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A VISUAL EXPLORATION OF BLACK FARMERS AND THE POWER OF LAND OWNERSHIP ACROSS GENERATIONS, “SEEDS” PREMIERES ON PBS’S INDEPENDENT LENS OCTOBER 26

Acclaimed Documentary Offers an Intimate Portrait of Black Farmers, Family Land, and the Fight To Preserve a Legacy Across Generations

(San Francisco, CA) September 1, 2026— A love letter to centennial farmers in the American South, Brittany Shyne’s documentary feature debut “Seeds” will premiere October 26, 2026, on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS. The U.S. Documentary Grand Jury Prize winner at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival is a lyrical and intimate exploration of Black farmers in the American South and the enduring power of land ownership across generations.

Shot in black-and-white over seven years, “Seeds” turns its lens on some of the nation’s remaining Black family farms, revealing the history, resilience, and profound sense of belonging rooted in the land with its immersive cinematography and intimate access to the farmers. The film is both a meditation on loss and a testament to resilience, inviting viewers to consider who gets to own land, who gets to pass it down, and what it means to fight for a future that began generations ago.

“‘Seeds’ is a deeply moving look at the families who have worked this land for generations and the challenges they face in holding on to it,” said Lois Vossen, an INDEPENDENT LENS founding executive producer. “Brittany brings us close to these families and the lives they’ve built, reminding us that protecting the land is also about protecting the history, memories, and way of life that come with it.”

At the heart of “Seeds” are three farmers whose lives illuminate different facets of Black land ownership and generational farming. Together, these three stories intertwine to form an intimate portrait of the rural South and the people who continue to shape it.

In Thomasville, Georgia, 89-year-old Carlie Williams is part of the Kentavia-Williams farm, land that has remained in her family since 1883. Once a bustling operation sustained by many hands, the farm is deeply woven into the region's history and community. Through Carlie's eyes, the film captures the pride and empowerment that have long come with working the land, while also revealing the difficult realities of aging and prolonged illness that threaten the farm's future.

Twenty-five miles away in Pavo, Georgia, 66-year-old Willie Head Jr. works the 167-acre farm his grandfather purchased in 1938 for \$300. Working largely on his own, Willie plants, harvests, and manages every aspect of the operation. His commitment is fueled by a desire to preserve the land for his grandchildren and ensure future generations inherit it.

In Petal, Mississippi, 72-year-old Ben Burkett, a fourth-generation farmer, brings a different energy to the story. A co-op member of Indian Springs Farmers Association and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Ben is an outgoing mentor and connector whose work reflects the communal bonds that have helped Black farmers endure. His story underscores that farming is not simply an occupation, but a network of knowledge, relationships, stewardship, and shared survival.

"Seeds" will premiere on PBS's INDEPENDENT LENS on October 26, 2026, (check local listings) and will be available to stream on the [PBS app](#) and [PBS Documentaries YouTube Channel](#).

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Brittany Shyne, Director/ Producer

Brittany Shyne is a director and cinematographer. Her debut feature, "Seeds," received the U.S. Documentary Grand Jury Award at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival. She received IDA's Emerging Filmmaker and Best Director Award, and Cinema Eye Honors for Best Debut Feature and Cinematography. "Seeds" was shortlisted for the 2026 Academy Awards®.

Danielle Varga, Producer

Danielle Varga is an award-winning documentary film producer who focuses on bold and artistic storytelling. Her producing credits include "Seeds," "River of Grass," "Light of the Setting Sun," and "The Hottest August." She co-produced "Cameraperson." Varga received the 2025 Sundance Institute | Amazon MGM Studios Producer Award for nonfiction film.

Sabrina Schmidt Gordon, Producer

Sabrina Schmidt Gordon is an Emmy® Award-winning documentary producer, editor, and director. Credits include the award-winning “Seeds,” Quest,” “Victim/Suspect,” and “BaddDDD Sonia Sanchez.” She is a Women at Sundance Fellow and member of the Academy.

CREDITS

Director	Brittany Shyne
Producer	Brittany Shyne Danielle Varga Sabrina Schmidt Gordon
Executive Producers	Lois Vossen Royd Chung

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

Independent Lens is an award-winning documentary series that fosters understanding, seeks to build empathy, and encourages a more united society. Produced by ITVS, *Independent Lens* documentaries have premiered on PBS for 25 years and streamed on YouTube, helping Americans foster deeper connections between communities and themselves. From the Oscar-nominated *I Am Not Your Negro* to the Peabody-acclaimed docuseries *Philly D.A.* and the Emmy® award-winning *The Invisible War*, *Independent Lens* provides viewers with in-depth, nuanced storytelling reflecting the experiences of people from a variety of voices and communities. Funding is provided by the Action Circle for Independent Lens with major funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Acton Family Giving, Ford Foundation, and Jonathan Logan Family Foundation, with additional support from Artemis Rising Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, Park Foundation, Brandt Jackson Foundation, the deNovo Initiative, and RandomGood Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Stream anytime on the PBS app or on the PBS Documentaries YouTube channel. Learn more at pbs.org/independentlens



ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (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 reach audiences across PBS, WORLD, and NETA, with streaming access available on digital platforms including the PBS app and the PBS Documentaries channel on YouTube. ITVS is funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Acton Family Giving, Ford Foundation, Jonathan Logan Family Foundation, Artemis Rising Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, Park Foundation, Brandt Jackson Foundation, the deNovo Initiative, and RandomGood Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. For more information, visit itvs.org

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