, including a recently produced feature film, *American Monster*, starring Adam Beach, Gary Farmer and Udo Kier. She is also producing *A Thousand Guns*, with Michael Robinson (*Trans, The Slaughter Rule*), which Julian Goldberger (*Trans, The Hawk Is Dying*) will direct. Additionally, she is producing *The Space Between All Things* with Yvonne Russo (*Naturally Native, True Whispers*) and directed by Randy Redroad (*The Doe Boy*). She co-produced *Backroads*, directed by Shirley Cheechoo, which premiered at Sundance in 2000. Prior to her years at Sundance, Rae produced in some capacity on such documentary films as CBS's *500 Nations*, Turner Broadcasting's *The Native Americans* and PBS's *Storytellers of the Pacific*. She produced the behind-the-scenes making of *Smoke Signals* for the Sundance Channel and was an associate producer on *Silent Tears*, directed by Cheechoo. Rae currently teaches film studies at Boise State University and sits on the Board of Directors for the True West Cinema Festival and TVTV, Boise's community television outlet. She resides in Idaho with her husband and three children.

Elyse Katz (Producer) comes to TRUDELL with more than 15 years of film experience, having worked on many films, including *Single White Female* and *Pretty Woman*. In 1997, after 10 years in features, Katz's career path took a turn toward socially conscious filmmaking with the Academy Award-winning feature documentary *The Last Days*. Katz then co-produced *Bellyfruit*, a gritty reality-based film about teen pregnancy, and in 2002, she produced *The Fire Within*, an inspiring documentary about a long-term AIDS survivor. Katz has worked in new media at the legendary Digital Entertainment Network and has produced a number of music specials, including *Chris Botti Live*, *Allman Bros. Live* and *Gov't Mule*. Her work in promotional programming includes the companion special *American First Horse* on the Hidalgo DVD and the recent *Spiderman II* international television special. Her other independent film credits include *Going All the Way*, Mark Pellington's first feature, starring Ben Affleck and Jeremy Davies; *Mojave Moon*, starring Angelina Jolie and Danny Aiello; and *Johns*, a 1995 Sundance American Spectrum entry starring Lukas Haas and David Arquette. She also worked on *Ring of Fire*, directed by Academy Award winner Xavier Koller and written by James Redford, and *Destiny Turns on the Radio*, developed at the Sundance Writers Lab and starring Quentin Tarantino, Dylan McDermott and Nancy Travis.

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

PAGE 1:
Left: John Trudell in the United States Navy (1964)
Photo: Courtesy of John Trudell / ITVS
Center: Robert John Trudell speaks at a press conference during the Alcatraz occupation in 1971.
Photo: Ilke Hartman / ITVS
Right: John Trudell (2004)
Photo: Gregory Bayne / ITVS

PAGE 2:
Left: John Trudell with his late wife Tina Manning and their children Ricarda (front) and Sunshine (cradleboard)
Photo: Courtesy of John Trudell / ITVS
Center: John Trudell, Rock-n-roller. His band is called "Bad Dog."
Photo: Adam Picker / ITVS
Right: Heather Rae (Producer / Director) of TRUDELL
Photo: Allison Remington / ITVS

