

TRUE LIVESA New Limited Series from the Producers of *P.O.V.***For Immediate Release**

Contact:

Cathy Fisher, cfisher@pov.org, 212-989-7425Neyda Martinez, neyda@pov.org, 212-989-7425**“Silverlake Life: The View From Here” Celebrates the Power of Love
In the Face of AIDS Through Groundbreaking Video Diary**Award-Winning Documentary, Part of “True Lives” Series Distributed by NETA,
Available for March 2008 – December 2009 Scheduling by PBS Stations

When Peter Friedman’s friends Tom Joslin and Mark Massi died, he accepted an extraordinary inheritance: 40 hours of videotape documenting the couple’s bout with AIDS. After 15 months of additional filming and editing, Friedman emerged with one of the most wrenching and candid documents on love, commitment and mortality in the age of the epidemic.

Silverlake Life: The View From Here airs on public television stations as part of *True Lives*, a series presented by American Documentary, Inc. and the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA). *True Lives* is a new programming initiative from the producers of P.O.V.

Winner of the Grand Jury Prize and the Freedom of Expression Award at the 1993 Sundance Film Festival, **Silverlake Life** had its national broadcast premiere on PBS’s P.O.V. series on June 15, 1993, and was broadcast the same night in France and Germany. The film drove home the devastation of AIDS to millions of viewers with no direct experience of the epidemic. While looking unflinchingly at death, this day-to-day video diary also makes it clear that life and hope go on. “No one who sees [the film] through to its unexpectedly buoyant final scene will regret the time spent or be unchanged by the experience,” said *Los Angeles Times* critic Kenneth Turan.

Set in the heart of Los Angeles’ Silverlake neighborhood, the film follows Joslin and Massi through their daily triumphs and sorrows, struggling valiantly to comfort and care for each other as even the simplest activities become excruciatingly difficult. Everyday chores, medical treatments and even a stroll in the park require what Joslin jokingly calls “a brave effort of physical dynamism.”

Joslin, a filmmaker and instructor at the University of Southern California, had turned the camera on himself and his family in the past. Thus Friedman, his former student, was not surprised that a super VHS camcorder had become an observant fixture in the Joslin/Massi household.

“Making a film about Mark’s illness was a perfectly natural thing for Tom to do because as an artist, his way of dealing with just about anything was to make a film about it,” said Friedman. “When Tom became sick himself, he incorporated that into the film.” As each partner’s health waned, the other picked up the baton, in what *The Advocate* called “a relay race between death and art.”

After Joslin died, Friedman flew to Los Angeles to begin reviewing the footage with Massi who was alone to deal with his own worsening condition. Though committed to helping complete the film, Massi was unable to bring himself to watch. Instead, he sat nearby, filling Friedman in on the details. Massi died months later.

"It's a first-person diary made by someone who wasn't around to finish it," explained Friedman. "And absence is really part of what the film is about. For me, that absence symbolizes the absence of people everywhere who aren't where they should be, because of the devastation AIDS has brought to this country and to the world."

Silverlake Life was named "One of the 10 Best Films of the Year" by *The Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today* and the *Boston Globe*, and "One of the Best Films of the Decade" by *Utne Reader* and *The Village Voice*. The film is one of 15 films in the **P.O.V. 20th Anniversary Collection**, a DVD set produced in partnership with Docurama and available at <http://amdoc.org/store> and www.docurama.com.

About the Filmmakers:

Peter Friedman

Producer/Director/Editor

Peter Friedman studied film at Hampshire College in Massachusetts, where he was a student and protégé of Tom Joslin. Friedman's thesis film received an Academy Award nomination. He then studied screenwriting and directing at Columbia University's MFA program, co-chaired by Milos Forman and Frank Daniel. After that he edited a variety of independent films and television shows and was nominated for an Emmy for editing **Flamingo Odyssey**.

Friedman is the founder of Strange Attractions, Inc., an independent film production company based in New York and Paris. Since 1984 he has directed and produced films which have received numerous awards, including the Sundance Grand Jury Prize, the LA Film Critics Award for Best Independent Film, a Peabody Award, the Prix Italia in Rome for Best Public Television Documentary Worldwide and the Prix Europa in Berlin for Best Documentary Broadcast in Europe.

His films include **The Life and Times of Life and Times** (1998), **There are No Direct Flights from New York to Marseilles** (1998), **Death by Design** (1995; named "One of the 10 Best Films of 1995" by *Film Comment*), **Silverlake Life** (1993), **Fighting in Southwest Louisiana** (1991), and **I Talk to Animals** (1991), which was broadcast in 10 countries. Friedman has served on the juries of the FIPA Film Festival in Biarritz, France, the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam, and the Visions du Réel Film Festival in Nyon, Switzerland. He lives in Paris and New York City.

Tom Joslin

Producer/Director

Tom Joslin was a documentary filmmaker, teacher and writer. His work included **Blackstar: Autobiography of a Close Friend**, a film about him coming out as a gay man, and **The Architecture of the Mountains**, an experimental work in which actual dreams were dramatized.

Joslin taught film at Hampshire College, where he helped build one of the nation's strongest documentary departments, in the late '70s. His students included acclaimed documentarians Ken Burns and Rob Epstein. He lectured on film writing at the University of Southern California from 1986 to 1990.

Credits:

Producers/Directors:	Tom Joslin, Peter Friedman
Co-Producers:	Doug Block, Jane Weiner
Camera:	Tom Joslin, Mark Massi, Elaine Mayes, Peter Friedman
Editor:	Peter Friedman
Music:	Lucia Hwong

Silverlake Life was produced in association with Channel 4 Television and JP Weiner Productions, Inc., with support from the New York State Council on the Arts.

Running Time: 2 hours

Awards:

- Sundance Film Festival – *Grand Jury Prize and Freedom of Expression Award*
- *Los Angeles Film Critics Award, Best Independent Film*
- *Peabody Award*
- *Prix Italia, Best Public Television Documentary Worldwide, Rome*
- *International Documentary Association Award, Los Angeles*
- Berlin Film Festival – *Teddy Bear Award*

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National Educational Telecommunications Association (www.netaonline.org)

The National Educational Telecommunications Association is a professional association based in Columbia, S.C. It serves public television licensees and educational entities in all 50 states, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico by providing quality programming content, educational resources, professional development, management support, and national representation.

American Documentary, Inc. (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 | P.O.V.

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