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INDEPENDENT LENS TO PREMIERE “OWNED: A TALE OF TWO AMERICAS,” FROM AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARIAN GIORGIO ANGELINI, ON PBS FEBRUARY 7

Film Untangles the History of Racist Housing Policies in Post–World War II America and Their Present-Day Ramifications

(San Francisco, CA) December 17, 2021 — In an effort to bolster both housing supply and a sluggish post–World War II economy, the U.S. government undertook the most sweeping wealth redistribution project in history, subsidizing home ownership and assisting an emerging middle class in the middle of the 20th century. But ingrained in the government’s postwar housing policies were more calculated efforts to support a white middle class, leading America toward two very stark realities: one of homeownership, wealth and The American Dream, and another of defunded and purposefully segregated communities.

From Emmy® Award-winning “Feels Good Man” filmmaker Giorgio Angelini comes “Owned: A Tale of Two Americas,” which weaves together the history of mid-century housing policy in America and the ramifications of the 2008 housing market collapse. “Owned: A Tale of Two Americas” will make its U.S. broadcast premiere on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS on February 7, 2022, at 10:00 p.m. ET ([check local listings](#)). The film will also be available on the PBS Video app.

Audiences journey to contrasting neighborhoods in Baltimore, Maryland; Levittown, New York; and Southern California. The documentary follows residents, realtors and developers as they share their stories of living and working in their respective urban communities. What emerges is the suburban picture of deeply unsustainable housing policies—exemplified in the 2008 housing market collapse—alongside an ongoing state of highly neglected urban neighborhoods, characterized by dangerous living conditions and pockets of concentrated poverty.

The crash of suburbia and urban unrest are not unrelated phenomena. They are a result of the United States’ racist housing policies, which have created vulnerable subcultures in our build environments. Throughout the film, it becomes clear that society cannot continue in a segregated state. Ultimately, the contrasting communities created by the country’s housing history may have more in common with each other than they expect.



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“We all remember the severity of the 2008 housing crisis and its impact on millions of families,” said director Giorgio Angelini. “What is often overlooked, though, is how the central struggles that America faces right now—from racial equity, education, policing, to climate change—often find their roots in bad housing policy that promised a lot, but ended up serving very few. And as housing has turned, essentially, into a globally traded commodity, it has only served to exacerbate these problems innate to the system. With home prices rising like crazy, and people making less than they did 20 or 30 years ago, we have to ask ourselves, what is the purpose of home ownership in a society? And is the current system actually meeting those needs?”

Featuring interviews with Nikole Hannah-Jones, leader of *The New York Times*’ “The 1619 Project,” Richard Rothstein, author of *The Color of Law*, and Yale economics professor Robert J. Shiller, among others, and utilizing drone and archival footage throughout, Angelini accomplishes an investigative and storytelling feat with “Owned: A Tale of Two Americas.”

Visit pbs.org/independentlens for more information about the film.

About the Filmmaker:

Giorgio Angelini (Director)

Giorgio Angelini came into film from a longer, multifaceted career in the creative arts. After touring in bands like The Rosebuds and Bishop Allen for much of his 20s, Angelini enrolled in the master of architecture program at Rice University during the depths of the 2008 real estate collapse. It was during this tumultuous time that the seeds for Giorgio’s directorial debut, “OWNED: A Tale of Two Americas” began to take shape. Following graduate school, Angelini began working with the boutique architecture firm, Schaum Shieh Architects, where he designed the White Oak Music Hall in Houston, Texas, as well as the headquarters for The Transart Foundation for Art and Anthropology, which won the Architect’s Newspaper’s “Design of the Year” award in 2018. In 2019, Angelini launched a production company (Ready Fictions) with his producing partner, Arthur Jones.

CREDITS

Written and Directed by Giorgio Angelini

Producer
Giorgio Angelini
Maggie Burns Angelini

Executive Producers
Lois Vossen
Sally Jo Fifer
Mark Elmore



About INDEPENDENT LENS:

INDEPENDENT LENS is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS, Monday nights at 10:00 p.m. 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, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org

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