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**Filmmaker's Journey of Self-Discovery Finds Dwarfism's Difficult Past—
And Unpredictable Future—in P.O.V.'s "No Bigger Than a Minute,"
Tuesday, Oct. 3 on PBS**

"A Production of Denver Center Media, The Denver Center for the Performing Arts"

After 40 Years of Living As If His Height Didn't Matter,
Steven Delano Takes Unflinching Look in Personal and Social Mirrors

*"Size matters. Bodies matter. But in 'No Bigger Than a Minute,' character matters most."
— Lisa Kennedy, Denver Post*

"My name is Steven. I am 48 years old and I'm a dwarf." So begins Steven Delano's unusual new documentary, **No Bigger Than a Minute**. What follows is neither an academic discourse on the life and times of America's "little people," nor a project in self-affirmation in the face of social discrimination—though the film includes healthy doses of both of these. **No Bigger Than a Minute** has tongue-in-cheek re-enactments, a music score structured after Delano's own mutated DNA sequence, short-statured Hollywood stars such as Peter Dinklage ("The Station Agent") and Meredith Eaton ("Family Law") and musicians, rappers, comedians, novelists, doctors, and ordinary folk. Not to mention filmmaker Werner Herzog and an uneasy, and very funny, cameo by Randy Newman, singer-songwriter of the top ten hit, "Short People."

Steven Delano's **No Bigger Than a Minute** has its national broadcast premiere **Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2006** at 10 p.m. as part of the 19th season of public television's groundbreaking P.O.V. series. (Check local listings.) American television's longest-running independent documentary series, P.O.V. is public television's premier showcase for point-of-view, nonfiction films.

What really stirs this eclectic mix into potent form is Delano's own reluctant "star turn" at the film's center—a film he didn't originally envision appearing in at all. Delano's opening statement is both the culmination of one story, about what he'd learned of dwarfism after 40 years of ignoring it, and the beginning of a new story. It's this new story that thrusts him into his own film to delve into questions of humanity's treatment of difference, tensions between personal and group identities, and the future evolution of these contradictions. It's here that Delano faces the most untidy dilemma of all: In the brave new world of genetic engineering, when it is conceivable that dwarfism can be bred out of human populations, is this what we want?

Delano was born in New Bedford, Mass., to an Irish-Polish Catholic family. His mother, Josephine, remembers finding out that something was wrong the night he was born. "It was upsetting, but we had to cope with it and eventually come to terms with it," she says, recalling the initial shock and the surgeries that followed. Delano still remembers the contraption his late father, James, and friends

built for him when he was in a full body cast: “It was effectively an old baby carriage with a piece of plywood on top. They’d plop me down on that and push me around the boulevard. That for me, is the best thing they ever did for me.” Josephine recalls Mr. Delano later telling Steven when he was taunted by a cousin, “If [he] does anything more, just pick up the crutch and hit him. . . . That was good, because he never did it to you again.”

Delano asks us to imagine the weird muddle of sympathy and presumption in people who are moved to pick up and hug a dwarf they don’t know. Especially in entertainment-crazed America, the fate of people who are different can be capricious. With “little people,” as many but not all of them prefer to be called, the dichotomies and contradictions that arise from such obvious differences are much sharper. And they occupied a disproportionate and fantastic place in popular culture, from the carnival sideshow to Hollywood to appearances in German director Werner Herzog’s acclaimed films. In **No Bigger Than a Minute**, Herzog declares that dwarfs have a “radical human dignity.” But dwarf rapper Bushwick Bill has his own take on it: “People tried to protect me; I didn’t give a * * * about that. . . . I wanted to be part of the great big world we live in.”

Certainly those who must struggle for their dignity, rather than merely assume it, often have a stronger sense of it. But its symbolic power comes in good part from the very odd circumstance that has thrown Delano pell-mell into the middle of his own film—hardly anyone, even other little people, knows a dwarf. Delano, himself, never met another dwarf until he was 35! The randomness of the genetic mutations that cause dwarfism, and the traditional reluctance of families to share their situations (a quality that brings both self-reliance and isolation), meant that, until recently, most little people and their families didn’t know other little people which gives media images of dwarfs an exceptional power to define dwarfism, even in the minds of dwarfs.

And so, Delano, after a lifetime of ignoring the question (he didn’t even know which of the estimated 200 kinds of dwarfism he had) and only five years after meeting another dwarf for the first time, finds himself wading through tides of media imagery of little people—and pursuing the behind-the-scenes realities that created the images—in his effort to understand what being a dwarf means. Then there is a modern dilemma: When is one being exploited and when is one exploiting himself? Much of the popular and minority culture, including dwarfs, is part of the national psyche, but it gains focus and force from Delano being, in fact, the first dwarf to make a film about it.

