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## ANOTHER CHANCE

Viewers will at last get to see *In the Life*,  
when OPB offers the series a trial run

by Inga Sorensen



Barney Frank

**O**regon Public Broadcasting plans to air three episodes of *In the Life*, a television program geared toward the gay and lesbian community, on June 24, July 1 and July 8.

Though *In the Life*, which is produced by In the Life Media and WNYC-TV in New York, has been airing nationally for more than a year, OPB has been reluctant to run the program regularly due to "poor production quality." An estimated 70 sta-

and Betty Shabazz, the widow of slain civil rights leader Malcolm X. The second segment presents excerpts of *The Darker Side of Black*, a film now in release by independent British director Isaac Julien, which takes a penetrating look at homophobia in the black community. Rounding out its coverage of Black History Month, *In the Life* interviews author/historian Barbara Smith, whose upcoming book focuses on the history of African American lesbians and gay men.

Also featured in this episode is an interview with servicewoman Margarethe Cammermeyer, whose life was the subject of a network television program (starring Glenn Close) that many of you probably watched in February, called *Serving in Silence*; a discussion of gay and lesbian parenting issues; and a segment about gay and lesbian life in Cuba.

The July 1 program includes a series of stories that pay tribute to gay and lesbian veterans of war, as well as those working on the forefront of the queer rights and AIDS awareness movements. Additionally, entertainment mogul Sidney Sheinberg, president of MCA Universal, talks about

his support for gay men and lesbians, as well as the group he co-founded with fellow mogul Barry Diller called Hollywood Supports, which encourages Hollywood studios to implement gay-friendly and AIDS-awareness policies. Also included is a segment

### Television

tions carry the show, and OPB's controversial decision angered many who felt the move was prompted by homophobia.

Tom Doggett, OPB's vice president of television programming, says the show's quality has since improved, which has led to the station's decision to air *In the Life* on a more consistent basis. In addition to broadcasting *In the Life* episodes in June and July, Doggett says he expects OPB will carry the program's next season line-up, which begins in October.

"When *In the Life* first began airing, it was like a cable access program," he says. "[The producers] are now doing fewer shows and putting more resources

into those productions. That's reflected in the quality of the program. The writing is better. The anchoring is better. The production quality is better. The hosts are more polished...I would expect if that continues we will air it next season."

Those who watch *In the Life* on June 24 will view a program that was actually designed for broadcast in February, which is Black History Month. In recognition of the occasion, the show featured an in-depth look at the gay and lesbian African American experience. In three separate segments, the episode explores the dual discrimination that people face based on race and sexual orientation, as well as the relationships between the movements striving for equal rights for the two marginalized groups.

The feature story, "Civil Rights/Gay Rights," includes interviews with Barney Frank, an openly gay congressman from Massachusetts; Marjorie Hill, who was former New York City Mayor David Dinkin's liaison to the gay and lesbian community;

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about OutWrite, an annual gathering of queer writers, editors, publishers and others interested in the power of the word to create change. (The episode of *In the Life* slated to air July 8 was not available for preview at press time.)

OPB will broadcast *In the Life* on June 24, July 1 and July 8 at midnight.

"The time slot has nothing to do with the content of *In the Life*. It runs that late because the program simply isn't a part of the regular PBS [Public Broadcasting System] prime-time lineup. In fact, PBS doesn't even distribute it," says Doggett.

The program's producers hope OPB will move the show to an earlier time slot next season. That will happen, they say, only if OPB receives a favorable response to *In the Life* from viewers.

The show receives funding from a national membership network and the H. van Amerigen Foundation. Its executive producer is John Scagliotti.