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For downloadable images, visit pbs.org/pressroom/

For the program companion website, visit pbs.org/me-facing-life

***ME FACING LIFE: CYNTOIA'S STORY* DELVES INTO THE TROUBLED LIFE OF A
YOUNG GIRL SENTENCED TO LIFE FOR MURDER**

**Film Premieres on the PBS Series *Independent Lens*
on Tuesday, March 1, 2011 AT 10 PM**

(San Francisco, CA) *Me Facing Life: Cyntoia's Story* is a hard-edged look into the troubled life of Nashville's Cyntoia Brown, a young woman tried as a juvenile and currently serving a life sentence for a murder she committed at age 16. *Me Facing Life: Cyntoia's Story* will have its premiere on the Peabody and Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by America Ferrera, on Tuesday, March 1, 2011 at 10 PM (check local listings).

Abandoned by her alcoholic and crack-addicted teenaged mother, Cyntoia was passed around from caretaker to caretaker as an infant, and finally adopted into a family with a loving mother but tough father. Shaped by bad genetics (several of her birth relatives have committed suicide and suffer from addiction and mental disorders), bad luck, and bad choices, then 16-year-old Cyntoia was a runaway forced into prostitution by an abusive, addict boyfriend. On the night of August 6, 2004, she was picked up by a 43-year-old man, went back to his home and, claiming she feared for her life, shot and killed him.

Filmed over the course of six years and featuring interviews with Cyntoia, her family, doctors, psychologists, lawyers, and others involved in her case, the filmmaker delves into Cyntoia's life in an attempt to answer a very basic question — why? Heartbreaking and disturbing, *Me Facing Life: Cyntoia's Story* pushes aside assumptions and forces us to look into a startling mirror that reveals some important social issues that show that the norm can fail to help a child or prevent a tragedy.



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To learn more about the film, and the issues involved, visit the companion website for *Me Facing Life: Cyntoia's Story* at www.pbs.org/independentlens/men-facing-life. Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmakers, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources.

About the Filmmaker

Daniel H. Birman (Producer/Director) recently produced the highly acclaimed documentary, *Brace for Impact: the Chesley B. Sullenberger Story* for TLC, which also aired on Discovery Channel. Earlier, Birman produced *Death of the Universe*, a one-hour special for National Geographic Channel that explores new theories (since Einstein) about the fate of the universe. He produced *Europa: Mystery of the Ice Moon*, a one-hour special for the Science Channel about the exploration of a moon of Jupiter that just might support life; and *Medical Maverick*, two one-hour shows for Discovery Health Channel that look at the work of a world-class trauma surgeon. Birman also produced *The Team*, a four-part and first-ever nonfiction series for Nickelodeon, and *Chopper Rescue*, a one-hour trauma pilot for Discovery Health. Before that, he produced *Alternatives: Uncovered*, a series of one-hour programs also for Discovery Health.

Birman represents nonfiction television on the Board of Governors for the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. Birman is also on the faculty at USC's Annenberg School of Journalism, where he teaches long-form nonfiction production.

About Independent Lens

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about unique individuals, communities, and moments in history. Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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