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***LOVE FREE OR DIE, THE STORY OF GENE ROBINSON,  
THE FIRST OPENLY GAY PERSON ELECTED BISHOP IN CHRISTENDOM,  
PREMIERES ON THE NEW SEASON OF INDEPENDENT LENS  
ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2012***

*Series Moves to Mondays at 10 PM on PBS*

(San Francisco, CA) — Sundance Award-winning documentary *Love Free or Die* will premiere on the new season of *Independent Lens*, which returns to PBS this fall on Mondays at 10 PM. Directed by Macky Alston, the film looks at church and state, love and marriage, faith and identity — and one man's struggle to dispel the notion that God's love has limits.

*Love Free or Die* follows Gene Robinson, the first openly gay person to be elected bishop in the high church traditions of Christianity. His 2003 elevation, in the Episcopal diocese of New Hampshire, ignited a worldwide firestorm in the Anglican Communion that has threatened schism. Even as he has pushed for greater inclusion within his own church, Bishop Robinson has become a standard bearer in the fight over the rights of LGBT people to receive full acceptance in church and state. The film will premiere on *Independent Lens*, hosted by Stanley Tucci, on Monday, October 29, 2012 at 10 PM on PBS (check local listings).

Director Alston's camera follows Bishop Robinson as he steps onto the world stage, travelling from small-town churches to the Lincoln Memorial, where he delivers the invocation at Barack Obama's inauguration; from London, where he is scorned and relegated to the fringes of a once-in-a-decade convocation of bishops to which he is deliberately not invited, to a decisive meeting in California of the Episcopal Church, where Robinson plays an instrumental role in establishing the full inclusion of LGBT people. Through it all, Robinson steadfastly calls for everyone to stand for equality — inspiring bishops, priests, and ordinary folk to come out from the shadows and change history.



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To learn more about the film, visit the *Love Free or Die* interactive companion website (<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/love-free-or-die/>), which features detailed information about 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.

### **About Bishop Gene Robinson — Diocese of New Hampshire**

V. Gene Robinson was elected Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire on June 7, 2003, having served as Canon to the Ordinary (Assistant to the Bishop) for nearly 18 years. He was consecrated a Bishop on All Saints Sunday, November 2, 2003, and was invested as the Ninth Bishop of New Hampshire on March 7, 2004.

He holds two honorary doctorates and has received numerous awards from national civil rights organizations. His story is featured in the 2007 feature-length documentary, *For the Bible Tells Me So* and his book *In the Eye of the Storm: Swept to the Center by God* (Seabury Books, New York) was published in 2008.

Bishop Robinson has been particularly active in the area of full civil rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. Working at the state, national and international levels, he has spoken and lobbied for equal protection under the law and full civil marriage rights. He has been honored by many LGBT organizations for this work, including the Human Rights Campaign, the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, GLAD, NH Civil Liberties Union, GLAAD, and the Equality Forum.

Bishop Robinson was invited by Barack Obama to give the invocation at the opening inaugural ceremonies at the Lincoln Memorial on January 18, 2009. The Bishop's next book, *God Believes in Love: Straight Talk about Gay Marriage*, will be published by Alfred Knopf in September 2012.

Following his tenure as Bishop of New Hampshire at the end of 2012, Bishop Robinson will be serving as Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, a progressive think tank in Washington, DC; and with St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Dupont Circle, in Washington, where he will spearhead an initiative to change the tenor of the political debate in the nation's capital. Robinson will also devote time to public speaking on behalf of LBGT inclusion in the church and in society.

He is the father of two grown daughters and the proud grandfather of two granddaughters. He lives with his husband, Mark Andrew, who is employed by the State of New Hampshire's Department of Health & Human Services.

### **About the Filmmakers**

**Macky Alston's (Director)** first film, *Family Name*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 1997 where it won the Freedom of Expression Award and later aired on PBS' *POV*. Since then he has directed *Questioning Faith* (premiered at Full Frame & Hot Docs International Film

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Festivals; aired on HBO/Cinemax 2002), *The Killer Within* (premiered at Toronto International Film Festival 2006; aired on Discovery Times 2007), and *Hard Road Home* (premiered at South by Southwest 2007; aired on PBS' *Independent Lens* 2008).

Alston is partnered with Sandra Itkoff and Christopher White in Reveal Productions. His awards include the Gotham Open Palm Award and Emmy® nominations for three of his films. He has been a guest on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *The Today Show*, and has been interviewed in *The New York Times*.

**Sandra Itkoff (Producer)** is a producer of award-winning documentaries and children's programming. In 2009, her European Film Award-nominated documentary *Defamation*, directed by Yoav Shamir, explored the complicated relationship between Jews and anti-Semitism and won critical acclaim worldwide. The same year, her film *Off and Running*, directed by Nicole Opper, aired on PBS. The Emmy® Award-nominated documentary traced the coming of age of a young African American woman raised by a Jewish lesbian couple.

Itkoff's feature documentary film, *The Killer Within*, also directed by Alston, premiered at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival and aired on the Discovery network the following year. Her 2004 film *Ladies as Gentlemen: Drag Kings on Tour*, a road documentary, premiered on the Discovery Channel and won Best Documentary/Audience Awards at Outfest Los Angeles, the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, and the Toronto Gay and Lesbian Film Festival.

She was the executive producer of *The Twentieth Century Project*, a six-film series that aired on Showtime in 2000. The project brought together directors Norman Jewison (*Moonstruck*, *In the Heat of the Night*), Barry Levinson (*Diner*, *Rain Man*), Garry Marshall (*Pretty Woman*), Gregory Nava (*El Norte*), Robert Townsend (*Hollywood Shuffle*), and Robert Zemeckis (*Forrest Gump*) to explore topics they felt were representative of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in documentary form.

Itkoff won the prestigious DuPont Columbia Award for her four-part PBS documentary series *Cadillac Desert* (1997), which focused on the epic political and environmental struggle for water in the modern American West. In addition to her documentary work, Itkoff produced the animated children's series *Grossology: The Science of Really Gross Things* for Nelvana and Discovery Kids.

### **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 provided by PBS, the National Endowment for the Arts and the 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).