



'POV' Introduces Four African Students At MIT Striving to Become Agents of Change in *Brief Tender Light*

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Philip Abel Adama in *Brief Tender Light*. Credit: One Day I Too Go Fly Inc.

Debuts on PBS Television Nationwide on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Monday, January 15, 2024 and Streaming on PBS.org and the PBS App Until April 15, 2024

Brooklyn, N.Y. — November 14, 2023 — Multi Emmy®, Peabody and Academy Award®-winning series, POV, goes inside MIT, America's premier technological university, to reveal opportunities and obstacles four Black African students face as they experience American culture and its embedded racism in [Brief Tender Light](#). Directed and produced by Arthur Musah, an MIT alumnus, the moving documentary marks his feature film debut. Brook Sitgraves Turner is the co-producer.

***Brief Tender Light* makes its national broadcast premiere on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Monday, January 15, 2024 at 10pmET/9C (check local listings) on PBS Television, and will be available to stream without PBS Passport membership until April 14th, 2024 at**

[pbs.org](https://www.pbs.org), and the [PBS App](#). The documentary will have a week-long awards-qualifying (for 2024 consideration) theatrical release in New York, multiple times per day from Jan. 5-11, 2024, at [Firehouse: DCTV's Cinema for Documentary Film](#),



In ***Brief Tender Light***, Musah captures students as they embark on their MIT education with individual ambitions: Sante to engineer infrastructure in Tanzania; Philip to secure a better life for family in Nigeria; Billy to contribute to post-genocide reconstruction in Rwanda; and Fidelis to advance the wellbeing of his community in Zimbabwe. Their missions are distinct, but fueled by a common goal: to become agents of positive change back home.

While their dreams are anchored in the societies they have left, their daily realities are defined by America – by the immediate challenges in their MIT classrooms, and by the larger social issues confronting the world beyond those classrooms. Their new environment demands they adapt if they want to succeed. Over an intimate, nearly decade-long journey spanning two continents, students and filmmaker alike are forced to decide how much of America to absorb, how much of Africa to hold on to, and how to reconcile teenage ideals with the truths they discover about the world and themselves.

“At its core, ***Brief Tender Light*** is about whether youthful idealism can survive the process of growing up,” said Director Arthur Musah. “At the onset, I considered following African youths at different stages of college for a single year. As I developed the idea, it became clear that it would be more adequate that the project become a longitudinal documentary filmed over nearly a decade, in order to answer the questions that intrigued me. How does time, and iterations of trying and failing on projects gradually transform one into an engineer? How does a new world become home? How does a Black African become aware of racism in America? How does one’s identity shift, and how do different people weigh living for their community’s expectations versus their own desires? As a gay man, I also drew on my

experience of turning away from Ghana and towards America in search of freedom to inform the film.”

"With about a million international students studying in the USA every year, Arthur Musah's *Brief Tender Light* is extremely relevant," said Chris White, executive producer, POV. "His lens offers a fascinating perspective of these student's trying to reach their potential while navigating two worlds, oceans apart. Their struggles and reflections illuminate much about our own country, and spotlight advantages Americans might take for granted."

Brief Tender Light made its world premiere at the Newburyport Documentary Film Festival 2023 where it won the "Best First Time Filmmaker Jury Award." At the 2023 Urbanworld Film Festival, it won the "Jury Prize, Best Documentary Feature," and the "Audience Award, Best Feature Film." The documentary took home "Best Documentary Feature" at the Tacoma Film Festival 2023 and the "Youth Vision Award" at the United Nations Association Film Festival 2023.



Brief Tender Light is a co-production of One Day I Too Go Fly Inc., American Documentary | POV, and Independent Television Service (ITVS) with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. A Grant for this film was generously provided by the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program, with support from Sandbox Films.

Now in its historic [36th season](#), POV continues to share bold, visionary stories as America's longest running non-fiction series on television. In addition to standard closed captioning for all films, POV, in partnership with audio description service [DiCapta](#), provides real time audio interpretations for audiences with sensory disabilities.

Brief Tender Light will be available for streaming concurrently with broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org) and the [PBS Video App](#), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. PBS station members can view many series, documentaries and specials via [PBS Passport](#). For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](#) website.

