



## For Immediate Release

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## What Defines America Today? P.O.V. Examines Race Relations, Elections, Health Care and Repercussions of War

Emmy-Winning PBS Documentary Series Returns June 24, 2008 With 15 Remarkable Stories Of Our Times

*Highlights Include Family Secrets, the Disappearing Yangtze, and Johnny Cash, Too*

Fresh on the heels of its 2007 Emmy Award for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking, **P.O.V.** returns for its 21<sup>st</sup> season on PBS with a powerful and provocative slate of films that explore the human stakes in such American election-year issues as war and peace, health care, border issues and race relations. This year P.O.V. also provides unique journeys into family burdens of the not-so-distant past, into the weirdly familiar backrooms of Japanese politics, and up one of the world's most fabled — and fast disappearing — waterways: China's Yangtze River. Plus, the best Johnny Cash documentary ever.

P.O.V. kicks off on **Tuesday, June 24, 2008** at 10 p.m. (check local listings) with **Traces of the Trade: A Story From the Deep North**, an extraordinary excavation of family secrets and Yankee myth that sheds new light on American race relations. P.O.V. continues on Tuesdays at 10 p.m. through Sept. 16. P.O.V. will then devote two consecutive nights to health care, starting **Tuesday, Sept. 30** at 9 p.m. with **Critical Condition**, a moving exposé of the human costs of the nation's health-care crisis, followed at 10:30 p.m. by a discussion of this key election issue from MacNeil Lehrer Productions. The following night, **Wednesday, Oct. 1** at 10 p.m., a young filmmaker tells the story of the genetic mutation she carries and what such discoveries mean for her and thousands of other women. P.O.V. closes its 21st season on **Wednesday, Dec. 10** at 9 p.m. with a special presentation of **Inheritance**, a remarkable, one-of-a-kind story revealing the personal legacies of the Holocaust.

Since its debut in 1988, P.O.V. has had a knack for showing films that reach the issues and emotions of the day. American television's longest-running independent documentary series, P.O.V. has featured the work of documentary superstars and emerging artists alike — more than 250 independent "point-of-view" films, which collectively have won every coveted industry award, including 18 Emmys, 11 George Foster Peabody Awards, eight Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Broadcast Journalism Awards, four Independent Spirit Awards, three Academy Awards®, 36 Cine Golden Eagles, the Prix Italia and the Webby.

"Winning the 2007 Emmy was incredibly energizing," said P.O.V. Executive Director Simon Kilmurry. "We believe the films in our upcoming season will contribute to today's public dialogue about the issues that most affect Americans."

**P.O.V. 2008 (all programs air Tuesday at 10 p.m. unless otherwise noted;  
Check local listings):**

In **Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North**, airing on **June 24**, first-time filmmaker Katrina Browne makes a troubling discovery — her New England ancestors were the largest slave-trading family in U.S. history. She and nine fellow descendants set off to retrace the Triangle Trade: from their old hometown in Rhode Island to slave forts in Ghana and sugar plantation ruins in Cuba. Step by step, they uncover the vast extent of Northern complicity in slavery while also stumbling through the minefield of contemporary race relations. In this bicentennial year of the U.S. abolition of the slave trade, **Traces of the Trade**, an Official Selection of the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, offers powerful new perspectives on the black/white divide.

In time for Independence Day, P.O.V. presents Katy Chevigny's **Election Day** on **July 1**. Forget the pie charts, color-coded maps and hyperventilating pundits. What's the street-level experience of voters in today's America? In a triumph of documentary storytelling, **Election Day** combines 11 stories — all shot simultaneously on Nov. 2, 2004, from dawn until long past midnight — into one. Factory workers, ex-felons, harried moms, Native American activists and diligent poll watchers, from South Dakota to Florida, take the process of democracy into their own hands. The result: an entertaining, inspiring and sometimes unsettling tapestry of citizens determined on one fateful day to make their votes count. *A co-production of Independent Television Service (ITVS).*

**The Ballad of Esequiel Hernández** by Kieran Fitzgerald follows on **July 8**. In 1997, U.S. Marines patrolling the Texas-Mexico border as part of the War on Drugs shot and killed Esequiel Hernández Jr. Mistaken for a drug runner, the 18-year-old was, in fact, a U.S. citizen tending his family's goats with a .22 rifle. He became the first American killed by U.S. military forces on native soil since the 1970 Kent State shootings. Narrated by Tommy Lee Jones, the film explores Hernández's tragic death and its torturous aftermath. His parents and friends, the Marines on patrol, and investigators discuss the dangers of militarizing the border and the death of one young man. *A co-presentation of Latino Public Broadcasting. An Official Selection of the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival.*

