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CONTACT

Adrianna Paidas 646-762-8704 adrianna.paidas@beckmedia.com

Jamedra Brown
Fleischman, ITVS 415-356-8383 jamedra.brown@itvs.org

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DOCUMENTARY EXPLORING COMPLEXITIES OF SCHOOL GUN VIOLENCE AND PREVENTION, "BULLETPROOF," PREMIERES ON PBS'S INDEPENDENT LENS ON FEBRUARY 14, 2022

*Filmmaker and Educator Todd Chandler Examines Fear, Violence, and the Monetization of
Classroom Safety in the Age of Mass Shootings*

(San Francisco, CA) January 21, 2022—From filmmaker Todd Chandler, "Bulletproof" takes a provocative look at what it means to feel safe in the classroom in the age of mass shootings. The film explores the complexities of violence in schools by examining the strategies employed to prevent it.

Hailed as a "keenly observational documentary" by *Variety* and a "quiet gut punch of a film" by *The Guardian*, "Bulletproof" will make its broadcast debut on PBS's INDEPENDENT LENS on February 14, 2022, at 10:00 p.m. ET ([check local listings](#)). The film, which has a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes, will also be available to stream on the PBS Video app.

The premiere coincides with the same date as the 2018 shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. "Bulletproof" is an urgent film that expands the conversation around gun violence by focusing on an overlooked angle: the daily realities of heightened fear and intensified security measures in schools.

The documentary takes a new approach to the conversation around gun violence in schools by examining attempts to stop it. Training, surveillance systems, lockdown mechanisms, and a host of bulletproof products are all among the growing effort to develop, market, and sell a panacea to this persistent, recurring crisis.

The film brings viewers inside schools across the United States, observing the age-old traditions that regularly take place: homecoming parades, basketball practice, morning announcements, and math class. Unfolding alongside these scenes are an array of newer rituals: lockdown drills, teacher firearms training, metal detector inspections, and school safety trade shows selling state-of-the-art products.

"Bulletproof" weaves together these moments in a cinematic meditation on fear, violence, and the meaning of safety. The documentary introduces viewers to the industry self-tasked with

protecting the nation's children, while generating revenue along the way, as well as to those most deeply impacted by these heightened security measures: students and teachers.

In addition to filmmaking, Chandler has taught in high schools and universities for over 15 years and currently teaches in the film department at Brooklyn College. This experience as an educator provided Chandler a nuanced perspective and access to subjects ranging from frightened parents to skeptical school officials.

"I started teaching in 1999, and I learned to be a teacher in an era of a new kind of violence in schools," said Chandler. "I approached 'Bulletproof' much as I do teaching—as a facilitator, posing questions, and provoking analysis through the juxtaposition of ideas, stories, and relationships. The film is a meditation on fear, the militarization of schools, and what it means to be safe."

Without relying on numbing statistics or the polarized debate around gun control, "Bulletproof" aims to simply observe moments, details, and interactions at American schools, and to provide a deeper understanding of the complex world of school safety and the impact of increased fortification of schools on students and teachers.

"Bulletproof" had its world premiere at SXSW in March 2020, and also premiered at the Hot Docs Film Festival, Maryland Film Festival, Philadelphia Film Festival, Tacoma Film Festival, Camden International Film Festival, IDFA, San Sebastian Human Rights Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival, Frames of Representation, and others. Chandler won Best Emerging International Filmmaker at the Hot Docs Film Festival.

Visit pbs.org/bulletproof on INDEPENDENT LENS for more information about the film.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS:

Todd Chandler (Director/Producer)

Todd Chandler is a filmmaker, artist, and educator. His work explores American rituals, landscapes, and systems of power. He has exhibited widely at film festivals, museums, DIY spaces, and backyards, and has worked in schools and with community-based organizations to create videos about pressing contemporary issues. He teaches in the film department at Brooklyn College.

Danielle Varga (Producer)

Danielle Varga is a nonfiction producer. She most recently produced "Bulletproof," directed by Todd Chandler, who won the Hot Docs Award for Best Emerging International Filmmaker. She produced Brett Story's critically acclaimed documentary, "The Hottest August," and co-produced Kirsten Johnson's award-winning and Oscar-shortlisted film, "Cameraperson."

**CREDITS:**

Directed by Todd Chandler

Produced by Todd Chandler
 Danielle Varga

Executive Producers Sally Jo Fifer
 Lois Vossen

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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1435 Folsom Street
San Francisco CA 94103
T. 415 356 8383
F. 415 356 8391
pbs.org/independentlens