



Contact:

Cynthia López, clopez@pov.org, Cathy Fisher, cfisher@pov.org, 212-989-7425

Emergency contact: 646-729-4748

POV online pressroom: www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom

Emotionally Traumatized Children Get a Second Chance in Unique English School in POV's "Hold Me Tight, Let Me Go," Tuesday, July 28, 2009, on PBS

At the Mulberry Bush School in Oxford, Loving Discipline Counters Anger and Violence In Troubled Kids

"Mixing ferocity with tenderness, delicacy with tenacity . . . a docu of uncompromised integrity and edge-of-the-seat drama." — John Anderson, Variety

MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET

National Air

Date:

Hold Me Tight, Let Me Go has its national broadcast premiere on **Tuesday, July 28, 2009**, at 10 p.m. on PBS during the 22nd season of **POV (Point of View)**. American television's longest-running independent documentary series, POV is the recipient of a Special Emmy for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking. The series continues on Tuesdays at 10 p.m. through Sept. 22 and returns with two specials in November and December. (Check local listings.)

Summary:

In **Hold Me Tight, Let Me Go**, one of Britain's leading documentary filmmakers takes a vérité look at Oxford's Mulberry Bush School for emotionally disturbed children. Mulberry's heroically forbearing staff greets extreme, sometimes violent behavior with only consolation and gentle restraint. Kim Longinotto's unblinking camera captures an arduous process and a nearly unhinged environment, but it also records the daily dramas of troubled kids trying to survive and the moments of hope they achieve with Mulberry's clear-eyed staff.

The kids ages five through 12 who attend Mulberry (most of them boys) can broadly be described as having attachment disorders, with some having Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD). **Hold Me Tight, Let Me Go** introduces five of Mulberry's students over the course of a year.

Filmmaker

Statement:

Kim Longinotto, Director/Producer/Cinematographer:

"When I first went to see the Mulberry Bush School, within 20 minutes of arriving, I knew I wanted to make a film there. I remembered that during my own school days, the driving force behind everything was punishment and discipline. You were constantly in fear and you didn't feel good. The aim of the school was to break down your self-esteem.

"By contrast, at Mulberry the goal is to help the kids feel happier and more confident. When they misbehave, the teachers don't punish them, but try to find out why they are acting like that. The way I heard adults speaking to children was so different from anything I had experienced, either with my parents or at school.

"As I filmed and then completed **Hold Me Tight, Let Me Go**, I was really touched by the kids' mix of rebelliousness, sadness and wisdom. I realize more and more how wise children are, and how often we don't respect them very much."

Mulberry Bush: As part of Britain's post-war reconstruction, renowned psychologist Barbara Dockar-Drysdale founded the Mulberry Bush School in 1948 with her husband, Stephen, to help children traumatized by World War II. The couple had looked after children who had been evacuated from London during the wartime blitz. Dockar-Drysdale published a 1958 paper, "The Residential Treatment of Frozen Children," which offered clinical stories about working closely with the most "cold" and "hardened" of children. She described them as emotionally "frozen" at the "point of failure" of their original relationships at home.

Dockar-Drysdale and her staff built on the concepts of various experts, including psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim, whose 1950 book, *Love is Not Enough*, described the treatment of severely emotionally disturbed young people at the Orthogenic School in Chicago. His work was informed by his own experience of the institutionalization of hatred in the Nazi concentration camps. Sue Gerhardt's 2004 book *Why Love Matters* validated Dockar-Drysdale's theories and described how the brain of the human baby physically enlarges as a result of being in a loving relationship. By contrast, if the baby experiences ongoing neglect and abuse, the evolving brain is flooded with the hormone cortisol, which can "freeze" the growth of the brain. www.mulberrybush.oxon.sch.uk/.

Filmmaker
Bio:

Kim Longinotto, Director/Producer/Cinematographer

Kim Longinotto studied camera and directing at England's National Film School, where she made "Pride of Place," a critical look at her boarding school, and "Theatre Girls," documenting a hostel for homeless women.

