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Sundance Award-Winning ‘The Overnighters’ Reveals the Human Side of America’s Oil Boom, Monday, June 29, 2015 on PBS’s POV

“[A] modern-day Steinbeckian parable...*The Overnighters* presents an indelible snapshot of a despairing moment in American history.”—Justin Chang, *Variety*

MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET

Airdate: **The Overnighters** has its national broadcast premiere on **Monday, June 29, 2015** at 10 p.m. (check local listings) on PBS’s **POV (Point of View)** series. The two-hour broadcast will also feature three short films: **The Caretakers** by Theo Rigby and Kat McLean and the **StoryCorps** animated shorts **A More Perfect Union** and **The Last Viewing**.

The Film: Chasing the American dream, thousands of workers flock to a North Dakota town where the oil business is booming. But instead of well-paying jobs, many find slim work prospects and a severe housing shortage. Pastor Jay Reinke converts his church into a makeshift dorm and counseling center, allowing hundreds of men, some with checkered pasts, to stay there despite the congregation’s objections and neighbors’ fears. The men become known as “overnighters,” and community opposition to their presence soon reaches a boiling point.

Filmmaker Jesse Moss unveils the human consequences of the oil boom in the electrifying documentary **The Overnighters**. The film was shortlisted for a 2015 Academy Award® nomination and won a Special Jury Award for Intuitive Filmmaking: Documentary at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival.

Embed a trailer, download press materials and learn more at www.pbs.org/pressroom.

Online: POV’s website for **The Overnighters** – <http://www.pbs.org/pov/theovernighters/> – offers a broad range of exclusive online content to enhance the PBS broadcast. Watch the full film online for free for a limited time following the broadcast (June 30, 2015 – July 30, 2015), learn from the filmmaker in an extended video interview, view photos from the film, download a discussion guide and other viewing resources, and find out what’s happened since the cameras stopped rolling. What’s Your POV? Share your thoughts about **The Overnighters** by posting a comment online

Filmmaker’s Statement:

“The themes of re-invention and self-invention in American life have long interested me and inspired my film work,” says filmmaker Jesse Moss. “The lure of the boomtown and its powerful place in the American imagination stem from its seductive promise of redemption and fortune for the brave and the desperate. It is this theme—played out in stark, raw terms in North Dakota and viewed through the prism of Pastor’s Jay’s church—that drew me to this story.

“When I arrived at the church, there were about 50 people sleeping there. I met tradesmen from Southern and Western states hard hit by the housing bust, African immigrants, kids from rural communities with no employment prospects, broken men, ex-cons and guys with Ph.D.’s. Pastor Jay told me, ‘The world has arrived on my doorstep.’ For the first six months of production, I slept there, among the men. Perhaps the forces that drew me to Williston—a search for opportunity, work and meaning in my life—were not far different from those that compelled the men I met.

“It was an intensely emotional experience. I had a gun pulled on me in Wheelock and was attacked by a broomstick-wielding woman. I cried with Pastor Jay—several times. And I stumbled into scenes of sublime beauty. I was lucky to be present for some extraordinary and intimate moments in the lives of these men. I’ve done my best to return the trust they offered me by making a compassionate, truthful and, I hope, lasting film.”

Filmmaker Bio: [Jesse Moss \(Director/Producer/Writer\)](#)

Jesse Moss is a Sundance award-winning filmmaker and cinematographer. He produced, directed and photographed *Full Battle Rattle*, about the U.S. Army’s fake Iraq in the Mojave Desert. The film premiered at the 2008 Berlinale (Panorama), won a Special Jury Prize at SXSW and opened theatrically at the Film Forum in New York. Prior to that he produced, directed and photographed [Speedo: A Demolition Derby Love Story](#), which won festival awards and critical raves across the country, had its national broadcast premiere on POV in 2004 and was optioned by Warner Bros Pictures. His first film, *Con Man*, about an Ivy League impostor, was commissioned by HBO. He also produced [William Kunstler: Disturbing the Universe](#), which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2009 and opened POV’s 2010 season.

Moss began his career working for acclaimed documentary filmmaker Barbara Kopple. He has twice been a fellow of the MacDowell Colony and the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program. He lives in the San Francisco Bay area with his wife and co-conspirator, Amanda McBaine, and their two children and is a lecturer in the cinema department at San Francisco State University.

Related Stories: “Crude-Oil Collapse Takes Toll on Williston,” by Russell Gold, *The Wall Street Journal*, March 12, 2015. <http://on.wsj.com/1H9hiNG>

“Some Anxiety, but No Slowdown for North Dakota Oil Boom Town,” by Kurt Siegler, NPR, March 20, 2015. <http://n.pr/1GHPDYg>

“Overnighters: A year later,” by Jerry Burnes, *Williston Herald*, Oct. 10, 2014. <http://bit.ly/1d7eRUs>

“Fracking in North Dakota: Women in the Drilling Boomtowns,” by Nicole Crowder, In Sight blog, *The Washington Post*, Sept. 23, 2014. <http://wapo.st/1PNyyg0>

“Welcome to Williston, North Dakota: America’s new gold rush city,” by Bartley Kives, *The Guardian*, July 28, 2014. <http://bit.ly/1KcZN5k>

“Will America’s Shale Boomtowns Bust? A Report from the Heart of North Dakota’s Fracking Country,” by Jennifer Rheingold, *Fortune*, March 1, 2014. <http://for.tn/1FqOc1b>

“North Dakota Went Boom,” by Chip Brown, *The New York Times Magazine*, Jan. 31, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/03/magazine/north-dakota-went-boom.html/>

Outreach: POV works with public television stations, national organizations, community groups and educators to present more than 650 free screenings across the county. POV and nationally recognized media educator Faith Rogow develop discussion guides to foster education, dialogue and action around the issues raised the films. **The Overnights** discussion guide includes information on the North Dakota oil boom and its impact on public health, housing and security, prompts for dialogue and a list of action steps and resources. POV and Rogow have also produced a standards-aligned lesson plan with free streaming clips for use in high school classrooms. In partnership with the San Diego Public Library, POV has compiled a reading list of fiction and nonfiction books that further explore the issues. Visit [The Overnights Partner Toolkit](#) to download these materials and find everything you need to get involved with the film. Join POV's [Community Network](#) to borrow the film for free from our DVD Lending Library. For a list of upcoming events, visit www.pbs.org/pov/engage/.

Credits: Director/Producer/Writer: Jesse Moss
Producer: Amanda McBaine
Editor: Jeff Gilbert
Camera: Jesse Moss
Music: T. Griffin

Running Time: 100 min.

POV Series Credits:
Executive Producers: Chris White, Simon Kilmurry
Associate Producer: Nicole Tsien
Coordinating Producer: Nikki Heyman

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

About POV: Produced by American Documentary, Inc., POV is public television's premier showcase for nonfiction films. The series airs Mondays at 10 p.m. on PBS from June to September, with primetime specials during the year. Since 1988, POV has been the home for the world's boldest contemporary filmmakers, celebrating intriguing personal stories that spark conversation and inspire action. With our documentary broadcasts, original online programming and dynamic community engagement campaigns, we are committed to supporting films that capture the imagination and present diverse perspectives.

POV films have won 32 Emmy® Awards, 18 George Foster Peabody Awards, 12 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards®, the first-ever George Polk Documentary Film Award and the Prix Italia. The POV series has been honored with a MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions, a Special News & Documentary Emmy Award for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking, two IDA Awards for Best Continuing Series and the National Association of Latino Independent Producers Award for Corporate Commitment to Diversity. More information is available at www.pbs.org/pov.

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