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***ALL OF ME PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS  
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2014 ON PBS***

“Our society tends to see being overweight as a character flaw, but we all have problems we have to deal with. Unfortunately, mine is just more visible.” - Judy



(San Francisco, CA) — “The Girls” have been friends, and fat, for years. Their bond goes deep and wide, literally and figuratively. Smart, complex, warm and compelling, the Girls met through the Austin chapter of the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance and partied together among Austin’s Big Beautiful Women community. Meanwhile, they tried every diet and every pill. But now, getting older and facing more health and mobility challenges, they’re choosing to have the gastric band or gastric bypass weight-loss surgery. The experience presents a host of issues and consequences — some they expected, some they feared, and some they never could have imagined. Produced and directed by Alexandra Lescaze, *All of Me* premieres on *Independent Lens*, hosted by Stanley Tucci, on Monday, March 24, 2014, 10:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. ET on PBS ([check local listings.](#))

The Girls have varied post-op experiences but one reality is true for all of them: having surgery means the loss of their primary coping strategy (eating), and the experience of shedding — or trying to shed — hundreds of pounds changes everything. Their health, their self-images, their marriages, and friendships are all at stake.

Although *All of Me* focuses on just one group of women, their story is not unique; more than 90 million Americans are obese. Our society’s diet and exercise talking points do not compute for those who have hundreds of pounds to lose. 200,000 people a year are choosing weight-loss surgery and 80% of them are women.

The film focuses on the journeys of three of the Girls: the strong-willed Judy, who is determined to succeed; Dawn, who had an early career as the fat model and calendar girl “Bridget,” and is struggling with both her weight and her identity; and the heaviest of the Girls, Zsalyann, who, at over 500 pounds, is trying to save enough money for surgery, out of desperation and for her young daughter’s sake.

Through the stories of these unforgettable women, *All of Me* shines light on our attitudes, (mis)understandings, and prejudices about obesity — its causes, challenges, and the intense psychological struggle so many have with food that no surgery or diet can cure. The Girls’ journeys of self-discovery are fascinating and inspiring, and, as in life, there are heartbreaks and unexpected consequences along the way. The Girls take us through their food addiction and emotional eating with a searing honesty. For a group that is so often vilified, joked about, or ignored, *All of Me* provides a much-needed platform for their stories and encourages viewers to take a fresh look at our own prejudices and complicated relationships with food, fat, and our bodies.

Visit the *All of Me* companion website (<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/all-of-me>) which features information about the film, four companion short films, an interview with the filmmaker and links, resources, and interactive features 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.

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### **About the Filmmakers**

#### **Alexandra Lescaze (Director/Producer)**

Alexandra Lescaze is a New York-based documentary filmmaker and the Executive Director of the Sidney Hillman Foundation, home of the annual Hillman Prizes in Journalism and monthly Sidney Awards, honoring excellence in journalism in service of the common good. Her first film, *Where Do You Stand? Stories from an American Mill*, documented the 25-year effort of North Carolina textile workers to organize a union in the face of modernization and globalization.

#### **Deborah Eve Lewis (Co-producer/Director of Photography)**

Deborah Eve Lewis’ documentary feature cinematography credits include *The Calling*, *Sunshine*, *Troop 1500*, *Last Man Standing* and *Writ Writer*. Her narrative feature credits include the award-winning films *The Slow Business of Going* and *Afraid of Everything*. Lewis serves as an adjunct lecturer in filmmaking and cinematography at the University of Texas at Austin where she recently created the Cinema Laboratory. She is also a founding member of the public art collaborative Legge Lewis Legge.

## **CREDITS**

Director/Producer	Alexandra Lescaze
Co-Producer/Director of Photography	Deborah Eve Lewis
Editor/Associate Producer	Sarah Devorkin
Sound	Andrew Garrison
Co-Editor	Jennifer Fineran
Associate Producer	Karen Bernstein
Executive Producer for ITVS	Sally Jo Fifer

**About *Independent Lens***

*Independent Lens* is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The senior series producer is Lois Vossen. More information at [www.pbs.org/independentlens](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens). Join *Independent Lens* on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/independentlens](http://www.facebook.com/independentlens).