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## The Men Who Want to End Circumcision in America

A new documentary, *American Circumcision*, explores whether the procedure is harmful and traumatizing.

BY ADVOCATE VIDEO TEAM  
AUGUST 31 2018 12:58 PM EDT



In this clip from **American Circumcision**, now available on **Netflix**, Jonathon Conte expresses the loss of trust he experiences while coming to terms with his circumcision. He fought against the practice as an intactivist (intact + activist) pushing for babies' bodies to remain intact, just the way they were born. **Two years ago**, he died by suicide; he is survived by his partner, Christopher Holden.

Georgetown University professor Ryan McAllister hears the stories of many men who have been circumcised and feel they cannot share their feelings about the experience with anyone else. After hearing many traumatic and stigmatizing stories, he says, "If you are willing to accept a man's feelings about circumcision as valid, then you have to question circumcision."

The film's director, Brendon Marotta, **said in an interview with Plus (The Advocate's sister magazine)** that the longterm harm is undisputed, stating, "Even the most pro-circumcision doctor in our film admits the pain from circumcision creates a lasting change in behavior that has been scientifically proven. Change in behavior is a form of memory, what in this case is known as somatic memory. The idea that early life experiences can shape who we are is scientifically proven."

Marotta goes on to connect the procedure to toxic masculinity, "When it comes to toxic masculinity or rape culture, one of our interview subjects notes that circumcision teaches men that if you are bigger and stronger than someone else, you get to do what you want to their body. It teaches this in their first shared sexual experience, the first time someone else touches their genitals, and in the relationship all other relationships will be patterned on, their relationship with their mother."

*American Circumcision* is now streaming online.

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