



P.O.V.'s "No Bigger Than a Minute"
By Steven J. Delano

Tuesday, October 3, 2006 on PBS (Check local listings)

Filmmaker's Statement

"My name is Steven, and I am a dwarf." So begins "No Bigger Than A Minute," an eclectic documentary film by ...well me, a four-foot-tall filmmaker. In it, I assert my license-of-stature and a healthy dose of irreverent humor in an effort to entertain as well as inform. "No Bigger Than a Minute" is a film that, in a sense, has taken a lifetime to make. For 40 years I lived this life as a genetically produced but reluctant celebrity; disavowing my dwarf deviance, and avoiding both the benefits and potential traumas of real self-discovery.

Perhaps it is worthy to note that I am possibly the first person with dwarfism to create this kind of personal film: one that aspires to be both a serious documentary and a big three-ring movie, full of fascinating people, ridiculous images, bold colors, and brimming with music. "No Bigger Than a Minute" is my journey along a continuum of definitions from freak to what is beautiful, and my attempt to lay new ground for myself by meeting other people like myself.

From opening titles to closing credits, I've tried to bring a dwarf's sensitivity, understanding and empathy to the film, avoiding such over-used adjectives as "unfortunate" or "inspirational" and the sympathetic tone of those terribly earnest "educational" films about overcoming adversity. Beyond merely deconstructing old archetypes, I hope I am creating new images and juxtapositions that, though they may not always be flattering, are honest and fresh.

By employing a variety of techniques—from surreal recollections of childhood encounters to a musical score composed from my very own mutated DNA sequence—I bring life-experience to the process of filmmaking. It's a cinematic exploration of the many mysteries and contradictions I face as a person with dwarfism, at the same time that it's an expose of the delightful, fulfilling and sometimes shocking realities that define a tiptoe life.

I've never viewed myself as special, let alone a member of particular "tribe," but I do know firsthand how a single gene mutation does indeed mark a person for life. By design, I'm using "No Bigger Than a Minute" to resize conventional notions of point-of-view—in content and form—through an idiosyncratic and artistic style. And though as a small person, I have no bitter complaints, and as a filmmaker I have no dull axe to grind, the motion picture purist in me has chosen to shoot film to best capture the dignity, beauty and grace of the many individuals who have contributed so much to this venture with their on-camera interviews.

Together we are exerting our prerogative to provide answers to a less angrily posed version of the question, "What do you think you're looking at?" Who better to provide the ironic commentary on how the world looks at dwarfs than a dwarf himself? And could

there have been a better time than when I'm finally confronting difficult truths about myself?

- **Steven J. Delano**