Her first film in Japan was "Eat the Kimono," about the controversial feminist performer Hanayagi Genshu. "Hidden Faces," an internationally acclaimed documentary about Egyptian women, and "The Good Wife of Tokyo," exploring women, love and marriage in Japanese society, followed. During this time period (1985-1988), she also made a series of 10 videos on special-needs issues, including "Tragic but Brave" for the UK's Channel 4.

With Jano Williams, Longinotto directed "Dream Girls," a BBC-produced documentary about the spectacular Japanese musical theatre company the Tararazuka Revue, and "Shinjuku Boys," concerning three Tokyo women who live as men. Next, she made "Rock Wives" about the wives and girlfriends of rock stars, for Channel 4, followed by "Divorce Iranian Style" with Ziba Mir-Hosseini, examining women and divorce in Iran. She then made two short films for Channel 4's *Best Friends* series: "Steve & Dave," about two friends who work as a drag act, and "Rob & Chris," about two homeless young men.

Longinotto worked with Mir Hosseini again on "Runaway," a documentary set in a refuge for girls in Tehran. "The Day I Will Never Forget," about young girls in Kenya challenging the tradition of female circumcision, followed, premiering at the Sundance Film Festival in 2003. Her next film, "Sisters in Law," set in Kumba, Cameroon, premiered at Cannes, where it won two prizes; it subsequently won a Peabody Award.

Her latest film, "Rough Aunties," which won the World Cinema Jury Prize in Documentary at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival and will be broadcast on HBO in 2010, looks at a brave group of women protecting neglected children in Durban, South Africa. Longinotto was recently honored with a two-week retrospective of her work spanning 30 years at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. (<http://www.wmm.com/longinotto/>)

POV Web: The **Hold Me Tight, Let Me Go** companion website, www.pbs.org/pov/holdmetight, offers a streaming video trailer of the film, an interview with the filmmaker, a list of related websites, organizations and books, and these special features:

- FAQ's about the Mulberry Bush School;
- An essay by the school's CEO, John Diamond;
- Perspectives on the film written by therapists and children's advocates;
- An update on the children's progress.

Outreach: POV works 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 **Hold Me Tight, Let Me Go**, go to: http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_news.php

POV also works with nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow to develop a discussion guide with background information to help event organizers carry out discussions around the film's content. Cari Ladd has created the lesson plan. Susan Conlon and Martha Perry of the Princeton Public Library have created a multimedia resource list of related books and videos that further explore the issues. The materials are available free of charge at www.pbs.org/pov/holdmetight.

Length: 86:46

Credits: Director/ Producer/ Cinematographer: Kim Longinotto
Executive Producer for the BBC: Richard Klein
Executive Producer: Roger Graef
Editor: Ollie Huddleston

Hold Me Tight, Let Me Go is a production of Films of Record in association with the BBC. The film is distributed by Women Make Movies (WMM), the world's leading distributor of independent films by and about women, including 14 films from Kim Longinotto

Awards

& Festivals: International Documentary Film Festival, Amsterdam (IDFA), 2008, *Special Jury Prize*
Britdoc, 2008, *Best British Feature Documentary*
Britspotting, Berlin, 2008, *Best Documentary*
Birds Eye View, 2008, *Best Documentary*
Film Retrospective, MoMA, New York, 2009
Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival, 2008
Seattle International Film Festival, 2008
Los Angeles Film Festival, 2008
Margaret Mead Film Festival, New York, 2008
London Film Festival, 2007

For a complete list of festivals and screenings go to <http://www.wmm.com/longinotto/films.htm>

Pressroom: Visit POV's pressroom, www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom, for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

POV: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 22nd season on PBS, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 275 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV 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 is available at www.pbs.org/pov.

Major funding for POV is provided by PBS, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, The Educational Foundation of America, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, 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 POV's *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Special support provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. POV is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston and Thirteen in association with WNET.org.

