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***MEDORA* PREMIERES ON *INDEPENDENT LENS*
MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2014**

A Small Town and Its High School Basketball Team Fight to Survive



(San Francisco, CA) — In Indiana, where life revolves around high school basketball, what happens to a community when their beloved team can no longer win a single game? *Medora* follows the down-but-not-out Medora Hornets varsity basketball team over the course of the 2011 season, capturing their stories both on and off the court. Riding a brutal losing streak when the film begins, the team's struggle to

compete bears eerie resemblance to the town's fight for survival. An in-depth, deeply personal look at small town life, *Medora* is also a thrilling, underdog basketball story and an inspiring tale of a community refusing to give up hope despite the brutal odds stacked against them. Directed by Andrew Cohn and Davy Rothbart, *Medora* premieres on *Independent Lens*, hosted by Stanley Tucci, on Monday, March 31, 2014, 10:00-11:30 PM ET on PBS ([check local listings](#)).

Years ago, Medora was a booming rural community with a thriving middle class. But the factories and farms are now closed and the population has dwindled. Poverty and despair have moved in.

The filmmakers traveled to the tiny town after reading a 2009 *New York Times* story about the struggles of the basketball team. The next fall, with the blessing of Medora High School and the local community, Cohn and Rothbart began to document a year in the life of some of the players and coaches. The Hornets three coaches are all volunteers who hold down full-time jobs as a cop, a preacher and a stonecutter. Rusty Rogers, the six-foot, five-inch center, is virtually homeless due to his mother's problems with alcohol, and lives with point guard Zach Fish in public housing. Shooting guard Dylan McSoley wonders whether he should reach out to his dad, a man he's never met who

lives in the next town over. Robby Armstrong, a farmer's son, wants to be the first in his family to complete high school, while Chaz Cowles, arrested on a gun charge, does his best to stay out of trouble with the law.

Ultimately, *Medora* is a film about America, and the thousands of small towns across the country facing the same fight. As one resident observes, "Once we lose these small towns, we can't get them back."

Visit the *Medora* companion website (<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/medora>) which features information about the film, including an interview with the filmmakers 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 the Filmmakers

Andrew Cohn (Director/Editor/Producer) is a screenwriter and documentary filmmaker originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan. His first feature-length film *Medora* premiered at the 2013 SXSW Film Festival. He is also the creator and producer of the off-Broadway play *FOUND: People Find Stuff. Now It's a Show*. In 2009, he directed the documentary-short *Dynamic Tom*, which was featured on McSweeney's *Wholphin No. 12* DVD of short films. He has directed material for Comedy Central, Fuse and most recently, ESPN Films' *30 for 30* series.

Davy Rothbart (Director/Producer) is the creator of *Found Magazine*, a frequent contributor to public radio's *This American Life*, and the author of a book of personal essays, *My Heart Is An Idiot*, as well as a collection of stories, *The Lone Surfer of Montana, Kansas*. He writes regularly for *GQ Magazine* and *Grantland*, and his work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and *The Believer*. Rothbart is also the founder of Washington II Washington, an annual hiking adventure for inner-city kids. He lives between Los Angeles, California and his hometown of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

CREDITS

Directors	Andrew Cohn, Davy Rothbart
Executive Producers	Steve Buscemi, Stanley Tucci, Wren Arthur, Michael B. Clark, Alex Turtletaub, Tim Foley
Producers	Rachel Dengiz, Davy Rothbart, Andrew Cohn, Rachael Counce
Editors	Vanessa Roworth, Mary Manhardt, Andrew Cohn
Director of Photography	Rachael Counce

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. Join Independent Lens on Facebook at www.facebook.com/independentlens.