



Contact:

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

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

Online Pressroom: [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom)

## **P.O.V.'s "LUMO" Exposes Rape as Terror Tool in Central Africa and Women Who Are Fighting Back, Tuesday, Sept. 18 on PBS**

Eve Ensler Featured in Special P.O.V. Podcast

*"This film is so provocative, and so brave. It lets us understand what a powerful tool film is for social change. . . . [It has] moved me." – Barbara Kopple, director, "Harlan County U.S.A."*

### **MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET**

**Summary:** The **P.O.V.** series (a cinema term for "point of view") celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> year on PBS in 2007. It is American television's longest-running independent documentary series. P.O.V. is broadcast Tuesdays at 10 p.m. (check local listings), June through September on PBS, with primetime specials in the fall and winter.

**Airdate:** P.O.V.'s **LUMO**, by Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter and Nelson Walkler III, airs nationally on **Tuesday, Sept. 18, 2007 at 10 p.m. on PBS.** (Check local listings.)

**Description:** The agonies of present-day Africa are deeply etched in the bodies of women. In eastern Congo on the Rwandan border, vying militias, armies and bandits use rape as a weapon of terror. Lumo Sinai was just over 20 when marauding soldiers attacked her. A fistula, a medical condition common among victims of violent rape, rendered Lumo incontinent and threatens her ability to bear children. Rejected by her fiancé and cast aside by her family, she awaits reconstructive surgery. **LUMO** is her story, tragic in its cruelties and inspiring for her dignity and the struggle she wages, with the help of an extraordinary African hospital, to overcome shame, fear and the affliction that robs her of a normal life.

On P.O.V.'s Web site, [www.pbs.org/pov/lumo](http://www.pbs.org/pov/lumo), playwright and women's activist Eve Ensler discusses her recent trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Rich mineral deposits, competing tribal groups, a brutal colonial legacy, and vast stretches of forest have made the nation of Congo ripe for foreign intervention and political chaos. Especially in eastern Congo, the country has served as haven and battleground for Congolese insurgents and armed groups spilling over from wars in neighboring countries. The end of the Rwandan genocide sent thousands of Hutu militiamen, responsible for the mass murder of Tutsis and moderate Hutus, fleeing to the Congolese forests, where they were pursued by the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan army.

Their struggle became entangled with a long-running insurgency against the crumbling Mobutu regime and cross-border tensions with other nations, helping to fuel the First and Second Congo Wars. The latter, lasting from 1998 to 2003, involved nine African nations and some 20 armed groups, and led to the death of nearly 4 million people. Child soldiers, drugs, superstition, and the terrorizing of women characterized the fighting.

Lumo Sinai was a victim of this war. She learned about a hospital in Goma that offers reconstructive surgery that has a high success rate of reversing the effects of rape-induced fistula, even allowing women to give birth. After four failed surgeries, Lumo is running out of chances to heal.

Filmmakers'  
Statement:

“Getting a grasp on the Congo—its wars, political machinations, and bewildering ethnic rivalries—is difficult, perhaps contributing to the relative obscurity of the humanitarian disaster on the world stage,” say directors Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter and Nelson Walker III. “We only began to understand it ourselves when we spent the fall of 2004 in the frontier town of Goma. We were volunteers making medical training videos for HEAL Africa Hospital, an NGO whose directors were our generous hosts.

“Congo’s beauty and its tragic history could occupy any filmmaker for a thousand years, but our story was the one that we were compelled to choose because of its searing immediacy. We returned in the fall of 2005 eager to put a human face on this situation. Lumo was at the center of a group of girls battling the tedium of waiting for treatment by playing jacks, catching grasshoppers, and singing hymns. When we asked whether anyone would like to share her story with us, Lumo was the first to step forward.”

Bios:

**Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter, Director/Producer/Cinematographer**

Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter holds a bachelors degree with honors from Brown University (2001) and master of fine arts with honors in film directing from Columbia University (2007). He served as co-producer and additional editor of “Control Room” (Magnolia Pictures, 2004). He has also directed, edited, shot and/or produced short films for the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the U.S. Department of Education, WGBH, the Global Leadership Campaign, and the Lincoln Center Film Society. Last year, Perlmutter taught an undergraduate course on documentary filmmaking at Columbia University and worked with WITNESS as a film instructor for a local human-rights group in Northern Uganda. He currently works as a correspondent for UNICEF, and recently produced four short films on child soldiers in Congo for the organization. His latest fiction film, “Les Vulnerables,” was selected to be the closing night short of the 2007 New York Film Festival.

**Nelson Walker III, Director/Producer/Cinematographer**

Nelson Walker III holds a bachelors degree in American civilization from Brown University. He began his career as a writer, penning documentaries for the Discovery Channel, History Channel, and PBS's “NOVA.” His directorial debut, “iThemba|Hope,” aired on the Sundance Channel in 2005. Walker works regularly as a cinematographer for renowned documentary film company Maysles Films, and is a founding member of the Maysles Films Institute, a non-profit organization committed to using film to empower marginalized individuals and communities. He was the 2005 recipient of the Albert Maysles Award for Excellence in Documentary Filmmaking at the Dallas Video Festival.

