



**For Immediate Release**

Contacts:

Cynthia López, 212-989-7425, [clopez@pov.org](mailto:clopez@pov.org), 646-729-4748 (cell)

Cathy Lehrfeld, 212-989-7425, [clehrfeld@pov.org](mailto:clehrfeld@pov.org)

Neyda Martinez, 212-989-7425, [neyda@pov.org](mailto:neyda@pov.org)

P.O.V. on-line pressroom: [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom)

**Orthodox Jewish Father and Sons Wrestle  
With Faith and Tolerance After the Holocaust  
In P.O.V.'s "Hiding and Seeking," August 30 on PBS**

Child of Survivors Crafts "Ethical Will"  
By Uncovering Polish Heroes Who Rescued His Family

*An Independent Television Service (ITVS) Co-presentation  
A PBS Program Club Selection*

Most fathers should have Menachem Daum's problems. An Orthodox Jew and child of Polish Holocaust survivors, Daum has spent many years interviewing camp survivors about the impact of the Nazi "final solution" on Jewish religious faith. Daum worries his two sons' inwardly-focused version of Orthodoxy may be leading them down narrow paths of intolerance toward the world outside the confines of the "yeshiva." His concern about his sons mirrors his misgivings over what he sees as growing insularity in Orthodox Judaism, both in Brooklyn, N.Y., where Daum grew up and reared his sons, and in Israel, where his sons have moved to immerse themselves in Talmudic studies.

So it's no laughing matter when Daum's wife, Rifka, comes home one night from a lecture with a tape of a rabbi openly preaching "hatred" of the non-Jewish world. Daum's first reaction is to try to raise an outcry in his own Brooklyn Orthodox community. But community leaders and media mostly ignore him. His second reaction is to consider the "ethical legacy" he might – and should – be leaving his children. So he flies to Israel, the audio tape in hand, to discuss the matter with his sons, who have adopted a strict Orthodox Judaism centered on study of the Torah and other sacred Jewish writings. Thus begins the difficult and revelatory journey documented by the Emmy® nominated filmmaking team of Menachem Daum and Oren Rudavsky, in **Hiding and Seeking**.

Rudavsky and Daum's **Hiding and Seeking** has its national broadcast premiere **Tuesday, August 30** at 10 p.m., as part of the 18th season of public television's P.O.V. series. P.O.V. continues on Tuesdays at 10 p.m., through September 13 on PBS stations nationwide. (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.

**Hiding and Seeking** uncovers unsettling generational, social, and philosophical rifts in contemporary Jewish life. What Menachem is up against becomes clear when he plays the tape of the rabbi for his sons. Neither son gives the tape much significance. For the older, Tzvi Dovid it is, "of course," wrong but also understandable. The younger, Akiva has a more combative view – the rabbi is only expressing the hard truth of Jewish experience, that Jews should have as little as possible to do with the world of the *goyem* (non-Jews). The brothers go further, questioning why their father should worry about relations with non-Jews. Akiva even ridicules his father's inner moral conflicts, insisting that nothing good can come from outside the complex life of Jewish scriptural study that both brothers have embraced.

For Menachem, Rifka and their parents, the struggle to reconcile the Holocaust with faith was unavoidable. For younger Jews like Tzvi Dovid and Akiva, the Holocaust bespeaks the historical perversion of non-Jews and is not, in that sense, something Jews should take to heart as their burden. Rather Jews should turn away and never again trust in the world of non-Jews. The son's rejection of conciliation with the non-Jewish world challenges the moral core of Menachem's life.

**Hiding and Seeking** shows the oldest generation, the grandparents who experienced the death camps, sharing a view much closer to that of Tzvi Dovid and Akiva. Only Menachem's mother rejected blind faith in a God who would subject His people to such terrors. The other grandparents re-embraced their faith. They also frankly hated their persecutors, whom they tended to group with all *goyem*. Menachem's father felt so strongly that, on coming to America, he gave up a good job in upstate New York and moved to Brooklyn so he could raise his family in an Orthodox environment. Interviewed on film as an older man, he unapologetically expresses his antipathy to non-Jews, especially the Christian Poles who, in his view, had a hand in the camps and murders of his family and other Jews. When, during the making of **Hiding and Seeking**, Menachem's explains to his father-in-law, Chaim, that he and Rifka are taking Tzvi Dovid and Akiva to Poland to seek the family's history, the old man warns Menachem against going to Poland and that all Poles are dangerous and treacherous. (In an eerily touching moment, Menachem's wheelchair-bound father remembers exactly his old address in Poland as his "home," which he belatedly wants to see again.)

