



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Jeff Dorta, Project Publicity: 212-445-0066
JeffDorta@ProjectPublicity.com

New Documentary "River of Life, LGBTQ+" Tackles Identity, Self-Acceptance and Queerphobia Within the LGBTQ+ Community

New York, NY: A multigenerational documentary where drama therapy transforms stories — from bar raids to modern backlash — into healing, as elders and youth repair community rifts and reclaim belonging and radical joy, will release on National Coming Out Day, October 11, 2026. Directed by Grace Walcott, a real-life marriage and family therapist, *River of Life, LGBTQ+* follows queer participants of varying races, ages, identities, and backgrounds. Among them are a 73-year-old non-binary individual who survived raids on gay bars, a 43-year-old therapist once labeled mentally ill for being trans, and a 21-year-old who feels their Blackness has eclipsed their queer identity even within LGBTQ+ spaces.

Viewers witness breakthrough realizations as elders share stories of when being gay was a crime, when the political movement ACT UP staged bold demonstrations, and when the AIDS crisis vilified gay men. Younger participants, in turn, walk the elders through their own thinking on gender — challenging views some elders once dismissed as flippant, even bizarre.

Walcott's own journey toward self-acceptance, and acceptance within the queer community, also comes to the fore in the film.

The idea to make *River of Life, LGBTQ+* began while Walcott was working at the Pacific Center for Human Growth, an LGBTQ+ community health organization. "I noticed in our staff meetings that people would make jokes or comments about not being accepted by the larger LGBTQ community," Walcott says. "People talked about not being 'trans enough,' or being bisexual or pansexual and fearing what gays and lesbians thought of them. Our community often felt anxious about being accepted by one another, which I found especially intriguing, because I've had the same feelings."

Walcott describes herself as a "middle" person who has often found herself bridging different worlds. She identified as bisexual in college and now identifies as pansexual; in the last decade, she discovered she is gender-expansive, or trans. "I was afraid I would not be accepted by some older lesbian friends who fought many feminist battles and see identifying even partially as male as a betrayal," she says. "I believe we should have the freedom to evolve and discover new parts of ourselves. I can't say I've always felt 100% supported by the LGBTQ+ community, and like other queer people, I have feared judgment."

The film's title is borrowed from a drama-therapy exercise in which participants step back and assess their lives, creating images and metaphors of life as a river—being in the flow and dodging rocks.

-over-

Releasing the film on National Coming Out Day was a deliberate choice. "I think now more than ever it is important for everyone to own their unique gender and sexual identity, whether within or outside what has been considered 'normal,'" Walcott says. "Coming out has always been a powerful act of both self-love and love of our community."

She believes we are in the midst of a repressive regime focused on dividing the community, and she urges LGBTQ+ people to embrace their diversity and continue fighting for the rights of every subset of the community, particularly those under attack for their authenticity.

"We are witnessing a paradox," Walcott explains. "The people who embody the freedom to move — trans and gender-expansive folks — are politically scapegoated while their very existence models resilience and authenticity. Within LGBTQ+ communities, internalized transphobia and generational gatekeeping produce additional wounds."

River of Life, LGBTQ+ shows the cost of that repression; the trauma of a world that stifles people's freedom to explore their truest selves.

"We have fought before. We can do it again. United, we will face down this current attack and protect the freedom of movement that keeps our LGBTQ+ communities alive," Walcott says.

#

About Grace Walcott

Grace Walcott (She/Her, He/Him), also known as Gracie X, is a director, actor, Drama Therapist, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and the author of *Wide Open: My Adventures in Polyamory, Open Marriage and Loving On My Own Terms*. A graduate of the California Institute of Integral Studies' Drama Therapy program, Walcott currently leads groups and sees individual clients throughout Oakland and the Bay Area.

Walcott moved to Oakland from New York City 30 years ago, where she had acted in Off-Broadway shows. Prior to producing and directing *River of Life, LGBTQ+*, Walcott's first film, *Ginger Snaps*, was based on her long-running San Francisco stage hit *Grace Under Pressure*, a feminist revenge fantasy about a woman whose breasts come alive with the ability to shoot. *Ginger Snaps* screened at Frameline SF LGBTQ+ Film Festival, Outfest in Los Angeles, the Berlin Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, and on PBS.

Find more information about Grace Walcott at www.RiverofLifeLGBTQ.com and www.GraceWalcott.com.