

“Smart, poignant, candid... It's a really extraordinary film.”

Graham Leggat, Executive Director, San Francisco Film Society

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THE KEY OF G DEBUTS ON PBS IN OCTOBER 2007

Award-Winning Documentary Explores the Relationship Between a Young Man with Severe Disabilities and his Bohemian Caregivers

(San Francisco, CA.) THE KEY OF G, an intimate documentary about a disabled man's transition into adulthood, will have its television premiere in October on PBS. Director Robert Arnold tells the story of Gannet, a 22-year-old man with severe disabilities, as he prepares to move out of his mother's home and into a San Francisco apartment with three musicians and artists as primary caregivers.

Gannet (or “G,” as his friends call him) was born with Mowat-Wilson syndrome, a genetic condition which results in a myriad of physical and developmental disabilities with symptoms resembling autism. G seldom makes eye contact and is unable to speak or use sign language so he communicates by pointing at icons in his “communication book.” G has a strong will and a great sense of humor, but requires physical assistance around the clock. Under different circumstances, someone like G could easily wind up in an institution, but through his mother's force of will and Gannet's own charisma, things have worked out quite differently.

Called “a smart, poignant, candid and extraordinary film” by San Francisco Film Society executive director Graham Leggat, THE KEY OF G begins with G still living at home with his mother, Amy. G has just turned 22 and Amy has come to the realization that her son is ready to move out. G's condition prevents him from moving to a traditional group home, so Amy seeks an alternative family for him, one that will outlive her.

Avoiding the conventional care model of paid professionals expected to keep an emotional distance from their clients, Amy finds three young artists who will become not just paid caregivers and roommates for G, but true friends. Together they cobble together funding from an array of state programs, and attempt to create an independent and sustainable household.



Winner of the 2007 Golden Gate Award for Best Bay Area Documentary at the 50th San Francisco International Film Festival, *THE KEY OF G* follows this unique household over several years as the usual difficulties and joys of group living are heightened by G's unique condition. Through the difficulties, relationships deepen and G's world keeps expanding.

In the end, *THE KEY OF G* is the caregivers' story as much as it is Gannet's. As they come to rely on him as a friend, they realize that they are building something better than just an independent life for G: They are building a community of interdependence that benefits them all. The film provides a model of how someone with serious disabilities can be integrated into the community and live a truly full life. Along the way, it challenges conventional notions about independence, empathy, and disability, and provides a glimpse into a kind of life seldom seen on television.

The Key of G is a co-production of Lateral Films and the Independent Television Service (ITVS), with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the Pacific Pioneer Fund, and the Fleishhacker Foundation.

About the Filmmakers

Director/Producer **Robert Arnold** has worked as an Editor, Director, Director of Photography, Gaffer, Grip, and Camera Assistant. His 16mm short film *Getting Out* played at the Anthology Film Archives in New York, NY, as well as showings in Vienna, Korea, and within the U.S. He studied film production at San Francisco State University and has a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. In addition to his film work, he exhibits regularly throughout the U.S. as an artist and photographer.

Producer **Lindsay Sablosky** has production and editing credits on several feature length documentaries. She is co-producer of *Daddy & Papa*, a documentary about gay fatherhood in America, which premiered at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival and has gone on to screen in nearly 100 international festivals, garnering over a dozen Best Documentary awards.

Editor/Co-producer **Malcolm Pullinger** was born in London and raised in the Bay Area. He recently produced and edited the feature-length documentary *Following Sean*.

Executive Producer **Vivian Kleiman** is a recipient of The George Foster Peabody Award, the Int'l Documentary Association's Outstanding Achievement Award, a National Emmy Award nomination (Outstanding Individual Achievement in Research) and the Organization of American Historians' Eric Barnouw Award for her distinguished work in documentaries.

