



“Personal, insightful and gently humorous”  
-THE TORONTO STAR

“A must see”  
-THE GLOBE AND MAIL

“Among doc fest hits”  
-VARIETY

# FROM THIS DAY FORWARD

Directed by  
Sharon Shattuck

76 minutes • USA

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**LOGLINE:** *From This Day Forward* is the story of a love, and a family, that survived the most intimate of transformations.

## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

With her own wedding just around the corner, filmmaker Sharon Shattuck returns home to examine the mystery at the heart of her upbringing: How her transgender father Trisha and her straight-identified mother Marcia stayed together against all odds. *From This Day Forward* is a moving portrayal of an American family coping with the most intimate of transformations.

## **LONG SYNOPSIS**

*From This Day Forward* is a moving portrayal of an American family coping with the most intimate of transformations. When filmmaker Sharon Shattuck's artist father came out as transgender and changed her name to Trisha, her transition was difficult for her straight-identified, physician wife, Marcia, to accept. Having married and fallen in love with a man, Marcia found herself doubting whether she could love Trisha as a woman. And, as a heterosexual woman, she felt that the idea of walking down the street, holding hands with a woman, would paint a false picture of her own identity. At the time, with Sharon in her preteen years and focused on developing her own sense of self, her parents' relationship seemed a mystery.

After announcing that they would get a divorce, Marcia and Trisha found themselves heartbroken and decided that they loved each other too much to separate. Committed to staying together as a family, they then began a careful balancing act that would test their love for one another, and ultimately prove even more challenging than expected.

As Sharon approaches her own wedding day, she begins asking the questions she couldn't ask as a child: Why did her father choose to transition when she and her sister were so young? How—and why—did her parents decide to stay together? As the film evolves into a conversation about love and acceptance in a modern American family, it raises questions relevant to all of us: As individuals, how do we adapt to sustain long-term love and relationships? Where do sexuality and gender intersect? And how do families stay together, when external forces are pulling them apart?

## TEAM BIOS

**Sharon Shattuck (director/producer)** is a filmmaker and animator. She's the co-creator of the New York Times Op-Docs series 'Animated Life,' which tells stories of scientific discovery using stringent journalism and paper puppets. She has animated several award-winning films, including the Emmy-nominated feature, *The City Dark*, which aired on PBS's POV series in 2012, *The Search for General Tso*, which premiered at Tribeca Film Festival in 2014, and the short films *Truck Farm* and *The Melungeons*. She is one-half of Sweet Fern Productions, where she hones her science storytelling skills. Her video and animation work has appeared in the New York Times, PBS, Slate, ProPublica, and Radiolab. She has degrees in environmental science and journalism. *From This Day Forward* is Sharon's feature-length directorial debut.

**Martha Shane (producer)** is an award-winning Brooklyn-based filmmaker. Her directorial debut, the feature documentary *After Tiller*, premiered in the U.S. Documentary Competition at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival to critical acclaim. The film was nominated for four Cinema Eye Honors, the Ridenhour Prize, and an Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary, won the Kathleen Bryan Edwards Award for Human Rights at Full Frame, and was named Best Documentary at the Sarasota Film Festival. Theatrically released in Fall 2013 by Oscilloscope Laboratories, *After Tiller* was broadcast on PBS's POV series in 2014. Previously, Shane produced and co-edited the feature documentary *Bi the Way*, which had its premiere at the SXSW film festival in 2008, won the Alternative Spirit Grand Prize at the Rhode Island International Film Festival, and was broadcast on MTV's LOGO channel. Shane is currently in production on her next feature documentary.

**Frederick Shanahan (editor)** is a freelance film editor based in New York City. He has worked on several award-winning documentaries, including the Emmy-nominated feature, *The City Dark*, which aired on PBS as part of the POV series in 2012, and *The Search for General Tso*, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2014. He has also worked on a variety of commercial projects with clients such as Victoria Beckham, Bergdorf Goodman, Estee Lauder, Bobbi Brown, NYU, Slow Money, Woodcock Foundation and YWLN. He graduated from the Boston University College of Communication, magna cum laude, with a B.S. in Film and Television.

**Ian Cheney (co-producer)** is an Emmy-nominated and Peabody Award-winning documentary filmmaker. His films and collaborations include *King Corn* (2007), *The Greening of Southie* (2008), *Big River* (2009), *Truck Farm* (2010), *The City Dark* (2011), *The Melungeons* (2012) and most recently *The Search For General Tso* (2015), a Sundance Selects release which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and hit theaters in 50 cities this winter. His films have been broadcast on numerous outlets around the globe include PBS' POV, PBS' Independent Lens, the Sundance Channel and Discovery Planet Green. The founder of the documentary production company Wicked Delicate

Films, Ian received bachelor's and master's degrees at Yale University and is a native of New England. He is currently a Knight fellow at MIT.

