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**GONZALO ARIJON'S AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY
"STRANDED: THE ANDES PLANE CRASH SURVIVORS"
TO AIR NATIONALLY
ON THE PBS SERIES "INDEPENDENT LENS" ON TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2009**

Eloquently Told by Those Who Survived, Film is a Remarkable Testament to the Human Spirit

(San Francisco, CA) —In December 1972, the world was shocked by the miraculous story of sixteen young men -- rugby players from Uruguay -- who went to extraordinary measures to survive 72 days after their plane crashed high in snowy peaks of the Andes. It's one of the great survival stories of all time, and now, 35 years later, director Gonzalo Arijon -- who was a childhood friend of several of the young men -- has carefully crafted this compelling documentary from the amazingly eloquent and poignant recollections of the sixteen out of 45 passengers who survived. From the joy these young, handsome, middle-class students felt at the prospect of a trip away from home, to their teenage hi-jinks aboard the plane, through the crash and the panoply of emotions that followed as hope of rescue slowly dissolved into despair. After ten days in the freezing, unforgiving conditions, consuming little more than toothpaste and cigarettes, those that remained alive learned that the search for survivors had been called off. From that moment on, inspired by faith, a powerful sense of brotherhood, and the indomitable will to survive, they banded together, refusing to surrender to death. Their ultimate decision -- to eat the flesh of those that did not survive -- shocked the world but kept them alive. For the first time onscreen, these thoughtful and heroic men discuss what they did and why. **STRANDED** will air on the Emmy and Peabody-Award winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Terrence Howard, PN Tuesday, May 19, 2009 at 10PM (check local listings.)



Scenes from STRANDED, coming to Independent Lens, May 2009.

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Director Arijon goes beyond the lurid tale of cannibalism – an act that the survivors movingly compare to Christ’s communion with his disciples -- to discover the essence of this extraordinary human drama. Thirty-five years later, the survivors and their children revisit the crash site, now known as the Valley of Tears. Recovered photos and footage of their rescue illuminate the interviews with a powerful immediacy, creating a profound, powerful and ultimately inspiring look at the overwhelming human desire to *live*.

To learn more about the film, visit the **STRANDED** interactive companion website (pbs.org/stranded) which 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.

About the Filmmakers

Gonzalo Arijon, Director

Gonzalo Arijon was born in Montevideo, Uruguay and lives in France. Among his many documentaries are *Lula: Managing a Dream* (ARTE/Dissidents, 2005); *Far, Very Far from Rome* (ARTE/Dissidents, 2004); *The Dark Side of Milosevic* (France 3/Mano a Mano, 2002) and *Massai: The Secret of the Volcano God* (CANAL PLUS/ 95°West, 1999). His film *For This Eyes* (FRANCE 2:Point du Jour, 1998) received the Coral Prize at Film Fest La Habana, the Grand Prix at Montecarlo Film Fest, the Freedom of Expression Award at Telluride Film Festival and was an official selection at FIPA 98 and the Margaret Mead Film Festival. **STRANDED** has won several awards including the Joris Ivens Jury Award for International Documentary at the 2007 Amsterdam Film Festival, the Grand Prize at the 2008 Boulder International Film Festival, the Audience Award for Best Documentary Feature at the 2008 San Francisco International Film Festival and was an Official Selection of the 2008 Sundance Film Festival.

Marc Silvera, Producer

Before he founded Ethan Productions in July 2000, Marc Silvera had a varied career in the audiovisual sector, both private and public. Ethan Productions has produced several documentaries including *Great Sporting Duels*; *Long Jump: Carl Lewis vs. Mike Powell*; *Boxing: Cuba vs. U.S.A.*; *Football: Boca Juniors vs. River Plate*; *Tony Blair*, directed by Deborah Ford; and *Maracana*, directed by Amar Ahrab for Ethan Productions/France 5.

About Independent Lens

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10:00 PM 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 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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