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Independent Lens* and *The Washington Post* Launch First Joint Online Distribution Venture, *After the Storm

Interactive Web Project Provides a Personal and Poignant Reflection on the 2011 Tornado That Devastated Tuscaloosa, Alabama

(SAN FRANCISCO, CA) — APRIL 27, 2015 — *Independent Lens* and *The Washington Post* announced today that *After the Storm*, their first joint online distribution venture, has launched on the fourth anniversary of the deadly tornado that ripped through Tuscaloosa, Alabama, destroying 4,700 homes, injuring over 1,500 people and leaving 50 dead. Created by Andrew Beck Grace, an independent documentary filmmaker based in Tuscaloosa who lived through the event, *After the Storm* is an innovative interactive short documentary essay that explores what happens after the storm passes, the media leaves town, and the adrenaline subsides.

After the Storm unfolds as an immersive, full-screen narrative that is propelled forwards by user interaction. The main narrative is driven by an intimate and direct voice-over that develops along a linear path with smaller branching pieces providing context and additional information. The viewer is guided through the story by an intuitive navigation system that drives a richly textured collage of full-screen video, animation, music and voiceover to deliver a surprisingly tactile and emotional experience.

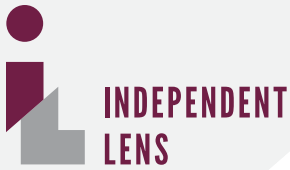
After the Storm can be viewed on PC's, tablets and smartphones. The full version of the site will play on the latest versions of Chrome, Firefox and Safari (8+) on Windows and Mac OSX, Fire HDX, Chrome for Android 4.4 and above, and Safari iOS 8. Older browsers and devices will play a simplified but still full version of the experience which takes approximately 12 minutes to complete.

“On the afternoon of April 27th, 2011, a half-mile wide tornado plowed through the middle of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the small southern college town where my wife and I live,” says Grace. “We huddled in an interior closet as the wind took off chunks of our roof, blew down a 32-year-old pecan tree in the backyard, and pulled houses off their foundations two blocks away. But, as we found out in the days after the storm, numbers, adjectives, even images only go so far in describing what it means to wake up to your world completely rearranged. *After the Storm*, written as a letter to future disaster survivors, is not so much about the how and why of the tornado, but about that central question all of us face after living through something traumatic. Namely, how do we make sense of it all?”

Experience *After the Storm* at <http://wapo.st/afterthestorm> and visit the project's companion site (<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/after-the-storm/>) for more information about the filmmaker, the project, and the storm itself.



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About the Filmmaker

Andrew Beck Grace (Writer/Director/Photographer) is an award-winning independent documentary filmmaker based in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. His 2012 film, *Eating Alabama*, was funded by ITVS, premiered at SXSW, went on to play over 40 festivals worldwide (including Full Frame, New Orleans, Napa Valley and the San Francisco Doc Fest) and premiered on PBS July 2013. The film was awarded Best Documentary of 2013 by the James Beard Foundation. His work has appeared on NPR and nytimes.com, and his films have won numerous regional Emmys and played at film festivals and on public television stations around the country. He directs the Program in Nonfiction Storytelling at the University of Alabama and was recently named one of the “Most Creative Teachers in the South” by *Oxford American Magazine*.

About Helios Design Labs

Helios Design Labs is a Toronto-based multidisciplinary design studio that designs experiences which combine the art of traditional storytelling with new and emerging technologies in web, mobile and animation. Helios works with clients and collaborators such as the BBC, National Film Board of Canada, Harvard University, Copenhagen Philharmonic, the International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies, and filmmakers, academics, artists, and marketing executives. Their work has been featured in international venues like IDFA, SXSW, Tribeca Film Festival, Sheffield DocFest and others. Their work has won numerous awards including the Peabody, an Emmy, Canadian Screen and CommArts.

Credits

Written, Directed and Photographed by	Andrew Beck Grace
Produced by	Andrew Beck Grace with Helios Design Labs
Interactive Studio	Helios Design Labs
Music and Sound Design	Jeff Byrd
Senior Content Producer, ITVS	Cathy R Fischer
Associate Producer	Lindsey Mullen
Additional Photography	Drew Hoover • Nick Corrao • Henry Busby

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 p.m. The acclaimed series features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by Independent Television Service, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS and the John D.



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About The Washington Post

The Washington Post is an award-winning news leader whose mission is to connect, inform, and enlighten local, national and global readers with trustworthy reporting, in-depth analysis and engaging opinions. It combines world-class journalism with the latest technology and tools so readers can interact with *The Post* anytime, anywhere.

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