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Pressroom for more information and/or downloadable images:
<http://www.itvs.org/pressroom/>

Program companion website: <http://www.pbs.org/sentencedhome>

Independent Lens: SENTENCED HOME
TO HAVE ITS TELEVISION PREMIERE ON PBS,
TUESDAY, MAY 15 AT 10:00 PM (Check Local Listings)

Film Examines the Human Toll of Deportation

(San Francisco, CA) — As the heated national debate over immigration continues, **SENTENCED HOME** is the first film to put a human face on the devastation wrought by this country's deportation policies. Chronicling three years in the lives of three Cambodian Americans, **SENTENCED HOME** offers viewers a rare glimpse into the drama of the deportation process as it happens; from the intimate final moments with their loved ones in the U.S. (the only country they have ever really known), to the squalid conditions of Cambodian detention facilities. **SENTENCED HOME** will have its television premiere on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Terrence Howard, on Tuesday, May 15 at 10:00 PM (check local listings).

SENTENCED HOME introduces us to Kim Ho Ma, Loeun Lun and Many Uch, three men whose stories share a common thread, as do those of nearly all of the 1,500 Cambodians who face deportation. Each came to America as a child in the early 80s after their families fled the horrors of the Khmer Rouge Killing Fields. As refugees, they were granted permanent resident status and, while they later became eligible for citizenship, many did not apply. Settled in gang-ridden housing projects in the Seattle area, each of the men profiled in the film ran afoul of the law as teenagers and served time in prison.

Despite having paid their debts to society, they were suddenly declared deportable by the sweeping Immigration Reform Act of 1996, without any chance of an appeal or review of their individual cases. A post-9/11 crackdown led to the U.S. pressuring Cambodia into accepting deportees after decades of refusal and **SENTENCED HOME** follows some of the first to be sent back.

The film includes extensive footage from Cambodia, showing what happens to the men post-deportation. Former gang leader Kim Ho Ma reverts to his tough-guy identity in an attempt to feel safe in a country he doesn't understand. Family man Loeun Lun fights to do the best he can for his kids and keep his marriage together from behind bars and across oceans.

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And an introspective Many Uch tries to redeem himself, taking advantage of what time he has left to give today's Cambodian-American youth something he never had: the ability to play little-league baseball.

The film raises timely questions about civil rights, cultural identity, the multi-generational effects of genocide and includes commentary from:

- Jay Stansell, a Seattle public defender who successfully argued the 2001 Supreme Court case banning indefinite detention for those awaiting deportation;
- Patricia Vroom, chief counsel of Immigration Customs and Enforcement (formerly INS Enforcement); and
- Bill Herod, founder of the Returnee Assistance Project, a Phnom Penh organization that helps recently arrived deportees.

“Stories like those portrayed in the film are playing out every day across our country and the film provides a critical human perspective for the ongoing immigration debate,” said David Grabias, who wrote, directed and produced the film along with Nicole Newnham.

The **SENTENCED HOME** companion website (www.pbs.org/sentencedhome) features detailed information on the film, including an interview with the filmmaker, and 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.

SENTENCED HOME will be the featured May film for ITVS COMMUNITY CINEMA, the monthly screening series featuring upcoming selections from the *Independent Lens* season. Presented in partnership with local public television stations and leading community organizations, ITVS Community Cinema holds preview screenings in select markets across the country making a contribution on a range of current social issues by connecting communities with organizations, information, and the opportunity to get involved. For more information, visit www.itvs.org/outreach/sentencedhome/.

SENTENCED HOME is a co-presentation with the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM). CAAM is a non-profit organization dedicated to presenting stories that convey the richness and diversity of Asian American experiences to the broadest audience possible. CAAM funds, produces, distributes and exhibits works in film, television and digital media. For more information visit, www.asianamericanmedia.org.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Writer/Producer/Director David Grabias is an award-winning documentary filmmaker with over a decade of experience. His films have aired internationally on PBS, A&E, Discovery, FX, and National Geographic. David was nominated for an Emmy as a producer on the Discovery Channel's two-hour documentary special *Why Dogs Smile And Chimpanzees Cry*, narrated by Sigourney Weaver. More recently, he directed and produced the one-hour documentary *The Real Exorcists* for A&E, profiling the current state of the exorcism ritual around the world. His previous independent documentary film was *Centralia*. This revealing portrait of an out-of-control mine fire that threatens to destroy a small Pennsylvania town aired on PBS. David lived in Turkey for two years to complete the one-hour documentary *Those Who Are In Love*, which celebrates the country's vanishing folk minstrel tradition.

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David has worked extensively in creating programming with a number of Hollywood studios, including Sony, Universal, and Disney, and corporate clients such as Goldman Sachs and General Electric. He also produced the orientation film for the Getty Center Museum. David is currently co-producing and co-directing *Money and Medicine*, a documentary for PBS about the health insurance crisis. A founder of Artifact Studios, David is based in Los Angeles.

Writer/Producer/Director Nicole Newnham is a documentary filmmaker and writer living in San Francisco. She co-directed the forthcoming historical documentary *The Rape of Europa*, which reveals the fate of Europe's cultural heritage in Nazi Germany and World War II, and chronicles the Allies attempts to restore and repatriate world-renowned masterpieces. She worked on the Emmy-nominated National Geographic/PBS special *Skin*, for which she produced a story about the Cambodian community in Boston and became aware of the plight of the deportees. Nicole co-produced *They Drew Fire*, a widely acclaimed feature documentary for PBS about the combat artists of World War II, and co-wrote the companion book, which is distributed by Harper Collins. Her film *Unforgettable Face*, about a Japanese American soldier present at the liberation of Dachau, and one of the survivors he helped to liberate, screened at the Sundance Film Festival. Nicole was associate producer of *Eye of the Storm* (1997), a cinema verité profile of United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan that was distributed worldwide by the BBC, and was a San Francisco-based associate producer for several US/UK co-productions for Discovery/The Learning Channel, including the Emmy-nominated *The Human Sexes with Desmond Morris* (1996). Nicole graduated from the Documentary Film Program at Stanford University in 1994.

About Independent Lens

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10:00 PM on PBS. Hosted this season by Terrence Howard, 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 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.

About ITVS

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) 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 10:00 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 its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV 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. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

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About PBS

PBS is a media enterprise that serves 354 public noncommercial television stations and reaches almost 90 million people each week through on-air and online content. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is a leading provider of educational materials for K-12 teachers, and offers a broad array of other educational services. PBS' premier kids' TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online (www.pbskids.org), continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at www.pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet.

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