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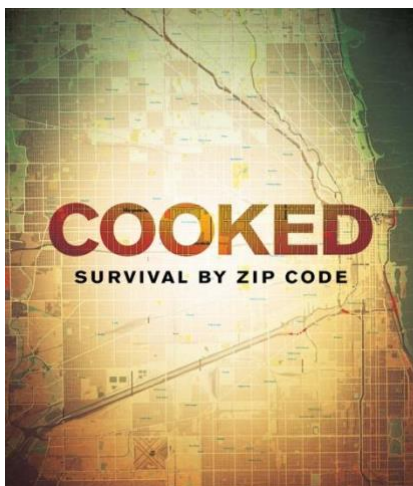
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## **COOKED: SURVIVAL BY ZIP CODE PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2020 ON PBS AND PBS.ORG**

*Peabody award-winning director Judith Helfand's documentary shines a light on repercussions of the 1995 Chicago heat wave and connects critical dots between extreme heat, extreme poverty and the long-term impact of structural racism and economic inequality.*



(San Francisco, CA) — A Chicago heat wave, one of the deadliest in U.S. history, which left 739 dead in neighborhoods that were predominantly home to Black and low-income families, anchors this searing new documentary feature, **COOKED: Survival By Zip Code**. Adapted from Eric Klinenberg's ground-breaking book *HEAT WAVE: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*, the film uses firsthand investigative reporting to tell the story of this unprecedented, often forgotten disaster, to look at the inextricable connection between the climate crisis and structural racism.

Helmed by Peabody award-winning director Judith Helfand, **COOKED: Survival by Zip Code** will premiere on *Independent Lens* Monday, February 3, 2020, 10:00-11:00 PM ET ([check local listings](#)) on PBS, PBS.org and the PBS

Video App. The film will also be available to stream throughout February as part of the network's Black History Month programming.

In July 1995, a heat wave overtook Chicago: high humidity and a layer of temperature-retaining pollution drove the heat index up to more than 126 degrees. City roads buckled, rails warped, electric grids failed, thousands became ill and people began to perish — by the hundreds. Of the hundreds who died, most were poor, elderly, and African American. Twenty-five years after this disaster, *COOKED: Survival by Zip Code* examines the events that led to these deaths, shining a light on local officials who failed to provide support in areas that needed aid the most. Balancing salient and somber with her respectful and ironic signature style, filmmaker Judith Helfand gradually peels away the layers of the trauma to reveal the lesser-known, long-term crisis of pernicious poverty, racism, and economic and social isolation that has been kept in the dark for so long.

Highlighting the systemic injustice at the heart of the Chicago heat wave crisis, Helfand also takes a deep dive into the world of disaster preparedness within the United States. She draws a direct



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connection between the headline-making natural disasters Americans invest resources into preparing for, and the everyday, ongoing man-made disasters deemed “unworthy” of support.

Observing preparation drills across the country, Helfand exposes the extent to which natural weather disasters, the wealth gap, and systemic racism are deeply intertwined, at the local, regional, and national levels. As cities across the U.S. move towards declaring racism a public health crisis, Helfand’s exploration of how class, race, and zip code predetermine who lives and dies not just when disaster strikes, but in everyday life, is more timely than ever.

**COOKED: Survival by Zip Code** was made in association with Ford Foundation | JustFilms and The Center for Independent Documentary. Major funding was provided by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), Leo S. Guthman Fund, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Fledgling Fund, Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program with support from Open Society Foundations, JustFilms | Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Visit the [Cooked: Survival by Zip Code](#) page on *Independent Lens* for more information about the film, and follow the hashtag #CookedFilmPBS for discussion on Twitter.

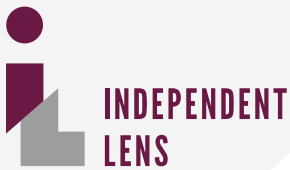
### About the Filmmakers

#### Judith Helfand (Director/Producer)

Filmmaker, activist and educator Judith Helfand is best known for her ability to take the dark, cynical worlds of chemical exposure and heedless corporate behavior and make them personal, resonant, highly charged, and entertaining. Her films, *The Uprising of '34* (co-directed with George Stoney), the Sundance-award-winning *Blue Vinyl* (co-directed with Daniel B. Gold and nominated for two Emmys), and its Peabody Award-winning prequel *A Healthy Baby Girl* (a five-year video diary about her experience with DES-related cancer), explore home, class, corporate accountability, intergenerational relationships, and the ever-shrinking border between what is personal and what is a critical part of the public record.

#### Fenell Doremus (Producer)

In addition to producing *COOKED: Survival by Zip Code*, Doremus co-produced the Academy Award-nominated and Emmy Award-winning, *ABACUS: Small Enough to Jail* for PBS’ FRONTLINE series. Doremus got her start working as an Assistant Editor on *Hoop Dreams* and went on to serve as staff producer at Kartemquin Films for the next eight years. She produced and directed *A Year on Teen St*, a short documentary broadcast locally on PBS, following a teen theater troupe over the course of a year, and was Segment Producer/Co-Editor of the groundbreaking multi-part immigration series *The New Americans*, broadcast on PBS’ *Independent Lens* and winner of multiple awards at festivals worldwide. Doremus lives in Chicago, is an active member of the Documentary Producers Association and serves on the Board of Kartemquin Films.



## CREDITS

Director	Judith Helfand
Produced by	Judith Helfand Fenell Doremus
Executive Producers	Sandra Itkoff Justine Nagan Gordon Quinn Betsy Steinberg Sally Jo Fifer Lois Vossen Diana Barrett
Edited by	Julie Parker Benello Simeon Hutner David E. Simpson

## About *Independent Lens*

*Independent Lens* is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 PM. 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, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit [pbs.org/independentlens](http://pbs.org/independentlens). Join the conversation: [facebook.com/independentlens](https://facebook.com/independentlens) and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](https://twitter.com/IndependentLens).

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