

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE****CONTACT**

Caitlin Jaynes, MPRM
323-648-8507
cjaynes@mprm.com

Aisha Almada, ITVS
415-356-8383
aisha.almada@itvs.org

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AN INTIMATE PORTRAIT OF THE VIBRANCE AND STRUGGLE OF ONE LAKOTA FAMILY, “WITHOUT ARROWS” PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS ON JANUARY 13

Decades after leaving South Dakota, a Lakota dancer returns to the reservation to reconnect and carry on the family legacy.

(San Francisco, CA) November 12, 2024—The poignant feature documentary “Without Arrows” premieres January 13, 2025 on INDEPENDENT LENS. The film chronicles three generations of a Lakota family as Delwin Fiddler Jr., an acclaimed grass dancer, returns to his ancestral home on the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation in South Dakota. After 11 years of living in Philadelphia, he leaves his big city life behind, aiming to reconnect with his mother and father and learn more about their family history.

A portrait of the Fiddlers, “Without Arrows” begins as Delwin works to rebuild his life and sense of identity while navigating within his family and within the larger culture of the reservation. Delwin experiences struggles and frustrations as he attempts to rekindle an interest in traditional Lakota lifeways while healing from the trauma that caused him to leave home in the first place. Through tenderness and tragedy “Without Arrows” celebrates the emotional arcs and hidden longings of the Fiddler family as they strive to carry on the legacy of their ancestors to the next generation.

“We are grateful to the Fiddlers for sharing their story and we hope that audiences will relate to this multi-generational story and gain new insights about the joys and challenges a Lakota family experiences,” said Producer and Director Jonathan Olshefski and Elizabeth Day. “As this is a story about a family legacy that goes back many generations, we want to emphasize the importance that every link in the chain has in creating a foundation for the ones who come next. We hope our film will cause audiences to consider the legacy that they leave behind as they live their lives and pursue their own hopes and dreams.”

“Without Arrows” premieres on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS on January 13, 2025, at 10 p.m. (check local listings). The film will also be available to stream on the [PBS App](#).



1435 FOLSOM STREET
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94103
T. 415 356 8383
F. 415 356 8391
PBS.ORG/INDEPENDENTLENS

The observational documentary weaves beautiful imagery and personal interviews to portray the complexities of Delwin and his family's experiences, exploring universal themes of love, family, trauma, and cultural identity.

"Without Arrows" is a co-production with Vision Maker Media and received Open Call funding from ITVS. Visit the "[Without Arrows](#)" page on INDEPENDENT LENS to learn more about the series.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Jonathan Olshefski, Producer/Director

Jonathan Olshefski is a documentary filmmaker from Philadelphia. He tells intimate and nuanced stories that honor his protagonists' complexity by employing a production process that emphasizes collaboration, dialogue, and relationship. He is a professor at Rowan University where he teaches in the Department of Radio, Television, and Film.

Elizabeth Day, Producer/Director

Elizabeth Day (Ojibwe) is a filmmaker born on the Leech Lake Reservation and raised in the Twin Cities. Day blends her Native American heritage with her urban upbringing to create films that employ traditional Ojibwe-style storytelling. Her work explores the tension between traditional Native teachings and the life of a modern Indian.

Delwin Fiddler Jr., Main Protagonist

Delwin Elk Bear Fiddler, is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Sans Arc band, and a world renowned Native American performing Artist. Delwin's accolades include performing for two American President's and the Royal Family in England. As a teenager he was a champion Grass and Hoop dancer on the pow-wow circuit. His traditional Grass Dance is displayed in a continual loop at the Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. Delwin created the non-profit PAZA Tree of Life to fulfill his mother's dream of returning the people to the roots of their culture. You can learn more about Paza here: <https://www.pazatree.org/>

CREDITS

A Film By

Delwin Fiddler Jr.,
Jonathan Olshefski
Elizabeth Day

Directors Jonathan Olshefski
Elizabeth Day

Producers Elizabeth Day
Jonathan Olshefski

Executive Producers Carrie Lozano
Lois Vossen
Francene Blythe-Lewis

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

INDEPENDENT LENS is an Emmy® Award-winning PBS documentary series. With founding executive producer Lois Vossen, the series has been honored with 10 Academy Award nominations and features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, INDEPENDENT LENS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Park Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and National Endowment for the Arts. Stream anytime on the PBS app. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Services (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years the San Francisco non-profit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy® Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS app. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, The Park Foundation, Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org

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