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CONTACT

Lisa Tawil, ITVS 415-356-8383 lisa_tawil@itvs.org
Mary Lugo 770-623-8190 lugo@negia.net
Cara White 843-881-1480 cara.white@mac.com

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Acclaimed Documentary *India's Daughter* Premieres on *Independent Lens* Monday, November 16, 2015 on PBS

**Banned in India, harrowing story of a brutal rape and murder has sparked
international movement**



Protesters at India Gate, Delhi in December 2012
Credit: Courtesy of Getty.

(San Francisco, CA) – In 2012, a promising 23-year-old medical student named Jyoti Singh was brutally gang raped and murdered in Delhi. Her horrifying ordeal and tragic death sparked riots in the streets of Indian cities, leading to changes in Indian law and what activists hope will be widespread change in the way women are allowed to live their lives in India's patriarchal society. Directed by Leslee Udwin, *India's Daughter*, which made international news after being banned in India, premieres on *Independent Lens* Monday, November 16, 2015, 10:00-11:00 PM ET ([check local listings](#)) on PBS.

“The brutal gang rape of Jyoti Singh sparked a movement in India that is demanding deep-seated cultural change to beliefs and laws that

have created grave consequences for women,” said Lois Vossen, *Independent Lens* Executive Producer. “Director Leslee Udwin overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles to get exclusive, intimate access to the victim's family and friends and startling jailhouse interviews with the rapists. Although banned in India, the film focuses the eyes of the world on this horrific situation.”

Ever since her parents can remember, Jyoti Singh hoped to become a doctor and dreamed of building a free hospital in her parents' village. She persuaded her father to give her what little money he had managed to save for her marriage, and to sell a piece of their ancestral land, to pay her medical school tuition. Many family members were shocked that her parents would make such an investment in a girl. But that money wasn't enough; Jyoti also worked night shifts at a call center, sleeping only three to four hours a night while studying by day. Driven, bright, brave and passionate about her rights as a young woman in a culture that often ignores the potential of its girls, Jyoti was determined to pull her family — and her country — out of poverty.

On December 16, 2012, Jyoti went with a male friend to see the film *Life of Pi*. When it was over,



651 Brannan Street, Suite 410
San Francisco, Ca 94107
T. 415 356 8383
F. 415 356 8391
pbs.org/independentlens

the couple headed home on one of India's many private transport buses. On the bus were six men: a driver (Mukesh Singh); and, posing as passengers, Mukesh's brother, Ram Singh, Akshay Thakur, Pawan Gupta, Vinay Sharma and a 17-year-old juvenile whose identity cannot legally be revealed. The six men beat Jyoti's friend and gang raped her for almost an hour as the bus rode around the highway.

The couple was thrown out of the moving bus, naked and bleeding. They lay on the roadside for almost an hour, pleading for help, but passersby and cars stopped only to stare and then move on. Finally, a man stopped to help and the police were summoned.

Against all odds, Jyoti survived for two weeks, but she died after seven surgeries. Her ordeal and death sparked massive protests and riots in the streets of Indian cities; the protesters were greeted with tear gas and water cannons. Their actions led to legal reform and what some hope heralds a change in how women are treated in India.

Interwoven in Jyoti's story are glimpses into the lives and values of the rapists, to whom the filmmakers had exclusive and unprecedented access between their conviction and expected hanging. By exploring their backgrounds and interviewing their families, the film reveals the roots of their attitudes towards women, attitudes that allowed and even encouraged them to commit such a heinous crime. Even more shocking are the interviews with the rapists' attorneys, who steadfastly believe that young women who flout patriarchal conventions are asking to be raped and deserve their fate. Also featured are interviews with activists working to ensure that what happened to Jyoti — now known throughout the world as "India's daughter" — never happens again.

"If anything positive can be said to have come out of the horror of this event, it is the awakening among women and men alike in India and the world to the issue of violence against women," says filmmaker Leslee Udwin. "This particular incident has been a huge turning point. We hope the film will spark a persuasive plea for change and the establishment of a new norm of freedom and respect for women the world over. Gender inequality, the disease of which the offenses against women are the symptoms, is a global issue."

Visit the *India's Daughter* companion website (<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/indias-daughter>), which features information about the film.

About the Filmmaker

Born in Israel, **Leslee Udwin (Director/Producer)** began her career as a stage actress in England. She began making films in 1986, and her many credits include *Sitting Targets*, based on her own experience with one of Britain's most notorious criminal landlords, in which she co-starred with Jonathan Hyde and Phyllis Logan; the award-winning docudrama *Who Bombed Birmingham?*, starring John Hurt, about two 1974 bomb attacks in Birmingham that left 21 dead





and six innocent men wrongly convicted and which led to their release after 17 years of imprisonment; the BAFTA Award-winning comedy-drama *East Is East*; the romantic comedy *The One and Only*; the satiric comedy *Mrs. Ratcliffe's Revolution*; and *West Is West*, the sequel to *East Is East*. She is the founder of the production company Assassin Films. In 2000, Udwin was awarded the London Critic's Circle Producer of the Year Award. She also regularly lectures on the power of film to educate and open hearts and minds.

CREDITS

Directed and Produced by
Executive Producers

Co-Producer
Editor
Associate Producers

Sound Designer
Original Music by
Camera

Line Producer

Leslee Udwin
Nick Fraser
Susan Ann Davis
Susan Sarandon
Thomas A. Morgan
Mary Pyatissa
Dibang
Anuradha Singh
Freida Pinto
Riddhi Jha
Peggy Cafferty
Resul Phookuty
Krsna Solo
Abhey Anand
Harmeet Basur
Anuradha Singh
Jehangir Choudhary
Faroukh Mistry
Sandeep Verma Kumar
Tushar Prakash
Rajesh Kumar
Vineet Batura

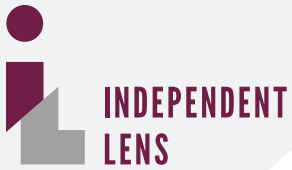
India's Daughter is a production of Assassin Films, co-produced with BBC Storyville, and Tathagat Films (India) in association with Gamini Piyatissa Foundation, Vital Voices Global Partnership, DR, Plus Pictures Aps, CBC News Network, SVT, IKON, RTS, SRF, and RAI.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 PM. 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



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