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NEW DOCUMENTARY “HAZING” TAKES DEEP DIVE INSIDE THE CULTURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF PLEDGING RITUALS AT AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, OPENS NEW SEASON OF PBS’S INDEPENDENT LENS ON SEPTEMBER 12

*Award-Winning Filmmaker and Fraternity Member Byron Hurt Pulls Back the Curtain on the
Psychological, Societal, Gendered, and Historical Components of Hazing*

(San Francisco, CA) – July 27, 2022 – After making its premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival earlier this summer, PBS’s Emmy® Award-winning documentary anthology series INDEPENDENT LENS today announced that acclaimed filmmaker Byron Hurt’s “Hazing” will kick off the new season on September 12.

Building on years of countless hazing-related tragedies and grappling with his own experiences, Hurt (“Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes,” “Soul Food Junkies”) explores the function, politics, and consequences of pledging rituals at universities and colleges across the U.S. Through a series of intimate interviews with victims’ families, survivors, and his fellow fraternity brothers, Hurt and his subjects reflect on the realities of hazing, and question the purpose of these ongoing rite-of-passage rituals in sororities, fraternities, and other groups.

“Hazing” not only opens the newest season of INDEPENDENT LENS, but also makes its television debut on September 12, at 10:00 p.m. ET (check local listings). The film will be available on the PBS Video app.

Through a look at the history of hazing and deeply personal narratives of those affected by the rituals, the film tackles topics of violence, sexual degradation, binge drinking, institutional coverups, and debased notions of manhood. Interviews with violence-prevention experts and campus professional staff provide broader cultural context for these practices and their association with Greek-letter organizations. Hurt also discusses victim-blaming narratives, offering insight into the psychology of belonging, insecurity, and cycles of abuse which largely contribute to hazing culture. “Hazing” takes a look inward as well, as Hurt and many of the film’s



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subjects find themselves conflicted with the joys of Greek culture while also admitting to the perils and damaging effects of pledging practices.

“When you’re sworn to secrecy, it’s a betrayal to reveal the painful experiences you endured in allegiance to your organization,” said Hurt. “As I came to terms with my role in this culture, I was called to make this film. I am extremely grateful to the brave individuals who shared their stories with the goal to spark lasting change on college campuses and prevent future tragedies.”

Hurt speaks with numerous participants in the film including Marc Lamont Hill, a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; James Vivenzio, hazing survivor and whistleblower; Brent McClanahan II, hazing survivor who sustained permanent injuries; and Reverend Patricia StrongFargas, founder of Mother’s Against Hazing whose daughter Kristin High drowned during a midnight hazing ritual.

“‘Hazing’ offers a nuanced perspective on the forces contributing to the hazing epidemic,” said Lois Vossen, executive producer of INDEPENDENT LENS. “We are proud to bring awareness to these practices and the larger issues of race, gender, identity, alienation, and belonging that are plaguing America’s campuses.”

“Hazing” received Series and Special Project funding from ITVS, the leading documentary co-producer and distributor for public media, and was co-produced by Black Public Media and Virginia Public Media.

Visit the [“Hazing” page](#) on INDEPENDENT LENS to learn more about the film.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER:

Byron Hurt (Director)

Byron Hurt is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, writer, and anti-sexist activist. His documentary, “Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes,” premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and broadcast nationally on PBS’ Emmy-award winning series INDEPENDENT LENS. Hurt’s subsequent film, “Soul Food Junkies,” won the CNN Best Documentary Award at the American Black Film Festival and Best Documentary at the Urbanworld Film Festival in New York City. “Soul Food Junkies” aired nationally on INDEPENDENT LENS in January and April 2013.

CREDITS:

Director

Byron Hurt



Producer	Natalie Bullock Brown
Executive Producers	Sally Jo Fifer
	Lois Vossen
	Stanley Nelson
	Regina Scully

About INDEPENDENT LENS:

INDEPENDENT LENS is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 p.m. ET. The acclaimed series, with Lois Vossen as executive producer, features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS, Acton Family Giving, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens. Join the conversation: facebook.com/independentlens and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](https://twitter.com/IndependentLens).

About ITVS:

ITVS is a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization that has, for over 25 years, funded and partnered with a diverse range of documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning films, and then airs them for free on PBS via our weekly series, INDEPENDENT LENS, as well as on other PBS series, and through our digital platform, OVEE. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, The National Endowment for the Humanities: American Rescue Plan, Acton Family Giving, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org.

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