In the seesaw of generations, Menachem had rejected his father's faithful hatreds. Instead, he evolved for himself, as did many first-generation Holocaust offspring, a conciliatory "Jewish humanism" that saw in the Holocaust the lesson that only by seeing the spark of God in all human beings could humanity progress. In Menachem's case, he took much of his inspiration from the teachings and music of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach (featured in concert footage in the film). This vision of conciliation among all humanity as the highest fulfillment of his Jewish faith has guided Menachem through his life. Is it possible that his sons could find his worldview – his ethical legacy – irrelevant?

The trip to Poland brings generational tensions into relief as a string of revelations come to the Daum band searching the Polish hinterland. Using old maps and accounts, Menachem leads the family on a journey that discovers some of the ruins of Poland's formerly rich Jewish life. He's determined to perform appropriate Jewish prayers at such sites. His posting of a paper with names and a prayer in the rubble of a former synagogue, however, only elicits exasperation from Akiva. A visit to the broken-down graveyard of Menachem's grandparents elicits more respectful attention and the beginning realization that their dad may be on to something.

Also on the agenda is seeking some memory or evidence of the rescue of Rifka's father, Chaim, and his two brothers, who spent 28 months hidden in a pit under a haystack in the farmyard of a non-Jewish Polish family. The story of this Polish family, who at ultimate risk to itself fed the Federman brothers and bluffed their way through German searches, inevitably grows in significance in the running argument between Menachem and his sons. Surprisingly, after nearly 60 years, the very farm where the Federman boys were saved remains intact; even more surprising, the same Mucha family lives at the farm. The Daums encounter first the granddaughter. Then, astoundingly, they learn that her grandparents, the very people who as newly-weds helped saved the three brothers, are still alive. The granddaughter brings out first her grandfather and then her grandmother. The grandmother – remembered by Chaim back in New York as a fetching girl – is now old and bent nearly to the ground but is sharp as a tack and remembers everything.

What follows is the heartening and heartrending rediscovery of a passage in the family's history that suddenly acquires immediate and tangible force. For the Daums, the encounter is steeped in unanticipated emotion – and the realization of a long unpaid debt. For the Polish rescuers, there is a kind of wistful reception of visitors long past expected. A story never before fully assembled – an instance of individual humanity in the face of collective brutality – gets fully aired at last in **Hiding and Seeking**. It isn't a simple story, for humans and their motives never are. On the other hand,

actions taken at mortal risk often tell simple truths. “A person saved is a world saved,” says Rifka, quoting a Jewish proverb.

The rescue of the Federman brothers by a Polish peasant family, seen up close, forces everyone in the Daum clan to react. The family finds a way to repay its debt, but the meaning of the Muchas’ act not surprisingly ripples with different effect through family members. Do the Muchas prove or disprove the rule? It’s a question raised by the Holocaust for all humanity, and is a question that even Tzvi Dovid and Akiva cannot escape.

**Hiding and Seeking** is the second in a trilogy of films about the Jewish world by Menachem Daum and Oren Rudavsky, who collaborated on the Emmy® nominated **A Life Apart: Hasidism in America**.

“Menachem and I began by working on a segment about Holocaust survivors and faith for PBS’ *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*,” recalls Rudavsky. “It soon became clear to us that Menachem’s own fears and struggles over the direction of the Orthodox world were a window on contemporary Jewish life.”

“With **Hiding and Seeking**, I believe we are getting to the heart of the matter,” adds Daum. “Not answers, but certainly the questions that will bear heavily on Judaism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

**Hiding and Seeking** was funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and produced in association with the Independent Television Service (ITVS). Additional funding was provided by The Hartley Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, The New York State Council on the Arts, The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, Arnold and Gloria Kaufman, and Lenny Lieberman.

