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Program companion website:  
[pbs.org/independentlens/maidinamerica/](http://pbs.org/independentlens/maidinamerica/)

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## MAID IN AMERICA EXPLORES THE COMPLEX AND HIDDEN LIVES OF THREE LATINA WOMEN WHO WORK AS NANNIES AND HOUSEKEEPERS

Film to Premiere on PBS's "*Independent Lens*,"  
the Emmy Award–winning Series Hosted by Edie Falco,  
on Tuesday, November 29, at 10 PM (Check Local Listings)

(San Francisco)—**MAID IN AMERICA** is a fascinating look at the changing face of motherhood. As more and more parents leave their homes to move into the workforce, others are being hired to care for children, run households and keep houses clean. Often those caregivers and domestic workers come from other countries. An examination of the challenges that three Latina immigrant women face in pursuit of the American dream and the significant role they play in American households today as nannies and housekeepers, **MAID IN AMERICA** will be broadcast on *Independent Lens*, hosted by Edie Falco, on Tuesday, November 29, at 10 PM.

The role Latina domestic workers play today in American society is a significant one; many consider them to be indispensable to the smooth operation of their daily lives and families. As the film opens, we meet 36-year-old Judith, driven by poverty and lack of employment opportunity to move to Los Angeles from a small village in Guatemala. But the decision wasn't an easy one: Judith's four young daughters had to stay behind, in the care of her sister, Olga, and her elderly mother. With her husband, Álvaro, Judith illegally crossed the Mexican border into the United States. Álvaro works as a day laborer and Judith as a domestic. Every two weeks she sends 50 percent of her income back home. The last time Judith saw her daughters was when she left in January 2000 (the youngest was then 17 months old). She hasn't been back home since. Now pregnant with her fifth child, Judith faces the challenges of continuing to perform heavy housework throughout her pregnancy, giving birth to a child in the United States and continuing to support a family abroad.

Telma, who came to Los Angeles in the early 1990s from El Salvador, works as a full-time nanny. She is a single mother who left behind three daughters to find work in the United States. In the mid 1990s, Telma began working for the Marburys, an upper-middle-class African American family, as a nanny for their 8-month-old baby boy, Mickey.



Six years later, the relationship between this Salvadoran woman and the young African American child is one filled with tenderness, love and laughter. She speaks to him in Spanish; he responds to her in English. She drops him off and picks him up from school every day and helps him with his homework in the afternoons. The nurturing that Telma offers Mickey is that of a mother to a child. Today, more than ever, affluent American children are being raised by Latina immigrant nannies. What are the consequences of this? The film goes in search of these answers by taking a peek at what happens when Mom goes to work and the nanny takes over mom's job.

Finally, the film profiles Evangelina, or Eva, as her employers like to call her. To Evangelina, housekeeping is a way to make a living until her situation changes. The 37-year-old, who immigrated from Mexico in 1997, holds a bachelor's degree in accounting. She came to Los Angeles with hopes of finding work with an accounting firm. But after several unsuccessful job interviews, Eva began working as a housekeeper. Determined to make the best of her stay in the United States, she has spent the last five years improving her English, attending night school and learning new computer programs. In 1999, Eva registered with the state of California as a licensed tax accountant and hopes that one day she will be given the opportunity to put her newly acquired skills and previous accounting experience to use. The Latino community is filled with stories like Eva's. Every year more college-educated men and women immigrate to the United States, legally and illegally, because of their countries' unstable economies. And like Eva, once they arrive, they face a new set of social and cultural challenges. Staying motivated and positive regardless of your job or living situation is not easy. But Eva is a perfect example of how determination, perseverance and a positive attitude can help overcome obstacles.

The challenges these women face are as diverse as their stories. Through this film, we have the rare opportunity to see the sacrifices, struggles and dreams that Latina immigrant women—many of them mothers themselves—experience today. **MAID IN AMERICA**, about the courage and hope of the human spirit, will give Latina nannies and housekeepers across America a face and a voice.