On **July 15**, P.O.V. presents John Valadez and Cristina Ibarra's **The Last Conquistador**. Renowned sculptor John Houser has a dream: to build the world's tallest bronze equestrian statue for the city of El Paso, Texas. He envisions a stunning monument to the Spanish conquistador Juan de Oñate that will pay tribute to the contributions Hispanic people made to building the American West. But as the project nears completion troubles arise. Native Americans are outraged — they remember Oñate as the man who brought genocide to their land and sold their children into slavery. As El Paso divides along lines of race and class, the artist must face the moral implications of his work. *A co-production of Independent Television Service (ITVS). A co-presentation of Latino Public Broadcasting, Native American Public Telecommunications and KERA Dallas/Fort Worth.*

Israeli director Ido Haar's **9 Star Hotel** will air on P.O.V. on **July 22**. The award-winning film documents the lives of a group of young Palestinian men working illegally as construction laborers in the Israeli city of Modi'in. Caught between Israeli security laws and a Palestinian Authority they see as having failed them, they work for Israeli contractors by day while hiding from police in makeshift dwellings by night. Like youths everywhere, they pass their idle hours talking about love, marriage and future hopes. The director has crafted a powerful *vérité* film that illuminates the plight of young men questioning their own culture while struggling to survive in the midst of bitter conflict.

Kazuhiro Soda's **Campaign** on **July 29** provides uncanny echoes of an American election year. But this is democracy — Japanese-style. **Campaign** provides a startling insider's view of Japanese electoral politics in this portrait of a man plucked from obscurity by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to run for a critical seat on a suburban city council. Kazuhiko "Yama-san" Yamauchi's LDP handlers are unworried that he has zero political experience, no charisma, no supporters and no time to prepare. What he does have is the institutional power of Japan's modern version of

Tammany Hall pushing him forward. Yama-san allows his life to be turned upside down as he pursues the rituals of Japanese electioneering — with both tragic and comic results. *A co-presentation with the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM).*

P.O.V. revisits Robert Elfstrom's classic 1969 documentary, **Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music**, on **Aug. 5**. In this rarely seen gem, the Man in Black is captured at his peak, the first of many in a looming roller-coaster career. Fresh on the heels of his *Folsom Prison* album, Cash reveals the dark intensity and raw talent that made him a country music star and cultural icon. Director Robert Elfstrom got closer than any other filmmaker to Cash, who is seen performing with his new bride June Carter Cash, in a rare duet with Bob Dylan and behind the scenes with friends, family and aspiring young musicians. **Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music** paints an unforgettable portrait that endures beyond the singer's 2003 death.

**Belarusian Waltz** by Andrzej Fidyk follows on **Aug. 12**. Belarus has been called "Europe's last dictatorship." Since 1994, Alexander Lukashenko has ruled the ex-Soviet republic with a despotic hand, jailing the opposition, shutting down the press and refusing to investigate the assassinations of dissidents. He has virtually silenced his critics — but not one lone performance artist who stages public stunts mocking the dictator's pretensions. **Belarusian Waltz** is the story of Alexander Pushkin, whose audacious, comical exploits find him facing the hostility of the police and the consternation of his family. An offbeat tale of post-modern street theater meeting 1930s-style authoritarianism, the film offers a surprising window into the soul of the Belarusian people. *A co-production of ITVS International.*

P.O.V. then takes viewers to Chile on **Aug. 19** for **The Judge and the General** by *NewsHour* correspondent Elizabeth Farnsworth and Chilean journalist Patricio Lanfranco. When in 1998 Chilean judge Juan Guzmán was assigned the first criminal cases against the country's ex-dictator, General Augusto Pinochet, no one expected much. Guzmán had supported Pinochet's 1973 coup — waged as an anti-Communist crusade — that left the democratically elected president, Salvador Allende, and thousands of others dead or "disappeared." The filmmakers bring decades of covering Chile to trace the judge's descent into what he calls "the abyss," where he uncovers the past — including his own role in the tragedy. **The Judge and the General** reveals one of the 20th century's most notorious episodes and tells a cautionary tale about violating human rights in the name of "higher ideals." *A co-production of Independent Television Service (ITVS). Produced in association with Latino Public Broadcasting.*

While the national political conventions take place in the following three weeks, P.O.V. offers these encore presentations:

- **Aug. 26: Kokoyakyu: High School Baseball** by Kenneth Eng — In Japan, baseball is not a pastime, it's a national obsession. And for many of the country's youth, the sport has become a rite of passage, epitomized by the high school baseball tournament known as "Koshien." Four thousand teams enter, but only 49 are chosen to compete in the championship that grips the nation for two weeks every August. Following two teams and their coaches, this is the first English-language film to take Western viewers inside a world where baseball becomes a proving ground for life's challenges.
- **Sept. 2: Lomax the Songhunter** by Rogier Kappers — Alan Lomax devoted his life to recording the world's folk tunes before they would permanently disappear. Dutch director Rogier Kappers visited Lomax in Florida in 2001, but a stroke had left the 86-year-old musicologist unable to speak. Lomax died shortly after. The filmmaker tells Lomax's story through interviews with friends including Pete Seeger and archival footage of Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly performing. Kappers gathered footage of the cotton fields and prisons where Lomax captured America's quintessential music, and traveled to remote villages in Spain and Italy to find the farmers, shepherds and weavers whose songs Lomax recorded decades ago.

- **Sept. 9: Freedom Machines** by Jamie Stobie and Janet Cole — This film takes a new look at disability through the lens of technology. The experiences of a group of unforgettable people allow us to re-examine ideas about ability and disability grounded in our culture and attitudes. Engineers, designers and users reveal the gap between the promises of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act and everyday reality for the 54 million Americans with disabilities. *Produced in association with Independent Television Service (ITVS).*

P.O.V. returns with new films starting **Sept. 16** with **Calavera Highway** by Renee Tajima-Peña and Evangeline Griego. When brothers Armando and Carlos Peña set off to carry their mother's ashes to south Texas, their road trip turns into a quest for answers about a strangely veiled past. As they reunite with five other brothers, the two men try to piece together their family's shattered history. Why was their mother cast out by her family? What happened to their father, who disappeared during the notorious 1954 U.S. deportation program Operation Wetback? This is a sweeping story of seven Mexican-American men grappling with the meaning of masculinity, fatherhood and a legacy of rootless beginnings. *Produced in association with American Documentary | P.O.V. A co-presentation of Latino Public Broadcasting. Funded in part by the Center for Asian American Media with funds provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.*

P.O.V. is pre-empted on Sept. 23. **Critical Condition**, airing on **Sept. 30** at a special time of **9 p.m.**, looks at an urgent election-year issue. What happens if you fall sick and are one of 47 million people in America without health insurance? The documentary by Roger Weisberg (*Waging a Living*, P.O.V. 2006) puts a human face on the nation's growing health care crisis by capturing the harrowing struggles of four critically ill Americans who discover that being uninsured can cost them their jobs, health, home, savings, even their lives. Filmed in vérité style, **Critical Condition** offers a moving and invaluable exposé at a time when the nation is debating how to extend health insurance to all Americans. *A production of Public Policy Productions in association with Thirteen/WNET New York and American Documentary | P.O.V. Stay tuned after the broadcast for an election special from MacNeil Lehrer Productions about the candidates' proposals to cover the uninsured.*

On **Wednesday, Oct. 1** at 10 p.m., **In the Family** highlights another serious health issue and asks: How much would you sacrifice to survive? When Chicago filmmaker Joanna Rudnick tested positive for the "breast cancer gene" at age 27, she knew the information could save her life. And she knew she was not only confronting mortality at an early age, but also was going to have to make heart-wrenching decisions about the life that lay ahead of her. Should she take the irreversible preventive step of having her breasts and ovaries removed or risk developing cancer? What would happen to her romantic life, her hopes for a family? **In the Family** documents Rudnick's efforts to reach out to other women while facing her deepest fears. *A co-production of Joanna Rudnick, Kartemquin Films and Independent Television Service (ITVS).*

**Up the Yangtze**, on **Wednesday, Oct. 8** at 10 p.m., takes viewers to China, where another young woman is forced to ask how she and her family are to live. Nearing completion, the massive Three Gorges Dam is altering the landscape and the lives of people living along the fabled Yangtze River. Countless ancient villages and historic locales will be submerged, and 2 million people will lose their homes and livelihoods. The Yu family desperately seeks a reprieve by sending their 16-year-old daughter to work in the cruise ship industry that has sprung up to give tourists a last glimpse of the legendary river valley. With cinematic sweep, Yung Chang's **Up the Yangtze** explores lives transformed by the biggest hydroelectric dam in history, a hotly contested symbol of the Chinese economic miracle. *An Official Selection of the 2008 Sundance Film Festival. An EyeSteelFilm / National Film Board of Canada production in association with American Documentary | P.O.V. A co-presentation with the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM).*

**Soldiers of Conscience** by Catherine Ryan and Gary Weimberg (*The Double Life of Ernesto Gómez Gómez*, P.O.V. 1999) follows on **Thursday, Oct. 16** at 9 p.m. When is it right to kill? In the midst of war, is it right to refuse? Eight U.S. soldiers today, some who killed and some who said no, reveal their inner moral dilemmas. Made with official permission of the U.S. Army, the film

transcends politics to explore the tension between spiritual values and military orders. **Soldiers of Conscience** follows the stories of both conscientious objectors and those who criticize them. Through this clash of views, the film discovers a surprising common ground: all soldiers are "soldiers of conscience," torn between the demands of duty and the call of conscience.

