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**Genetic Discoveries Bring Agonizing Choices to Women
Facing Breast and Ovarian Cancer
In P.O.V.'s "In the Family," Wednesday, Oct. 1 on PBS**

A Co-production of Kartemquin Films and Independent Television Service

"Joanna Rudnick's 'In the Family' bravely explores the emotional implications of predictive genetic testing for breast and ovarian cancer. It challenges the stigma and secrecy associated with familial disease, while defending the rights of all populations to access genetic information and receive equitable health care. It is a sensitive, provocative and important film." – Elizabeth Edwards

MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET

National Air

Date:

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2008 at 10 p.m. on PBS. (Check local listings.) The **P.O.V.** series (a cinema term for "point of view"), now in its 21st year on PBS, is broadcast June through October, with primetime specials in the fall and winter. **In the Family** is part of a two-night P.O.V. examination of healthcare in America today. On Tuesday, Sept. 30 at 9 p.m., P.O.V. presents **Critical Condition**, which looks at families facing critical illnesses without insurance, followed by Rx for Change at 10:30 p.m., a MacNeil/Lehrer special that explores the presidential candidates' proposals for healthcare reform

Summary:

In the Family: How much would you sacrifice to survive? When Chicago filmmaker Joanna Rudnick tested positive for the "breast cancer gene" at age 27, she knew the information could save her life. And she knew she was not only confronting mortality at an early age, but also was going to have to make heart-wrenching decisions about the life that lay ahead of her. Should she take the irreversible preventive step of having her breasts and ovaries removed or risk developing cancer? What would happen to her romantic life, her hopes for a family? P.O.V.'s **In the Family** documents Rudnick's efforts to reach out to other women while facing her deepest fears.

The BRCA mutation runs in Joanna's family. Two great-grandmothers died from ovarian and breast cancers. Joanna's grandmother Ethel developed breast cancer at age 56; her mother, Cookie, was diagnosed with fallopian tube cancer at 44. Joanna's older sister, Lisa, a radiologist who diagnoses breast cancer and drove the process to get tested, turned up negative for the mutation. Inheritance of the genetic mutation is not certain, but there was no doubt that Joanna was a candidate for the test.

Filmmaker

Statement:

"I had no intention of 'starring' in my own movie," says director Joanna Rudnick. "Actually, I was as reluctant as anyone to 'come out' on camera because I was afraid it would make falling in love and having a relationship too difficult. But I realized this story had to be told not only factually and objectively, but in the most personal way, and that I could do that best by using my own story."

Bio:

Joanna Rudnick, Director

In the Family is Joanna Rudnick's directorial debut. Other credits include co-producing "Robert Capa: In Love and War" for PBS's American Masters series and the BBC. She had earlier worked for American Masters on the films "Julliard," "Ella Fitzgerald: Something to Live For" and "Joe Papp: In Six Acts." She is the director of development for Kartemquin Films in Chicago and is currently producing "Prisoner of Her Past," the story of one woman's late-life reliving of her Holocaust childhood. Joanna received a master's degree in science and environmental journalism from New York University and a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University.

People in
The Film:

In the Family follows Joanna's journey to learn from the experiences of other women confronting BRCA. Poet **Martha Haley** of Chicago is three-time breast cancer survivor and founder of the African American breast cancer support group Celebrating Life. She confronts the fact that black women are much less likely to get genetic testing for BRCA, not only because of disparities in wealth and health care, but also because of the distrust many African Americans feel toward the medical establishment. Martha speaks out, urging women to get tested.

Linda Pedraza of Boston was 10 when her mother died of ovarian cancer. Seven years later, her brother Gary fought bladder cancer. As Linda and her siblings started having families, they hoped cancer was in the past. Unfortunately, it is very much in the family's present. Linda was diagnosed with ovarian cancer at age 42, and she and her siblings all tested positive for BRCA. **In the Family** finds Linda enduring another round of treatment, this time for metastatic breast cancer. Now Linda's greatest concern is for her 16-year-old daughter Nicole, still too young to be tested for BRCA.

Thirty-two year-old **Olga Flores** is a professional singer and single mother who knows that BRCA runs in her family: both her mother and grandmother battled cancers caused by the mutation. Though at first paralyzed by the thought of testing for the "breast cancer gene," Olga finally decides to do it. "My grandmother died at age 39 of ovarian cancer; I'm her namesake," she says. "When my mom got breast cancer, it ripped me apart." Medical professionals, including Dr. Mary-Claire King of the University of Washington, whose determination to fight breast cancer in women led to the discovery of the BRCA mutation, lend context to these women's stories.

Related News **Amy Harmon** is a domestic correspondent at *The New York Times*, covering the impact of the genetic revolution on American life. Ms. Harmon won the Pulitzer Prize for explanatory reporting in 2008 for her ongoing series "The DNA Age," which explores the impact of new genetic technology on American life. Following is the link to the articles: <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/national/series/dnaage/index.html>
EDITORS NOTE: Ms Harmon is available for interview regarding issues raised in the film **In the Family**.

P.O.V. Web: The **In the Family** companion website, www.pbs.org/pov/inthefamily, offers a streaming video trailer of the film, interview with filmmaker Joanna Rudnick; a list of related websites, organizations and books; a downloadable discussion guide, classroom activities and the following special features:

- **Background: Hereditary Cancer and Genetic Testing:** Find out more about hereditary breast and ovarian cancer, how genetic testing works and current legislation on genetic nondiscrimination.
- **Frequently Asked Questions:** What do you need to know if you think you might carry the gene? What ethnic populations are at risk? This FAQ poses some of the most commonly asked — or unasked — questions about the BRCA gene.
- **Additional Scenes: Understanding the Science and Medical Options for BRCA:** Watch several scenes not shown in the film to learn more about the science behind the BRCA gene. The BRCA1 mutation is disproportionately high among certain

populations of women, including Ashkenazi Jews, African-American and Hispanic women. African-American women discuss the importance of being tested. In another scene, Joanna talks to a doctor about reconstructive surgery.

- **Resources and Support for Viewers:** During the week of broadcast, a team of genetic counselors from the National Society of Genetic Counselors and trained volunteers from Facing Our Risk for Cancer Empowered (FORCE) will be standing by to answer questions and offer peer-to-peer support to viewers. And if you or someone you know has been diagnosed with the BRCA gene mutation, we hope you will share your story with Joanna and other viewers on the *P.O.V. Blog*.

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 the film. For a list of upcoming screening and discussion events for **In the Family**, go to: 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. Rebecca Federman of the New York Public Library has 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.

Festivals: World Premiere, US Feature Competition.
SILVERDOCS AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival, June 2008
Official Selection, San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, August 2008

Length: 86:46

Credits: Director/Producer: Joanna Rudnick
Executive Producer: Gordon Quinn
Co-producer: Beth Iams
Editor: Leslie Simmer
Cinematographers: Dana Kupper, Gordon Quinn, Ines Sommer, Cynthia Wade
Original Music: Erin O'Hara

In the Family is a co-production of Joanna Rudnick, Kartemquin Films and Independent Television Service (ITVS).

Pressroom: Visit P.O.V.'s pressroom, 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 21st season on PBS in 2008, 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. Airing Tuesdays at 10 p.m., June through October, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought more than 250 award-winning 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.

Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by PBS, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, The Educational Foundation of America, The Fledgling Fund, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, The September 11th Fund, and public television viewers. Funding for P.O.V.'s *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public

television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston and Thirteen/WNET New York.

DVD 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.



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