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For the program companion website, visit pbs.org/independentlens/journals-of-a-wily-school

**“JOURNALS OF A WILY SCHOOL,” AN INSIDE LOOK AT
A SCHOOL FOR PICKPOCKETS IN INDIA,
PREMIERES TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27 AT 10PM ON
THE PBS SERIES *INDEPENDENT LENS***

*“There is honor even among thieves.”
— Unknown, 1630*

(San Francisco, CA) — Filmed with unprecedented access to the activities of both pickpockets and police, **JOURNALS OF A WILY SCHOOL** takes viewers inside the world of the petty thieves who ply their trade on the streets of Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), and the detectives who try to control them. Directed by Sudeshna Bose and produced by Debu Bhattacharyya, the film premieres on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday, October 27 at 10PM (check local listings).

Azad Jalaluddin, the eldest of five children, is 22 years old and lives with his family. A brilliant young man, his father encourages him to enter the family business—wholesale fish trading. Yet Azad has chosen a different path, and becomes a skilled pickpocket at an early age. Day after day he practices his profession across the length and breadth of the crowded streets, lightening the loads of unsuspecting passengers on sweltering city buses. And just like any other dedicated artist, Azad passionately hones his skills under the tutelage of a master, taking classes at the local school for pickpockets.

The master of the wily school teaches students the pilfering arts, such as how to lift a coin from the bottom of a water bucket with nary a ripple on the surface. He also shows the skills of a surgeon as he precision-cuts a piece of cloth laid on a melon with a razor blade and without ever piercing the skin of the fruit.

Azad is successful and skilled, yet even he comes under scrutiny from the watchful eyes of Police Detective Bidhan Saha. Once caught, Azad is offered a deal: go to jail or help the police catch other pickpockets. Given a second chance and the hope for respectability, what choice will Azad make? Collaboration or incarceration proves a difficult choice for Azad, and the lure of the city streets is powerful.

To learn more about the film and the issues it explores, visit the companion website for **JOURNALS OF A WILY SCHOOL** at pbs.org/independentlens/journals-of-a-wily-school. Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmaker and explore the subject in depth, with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section where viewers can share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film and more.

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About the Filmmakers

Debu Bhattacharyya, Producer, was born in 1978 and graduated from the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute of India (SRFTII) in Kolkata, with a specialization in Film Direction and Screenplay Writing. Bhattacharyya was also a student of the *Université d'été* (Summer University), at the FEMIS in Paris in 2005. A Charles Wallace fellow, Debu was selected as India's Best Young Screen Entrepreneur in 2007, and is currently a participating producer of EURODOC 2009. Despite being a director by training, Debu works as a producer in the professional arena. His current interests include facilitating the increase in the number of documentary productions in India, and in the creation of a documentary production fund that Asian Directors/Producers can access.

JOURNALS OF A WILY SCHOOL is the first project under the banner of Theme Entertainment, which has already produced several other documentaries.

Sudeshna Bose, Director, was born in 1979 and studied at the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute of India (SRFTII) between 2002 and 2006, with a specialization in Film Direction and Screenplay Writing. Prior to that, she graduated with a degree in English literature from the University of Calcutta. **JOURNALS OF A WILY SCHOOL** is the first documentary directed by Sudeshna outside of the film institute. She has directed two other documentaries as well: *Scotland in Kolkata* and *Fairytales Dreams*. Currently she is writing a screenplay that she will direct in 2010-2011.

About Independent Lens

Independent Lens is an Emmy® and Peabody Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10PM on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. Further information about the series is available at www.pbs.org/independentlens. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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