

**Do You Remember Your First Kiss?**  
**New Documentary Series, *The First Kiss and other Rites of Passage* Premieres on  
TELUS Optik™ TV On Demand Thursday, February 11, 2016**



**February 11, 2016.** Reel Girls Media's new documentary series, ***The First Kiss And Other Rites Of Passage*** launches this February 11, 2016. The series was filmed in Edmonton, Ft. McMurray, and Gr. Prairie and all ten episodes will be available for free on demand on TELUS Optik™ TV and via the TELUS Optik Local Youtube™ channel.

Do you remember buying your first car, moving out of home for the first time, losing your virginity, your first heartbreak, maybe even that first drink? These rites of passage help shape who we are and mark important transitions in our journey through life. These memories are universally experienced and at the same time deeply personal. Firsts are crucial moments that mark milestones in life. Firsts cover a huge range of human experiences, comic to tragic, from the shameful to the sublime. ***The First Kiss and other Rites of Passage*** is a ten-part short documentary series that explores these shared human narratives through intimate interviews.

*"The idea for the series dates back to a casual conversation where over a glass or two of wine, a few friends shared stories about first kisses and losing our virginity,"* recalls series creator/producer/director, Ava Karvonen. *"I remember the pressures I felt as a teenager and wanted to know about the experiences other people had and to see if they were that different from my own."*

To personalize the process even more, Ava included interviews with the crew in the series. After all, she says, "If we were going to ask strangers about their personal first experiences,

then it was only fair to turn the camera on ourselves.”

As filming progressed an underlying theme emerged about the universality of the human experience. No matter where we come from or what our background is, we all go through some of the same rites of passage.

The production interviewed more than fifty people between the ages of sixteen and eighty. The stories told were just as diverse as the people who told them. When asked about her *First Kiss*, Nicole Prouty said, “*I pulled my friend aside and asked, ‘Hey, Amanda, I don’t know how to kiss. I don’t know what to do.’ And the tip she gave me was, ‘Play hockey in his mouth with your tongue.’*” Richard Lukacs tells the story about *losing his virginity* as a young man. “*I was like, ‘Wow, that’s it?’ It just feels weird. Like that’s exactly the same as beer and cigarettes. I just don’t know what people like about them. But I learned what’s good about all these things ever since, so yeah, I learned to like it.*”

***The First Kiss and other Rites of Passage*** was produced by Ava Karvonen and Reel Girls Media, with the support of a community programming grant from TELUS Optik Local and the assistance of the Government of Alberta, Alberta Media Fund.

**REEL GIRLS MEDIA** is known for creating smart, original and innovative entertainment designed for flexible multi-platform delivery to the global market. Reel Girls Media projects have had more than 80 worldwide screenings and been recognized with more than 40 international awards including Best Original Cross-Platform Content at the Alliance for Children and TV Awards, Best Convergent New Media at the CFTPA Indie Awards, and the Japan Prize. For more information go to [www.reelgirlsmedia.com](http://www.reelgirlsmedia.com).

### **About TELUS Optik Local**

Telus Optik Local seeks to support programming and projects that reflect the local community, a diversity of voices, innovative ideas and alternative views on existing or emerging issues of importance in the communities it serves, featuring local places and events in arts, culture, education and sports.

**Media kit available from the website at:** <http://www.yourfirstkiss.ca/>

**Link To Trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjjMPIAzfhE>

**Link to the TELUS Optik Local Youtube channel –**

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUj3rWl-eKLF0V486JKzYSICd4D0plAKB>

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