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

When I was growing up, there were no families that looked like mine on TV or in the movies. I would watch "Full House" or "Family Matters" and daydream about what life would be like if I had a normal family, where my mom would pack me lunches, and my dad would come home from work in a suit and tie. What I didn't realize at the time is that *no one* really has a normal family—mine just stuck out a bit more than most.

Growing up with a transgender parent was challenging for my sister and me, mostly because we cared so much what our friends and neighbors thought. But as we got older, we realized that in our small town, everyone knew about Trisha. Though some townsfolk shunned us (and still do to this day), our close friends didn't care—and that made all the difference.

As an adult working in documentary film and journalism, I skirted the idea of making a film about my family for years, precisely because I'd never seen a story like ours in the public consciousness. I found the idea of filming my family very uncomfortable and knew that my parents wanted to live a quiet life. They didn't want to defend their choices to outsiders. So instead of focusing on my own family, I initially thought that I would make a film telling the story of *numerous* rainbow families--families with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) members. An easy endeavor, right?

It soon became clear that this idea was too far-reaching. So when I took my camera out at home and saw what a ham Trisha was, coupled with Marcia's eye-rolling indulgence, I decided to turn the story inward and began asking more pointed questions of my parents. In this way, the film evolved gradually, over the course of several years.

Usually when I hear the story of a married transgender person, it's a tale of coming out and the inevitable divorce that follows. For my parents it was different. I know that Trisha doesn't think of herself as being "representative" of the transgender community, because she's not what she pictures as a typical transgender woman. Most of the time she doesn't wear dresses, makeup, and heels, and she cut her long hair short around the time that I left for college. She explains these changes by saying that she peeled away "layers of the onion" to unveil her true self—a "farmer woman" comfortable in her own skin.

I chose to make Trisha's ongoing search for identity a part of my film's narrative in part because I struggle with my gender expression every day, and I know that a lot of other women do, too. Does it make Trisha any less of a woman that she eschews skirts much

of the time in favor of utilitarian overalls? Does it make me less of a woman that I wear jeans and a long-sleeve shirt nearly every day? I don't think so. I applaud the graceful, glamorous women that are the new faces of transgender identity—Janet Mock, Laverne Cox—while also recognizing that there are those who land elsewhere on the spectrum of gender expression.

The fact that my parents remained married, even though my mom identifies as straight makes Trisha's search for identity all the more complex. But to my parents, the larger political conversations about gender identity are less significant than what they truly care about—staying together. They've prioritized one another in a way that may make not only heterosexual, but also some transgender people feel uncomfortable, because what Trisha has done could be viewed as “compromising” on her gender expression some of the time. Yet Trisha's choices are at once fully her own, and, like everyone's, made in response to a plethora of social, cultural, familial, and personal considerations.

In my own marriage, I constantly consider the feelings of my husband and make choices accordingly. Similarly, my parents' marriage is a give-and-take, a loving dance that both partners willingly engage in and, I believe, a beautiful thing to witness.

Unfortunately there are many stories of transgender people that don't have happy endings—stories of discrimination, abandonment and even violence. I think that it's important to hear these painful stories, because they galvanize society to push for change, for an end to discrimination. But I think it's equally important to hear stories of hope within the tapestry of transgender narratives. No two stories are alike, but they're all valid. Ultimately, my wish is that my family's story inspires others to embrace the LGBTQ people in their lives with compassion, respect, and love.

## **WEBSITE**

[Fromthisdayforwardfilm.com](http://Fromthisdayforwardfilm.com)

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

[Twitter.com/fromthisdayfilm](https://twitter.com/fromthisdayfilm)

[Facebook.com/fromthisdayforwardfilm](https://facebook.com/fromthisdayforwardfilm)

## **CREDITS**

Directed by **Sharon Shattuck**

Produced by **Martha Shane** and **Sharon Shattuck**

Executive produced by **Abigail E. Disney** and **Regina K. Scully**

Edited by **Frederick Shanahan**

Director of Photography **Sharon Shattuck**

Written by **Frederick Shanahan**, **Martha Shane**, and **Sharon Shattuck**

Co-Produced by **Ian Cheney**

Associate Produced by **Brooke Brewer** and **Margaret Brunyansky**

Story Researcher **Lily Spottiswoode**

Re-recording Mixer **Peter Levin**

Sound Editing by **Barbara Parks** and **William Hsieh**

Music by **Chris Bathgate**

Colorist **Aaron Rothschild**

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