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*NEW DOCUMENTARY “OUTTA  
THE MUCK” PREMIERES ON PBS’S  
INDEPENDENT LENS FEBRUARY 6,  
2023, PAINTING AN INTIMATE  
PORTRAIT OF A RURAL FLORIDA TOWN  
WITH A RICH FOOTBALL LEGACY*

DECEMBER 20, 2022

Filmmaker Ira Mckinley Journeys Home to Explore Shared Family History Spanning Seven Generations, Telling Stories of Black Achievement and Community in the Deep South

**(San Francisco, CA) December 20, 2022** — Filmmaker Ira Mckinley turns the camera lens on his hometown of Pahokee, a small rural city of about 6,000 people located in the Everglades region of Florida, perhaps best known for its achievements in high school football. With co-director Bhawin Suchak, Mckinley captures his journey home to reconnect with his niece and nephew, and explores their shared family history spanning seven generations.

“Outta the Muck” makes its broadcast debut on INDEPENDENT LENS, February 6, 2023, at 10:00 p.m. ET (check local listings), and also will be available to stream on the PBS Video app.

Pahokee sits on the ancestral lands of the Seminole and Miccosukee people, on the shores of Lake Okeechobee. Taking its name from the Seminole word for the Everglades region Pa-Hay-Okee, meaning “grassy waters,” Pahokee is located in an area of Lake Okeechobee known as “the Muck,” named so for the nutrient-rich, dark soil unique to the region. The historic town comprises a tightly-knit community of families, friends, and neighbors and is known for its rich football legacy: Pahokee High School boasts one of the top high school

football programs in the country and regularly sends its seniors to colleges on football scholarships.

As Mckinley returns to Pahokee, he reconnects with his niece Bridget Dean and his nephew Alvin Dean (Bridget's brother), tracing their everyday lives in Pahokee and the larger family history that they share going back through the generations. United by the pride in their community and in being "from the muck," the Dean family remains fiercely self-determined, resisting despair with love, and forging their own unique narrative of Black achievement and resilience in the face of tragic storms and personal trauma.

A focal point of the film is the lead-up to the Muck Bowl, the annual game between the Pahokee Blue Devils and the Belle Glade Raiders, their rivals from their neighboring city on the lake—a high school rivalry considered one of the fiercest in the country. Through the town's beloved sport, the film chronicles intimate stories of Pahokee residents—players, parents, coaches, cheerleaders—and illustrates the tight bonds of community as they support and rely on each other through hardship, and celebrate their shared triumphs.

"'Outta the Muck' is a very personal telling of my family's story, but also of the broader community of Pahokee as a whole. Our aim was to capture a sliver of Pahokee's history and preserve it, for present and future generations, in a way that celebrates our community and reminds us of our own shared resilience," said co-director Ira Mckinley. "For the audiences who find and watch the film on INDEPENDENT LENS, we hope that they are able to see some of their own family struggles and triumphs reflected in the stories of the Dean family, and be inspired by their shared pursuit of love and community above all."

"Outta the Muck" received co-production support from ITVS through its Open Call funding initiative, which supports projects through completion for broadcast on public television, as well as from its Diversity Development Fund, which was created to support exceptional stories by filmmakers from diverse backgrounds.

Visit the ["Outta the Muck"](#) page on INDEPENDENT LENS for more information about the film.

### About the Filmmakers

#### **Ira Mckinley, Co-Director/Producer**

Ira Mckinley is a filmmaker and activist and the director/producer of the award-winning documentary “The Throwaways.” “Outta The Muck” tells the story of his family roots in Pahokee, Florida, and is being produced with support from ITVS, Black Public Media, JustFilms, Sundance, and the Southern Documentary Fund.

#### **Bhawin Suchak, Co-Director/Producer**

Bhawin Suchak is an educator, filmmaker, mentor, and founding member/co-executive director of Youth FX and NeXt Doc. He is the co-director, producer, cinematographer, and editor of “Outta The Muck,” a feature-length documentary supported by ITVS, JustFilms, Sundance, and Southern Documentary Fund.

### CREDITS

#### **Director and Producer**

Ira Mckinley  
Bhawin Suchak

#### **Producers**

Tracy Rector  
Sam Pollard  
Darian Henry

#### **Executive Producers**

Sally Jo Fifer  
Lois Vossen

Visit the INDEPENDENT LENS [website](#) for more information.

### **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, Action 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](https://pbs.org/independentlens). Join the conversation on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram at @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](https://itvs.org).

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