THE KEY OF G credits

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER/CAMERA
Robert Arnold

PRODUCER
Lindsay Sablosky

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
Vivian Kleiman

CO-PRODUCER
Malcolm Pullinger

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS
Carla Healy-London
Katie Edmonds
Alexandra Harley

EDITORS
Malcolm Pullinger
Robert Arnold

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Katie Edmonds

MUSIC COMPOSITION
Paul Rucker
Peter Whitehead

ADDITIONAL MUSIC
Window Window

SOUND DESIGN
RE-RECORDING MIXER
Jeremiah Moore

COLORIST
Gary Coates

ILLUSTRATIONS
Colter Jacobsen

TITLES/ANIMATION
Peter Herrmann

ADDITIONAL CAMERA
Anjali Sundaram

ONLINE EDITOR
Jonathan Vargo

ONLINE FACILITY
Video Arts

CLOSED CAPTIONING
Pillar to Post

FISCAL SPONSOR
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Rebecca Millsop

ADVISORY BOARD
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Leroy Franklin Moore, Jr.

"Michigan State"
Performed by Devendra Banhart
Courtesy of Devendra Banhart

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FOR ITVS:
Sally Jo Fifer

Funding provided by

The Independent Television Service
(ITVS)
Pacific Pioneer Fund
The Fleishhacker Foundation



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www.thekeyofg.com

THE KEY OF G Cast biographies:

Just shy of his 23rd birthday, **Gannet Hosa-Betonte** graduated as a special education student from a public high school in San Francisco, and moved into a “supported living” apartment with two live-in care givers and a ‘round the clock staff. He understands language, but doesn’t speak, rather uses a combination picture and word communication book to point to what he has to say. Gannet’s favorite pastime is listening. He is a collector and a connoisseur of sounds, from strange music to motorcycle engines, from explosive “achooos” to the soft sound of a friend’s voice reading out loud. His second love is looking at cars. Gannet lives a full and productive life: volunteers at a motorcycle shop, a national park, and community garden; has assigned chores around the house; goes to the gym; frequents the community music center to improvise on the piano; meets friends at a local park or coffee house to hang out; attends concerts, watches movies; goes to museums; and just loves to be out and about. Gannet’s disabilities are best described as developmental delay with mild cerebral palsy, and visual impairment (due to processing) and, more recently, cataracts. When Gannet was 6 months old, a specialist told his parents, “His brain is getting the visual image, but you’ll have to teach your son how to see.” They felt stymied, but accepted the challenge, and so began a “multi-sensory-whatever-works” therapeutic approach. Gannet began life as the limp “puzzle baby”, and most of the experts offered little hope for him to achieve developmental milestones. His parents, teachers, and therapists didn’t set limits, and worked with him non-stop to stimulate and expand his abilities and world-view. Now that he is living with full- time caregivers, Gannet is still learning how to see, is still learning to integrate his senses into meaningful experiences, and is still learning to gain practical living skills. The teaching never stops and the learning never ends.

Amy Hosa is Gannet’s mother. At the age of six months Gannet's wise ophthalmologist referred mom to the Blind Babies Variety Club. The social worker, shortly thereafter, gently dropped the bomb that perhaps Gannet’s suspected vision problems were merely the tip of the iceberg. Amy says that “it felt like welcome to the Twilight Zone, and there was no turning back.” She and Gannet’s father participated in the infant intervention programs, followed by 18 years of special education classroom involvement and advocacy for his educational rights within San Francisco’s public school system. Early on, Amy turned to a local non-profit, CASE, for special education advocacy training, and became an active board member for many years. While special-ed classroom participation, advocacy and volunteering were sometimes a full-time cause, Amy’s professional career as an independent graphic designer and illustrator continued throughout. When Amy and Gannet’s father split up when he was 13, her work projects and a few dear friends kept her sane amidst the chaos of motherhood and Gannet’s needs. She still works and now has more time to paint and sketch, and teaches an occasional class or workshop.

Donal Mosher began his work with G in 2001. He also works as a writer, musician and photographer. He currently resides in Portland, Oregon where he is working on a feature length documentary entitled "October Country" with filmmaker Michael Palmieri. For information on Donal's film or photo projects, please visit wishbonefilms.com and donalmosher.com.

Colter Jacobsen moved to San Francisco in 1999 to attend San Francisco Art Institute, where he met Donal. He paints and draws incessantly, and plays the drums for the band Coconut. He is currently producing work for a show in Vienna, and illustrations for a book called "Bill."

Amanda Eicher is an artist, writer and educator living in San Francisco. She worked directly with G for two years, and continues to play an active role in his life as a friend to him and his mother Amy. She is currently the director of San Francisco State's Art Education Program, The Colima Project, in El Salvador.

About ITVS

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series Independent Lens. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.