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P.O.V.'s "Libby, Montana" Exposes Legacy of Environmental Pollution, Corporate Scandal in an American Eden, Tuesday, Aug. 28 on PBS

"...a big film about a big problem, well-balanced and well-told." – Montana Magazine

MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET

Summary: The **P.O.V.** series (a cinema term for "point of view") celebrates its 20th year on PBS in 2007. It is American television's longest-running independent documentary series. P.O.V. is broadcast Tuesdays at 10 p.m. (check local listings), June through September on PBS, with primetime specials in the fall and winter.

Airdate: P.O.V.'s **Libby, Montana**, by Drury Gunn Carr and Doug Hawes-Davis, airs nationally on **Tuesday, Aug. 28 at 10 p.m. on PBS.** (Check local listings.)

Description: Nestled below the rugged peaks of the Northern Rockies in Montana—as iconic a representation of America's "purple mountain majesties" as one can find—lies the worst case of community-wide exposure to a toxic substance in U.S. history. In the small town of Libby, many hundreds of people are sick or have already died from asbestos exposure. **Libby, Montana** takes a long working day's journey into a blue-collar community, and finds a different reality—one where the American Dream exacts a terrible price.

But **Libby, Montana** is also the story of an ideal betrayed in a way that crosses political lines and raises questions about the role of corporate power in American politics, and environmental pollution that extracts its highest costs from ordinary citizens. In Libby, 70 years of strip-mining vermiculite ore and marketing a product called "Zonolite" exposed workers, their families, and thousands of residents to asbestos fibers associated with the vermiculite ore, creating what the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has called the worst case of industrial poisoning of a whole community in American history. W.R. Grace acquired the Zonolite Company in 1963, and closed the mine in 1990.

An estimated 35 million homes in the U.S. contain Zonolite insulation. When the EPA began screening Libby residents in 2001, over 1,200 of those tested, or roughly one-quarter of the town's population, were found to have lung abnormalities associated with asbestos exposure: 10 times the national average. Mesothelioma, a form of cancer caused only by exposure to asbestos, was at least 100 times the national average. Libby was declared a national Superfund site in 2002.

The directors of **Libby, Montana** use archival footage, news reports and the words of a range of participants—from ex-miners and their families to Earl Lovick (the mine's former head manager who died in 1999) to EPA field workers to the state's governor, Judy Martz, and then-EPA chief Christie Todd Whitman. In 2005, seven Grace executives were criminally indicted for knowingly endangering the residents of Libby: a case due to go to trial this fall.

Filmmakers'
Statement:

"Even as we documented the history of the town and the clean-up efforts, the story of Libby took on a larger life as Congress was forced to consider what to do about the millions of homes and other buildings in the U.S. filled with vermiculite from Libby," says co-director Drury Gunn Carr.

Adds co-director Doug Hawes-Davis: "Libby is a hard-working, blue-collar community that personifies the American Dream, but the story we had to tell was about the dream gone horribly wrong. Industrialists, politicians, workers and ordinary citizens all play a role in this American tragedy."

Biographies:

Drury Gunn Carr

Doug Hawes-Davis

Co-directors/Co-producers/Co-editors

In 1992, Drury Gunn Carr and Doug Hawes-Davis co-founded High Plains Films, dedicated to exploring complex and controversial environmental issues. The "do-it-all-yourself" filmmakers have since collaborated on more than a dozen documentaries, earning more than 35 awards nationally. In 2007, the team was the first recipient of the True West Visionary Award, a career achievement award at the True/False West Film Festival. **Libby, Montana** is their fourth documentary feature, following "Varmints" (1998), "Killing Coyote" (2000) and "This Is Nowhere" (2002). In 2003, Hawes-Davis also founded the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, which has become a top nonfiction showcase. Carr and Hawes-Davis both graduated with masters' degrees from the University of Montana. Their fifth documentary feature, "Brave New West," will be completed in the fall of 2007.

Libby in the
News:

Associated Press, Washington, Aug. 6, 2007: Montana Senator Max Baucus is threatening to subpoena the Environmental Protection Agency over why asbestos poisoning in Libby was never declared a public health emergency. Baucus has requested five-year-old documents from the EPA, detailing deliberations over whether it would declare such an emergency. Baucus says the declaration would have led to more extensive cleanup, and health protections for the town.

During a visit to Libby, EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson said he would get the documents to Baucus by Aug. 31. The vermiculite, used in a variety of household products, contained tremolite asbestos, which was released into the air and carried home on miners' clothing. The asbestos is blamed by some health authorities for killing about 200 people. The EPA, which has declared the area a Superfund site, first arrived in Libby in 1999, when news reports linked asbestos contamination from the mine to the deaths and illnesses.

Length: 86:46

Festivals:

- True/False West Film Festival, Bellingham, Wash., 2007—*True West Visionary Award*
- Plymouth Independent Film Festival, Massachusetts, 2005—*Best Environmental Film*
- Finalist, 26th Independent Feature Project Market (IFP), New York, 2004
- Finalist, Banff Mountain Film Festival, Alberta, Canada, 2004
- Northwest Documentary Association DocFarm/Arlington, Washington, 2007
- Independents Night, Lincoln Center, Walter Reade Theater, New York, 2005
- Bozeman Film Festival, Montana, 2005
- Available Light Film Festival, Yukon Territory, Canada 2005
- River Run International Film Festival, Winston-Salem, N.C., 2005
- Ecocinema, Athens, Greece, 2005
- USA Film Festival, Dallas, 2005

Credits:

Co-directors/Co-producers/Co-editors: Drury Gunn Carr, Doug Hawes-Davis

Camera and Sound: Drury Gunn Carr, Doug Hawes-Davis
Additional Camera: Ken Furrow
Original Score: Ned Mudd

Libby, Montana is a production of High Plains Films.

P.O.V. Web: The **Libby, Montana** companion Web site, www.pbs.org/pov/libbymontana, offers a streaming video trailer of the film, an interview with filmmakers Drury Gunn Carr and Doug Hawes-Davis (video, podcast and text); a list of related Web sites, organizations and books; a discussion guide and classroom activity; and the following special feature:

Additional Scenes: Watch video clips of footage not included in the film, including extended interviews, outtakes and updates on the townspeople of Libby.

Outreach: P.O.V. is working with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in **Libby, Montana**. For a list of upcoming screening and discussion events, go to: http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_news.php

P.O.V. also works with nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow to develop a facilitation guide with discussion questions and background information to help event organizers carry out discussions around the film's content. Cari Ladd has created the lesson plan. In addition, the American Library Association and P.O.V. have created a multimedia resource list of related fiction and nonfiction books and videos that further explore the issues. The materials are available free of charge at: www.amdoc.org/outreach.

Pressroom: Visit P.O.V.'s pressroom, www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom, for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

P.O.V.: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and celebrating its 20th season on PBS in 2007, 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. P.O.V. has brought more than 250 documentaries to millions nationwide, and 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 at www.pbs.org/pov.

Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by PBS, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Educational Foundation of America, the Ford Foundation, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York State Council on the Arts, and public television viewers. Funding for P.O.V.'s Diverse Voices Project is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, with additional support from JPMorgan Chase Foundation, the official sponsor of P.O.V.'s 20th Anniversary Campaign. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston, and Thirteen/WNET New York.

TAPE REQUESTS: Please note that broadcast versions of the films are available upon request, as the films may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.

