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Deciding the fate of a murderer: ‘Lindy Lou, Juror Number 2’ explores the aftermath for death-penalty jurors with its POV premiere on Monday, July 16, 2018.

A juror reconsiders her thoughts on the death penalty



If you kill a murderer, do you become a murderer as well? Lindy Lou Wells Isonhood asks her granddaughter this question, while explaining the role she played on a capital jury. Although Lindy voted for Bobby Wilcher, a convicted murderer, to receive a death sentence, she found that the views she had once held on capital punishment changed drastically during the course of the trial and afterward.

Director Florent Vassault brings to light Lindy’s struggle to understand her guilt and sorrow in [Lindy Lou, Juror Number 2](#), debuting on the PBS documentary series [POV](#) and pov.org on **Monday, July 16, 2018** at 10 p.m. ([check local listings](#)).

Through Lindy’s experience we learn how a civic obligation meant to last no longer than a few weeks can become an enduring burden. After two decades of self-reflection and internal conflict, Lindy seeks out the other jurors to learn whether they were also affected by the trial. “I thought this story would offer an opportunity to shift our vision of the death penalty from a vague and distant idea to something more tangible and complex,” states Vassault. “Jurors are an essential element of the criminal justice system, but no one knows how they feel after leaving the courthouse.”

Throughout the film we are reminded of Lindy’s conservative ideals, which once supported placing a murderer on death row. Now, rather than feeling satisfied that justice was served, Lindy feels like a killer. We see her grapple with the evolution between who she was and the outlier she is becoming in her own community. She is a proud Southern woman wrestling with her identity and values; in one instance Lindy shares her military background and shows the two pistols that are kept in her car, all while continuing on her journey to find closure from having to, as she puts it, “kill somebody.”

Nearly all the jurors are willing to share their honest feelings about the trial with Lindy. Most accept serving on the jury as a civic duty they had to fulfill, no matter what their consciences said. Some jurors are indifferent about the trial, while others have developed ways to rationalize and take the emotion out of their decision.

Kenneth, the foreman of the jury, remembers how quickly they were able to agree on Wilcher's death sentence. Since the trial he has been trying to suppress his feelings, but an insightful conversation with Lindy allows them both to process their emotions momentarily.

The film also shows the lack of support that Lindy receives while trying to reconcile her feelings about the trial. Lindy was a true believer in the death penalty who later befriended the murderer she sentenced to death. This alone leads friends and family to believe she has "gone off the deep end." She guides her own search for self-healing, driving from house to house for answers on what her husband calls an "adventure." Lindy and another juror named Bill discuss how surprised they are that their feelings are completely disregarded by others. "How can you take so lightly what we went through?" Bill remarks.

Lindy Lou, Juror Number 2 encourages audiences on all sides of the fence regarding capital punishment to think beyond the sentence and to consider the emotional toll that jurors experience with such a decision.

"When talking about the death penalty, few think about one of the most integral parts of this contentious process: the juror," said Chris White, executive producer of POV. "**Lindy Lou, Juror Number 2** is a delicate examination of the jurors and the emotional baggage they may carry well after the trial and execution. It also brings national audiences a complicated, not-often-seen view of the South and its residents, revealing both the depth and range of their views and beliefs."

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About the Filmmakers:

Florent Vassault

Born in France, Florent Vassault is a documentary filmmaker. After making several short fiction films and a mockumentary (*Bernard Thomas, les secrets de la gloire*, 2007), he co-directed with sociologist Arnaud Gaillard the award-winning documentary *Honk!* (2011), a take on the death penalty in the United States. In 2017, he further pursued this examination of the effects of capital punishment by making *Lindy Lou, Juror Number 2*. In addition to working on his own projects, Vassault is a feature film editor.

Credits:

About the Filmmakers:

Director:	Florent Vassault
Writers:	Cécile Vargaftig and Florent Vassault
Editor:	Léa Masson
Original Score:	Alexis Rault
Executive Producers for POV:	Justine Nagan, Chris White

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Produced by American Documentary, Inc., POV is public television's premier showcase for nonfiction films. Since 1988, POV has been the home for the world's boldest contemporary filmmakers, celebrating intriguing personal stories that spark conversation and inspire action.

Always an innovator, POV discovers fresh new voices and creates interactive experiences that shine a light on social issues and elevate the art of storytelling. With our documentary broadcasts, original online programming and dynamic community engagement campaigns, we are committed to supporting films that capture the imagination and present diverse perspectives.

POV films have won 37 Emmy® Awards, 21 George Foster Peabody Awards, 12 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards®, the first-ever George Polk Documentary Film Award and the Prix Italia. The POV series has been honored with a Special News & Documentary Emmy Award for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking, three IDA Awards for Best Curated Series and the National Association of Latino Independent Producers Award for Corporate Commitment to Diversity. Learn more at www.pbs.org/pov/.

POV Engage (www.pbs.org/pov/engage/)

POV's Community Engagement and Education team works with educators, community organizations and PBS stations to present more than 800 free screenings every year. In addition, we distribute free discussion guides and standards-aligned lesson plans for each of our films. With our community partners, we inspire dialogue around the most important social issues of our time.

POV Spark (www.pbs.org/pov/)

Since 1994, POV Digital has driven new storytelling initiatives and interactive production for POV. The department has continually experimented with web-based documentaries, producing PBS' first program website and the first Snapchat-native documentary. It has won major awards for its work, including a Webby Award and over 19 nominations. Now with a singular focus on incubating and distributing interactive productions, POV Spark continues to explore the future of independent nonfiction media through its co-productions, acquisitions and the POV Labs, where media makers and technologists collaborate to reinvent storytelling forms.

American Documentary, Inc. (www.amdoc.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.

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