

TRUE LIVES

A New Limited Series from the Producers of *P.O.V.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

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

Cathy Lehrfeld, clehrfeld@pov.org, Neyda Martinez, neyda@pov.org, 212-989-7425

Online pressroom: www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom

DAYS OF WAITING

Winner of an Academy Award® and a Peabody Award

*"An extraordinary love story set against one of the darkest chapters in American history."
- Chicago Tribune*

Documentary, Distributed by American Public Television,
Available for January 2006 – December 2006 Scheduling in Second Season of "True Lives"

When Estelle Peck Ishigo followed her Japanese-American husband into an internment camp during World War II—one of the few Caucasians to do so—she created a legacy of works that live on as a painful reminder of one of America's darkest periods, and as a testament to an extraordinary woman who refused to give in to prejudice and injustice.

Through vivid use of Ishigo's own memoirs, photos, and paintings, as well as historic film footage of the Japanese-American internment, Steven Okazaki's **Days of Waiting**, winner of both an Academy Award® and Peabody Award, recreates the shattering experience of relocation from an "outsider's" perspective. The film is co-presented by The Center for Asian American Media, and will air on public television stations in 2006 as part **True Lives**, a series bringing classic documentaries to public television stations, from the producers of PBS's **P.O.V.** series.

Estelle married Arthur Ishigo despite the fact that interracial marriages were illegal in California.

Thirteen years later, in 1941, the Ishigos and some 110,000 Japanese-Americans, most U.S. citizens, were placed under "protective arrest." Estelle and Arthur spent more than three years living in two relocation camps, the first in Pomona, Calif., the second at Heart Mountain, Wyo.

Throughout their ordeal, Estelle Ishigo documented life in the camps—the cheap barracks, the barbed-wire fences, guard towers, and machine guns—on hoarded scraps of paper. Her evocative drawings of shabbily dressed workers, mothers with their children, food lines, and the ice of Heart Mountain give the sense of an everyday existence devoid of hope. They were, she writes, "thousands of people with nothing to do but wait ... watch the sunset ... and wait for the next day to begin."

When the war ended, Heart Mountain was closed, but the Ishigos, with no money and no place to go, lived in poverty for years afterwards. After Arthur died, Estelle continued to live in poverty, and her work

was given its first public showing in 1972 at an exhibition of internment camp artists held by the California Historical Society.

When he was introduced to Estelle's works, Steven Okazaki, a filmmaker committed to reclaiming Asian American history, learned that she was ailing in a convalescent hospital. Unwilling to accept the hospital director's claim that she was insane, Okazaki persevered, and as he suspected, found her heavily medicated but able to comprehend what he wanted. "I've been waiting for someone to tell my story to," she said. "Then I can die."

With the help of other camp internees, Okazaki was able to piece together Estelle's story. He was eager to show her his film, but Estelle passed away in March 1990 before the screening could be arranged.

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About the Filmmaker:

STEVEN OKAZAKI

Producer/ Writer/ Editor/ Director

Academy Award-winning filmmaker Steven Okazaki's diverse filmography includes children's films, documentaries and independent features. Segments from his films have been featured on "The CBS Evening News," "The NBC Nightly News," ABC News' "Nightline," CNN and "Oprah."

Okazaki started his career in 1976, producing children's films about racism. His short documentary **A-m-e-r-i-c-a-n-s**, was broadcast on CBS in 1977 and his short drama **A Little Joke**, was awarded *Instructor* magazine's "Best Educational Film" in 1978.

His first feature documentary, **Survivors**, about Hiroshima and Nagasaki survivors, was broadcast on PBS in 1982. In 1985, he was nominated for an Academy Award for **Unfinished Business**, the story of three Japanese Americans who challenged the incarceration of their people. With a fellowship from the American Film Institute, he moved in a different direction with **Living on Tokyo Time**, a no-budget comedy that premiered at Sundance in 1987.

In 1991, Okazaki won an Academy Award and a Peabody for **Days of Waiting**, which aired on P.O.V. His next films were **Troubled Paradise**, which looks at native Hawaiian activism and aired on PBS, **Hunting Tigers**, a comic look at Tokyo pop culture and **American Sons**, a look at Asian-American men and racism. From 1994 to 1996, he produced high-definition television programming for NHK Hi-Vision. Two programs, **Alone Together: Young Adults Living With HIV** and **Life Was Good: The Claudia Peterson Story**, about a family living next to the Nevada Test Site, won UNESCO Awards.

His 1999 HBO film **Black Tar Heroin: The Dark End of the Street**, a cinema-vérité chronicle of young heroin addicts, was nominated for an Emmy and was one of HBO's highest-rated documentaries. From 1999-2000, he was a visiting scholar at the Smithsonian Institution. Okazaki's latest work is **Rehab**, broadcast on HBO, and he recently completed **The Mushroom Club**, about a group of *hibakusha* – survivors – of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. He is also working on a personal film, **Nikkei Style**, about what it means to be Japanese American, and is producing a feature documentary about the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Okazaki grew up in Venice, Calif., and graduated from San Francisco State University's film school. He lives in Berkeley, Calif. with his wife, writer Peggy Orenstein, and their daughter.

Credits:

Producer/ Writer/ Director/ Editor/ Camera	Steven Okazaki
Narrator	Dorothy Stroup
Associate Producer/ Assistant Editor	Cheryl Yoshioka
Key Advisor	Bacon Sakatani
Assistant Camera	Dean Hayasaka
Sound Recordists	Kim Costalupes John Esaki

Cara Mertes is the Executive Producer of **True Lives**. The series is produced by American Documentary, Inc. Major funding for **True Lives** is provided by the Tides Foundation.

American Public Television (www.aptonline.org)

For 44 years, American Public Television (APT) has been a prime source of programming for the nation's public television stations. APT distributes more than 10,000 hours of programming including *JFK: Breaking the News*, *Simply Ming*, *Globe Trekker*, *Rick Steves' Europe*, *Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home*, *Battlefield Britain*, *Jungle*, *America's Test Kitchen*, *Lidia's Italian-American Kitchen* and classic movies. APT is known for identifying innovative programs and developing creative distribution techniques for producers. In four decades, it has established a tradition of providing public television stations nationwide with program choices that enable them to strengthen and customize their schedules.

American Documentary, Inc. (www.americandocumentary.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. The producers of *P.O.V.* and *P.O.V.'s Borders* online (www.pbs.org/pov), AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, on line and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback, to educational opportunities and community participation.

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