No Bigger Than a Minute follows twists to the story of dwarfism today. Scientists have isolated the genetic mutations for the majority of dwarf cases, and most astoundingly, the tests that detect these mutations in the earliest stages of a fetus’s development. The question is inescapable: Is dwarfism a chronic handicap to be eliminated? Or is it a valuable human diversity?

Much has changed in recent years for little people. The founding of Little People of America, and their annual conventions, which promote social, professional and political relations among dwarfs, have broken down their traditional isolation and heralded the public emergence of this minority group. Now in his middle years, and for all the wonderful support he found in his childhood, Delano can’t help but wonder how different his life would have been if he had met other dwarfs earlier—if he had been a little less determined to live as if his 4-foot stature didn’t matter.

“The viewer goes on a trip with me as I learn and try to explain what it feels like to be a person with dwarfism,” says Delano. “Along the way there’s been this bit of self-discovery and acceptance. But it necessarily meant that I needed to meet other people who had already achieved this self-acceptance. So we meet a lot of great and interesting people from all walks of life—dwarfs from middle-class upbringings to movie stars. And they help me explain what it feels like to be a person who gets a lot of attention, even just walking down the street, but also what it feels like to take control of that attention.

“It was important to me that **No Bigger Than a Minute** be different from other films about dwarfism,” Delano continues. “I was determined to avoid sentimentality and adjectives like ‘inspirational.’ Because of my interests in pop culture, I wanted to make something more on the stylistic side. And something with some attitude.”

About the filmmaker:

Steven Delano

Producer/Director/Writer

For over 20 years, Steven Delano has studied and worked with motion pictures, playing many roles—all of them behind the camera. He edited **America's Prairie** for The Discovery Channel and the teleplays **Memory of a Large Christmas** and **Monty**. He produced, directed and edited **Healthward Bound**, a six-part series that aired on public television stations. Delano's work has received awards from the American Medical Association and various festivals as well as several Heartland Emmy Awards.

Credits:

Producer/Director/Writer:	Steven Delano
Executive Producers:	Brockman Seawell, Diane Markrow, Dirk Olson
Producer:	Diane Markrow
Cinematography:	James Phelan
Editor and Graphic Designer:	Chad Herschberger
Original Music:	Jon Hegel

A Production of Denver Center Media, The Denver Center for the Performing Arts

Running Time: 56:46

Original Online Content on P.O.V. Interactive (www.pbs.org/pov)

The **No Bigger Than a Minute** companion Web site (www.pbs.org/pov/nobiggerthanaminute) offers a streaming video trailer of for the film, an interview with Steven Delano (video, podcast and text), links to related content on the P.O.V. **Big Enough** companion website, a downloadable discussion guide and classroom activity, plus the following special features:

- **ADDITIONAL SCENES**
Actors Peter Dinklage (“The Station Agent”), Joe Gieb and Meredith Eaton talk more about their lives as performers and dwarfs in these clips not seen in the broadcast version of **No Bigger Than a Minute**.
- **OVERVIEW**
Dwarfs in Art: Diego Velázquez
Considered one of Spain's greatest painters, Velázquez painted several portraits of dwarfs and included dwarfs in many of his works as court painter in Madrid during the early 17th century. Find out more about several of his works, including “Dwarf Don Sebastian de Morra,” referenced in **No Bigger Than a Minute**.



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 19th season on PBS, 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 nearly 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.

P.O.V. Interactive (www.pbs.org/pov)

P.O.V.'s award-winning Web department produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. It also produces a Web site for every P.O.V. presentation, extending the life of P.O.V. films through community-based and educational applications, focusing on involving viewers in activities, information and feedback on the issues. In addition, www.pbs.org/pov houses our unique *Talking Back* feature, filmmaker interviews and viewer resources, and information on the P.O.V. archives as well as myriad special sites for previous P.O.V. broadcasts.

P.O.V. Community Engagement and Education

P.O.V. provides Discussion Guides for all films as well as curriculum-based P.O.V. Lesson Plans for select films to promote the use of independent media among varied constituencies. Available free online, these originally produced materials ensure the ongoing use of P.O.V.'s documentaries with educators, community workers, opinion leaders and general audiences nationally. P.O.V. also works closely with local public television stations to partner with local museums, libraries, schools and community-based organizations to raise awareness of the issues in P.O.V.'s films. *Youth Views*, P.O.V.'s youth engagement initiative, expands these efforts by working directly with youth service organizations.

Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Ford Foundation, PBS and public television viewers. Funding for P.O.V.'s Community Engagement activities and the *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.americandocumentary.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. Cara Mertes is executive director of American Documentary | P.O.V.



TAPE 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.

