For Immediate Release

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Aging Residents of Christian Nursing Home Live in Shadow of West Bank Security Wall in “This Way Up” on POV, Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2009, on PBS

Some Prefer Oranges Over Politics, but None Can Ignore the Wall Dividing Them From Their Families

“Poignant, profound and artistically viable . . .” — Slant Magazine

To say that residents of the Catholic–run Our Lady of Sorrows Nursing Home, in East Jerusalem, live in the shadow of the security wall being constructed by Israel is hardly a metaphor. As recounted in the new documentary This Way Up, the wall, composed of concrete slabs — one of which, marked THIS WAY UP, was in fact installed upside down — runs right past the windows and doors of Our Lady of Sorrows. But the loss of a view is not what troubles the Palestinian Christian residents most. Even the actual shadow introduced by the wall is not the worst thing. The worst is the separation from their families. Our Lady of Sorrows, an incidental victim of the wall’s zigzag through the West Bank, has fallen on the Israeli side. For these elderly Palestinians, it is the “wrong” side.

Georgi Lazarevski’s This Way Up has its world television premiere Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2009, at 10 p.m. on PBS (check local listings) as part of the 22nd season of POV (Point of View). American television’s longest-running independent documentary series, POV is the winner of a Special News & Documentary Emmy Award for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking. The series continues on Tuesdays at 10 p.m. through Sept. 22, and returns with specials in November and December.

Shot vérité-style, This Way Up is loosely structured around the daily perambulations of one of the male residents, Jad. (The film’s French title, “Le jardin de Jad,” translates as “Jad’s Garden.”) Still robust and wearing his trademark knitted cap, Jad is a weathered, tough-as-nails visage as he prowls around Our Lady of Sorrows and its rocky environs. Inside, he quietly makes the rounds to see how the other residents are doing. Outside, he reveals an insistent curiosity about the daily goings-on around the home, including work on the wall. Periodically, he pauses to draw on a cigarette with the most sincere and extraordinary pleasure, which seems to give him a philosophical distance from the sufferings of old age.

Jad’s pleasure in cigarettes is matched by that of at least one other resident, a bed-ridden old woman who, despite her condition, believes life is beautiful and that any time is a good time for a cigarette. Smoking, in fact, seems a habit endemic to the home’s residents, a habit that the nuns and staff do nothing to discourage.

What Our Lady of Sorrows lacks in up-to-date practices and facilities, however, is more than compensated by the staff’s genuinely caring attitude and a prevailing warm-hearted atmosphere. Some of the residents are in terminal stages of old age; some have lost their senses. There are those who are bitter and miserable with old age, those with sharp minds and those who still find life
worth living. Despite all of this, the nuns and other staff maintain a remarkably upbeat environment — even as the wall, built to stop suicide bombers from infiltrating Israel, has made running the home more difficult. Some workers must sneak in, while others simply climb up and down a ladder set against a section of the wall that hasn’t yet been completed.

And so, to the rigors of old age are added the wall of a terrible conflict. And while some of the residents avidly follow the news of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, others will have nothing to do with politics. One woman cuts off such talk with the comment that she’d “rather eat oranges.” Yet few of them can ignore the personal effect of the wall dividing them from their families. Even with the wall incomplete, authorization to visit is so difficult to obtain that relatives sneak in, much as the lay staff does. Once the wall is complete, they face the prospect of visiting becoming impossible.

As the wall grows into an implacable presence in their lives, the residents of Our Lady of Sorrows reveal equal parts anger, fortitude, eccentricity and humor as they contemplate living out their lives on the front line of one of the world’s most enduring conflicts. Beautifully shot and eloquently constructed, This Way Up examines a wall of geo-political consequence in the most intimate way — through its impact on the lives of some of the most vulnerable people affected by it. In this way, the film interrogates the effects of all walls that divide communities, families and psyches for the sake of security.

“It was difficult to find the money for a more intimate, almost non-political film on the Arab/Israeli conflict,” says director Lazarevski. “I went back to Jerusalem twice, once for a month and the other time for three weeks, to finish the project. I actually lived at the nursing home, so that I could gain the trust of the inhabitants and the nuns who cared for them.”

This Way Up is a production of Arturo Mio in association with Arte France.

About the Filmmaker:
Georgi Lazarevski, Director/Cinematographer
Georgi Lazarevski, a 1989 graduate of the National Cinema School Louis Lumière in Paris, has worked as freelance photographer, especially involved in humanitarian organizations in Sarajevo, Baghdad and Mali, as well as a cinematographer and second-unit director of photography on several feature films, including the Cannes award-winner “Entre les murs.”

He directed his first documentary in 2006, “Voyage en sol majeur,” which won awards in numerous international festivals and was broadcast in many countries. With This Way Up (“Le jardin de Jad”), produced in association with Arte France, Lazarevski carries on his central theme, revealing distinctive characters in their struggle to escape their conditions. He’s member of ACID (Agence pour la Diffusion du Cinema Independant) and the SIGNATURES photography agency.

Credits:
Director/Cinematographer: Georgi Lazarevski
Producer: Stephanie Roussel
Editor: Fabrice Salinié
Sound: Christian Sonderegger
Original Music: Stephane Scott
Running Time: 56:46

Awards & Festivals:
• Tetouan International Mediterranean Film Festival, Morocco, 2009 – Grand Prix of the City of Tetouan, Documentary
• Asterfest Film Festival, Macedonia, 2009 – Golden Horseshoe Award
• Krakow Film Festival, Poland, 2008 – Don Quixote Award
Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and beginning its 22nd season on PBS in 2009, 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.

**POV Interactive** ([www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov))

POV’s award-winning Web department produces special features for every POV presentation, extending the life of our films through filmmaker interviews, story updates, podcasts, streaming video and community-based and educational content that involves viewers in activities and feedback. POV Interactive also produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, POV’s Borders. In addition, the **POV Blog** is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss and debate their favorite films, get the latest news and link to further resources. The POV website, blog and film archives form a unique and extensive online resource for documentary storytelling.

**POV Community Engagement and Education**

POV works with local PBS stations, educators and community organizations to present free screenings and discussion events to inspire and engage communities in vital conversations about our world. As a leading provider of quality nonfiction programming for use in public life, POV offers an extensive menu of resources, including free discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. In addition, POV’s **Youth Views** works with youth organizers and students to provide them with resources and training so they may use independent documentaries as a catalyst for social change.

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/WNET New York.

**American Documentary, Inc.** ([www.amdoc.org](http://www.amdoc.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, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. Simon Kilmurry is executive director of American Documentary | POV

**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.