

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Voleine Amilcar, ITVS
Mary Lugo
Cara White

415-356-8383 x 244
770-623-8190
843-881-1480

voleine_amilcar@itvs.org
lugo@negia.net
cara.white@mac.com

For downloadable images, visit pbs.org/pressroom/

For the program companion website, visit pbs.org/two-spirits

***INDEPENDENT LENS* SEASON CONCLUDES WITH PREMIERE OF
TWO SPIRITS ON TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2011 AT 10 PM**

Fred Martinez was a Navajo boy who was also a girl. In an earlier era, he would have been revered. Instead he was murdered.

(San Francisco, CA)— *Two Spirits* interweaves the tragic story of a mother's loss of her son with a revealing look at the largely unknown history of a time when the world wasn't simply divided into male and female, and many Native American cultures held places of honor for people of integrated genders. Powerful and moving, Lydia Nibley's *Two Spirits* explores the life and death of Fred Martinez and the ancient Native American two-spirit tradition. *Two Spirits* will premiere on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by America Ferrera, on Tuesday, June 14, 2011 at 10 PM (check local listings).

Fred Martinez told his mother that he felt as if he was both a boy and a girl, and she explained that this was a special gift, according to traditional Navajo culture. But the place where two discriminations meet is a dangerous place to live, and Fred became one of the youngest hate-crime victims in modern history when he was brutally murdered at 16. Between tradition and controversy, freedom and fear, lies the truth — the bravest choice you can make is to be yourself.



--More --

Two Spirits explores issues of national concern including the bullying and violence commonly faced by LGBT people, and the epidemic of LGBT teen suicide, and reveals the range of gender expression that has long been seen as a healthy part of many of the indigenous cultures of North America, and of Navajo culture in particular.

The Navajo believe that to maintain harmony, there must be a balanced interrelationship between the feminine and the masculine within the individual, in families, in the culture, and in the natural world. For the first time on film, *Two Spirits* tells stories from the Navajo tradition of *four* genders. The first gender is the feminine woman. The second is the masculine man. The third is the male-bodied person who has a feminine essence — *nadleehi*. The fourth is the female-bodied person who has a masculine essence — *dilbaa*.

In Navajo, *nadleehi* means “one who is transformed,” and as the film traces the ramifications of Fred’s murder, it also shows the transformation being undertaken by Native activists who are working to restore the rich heritage of two-spirit people and to claim their place within their tribal communities.

“The film team is working with over sixty organizations nationwide to have six million people see the film and to help expand the national conversation about gender,” says the director of *Two Spirits*, Lydia Nibley.

Lois Vossen the producer and founder of Independent Lens explains, “*Two Spirits* is an important film that tells a modern story with deep historical roots and does so in a way that is surprising and striking. It’s a film that shows humankind at both our best and worst. It’s gut-wrenching at times, but also hopeful and very engaging.”

To learn more about the film, and the issues involved, visit the companion website for *Two Spirits* at www.pbs.org/independentlens/two-spirits. 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.

About the Filmmakers

Lydia Nibley (Director/Co-Producer/Co-Writer)

Lydia Nibley of Riding The Tiger Productions is the director, co-producer, and co-writer of the award-winning *Two Spirits*. Her work has been broadcast internationally and she has created and contributed to works that have received Emmy®, Clio, and numerous film festival awards.

--More--

Russell Martin (Producer/Co-Writer)

Russell Martin's bestselling books have been translated in many languages. His nonfiction book *Beethoven's Hair*, a national bestseller and a *Washington Post* Book of the Year, has been published in twenty-one translated editions and is the subject of a Gemini-award-winning film of the same name. Russell heads up co-producing partner Say Yes Quickly Productions.

Henry Ansbacher (Executive Producer)

Henry Ansbacher is executive director of Just Media. His film *Iron Ladies of Liberia* aired on *Independent Lens* and has been broadcast around the world. His *They Killed Sister Dorothy* aired on HBO, won both the Grand Jury Prize and the Audience Award at the South by Southwest Film Festival, and was short-listed for an Academy Award® nomination in 2008. His film *The Last Campaign of Governor Booth Gardner* was nominated for an Academy Award® in 2009.

Rock music icon and political activist **Patti Smith** contributes music to the production, as do a number of **Native artists** who record with Canyon Records.

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.

###