P.O.V.'s 2008 showcase concludes on **Wednesday, Dec. 10** with a special 9 p.m. presentation of Academy Award-winning director James Moll's **Inheritance**. Imagine watching *Schindler's List* and knowing the sadistic Nazi camp commandant played by Ralph Fiennes was your father. This is the story of Monika Hertwig, the daughter of mass murderer Amon Goeth. Hertwig has spent her life in the shadow of her father's sins, trying to come to terms with her "inheritance." She seeks out Helen Jonas, who was enslaved by Goeth and who is one of the few living eyewitnesses to his unspeakable brutality. The women's raw, emotional meeting unearths terrible truths and lingering questions about how the actions of our parents can continue to ripple through generations.

### **P.O.V. 2008 AT-A-GLANCE**

(All programs air Tuesdays at 10 p.m., unless otherwise indicated; check local listings.)

<b>June 24</b>	<b>Traces of the Trade</b>
<b>July 1</b>	<b>Election Day</b>
<b>July 8</b>	<b>The Ballad of Esequiel Hernández</b>
<b>July 15</b>	<b>The Last Conquistador</b>
<b>July 22</b>	<b>9 Star Hotel</b>
<b>July 29</b>	<b>Campaign</b>
<b>Aug. 5</b>	<b>Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music</b>
<b>Aug. 12</b>	<b>Belarusian Waltz</b>
<b>Aug. 19</b>	<b>The Judge and the General</b>
<b>Aug. 26</b>	<b>Kokoyakyu: High School Baseball (Encore)</b>
<b>Sept. 2</b>	<b>Lomax the Songhunter (Encore)</b>
<b>Sept. 9</b>	<b>Freedom Machines (Encore)</b>
<b>Sept. 16</b>	<b>Calavera Highway</b>
<b>Sept. 23</b>	<b>Pre-empted</b>
<b>Sept. 30</b>	<b>Critical Condition – 9 p.m. Special</b>
<b>Wednesday, Oct. 1</b>	<b>In the Family – 10 p.m.</b>
<b>Wednesday, Oct. 8</b>	<b>Up the Yangtze – 10 p.m.</b>
<b>Thursday, Oct. 16</b>	<b>Soldiers of Conscience – 9 p.m.</b>
<b>Wednesday, Dec. 10</b>	<b>Inheritance – 9 p.m. Special</b>

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Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> season on PBS in 2008, the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. Airing Tuesdays at 10 p.m., June through October, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought more than 250 award-winning documentaries to millions nationwide, and now has a Webby Award-winning online series, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information about P.O.V is available online at [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

#### **P.O.V. Interactive** ([www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov))

P.O.V.'s award-winning Web department produces special features for every P.O.V. presentation, extending the life of our films through filmmaker interviews, story updates, podcasts, streaming video and community-based and educational content that involves viewers in activities and feedback. P.O.V. Interactive produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. In addition, [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov) has launched the *P.O.V. Blog*, a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss and debate their favorite films, get the latest news and link to further resources. The P.O.V. Website, blog and film archives form a unique and extensive online resource for documentary storytelling.

### ***P.O.V. Community Engagement and Education***

American Documentary | P.O.V. works with local PBS stations, educators and community organizations to present free screenings and discussion events to inspire and engage communities in vital conversations about our world. As a leading provider of quality nonfiction programming for use in public life, P.O.V. offers an extensive menu of resources, including free discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. In addition, P.O.V.'s *Youth Views* works with youth organizers and students to provide them with resources and training in order to use independent documentaries as a catalyst for social change.

Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by PBS, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, The Educational Foundation of America, The Fledgling Fund, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, The September 11th Fund, and public television viewers. Funding for P.O.V.'s *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston and Thirteen/WNET New York.

### ***American Documentary, Inc. ([www.amdoc.org](http://www.amdoc.org))***

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. Simon Kilmurry is executive director of American Documentary | P.O.V.

***DVD REQUESTS: Please note that a broadcast version of this film is available upon request, as the film may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.***



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