

TRUE LIVES

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Cynthia López, clopez@pov.org, 212-989-7425/cell: 646-729-4748,
Cathy Lehrfeld, clehrfeld@pov.org, Neyda Martinez, neyda@pov.org, 212-989-7425
Online Pressroom: www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom

MARC AND ANN

*"I can't believe that anyone interested in movies or America...could watch Blank's work
without feeling they'd been granted a casual, soft-spoken revelation."
– Jay Cocks, Time Magazine*

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

Marc Savoy knows only one way to talk about Cajun music and that is with the passion and conviction that the music itself contains. "It bit me and got a hold of me and never got out of my blood."

Legendary filmmaker Les Blank's documentary **Marc and Ann** delves directly into the heart of Cajun country to portray a couple devoted to the preservation of Louisiana French culture in their personal, as well as public, lives. The joy of Cajun music, its signature yelps and wails, filter through many of the kitchens, porches, and dance halls of the Savoy's Eunice, La., community.

Marc and Ann will air on public television stations in 2006 as part of the second season of **True Lives**, a series by the producers of **P.O.V.**

Ann Savoy likes to recall Marc's opening line when he first asked her to dance at a folk festival in Virginia, calling her face "freckled like a turkey egg." She flips through old photographs, recalling the mystique that first brought her to bayou country, and her continuing love affair with Cajun French, a language she calls "beautiful in its rawness, its poetry." Ann's book *Cajun Music: The Reflection of a People*, was the basis for Blank's 1989 film **J'ai Été au Bal (I Went to the Dance)**.

When Marc is not busy stirring a large pot of gumbo or talking his children on a canoe trip through the swamp, he can frequently be found creating one of his beautiful squeeze box/accordions, made out of plate hangar springs, table cloth bellows, parts from commodes, and fine wood. "I play music like I heard it when I was a kid," says Marc, "and I work very hard to keep it that way."

"This is ultimately a home movie about people I like," says Les Blank, who met Marc Savoy while making his first Cajun film, **Spend It All**, in 1970. "In fact, I'd been putting off marrying my girlfriend (co-producer Chris Simon) for nine years and finally I said, 'All right, if you can get Marc and Ann to play at our wedding, I'll do it.' They said yes and so did I." What did they play before the ceremony? "I Made a Big Mistake (J'ai Fait un Gros Erreur)," Blank's favorite Cajun song.

MARC AND ANN was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts-Media, EFG Foundation through Northwest Film and Video Center, Flower Films, and the Western Regional Media Arts Fellowship-Rocky Mountain Film Center.

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About the Filmmakers:

LES BLANK

Les Blank, who has made more than 30 films, has been called "a master of movies about the American idiom ... one of our most original filmmakers" by Vincent Canby in *The New York Times*. His films have won awards throughout the world, have been selected by the U.S. Library of Congress for inclusion in The National Film Registry, and have been shown in major museum retrospectives. He has been a fellow at the Sundance Institute and filmmaker-in-residence at Dartmouth College and San Diego State University. In 1990, he received the American Film Institute's Maya Deren Award for outstanding lifetime achievement as an independent filmmaker.

Blank's first independent films, **The Blues Accordin' to Lightnin' Hopkins** and **God Respects Us When We Work, But Loves Us When We Dance** (about flower children) began a series of intimate glimpses into the lives and music of passionate people who live at the periphery of American society. That collection grew to include rural Louisiana French musicians and cooks (**Yum, Yum, Yum!**; **J'ai Été Au Bal**; **Dry Wood**; **Hot Pepper**; **Spend It All**; **Marc and Ann**); Mexican-Americans; (**Chulas Fronteras**); New Orleans music and Mardi Gras (**Always for Pleasure**); German filmmaker Werner Herzog (the award-winning **Burden of Dreams**, which aired on PBS in a 60-minute version, and **Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe**); Appalachian fiddlers (**Sprout Wings and Fly**); Polish-American polka dancers (**In Heaven There Is No Beer?**); rock and blues musicians (**Huey Lewis and the News: Be-FOR!**; **Ry Cooder and the Moula Banda Rhythm Aces**; and **A Poem Is a Naked Person**, on Leon Russell); Serbian-American music and religion; Hawaiian music and traditions; Afro-Cuban drumming and religious tradition (**Sworn to the Drum**); American tourists in Europe; and even gap-toothed women (**Gap-Toothed Women**).

Chris Simon

Chris Simon is Head of Production at Flower Films and has worked in a range of capacities on all of Les Blank's films since 1980, including co-filmmaker on **Marc and Ann** and **Gap-Toothed Women**. She has also developed a film on female explorers for her own production company, Adventuress.

Maureen Gosling

Maureen Gosling has been a documentary filmmaker for more than 30 years and is best known for her 20-year collaboration with Les Blank. Her work often focuses on themes of people and their cultural values, music as cultural expression and changing gender roles. She made her debut as producer/director with the feature-length documentary **Blossoms of Fire**, a celebratory tribute to the Isthmus Zapotec people of southern Oaxaca, Mexico, which

was broadcast on HBO Latino. She edited **California and the American Dream: California's Lost Tribes**, a four-part public television series to be broadcast in spring 2006. Gosling's work also comprises print. In 1984 Blank produced the *Burden of Dreams Book* in which Gosling's 74 photographs and 100-page journal were published. She is the author of the 2003 book *You Can Be a Woman Moviemaker*, (Cascade Pass), for junior high school girls.

Credits:

Producer/ Director/ Cinematographer	Les Blank
Editor	Maureen Gosling
Associate Producer/ Production Manager	Chris Simon
Sound Recordist	Chris Simon
Assistant Camera	Susan Kell

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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