The companion website for **MAID IN AMERICA**

([www.pbs.org/independentlens/maidinamerica/](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/maidinamerica/)) features detailed information on the film and an interview with the filmmaker as well as links and resources pertaining to the film's subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.



## CREDITS

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

## ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS



Director/Producer  
Producer

Anayansi Prado  
Kevin Leadingham

Women Make Movies distributes **MAID IN AMERICA** in North America. More information is available online at [www.wmm.com](http://www.wmm.com)

### **ANAYANSI PRADO** (Director/Producer)

Prado was born in Panama and holds a B.A. in broadcasting and film from Boston University. Shortly after graduation, Prado worked for Women Make Movies and Castle Hill Productions. In 1998, she moved to Los Angeles and founded the production company Impacto Films, whose focus is the production of documentaries with a social impact.

Prado was the co-director and co-producer of a documentary on the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, a cross-country trip whose purpose was to bring awareness of and change to the working conditions of immigrants in the United States. Prado is a recipient of two John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation grants. **MAID IN AMERICA** is her first documentary.

### **KEVIN LEADINGHAM** (Producer)

Kevin Leadingham has established himself as both a steadfast and versatile documentary and reality television producer and director. Leadingham first turned his attention to documentaries with the award-winning film *A Refugee and Me*, shot on location in Thailand, followed by *Witch Way to Hollywood*, a look into the making of a *Blair Witch Project* spoof.

Leadingham then served as field producer and videographer on *U.S. Marshals: The Real Story* and *The Hunt for Amazing Treasures III* (TLC) and *Lifeline: Las Vegas* (Discovery Communications). He is currently producing *Mama's Gold*, which documents a privately run orphanage in southern China. Leadingham's résumé also includes producing and camera credits for: *A Second Look* (E!); *FM Nation* (MTV); *My Life Is a Sitcom* (ABC Family Channel); *The Season: Oakland Raiderettes*, *Sidelines: LA Hoops* and *Totally Hooked* (ESPN); *NASCAR Driver: 360* (FX); *Underweigh: Life Aboard the U.S.S. Pelilliu* (Travel Channel); *Berman & Berman* (Discovery Health Channel); *The Bravest* (Syndicated); *Wife Swap* (ABC); and *Playing It Straight* and *Next Great Champ* (Fox). Leadingham recently worked as supervising producer on the TLC reality series *Sheer Dallas* and is now working on an as yet untitled program for A&E.

A film festival in your living room, *Independent Lens* is an Emmy Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. Hosted by Edie Falco, the acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of independent producers, which has prompted *Television Week* to call it "entertaining as hell and better than any other documentary series around."

Presented by Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and community engagement campaigns. Further information about the series is available at [www.pbs.org/independentlens](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens). *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts.

## ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since ITVS's inception in 1991, its programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing television audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting [www.itvs.org](http://www.itvs.org). ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

## ABOUT PBS

PBS, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, is a private, nonprofit media enterprise owned and operated by the nation's 349 public television stations. Serving nearly 90 million people each week, PBS enriches the lives of all Americans through quality programs and education services on noncommercial television, the Internet and other media. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org), the leading dot-org Web site on the Internet.

The images found in this release and more are available to the press as high resolution downloadable photos with captions and credits at [www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos/](http://www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos/)

### PAGE 1:

**Left:** Eva folding clothes.

Photo: Anayansi Prado/ITVS

**Center:** Telma plays with Mickey.

Photo: Anayansi Prado/ITVS

**Right:** Judith reunites with her mother and son in Guatemala.

Photo: Anayansi Prado/ITVS

### PAGE 2:

**Left:** Eva as "Super Doméstica" in a play by the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights.

Photo: Anayansi Prado/ITVS

**Center:** Telma with Mickey and his parents.

Photo: Anayansi Prado/ITVS

**Right:** Anayansi Prado (Director/Producer) of MAID IN AMERICA.

Photo: Anayansi Prado/ITVS



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