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**INDEPENDENT LENS TO PREMIERE INVESTIGATIVE  
DOCUMENTARY EXPOSING ON-GOING EFFECTS OF AGENT  
ORANGE AND ITS TOXIC SUCCESSORS  
JUNE 28 ON PBS**

*Through Personal Stories, Investigative Documents and Revelatory Interviews, “The People Vs. Agent Orange” Exposes the Fight to Hold the Chemical Industry Accountable for the Lasting Devastation Caused by the Toxins Associated with the Infamous Herbicide Agent Orange*



(San Francisco, CA) June 8, 2021 – Nearly 60 years following the use of Agent Orange in the Vietnam War—the deadliest use of chemicals in the history of warfare—toxins associated with the herbicide continue to cause devastation in Vietnam and at home in America where the chemical defoliant was used by the U.S. Forest Service as well as the commercial timber industry. From filmmakers **Alan Adelson** and **Kate Taverna**, “**The People vs. Agent Orange**” closely follows two women activists as they take on the chemical industry and demand accountability for the devastating legacy caused by the use of this poisonous herbicide.

“The People vs. Agent Orange” will make its PBS premiere on **INDEPENDENT LENS, Monday, June 28 at 10/9c** ([check local listings](#)) on **PBS** and the **PBS Video app**.

Through the stories of two primary protagonists, French-Vietnamese author Tran To Nga and American activist Carol Van Strum, the film explores the pair’s crusades as they struggle to hold the chemical manufacturers accountable for the ongoing, intergenerational Agent Orange catastrophe. These personal accounts, alongside investigative documents and rare interviews with experts, scientists, and government officials, expose the staggering role our government and private industry played in obfuscating the chilling aftereffects of dangerous herbicides used at home and abroad.

Decades of death, deformity, and disability are the result of more than 20 million gallons of toxic herbicides used in Vietnam by the American military between 1962 and 1971. Tran To Nga has spent seven years building a legal case against the American chemical industry for poisoning her family. In Oregon, Carol Van Strum fights intimidation and threats by timber interests as she brings to light damning corporate documentation of the deadly impacts of the chemical mixture used in her community, including Agent Orange component 2,4-D.



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In this gripping documentary, Adelson and Taverna weave together the experiences of two women from countries nearly halfway around the world, each fighting passionately for a common cause. “The People vs. Agent Orange” presents groundbreaking commentary from noted officials including former Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle and retired United States Air Force scientist James Clary who break decades of silence to reveal long-held secrets.

“The intergenerational human damage caused by the use of Agent Orange is staggering, both in Vietnam and also here in America. It was the first instance of what we now call ecocide. How and why it happened is an important lesson for humanity,” said Adelson. “There has never been a full accounting of the chemical’s use by its creators, and those who profited from it” continues Taverna. “With this film, we want to fight the silence and the obfuscation of those companies, shining a light on fearless activists like Tran and Van Strum who have been fighting this battle for decades.” A recipient of the Organization of American Historians’ 2021 Erik Barnouw Award, “The People vs. Agent Orange” takes viewers through painstaking investigative research and interviews with whistleblowers, researchers, doctors and the people who have lived through contact with the poison in both Vietnam and the United States.

Visit [“The People vs. Agent Orange”](#) page on INDEPENDENT LENS for more information about the film.

### **About the Filmmakers**

#### **Alan Adelson**

Alan Adelson (Director, Producer, Writer) has overlapping careers in documentary film and investigative journalism. Adelson produced and co-directed “Lodz Ghetto” (1988) with Kate Taverna. The documentary was shortlisted for the Academy Award Best Documentary Oscar. The filmmaker couple also produced and directed “Two Villages in Kosovo” (2006) for Arte, and the widely acclaimed “In Bed with Ulysses” (2012). Adelson made worldwide headlines with his investigative articles in *Esquire* and *The Wall Street Journal* revealing the disappearance of enriched plutonium from an American nuclear reprocessing plant.

#### **Kate Taverna**

Kate Taverna (Director, Producer, Editor) has co-directed and edited four documentaries with Adelson. Taverna has edited more than 50 independent feature documentaries, shorts and broadcast films over a career spanning more than 35 years for PBS, Arte, BBC, HBO, A&E, IFC and global broadcasters. “Asylum” (2004) and “Killing in the Name” (2011) were both Academy Award nominees in the Best Short Documentary category. “Pray the Devil Back to Hell” won Best Documentary at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival and led to a Nobel Prize being awarded to its central protagonist, Leymah Gbowee.

#### **Véronique Bernard**

Véronique Bernard (Producer, Writer) is an award-winning independent non-fiction film and television producer, director, and senior executive with more than 30 credits whose experience includes WNET Culture & Arts Documentaries, Sundance Channel Original Programming, New York Times Television, National Geographic Television, ABC News Productions, and PBS.



## CREDITS

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|---------------------|--|
| Directors           | Alan Adelson<br>Kate Taverna   |
| Producers           | Alan Adelson<br>Véronique Bernard<br>Kate Taverna                                      |
| Executive Producers | Sally Jo Fifer<br>Lois Vossen<br>Maxyne Franklin<br>Abigail E. Disney<br>Gini Reticker |
| Editor              | Kate Taverna   |

## ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

*Independent Lens* is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 PM. 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](https://pbs.org/independentlens). Join the conversation: [facebook.com/independentlens](https://facebook.com/independentlens) and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](https://twitter.com/IndependentLens).

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