Walker, who lives in New York, has worked extensively in Tibet, as a visiting instructor at Tibet University in Lhasa and contributor the Tibetan & Himalayan Digital Library Project. In 2006, he traveled to the Kham region as a documentarian for the Kham Geotourism Project, an initiative launched by the University of Virginia, Machik, and the Maysles Films Institute. Walker will receive his master of fine arts in film directing from Columbia University this fall.

**Louis Abelman, Co-Director/Producer**

Louis Abelman is a freelance writer living in New York. This is his first film. After attending Brown University, where he majored in African history, he worked for the *International Herald Tribune* in Paris, where he later wrote an op/ed about the war in the Congo. For the past two years while working on **LUMO** he has been an editorial assistant at *The New York Times*, posted variously on the Foreign, Metro, Society, and Editorial desks.

**Lynn True, Co-Director/Editor**

Lynn True graduated from Brown University with a joint degree in urban studies and architecture. She was an assistant editor for PBS, AMC, and NBC News Productions before moving on to edit documentary and narrative films. Her editing credits include “Chain Times Three” (Museum of Modern Art), “iThemba|Hope” (Sundance Channel),

and “Asparagus! A Stalk-umentary” (which won an American Documentary | P.O.V. “Art of the Documentary Pitch” grant at the Museum of Television and Radio’s Film Festival in 2005). Past projects have also screened on Current TV, the Museum of Television and Radio, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Anthology Film Archives, IFC Center, as well as at festivals and conferences around the world. True traveled to the Kham region of Tibet to work on a documentary production of the Maysles Film Institute. She returned recently to complete a short film about Tibetan nomads. She lives in New York.

Length: 56:46

Awards & Festivals:

Student Academy Award, *Best Documentary*, 2007  
Columbia University Film Festival, 2006 – *National Board of Review of Motion Pictures Award*  
Media That Matters Film Festival, 2006 – *Global Health Award*  
Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, Durham, N.C., 2007  
Human Rights Watch Film Festival, New York and London, 2007  
United Nations Film Festival, New York, 2007

Credits:

Directors/Producers:	Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter and Nelson Walker III
Producer/Co-Director:	Louis Abelman
Editor/Co-Director:	Lynn True
Cinematographers:	Nelson Walker III and Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter
Writers:	Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter, Nelson Walker III, Louis Abelman, Lynn True

P.O.V. Web:

The **LUMO** companion Web site, [www.pbs.org/pov/lumo](http://www.pbs.org/pov/lumo), offers a streaming video trailer of the film, an interview with filmmakers Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter and Nelson Walker III, Louis Abelman & Lynn True (video, podcast and text); a list of related Web sites, organizations and books; a discussion guide and classroom activity; and these special features:

*Interview:* UNICEF child protection specialist Pamela Shiffman talks with P.O.V. about the U.N. Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict and what they are doing to prevent the use of rape as a tactic of warfare, to help the victims of violence in conflicts around the world and to increase awareness of the issue. Their new campaign, "Stop Rape Now," will launch a website on October 1, 2007.

*Podcast:* Eve Ensler, playwright, activist and founder of V-Day, an organization that works to stop violence against women, talks with *Ms. Magazine* senior editor Michele Kort about her work and her recent trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

*Film Update:* Extended video update of Lumo and of Jo Lusi, the HEAL Africa doctor featured in the film

Outreach:

P.O.V. is working with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in **LUMO**. For a list of upcoming screening and discussion events, go to: [http://www.amdoc.org/outreach\\_news.php](http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_news.php)

P.O.V. also works with nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow to develop a facilitation guide with discussion questions and background information to help event organizers carry out discussions around the film’s content. Cari Ladd has created the lesson plan. In addition, the American Library Association and P.O.V. have created a multimedia resource list of related fiction and nonfiction books and videos that further explore the issues. The materials are available free of charge at: [www.amdoc.org/outreach](http://www.amdoc.org/outreach).

Pressroom: Visit P.O.V.'s pressroom, [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom), for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

P.O.V.: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and celebrating its 20th season on PBS in 2007, the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. P.O.V. has brought more than 250 documentaries to millions nationwide, and 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 at [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by PBS, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Educational Foundation of America, the Ford Foundation, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York State Council on the Arts, and public television viewers. Funding for P.O.V.'s Diverse Voices Project is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, with additional support from JPMorgan Chase Foundation, the official sponsor of P.O.V.'s 20th Anniversary Campaign. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston, and Thirteen/WNET New York.

***TAPE REQUESTS: Please note that broadcast versions of the films are available upon request, as the films may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.***

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