



For Immediate Release

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P.O.V.'S "The Betrayal (Nerakhoon)" Nominated for Academy Award®

Film by Ellen Kuras and Thavisouk Phrasavath Nominated for Best Documentary Feature;
A Diverse Voices Project Co-production

"Haunting. . . a work of visual art." – A.O. Scott, *The New York Times*

New York, NY, Jan. 22, 2009 – **The Betrayal (Nerakhoon)**, which will have its national broadcast premiere on the 22nd season of PBS's **P.O.V.** (Point of View) series in 2009, received an Academy Award® nomination for Best Documentary Feature, it was announced today by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The 81st Academy Awards for outstanding film achievements of 2008 will be presented on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009 at the Kodak Theatre at Hollywood & Highland Center, and televised live by the ABC Television Network. The Oscar® presentation also will be televised live in more than 200 countries worldwide.

Filmed over 23 years, **The Betrayal** is the directorial debut of renowned cinematographer Ellen Kuras in a remarkable collaboration with the film's subject and co-director, Thavisouk Phrasavath. During the Vietnam War, the United States government waged its own secret war in the neighboring country of Laos. When the U.S. withdrew, thousands of Laotians who fought alongside American forces were left behind to face imprisonment or execution. Phrasavath's family made the courageous decision to escape to America. Hoping to find safety, they discovered a different kind of war. Epic in scope yet profoundly intimate and featuring a score by Academy Award-winning composer Howard Shore, **The Betrayal** is a story of survival and a testament to the resilient bonds of family.

The Betrayal, which had its world premiere at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, is a *Diverse Voices Project* (DVP) co-production, made possible through major funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), and is funded in part by the Center for Asian American Media. It won the Cinereach Award at the 2008 Human Rights Watch International Film Festival and the Spectrum Award at the Full Frame. The documentary is a Pandinlao Films Production.

P.O.V. films have won three Academy Awards. Honored with a 2007 Special Emmy Award for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking, P.O.V. is American television's longest-running independent documentary series. It is broadcast Tuesdays on PBS from June through October, with primetime specials during the year. P.O.V. presentations are accompanied by companion websites, community screenings, educational material and other outreach activities, enabling audiences to dig deeper and engage with one another about the issues the films present.

About the Filmmakers

Ellen Kuras, Director/Co-writer/Cinematographer/Producer

An unprecedented three-time recipient of the Sundance Film Festival's Best Dramatic Cinematography Award Director, Ellen Kuras was first widely recognized for her black and white cinematography on "Swoon," Tom Kalin's independent feature about the Leopold and Loeb murder case. She won the Best Dramatic Cinematography Award at Sundance in 1992.

She began her career in 1987, shooting documentarian Ellen Bruno's "Samsara," which received over 25 international awards, including the 1990 Sundance Jury Award. Kuras's photography on the film earned her the 1990 Eastman Kodak Best Cinematography Focus Award. Her work on the feature "Angela," directed by Rebecca Miller, won the Best Dramatic Cinematography Award at Sundance in 1995, the first and only time a director of photography has won this honor two different times. That same year, Kuras was nominated for an Emmy for her work on "A Century of Women."

Among her other credits are Isaac Mirzrahi's "Unzipped," Mary Harron's "I Shot Andy Warhol" and Spike Lee's Oscar-nominated documentary "4 Little Girls" and feature films "Summer of Sam" and "Bamboozled." Kuras shot Ted Demme's "Blow," starring Johnny Depp, and Rebecca Miller's "Personal Velocity" (winner, Best Dramatic Cinematography and Grand Jury Award, Sundance 2002) and "The Ballad of Jack and Rose." One of the few women to shoot studio films, she shot "Analyze That," starring Billy Crystal and Robert DeNiro, and Michel Gondry's "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind." Her latest work includes the Neil Young concert film "Heart of Gold," "Lou Reed's Berlin" and "Be Kind Rewind."

Thavisouk Phrasavath, Co-director/Co-writer/Editor

Active within the Laotian American community in the U.S. and Canada, Thavisouk Phrasavath is a creative consultant for developing Lao TV and other media. During his early years in Brooklyn, he served as the primary liaison/translator for Laotians living in New York City and surrounding areas. His background in community work includes assisting Gang Prevention for Youth and Family Crisis Intervention through the Church Avenue Merchants Block Association and working with the police department as a liaison and interpreter for the Lao community. Formerly an Area Policy Board Member, Phrasavath has consulted for the NYC Board of Education.

His film work extends into writing, editing, directing and cinematography. His projects as editor include Mira Sorvino's directorial debut, "Making Famous," as well as "Summer School," "Cuba Libre," "Americanos," "Streaming with the Prez," "Vietnam on the Cusp," "Sound Painting" and most recently, "Golden Venture." Phrasavath has also directed and edited music videos for independent artists, is a published poet, and has won awards for his paintings and illustrations. He graduated with honors from Pratt Institute with a degree in electrical engineering. **The Betrayal** is his first film as both subject and filmmaker.

About P.O.V.

The *Diverse Voices Project* is a partnership of P.O.V. and CPB, working with the five publicly funded Minority Consortia, which include Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB), the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM), Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT), National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC), and Pacific Islanders in Communication (PIC). Additional funding for the *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Past DVP films include Linda Goode Bryant and Laura Poitras's **Flag Wars**, which won a 2004 George Foster Peabody Award, and Almudena Carracedo and Robert Bahar's **Made in L.A.**, winner of a 2008 News & Documentary Emmy Award. Please visit www.pbs.org/pov/dvp for more information.

Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and beginning its 22nd season on PBS in 2009, 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 June through October, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought more than 275 acclaimed 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 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, JP Morgan 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 P.O.V.'s *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston and Thirteen/WNET New York.