#### **About the filmmakers:**

##### **Menachem Daum**

###### **Co-director/Co-producer**

Menachem Daum is co-producer and co-director, with Oren Rudavsky, of the Emmy® nominated **A Life Apart: Hasidism in America**. For years he has been conducting an oral history project among elderly survivors of the Holocaust and has written extensively on the subject. Also Research Director of the Brookdale Center on Aging at Hunter College for over 12 years, Daum produced and directed **In Care Of**, also Emmy® nominated, about the dilemmas facing families caring for the elderly, and **Stay Tuned: The Challenge of Hearing Loss** for the National Institute of Health. Early in life, Daum pursued Talmudic studies at Mesiftha Tifereth Jerusalem. He went on to receive a master’s degree from Fairfield University and a PhD in Educational Psychology from Fordham University. He and his wife, Rifka, have lived in the Hasidic neighborhood of Boro Park, Brooklyn, for the past 36 years.

##### **Oren Rudavsky**

###### **Co-director/Co-producer**

Oren Rudavsky has been producing and directing films since 1980. His numerous credits include his first documentary, **Dreams So Real**, about three mentally ill men who created their own animated films; the autobiographical short **A Film About My Home**; **Gloria: A Case of Alleged Police Brutality**; **Theater of the Palms: The World of Puppet Master Lee Tien Lu**; and the award-winning **Spark Among the Ashes: A Bar Mitzvah in Poland**. He was also Director of Photography on **The Amish: Not to Be Modern**. Other Jewish themed works include **At the Crossroads: Jewish Life in Eastern Europe Today**, **Ritual**, **The Last Klezmer**, and the original drama, **Saying Kaddish**, which was nominated for an Emmy in Directing. Rudavsky is a graduate of Oberlin College. Rudavsky’s first narrative feature film, **The Treatment**, based on the novel by Daniel Menaker, will be released in 2006.

## Credits:

Executive Producer for ITVS: Sally Jo Fifer  
Producers/Directors: Menachem Daum, Oren Rudavsky  
Co-producer: Martin Dornbaum  
Editor: Zelda Greenstein  
Cinematographer: Oren Rudavsky  
Music: John Zorn and Shlomo Carlebach

**Running Time:** 86:46

## Awards & Festivals:

- Grand Prix - Warsaw International Jewish Film Festival, 2004
- First Prize for Best Documentary and Best Interfaith Film of 2004 - North American Interfaith Network Film Festival
- Independent Spirit Award, 2005 IFP Finalist
- Jerusalem International Film Festival, 2004
- Barcelona Parliament of the World's Religions, 2004

## Co-Presenters:



Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the weekly series Independent Lens on PBS. 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 helped revitalize 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](http://www.itvs.org). ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 18th season on PBS, the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running series on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary- issue independent filmmakers. Airing Tuesdays at 10 p.m., June through September, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought over 220 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](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

### ***P.O.V. Interactive*** ([www.pbs.org/pov](http://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](http://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 program, 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 Educational Foundation of America, the Ford Foundation, PBS and public television viewers. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television station including KCET/Los Angeles, WGBH/Boston, and WNET/New York. Cara Mertes is executive director of P.O.V./American Documentary, Inc.



Support for P.O.V. is provided by Starbucks Coffee Company. Starbucks has a rich tradition of supporting the arts and independent film and celebrates the fact that numerous points of view can be discussed over a good cup of coffee. Starbucks is committed to offering the highest quality coffee in grocery stores nationwide.

***American Documentary, Inc.*** ([www.americandocumentary.org](http://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, on line and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback, to educational opportunities and community participation.

*P.O.V.'s **Hiding and Seeking** is a PBS Program Club pick. PBS Program Clubs work like book clubs, but for TV. To learn more or to start your own club, visit [www.pbs.org/pbsprogramclub](http://www.pbs.org/pbsprogramclub).*

**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.*



Support for P.O.V. is provided by Starbucks Coffee Company.

