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***Real Boy* Premieres on *Independent Lens*  
Monday, June 19, 2017 on PBS**

**Online Streaming Begins June 20**

**A Son's Transition and a Mom's Transformation**



*Bennett and Joe Stevens.*  
Credit: Shaleece Haas

(San Francisco, CA) — A moving and intimate story of a family in transition, *Real Boy* follows the journey of trans teen Bennett as he navigates adolescence, sobriety, and the physical and emotional ramifications of his changing gender identity. Through the process, his mother Suzy makes her own transformation — traveling a difficult road toward accepting that the daughter she raised is now her son Bennett. Filmed over the course of four years, *Real Boy* is a love story about a mother and son who rediscover connection with each other and find support from their communities, reminding us that families are not only given, but chosen. Produced and directed by Shaleece Haas, *Real Boy* premieres on *Independent Lens* Monday, June 19, 2017, 10:00-11:00 PM ET ([check local listings](#)) on PBS.

“All I want is to be loved by my family, but for my family, it’s not as simple as that,” says Bennett. “It’s complicated for them.” Through interviews with his mother and old home movies, we meet Bennett as a joyful, happy child, but that changed as he grew older. Adolescence brought anger, substance abuse, and self-destructive behaviors. When Bennett began to share his true identity as male, he felt happier inside but faced resistance from his family. Finding solace online with other teens facing the same issues, the aspiring musician is also taken under the wing of his idol Joe Stevens, a celebrated transgender musician fighting his own demons.

“The struggle to find our identity, to be our true self is universal,” said Lois Vossen, Executive Producer of *Independent Lens*. “The discovery of who we really are, versus who we believe we are meant to be, is at the core of Haas’s remarkable film.”

Through observational storytelling that is alternately heartbreaking and humorous, *Real Boy* offers a clear-eyed look at a family tested by a change they never imagined, the complexity of addiction, the healing power of music, and the unbreakable bond between mother and child.

Visit the [Real Boy](#) page on *Independent Lens*, which features more information about the film. The film will be available for online viewing on the site beginning June 20.



1435 Folsom Street  
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## About the Filmmaker

**Shaleece Haas (Director/Producer)** is a documentary filmmaker based in Los Angeles, CA. Her films are marked by a balance of poignancy and humor, and by intimate character-driven storytelling that invites audiences deep into the interior worlds of their protagonists. Haas produced *The Genius of Marian* (2013; Tribeca, POV) and the short films *Awardwinninggir* (2012; SF DocFest) and *City Fish* (2011; Hot Docs, Documentary Channel). She associate produced *Extreme by Design* (2012, PBS) and *The Art of Doing It Yourself* (2011, PBS). Her documentary short, *Old People Driving* (2010, Mill Valley Film Festival), was broadcast on *PBS NewsHour* as part of the Economist Film Project and won best documentary at the Phoenix Film Festival. Haas's films have received support from ITVS, California Humanities, Berkeley Film Foundation, Fledgling Fund, Film Independent, IFP, among others. She is a 2015 Film Independent Documentary Lab Fellow, a 2012 Working Films (Reel Aging) Fellow, and a 2010 Met Life Foundation Journalists in Aging Fellow. Haas is a member of Film Fatales and the Queer Producers Collective. In addition to filmmaking, Haas has taught at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism and led video storytelling workshops for the Berkeley Advanced Media Institute and the NY Press Association. She previously worked as an editorial photographer and radio producer and was a founding staff member of the national oral history project, StoryCorps. She is a graduate of the documentary film program at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism.

## CREDITS

Produced and Directed by	Shaleece Haas
Director of Photography	Shaleece Haas
Edited by	Andrew Gersh
Executive Producer	Charlotte Lagarde
Original Score	William Ryan Fritch
Animation	Molly Schwartz
Associate Producers	Sam Berliner Kyle Ranson-Walsh

*Real Boy* is a co-production of Shaleece Haas and Independent Television Service (ITVS), with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

## 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, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit [pbs.org/independentlens](http://pbs.org/independentlens). Join the conversation: [facebook.com/independentlens](https://www.facebook.com/independentlens) and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](https://twitter.com/IndependentLens).



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