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***MORE THAN A MONTH PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS
ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2012 AT 10 PM***

***One Man's Quest to End Black History Month Becomes a Humorous and Provocative Look at
Race in "Post-Racial" America***

(San Francisco, CA) – Should Black History Month be ended? That's the question explored by African American filmmaker Shukree Hassan Tilghman as he embarks on a cross-country campaign to do just that. Both amusing and thought provoking, ***More Than a Month*** examines what the treatment of history tells us about race and power in contemporary America. Written and directed by Tilghman, *More Than a Month* premieres on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Mary Louise Parker, on Thursday, February 16, 2012 at 10 PM (check local listings).

The film takes the form of a road trip that begins in Washington, D.C., crisscrosses the country during Black History Month 2010, and ends with an epilogue one year later. Combining cinema verité, man-on-the-street interviews, and inspired dramatizations, the film is a first-person narrative of the filmmaker's quest to understand the implications of Black History Month.

Tilghman begins his research at home, but finds his parents dismayed when he suggests eliminating Black History Month. He then seeks a deeper understanding of Carter G. Woodson, the creator of Negro History Week, the predecessor to Black History Month. To this end, he reaches out to Woodson's organization, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. They too respond with horror at his suggestion.



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At Harvard, Tilghman collaborates on a psychological study exploring how Black History Month makes blacks and whites feel about themselves and their place in American history. And in Chicago, Tilghman visits Burrell Communications, the nation's largest black owned advertising agency, to investigate whether corporate sponsorship and advertisements during Black History Month are just an excuse to sell products to black consumers.

Exploring history itself — how we treat it, how we value it — also shapes the narrative. Tilghman talks with members of a Sons of Confederate Veterans chapter in Lexington, Virginia, who are seeking to establish Confederate History month. And in Philadelphia, he speaks with school officials who have made African American history a graduation requirement, ensuring that courses are taught.

At its core, *More Than a Month* is about what it means to be an American, to fight for one's rightful place in the American landscape, however unconventional the means, even at the risk of ridicule or misunderstanding. In that way, it is about the universal endeavor to discover one's self.

The film asks the questions: How do we justify teaching American history as somehow separate from African American history? What does it mean that we have a Black History Month? What would it mean if we didn't?

The broadcast of *More Than a Month* is part of the *Independent Lens* and PBS celebration of Black History Month, which also includes the *Independent Lens* broadcasts of *Daisy Bates: First Lady of Little Rock* (February 2) and *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975* (February 9).

To learn more about the film, and the issues involved, visit the companion website for at www.pbs.org/independentlens/more-than-a-month. Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmaker, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section where viewers can share their ideas and opinions.

More Than a Map(p)

Based on the documentary *More Than a Month*, More Than a Map(p) is a smartphone application that uses a phone's GPS to point users in the direction of the nearest location relevant to African American History. Users can experience each point in a variety of ways including text, video, audio, and links to more information. What makes More Than a Map(p) truly unique is the user's ability to add their own historical points to the map — points that then become part of everyone's app. More Than a Map(p) will be available on iTunes February 2012.

About the Filmmaker

Shukree Hassan Tilghman (Director/Writer/Producer) has worked as an editor on *Dog the Bounty Hunter* and various other cable reality shows before “coming to his senses” and pursuing an M.F.A. in screenwriting at Columbia University. A recipient of the Martin Scorsese

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Filmmaker's Scholarship while an undergraduate at New York University, Shukree has directed several short films and written television and feature scripts, a couple of which have placed in competitions such as Bluecat, the Austin Film Festival, Anything But Hollywood, and ScriptShark Insider.

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 the Independent Television Service (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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