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Download **Brief Tender Light** photos [here](#)

Credits

Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Editor, Writer: Arthur Musah

Co-producer: Brook Sitgraves Turner

Executive producers: Sally Jo Fifer, and Erika Dilday and Chris White for American Documentary

Participants/Cast: Philip Abel Adama, Fidelis Chimombe, Billy Ndengeyingoma, Sante Nyambo

Supervising Producer: Michael Kinomoto

Consulting Producer: Thomas G. Miller, ACE

Writer, Editor: Kelly Creedon

Editors: Keith Fulton, Brian Redondo

Composer: Ted Reichman

Colorist: Nathaniel Krause

Sound Designer & Mixer: Amy Reed

Running Time: 93 minutes

Languages: English, Spanish

Country: USA

Year: 2023

About the Filmmakers

Arthur Musah, Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Editor, Writer, **Brief Tender Light**



Arthur Musah is a filmmaker from Ghana, Ukraine, and the United States. His 50-minute *Naija Beta* (2016) played at festivals in the U.S., Africa and Europe, and won the Roxbury International Film Festival's Best Documentary Short and the Silicon Valley African Film Festival's Achievement in Documentary awards,

among others. Musah studied filmmaking in the M.F.A. program at the University of Southern California as an Annenberg Fellow. He also earned a bachelor's and a master's in electrical engineering and computer science from MIT, and worked as an engineer. *Brief Tender Light* is his first feature. It secured co-productions from ITVS and American Documentary | POV, won the 2020 Paley Doc Pitch competition, and has been supported by the Sundance Sandbox Fund, the DCTV Docu Work-In-Progress Lab, Cinephilia Bound, the California Film Institute's DocLands DocPitch, the Hot Docs Forum, the Gotham Documentary Lab, and hundreds of backers on Kickstarter.

Brook Sitgraves Turner, Co-Producer, *Brief Tender Light*



Brook Sitgraves Turner is a graduate of UC-Berkeley and USC's Peter Stark Producing Program. Raised in a multigenerational family of Black women, she's focused on inclusive storytelling across many mediums: film, television, podcasts and children's books. She has been a member of Film Independent's Project Involve Fellowship, has produced documentaries and *The New York Times*-recognized podcasts, and has written on television shows for Fox, Paramount and ABC. She also founded a health equity mutual aid organization

that's supported over 1,000 families in Los Angeles County.

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About POV

Produced by American Documentary, POV is the longest-running independent documentary showcase on American television. Since 1988, POV has presented films on PBS that capture the full spectrum of the human experience, with a long commitment to centering women and people of color in front of, and behind, the camera. The series is known for introducing generations of viewers to groundbreaking works like *Tongues Untied*, *American Promise*, *Minding The Gap* and *Not Going Quietly*, and innovative filmmakers including Jonathan Demme, Laura Poitras and Nanfu Wang. In 2018, POV Shorts launched as one of the first PBS series dedicated to bold and timely short-form documentaries. All POV programs are available for streaming concurrent with broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org) and the [PBS App](#), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](#) website.

POV goes "beyond the broadcast" to bring powerful nonfiction storytelling to viewers wherever they are. Free educational resources accompany every film and a community network of thousands of partners nationwide work with POV to spark dialogue around today's most pressing issues. POV continues to explore the future of documentary through innovative productions with partners such as

The New York Times and The National Film Board of Canada and on platforms including Snapchat and Instagram.

POV films and projects have won 47 Emmy® Awards, 27 George Foster Peabody Awards, 15 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards® and the first-ever George Polk Documentary Film Award. Learn more at pbs.org/pov and follow @povdocs on social media.

About American Documentary, Inc.

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia organization dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.

Major funding for POV is provided by PBS, the Open Society Foundations, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Wyncote Foundation, Reva & David Logan Foundation, Park Foundation, and Perspective Fund. Additional funding comes from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the *Chasing the Dream* and *Peril and Promise* public media initiatives of The WNET Group, Chris and Nancy Plaut, Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee and public television viewers. POV is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KQED San Francisco, WGBH Boston and THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG.

About PBS

[PBS](http://pbs.org), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS's broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirm that PBS's premier children's media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV – including a 24/7 channel, online at pbskids.org, via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at www.pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](#). Specific program information and updates for press are available at pbs.org/pressroom or by following [PBS Communications on Twitter](#).

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