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Community + Connection: 9th Annual San Francisco Irish Film DocFest Announces 2026 Program

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — February 16, 2026 — The San Francisco Irish Film DocFest is proud to announce the program for its 9th annual edition, returning as the only documentary festival in the United States exclusively dedicated to Irish non-fiction storytelling. This year's festival, themed "**Community + Connection**," explores the invisible threads that bind Ireland to the Bay Area and beyond through shared histories of struggle, resilience, and triumph.

A Celebration of Shared History and Global Solidarity

A cornerstone of the 2026 festival is the exploration of the profound historical relationship between Ireland and Native American communities.

- **Film Highlight:** *Éire agus Na Chéad Náisiúin*, directed by Ronan McCloskey, traces the complex interactions between the Irish and the First Nations of North America, including trade, alliances, and conflicts.
- **A Legacy of Kindness:** The documentary highlights the "Great Kindness" of 1847, when the Choctaw Nation—despite surviving the Trail of Tears—sent \$170 to aid victims of the Great Irish Famine, sparking a bond of solidarity that persists today.

The DocFest continues its mission to amplify marginalized voices and unique sensory experiences.

- **A Quiet Love:** Directed by Garry Keane, this is Ireland's first feature film in Irish Sign Language (ISL). It follows three Deaf couples—including a forbidden religious romance and an LGBTQI+ couple—navigating life with an immersive soundscape designed to bridge the gap between hearing and non-hearing worlds. The film was recently honored at Cannes with the Global Production Award for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Justice, Healing, and Local Ties

The program also features powerful stories of exoneration and local California experiences:

- **Stolen Lives:** This centerpiece documentary follows Peter Pringle and Sunny Jacobs, the world's only married couple to both be wrongly sentenced to death and later exonerated. The film explores their journey in building a "landing strip" sanctuary for fellow exonerees.
- **In Person:** Director **Mark McLaughlin** will join the festival for an intimate "In Conversation" segment following the screening.
- **Dipsea Generations:** Directed by San Francisco-based Irish athlete Paddy O'Leary, this film follows five young runners tackling the iconic Dipsea race, highlighting efforts to make the outdoors more welcoming and diverse.

The 9th Annual DocFest will be held at the **Delancey Street Theater**. The festival is made possible through the support of Culture Ireland, The Irish Film Institute, The Consulate General of Ireland, Ranger Pipelines, Casements SF, and the United Irish Cultural Center.

As the Irish proverb says, "*Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine*"—it is in the shadow of each other that people live.

For more information on the full program and ticket sales, please visit SFIrishfilm.com

About the San Francisco Irish Film DocFest: The San Francisco Irish Film DocFest is the premier U.S. festival dedicated to Irish documentary filmmaking. By bridging Irish perspectives with local California experiences, the festival uses the power of the lens to heal, connect, and inspire.