**POPS: A NEW WEB SERIES EXPLORING BLACK FATHERHOOD PREMIERES**

**Premieres October 26, 2017**

September 26, 2017 – **POPS** is a new web series about three African-American men facing the toughest challenge of their lives, becoming good fathers. The series consists of 11 short episodes each 5-8 minutes, that will premiere weekly beginning in October 26th and will be available for free viewing via the **Indie Lens StoryCast Youtube Channel** ([www.storycastdocs.com](http://www.storycastdocs.com/)) and at <http://www.pops.life>.

**POPS** follows the parenting experiences of three families:

• **Shaka Senghor**, the *New York Times* Best-Selling Author of “Writing My Wrongs”, an activist who served 19 years in prison and active co-parent to his young son Sekou.

• **La Guardia Cross**, a social media sensation, a new father to daughter Amalah and a dedicated husband to his wife of eleven years Leah. His show “The New Fatherhood Chronicles” is a fast-growing and influential social network with thousands of followers and millions of views.

• **Chris and Shelton Stroman-Inniss**, of Snellville GA, a same-sex couple who were on the forefront of fighting for marriage equality in Georgia and now navigate preparing their 12-year-old son Jonathan for middle school.  Chris and Shelton also explore fractured relationships with their own fathers as they cultivate a relationship between their son Jonathan and his birth mother.

**POPS** is a unique and entertaining window into the realities of 21st Century Parenthood for African-American men. The media narrative of the deadbeat black father is generally accepted as a fact of life for African-American children. But buried beneath these assumptions are the facts of black fatherhood that dispel some of those stereotypes. **POPS** goal is to affirm black fathers and black families – and empower them to share their own experiences of black fatherhood.

Shot in verité documentary style rich with raw, intimate moments, each character reveals what fatherhood looks like in their world. The fathers differ in personalities, socioeconomic backgrounds and struggles, but share the collective experience of fatherhood, through which they explore the universal themes of responsibility, nurturing and love.

In addition to organizing a series of online events and conversations with experts and organizational partners, **POPS** is encouraging viewers to share their own pictures and stories of black fathers using **#PopsLife** and **#BlackDadJoy**.

**Created and Directed by Garland McLaurin:** Garland McLaurin is a Peabody-Award winning filmmaker and new father. He co-directed PBS’ “180 Days A Year Inside An American High School” and “180 Days Hartsville.”

**Contact:** Garland McLaurin and the fathers featured in the series are available for interview. Please contact gmclaurin@gmail.com for interview requests, high-res stills, and clips.

**FOLLOW POPS ONLINE:**

www.pops.life

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**POPS Episode Descriptions:**

**Struggles of Fatherhood - Episode 1 – Publish Date: October 26, 2017**

For La Guardia Cross Jr. of Miami Florida, the reality of being a first time dad begins to sink in. He tries to keep his artistic career going while trying to balance daddy duties and support his wife.

**A Leap of Faith - Episode 2 – Publish Date: November 2, 2017**

Looking to make more money La Guardia must decide whether to take a new job that would end the New Father Chronicles. Meanwhile, La Guardia and Leah reflect on how faith and family help them with life and childcare.

**Caught in Limbo - Episode 3 – Publish Date: November 9, 2017**

La Guardia looks for employment opportunities after his job offer falls through. Leah is pregnant, her prenatal care as well as Amalah’s behavior weigh heavy on La Guardia’s mind.

**Trust, Love and Purpose – Publish Date: November 16, 2017**

La Guardia successfully re-launches the New Father Hood Chronicles leading to unexpected career opportunities. The Cross family celebrates their 10th wedding anniversary with family and friends.

**A Blueprint for Success - Episode 5 – Publish Date: November 23, 2017**

Chris and Shelton Stroman-Inniss work hard to get their 12-year-old son Jonathan ready for middle school. They navigate the world of adoption and parenting as a gay couple by building a support community of parents with similar circumstances.

**A Painful Past - Episode 6 – Publish Date: November 30, 2017**

Chris talks to his father for the first time in over 20 years, Shelton reflects on his fractured relationship with his dad at a family barbecue. Back in Atlanta, Jonathan asks Chris and Shelton about his birth father while writing his birth mom.

**Suspended from School - Episode 7 – Publish Date: December 7, 2017**

Description: Jonathan is suspended from school for fighting and placed on punishment. He’s given the challenge by Chris and Shelton to finish the year on honor roll. Chris and Shelton talk with their parenting group about discipline and issues they face as parents.

**Living Your Truth – Publish Date: December 14, 2017**

Producer’s Title: Garland McLaurin

Description: Chris and Shelton get married after waiting years to tie the knot. Jonathan’s middle school transition hits a rough patch that the family works through. For his 13th birthday Jonathan celebrates with his birth mom, family and friends.

**Writing the Future - Episode 9 – Publish Date: December 21, 2017**

Post incarceration Shaka Senghor works on being a good father, correcting mistakes that caused his incarceration and creating a better future. He and co-parents his 3-year-old son Sekou while working on a memoir that will be published about his life.

**The Price of Fame - Episode 10 – December 28, 2017**

Shaka’s Memoir “Writing My Wrongs” lands on the NY Times Best Seller list, he takes Sekou on his book tour. Shaka must make the difficult decision to move to Los Angeles to establish his writing career while Sekou remains in Detroit.

**Making up for Lost Time - Episode 11 – January 4, 2018**

Shaka’s busy travel schedule leaves him very little time to see Sekou. After five anxious months Shaka looks forward to reuniting with Sekou in LA.

**Funding information:** POPS was funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, ITVS and the National Black Programming Consortium.

**About Indie Lens Storycast:**Beginning September 2017. Discover the big story in the small moments with Indie Lens Storycast. A place for fun, unique, and impactful short docuseries, Indie Lens Storycast is produced by ITVS for PBS Digital Studios.

**About NBPC:** The National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC) is committed to enriching our democracy by educating, enlightening, empowering and engaging the American public. The nonprofit supports diverse voices by developing, producing and distributing innovative - more - - 2 - media about the Black experience and by investing in visionary content makers. NBPC provides quality content for public media outlets, including, among others, PBS and PBS.org and BlackPublicMedia.org, as well as other platforms, while training and mentoring the next generation of Black filmmakers. Founded in 1979, NBPC produces the AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange documentary series and manages the 360 Incubator + Fund, a funding and training initiative designed to accelerate the production of important Black serial and interactive content.

**About ITVS:** ITVS brings independently-produced, high-quality public broadcast and new media programs to local, national, and international audiences. The independent producers who create ITVS programs take creative risks, tackle complex issues, and express points of view seldom explored in the mass media. ITVS programs enrich the cultural landscape with the voices and visions of underrepresented communities, and reflect the interests and concerns of a diverse society.