

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT**

Cara White	843/881-1480	carapub@aol.com
Mary Lugo	770/623-8190	lugo@negia.net
Randall Cole	415/356-8383 x254	randall_cole@itvs.org
Wilson Ling	415/356-8383 x231	wilson_ling@itvs.org

*Pressroom for more information and/or downloadable images:*

*[www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos](http://www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos)*

*Program companion website: [www.pbs.org/daymygoddied](http://www.pbs.org/daymygoddied)*



**INDEPENDENT LENS's "THE DAY MY GOD DIED" EXAMINES GROWING PLAGUE OF CHILD SEX SLAVERY**

*Heart-wrenching Expose Takes Viewers inside the Horrific World of Sex Trafficking and Introduces Audience to Young Women who Survived the Brothels of Bombay and Have Dedicated Their Lives to Ending this Widespread Epidemic*

*Film by Andrew Levine*

*Narrated by Tim Robbins*

*Airs Nationally on "Independent Lens"*

*Emmy® Award-Winning Series on PBS*

*Hosted by Susan Sarandon*

*Tuesday, November 30, 2004 at 10:00 P.M.  
(check local listings)*

---

(San Francisco, CA) — According to the United Nations, 2,500 women and children throughout the world disappear every day to be sold into sexual slavery. Many of these are young Nepalese girls who are trafficked, often by someone they trust, and sold into sexual servitude in Bombay's nightmarish red-light district Kamthipura—a filthy, teeming, sexual marketplace of over 200,000 young women and children known as "the cages." Sexual servitude is also often times a death sentence. In Bombay alone, 90 new cases of HIV infection are reported every hour. These victims are getting younger—two decades ago, most women in the Indian brothels were in their twenties or thirties, but today, the average age is 14. **THE DAY MY GOD DIED** puts a human face on these abstract numbers as it recounts the stories of several Nepalese girls who were forced into the international

child sex trade. In their own words, the girls tell about the day traffickers took each of them—described as “the day my God died.” Andrew Levine’s powerful, unforgettable **THE DAY MY GOD DIED** will air



nationally on the acclaimed PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Susan Sarandon, on **Tuesday, November 30, 2004 at 10:00 P.M. (check local listings).**

**THE DAY MY GOD DIED** lifts the veil of secrecy on child sex trafficking using footage from the brothels captured with spy camera technology. Through the film we come to know Gina, sold into sexual slavery at age seven and beaten with sticks and aluminum rods; Anita, lured by a friend, then drugged and sold to a brothel at age 12, where she was beaten and threatened with being buried alive; Maili, trafficked at age 19 along with her infant daughter who was seized and used as “insurance” to keep Maili from fleeing; and Jyoti, sold at age 12, raped, choked and forced to drink alcohol to break down her resistance to servicing men.

As the girls recount their descent into a world unfathomable to most of us, we learn that these stories are not isolated or haphazard. The child sex trade is a highly organized syndicate that rivals the drug trade in profitability. The industry has formed a pipeline, which starts in the villages of Nepal and feeds a continuous supply of girls to the urban brothels. Recruiters capture them, smugglers transport them, brothel owners enslave them, corrupt police betray them and customers rape and infect them. Every person in the chain profits except for the girls, who pay the price with their lives: since the girls are powerless to insist that men wear condoms, they suffer an 80% HIV/AIDS rate.



But as **THE DAY MY GOD DIED** also shows, there is a growing movement from both within and outside of the brothels to put an end to this insidious crime. The film introduces us to some of the heroes of the movement to abolish child sex slavery, including Gary Haugen of the International Justice Mission, Harleen Walia of Sanlaap and Anuradha Koirala, the founder of Maiti Nepal. Each of these crusaders has risked his or her life to save girls and dismantle the web that enslaves them. The film documents one alliance with local officials, showing footage of a raid that exposed a system of secret passageways used to hide the girls. Seven girls were liberated in this raid, and the two brothel owners that are now in jail awaiting trial may be among the first abusers in Bombay to be sentenced for this crime.

Some of the rescued girls are lucky enough to find shelter at Maiti Nepal, a healing center where they learn skills and participate in arts programs that rebuild their spirits. A hospice has been established where AIDS-infected girls can die with dignity. These non-profit centers are under-funded and dwarfed by the size of the child sex trafficking trade. But this small group of heroes continues to fight for one life at a time. Some of the most courageous advocates are former sex slaves who risk their lives to save other girls. These victims have emerged to form their own underground railway to move sex slaves to freedom.

For the viewer, this heart-wrenching documentary offers a memorable portrayal of the corruption and evil behind the curtain of the global sex industry, providing us with a brief glimpse into a world seldom seen by outsiders. But it is also a reminder that of the over one million women and girls who are sold, transported and forced into sexual slavery, 50,000 are in the United States. **THE DAY MY GOD DIED** is a film about a world not only far away but one that is much closer to home than we may ever have imagined.

The companion website for **THE DAY MY GOD DIED** ([www.pbs.org/daymygoddied](http://www.pbs.org/daymygoddied)) features detailed information about the film, with information and statistics about the child sex trade, the impact of sex trafficking, and the ongoing efforts to stop this global human rights violation. The site also includes Learn More links and information on the organizations featured in the film. Video previews and a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions is also featured.

The ITVS-Community Connections Project (CCP) will be partnering with local and national organizations for a closer examination of the complex issues underlying the global sex trafficking trade. The personal accounts of the young women featured in **THE DAY MY GOD DIED** will be the focus of classroom and community discussions around the country.

In conjunction with our national partners, ITVS-CCP will develop materials to integrate the film into educational workshops that engage students and communities at large on such issues as human rights, the global spread of HIV/AIDS and U.S. policy aimed at halting the industry.

## THE DAY MY GOD DIED Credits

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER  
PRODUCERS  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS  
EDITOR  
DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
MUSIC  
WRITTEN  
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER  
NARRATOR

**Andrew Levine**  
**Geralyn White Dreyfous, Tamera Martin & Winona Ryder**  
**Ingrid Savage & Geralyn White Dreyfous**  
**Tamera Martin**  
**Basil Katsaounis & Jurg Walther**  
**David Robbins**  
**Cari Beauchamp**  
**Elle Karp**  
**Tim Robbins**

## MAJOR ON-AIR PARTICIPANTS, IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

**Meena** - Trafficking survivor from Nepal.

**Anita** - Trafficking survivor rescued by Maiti Nepal. Anita now works the border crossing between Nepal and India for Maiti Nepal with the hope of saving other girls from being trafficked. She and her husband are living with HIV/AIDS, but are not yet eligible for medication under current guidelines.

**Maili Lama** - Trafficking survivor rescued by Maiti Nepal. The first Nepalese escapee to return to the Bombay brothels as an undercover rescue agent, Maili was recognized with the 2002 Reebok Human Rights Award. The financial assistance that came with the award allowed Maili to open a satellite rescue center in Bombay where she and her husband operate brothel raids. They collaborate regularly with Maiti Nepal and other organizations.

**Gina** - Trafficking survivor rescued by Maiti Nepal. She takes care of the children at the Maiti center in Kathmandu and continues to battle HIV/AIDS although she is now receiving medical treatment.

**Jyoti** - Trafficking survivor rescued by the International Justice Mission. Jyoti continues to perform hands-on brothel raids with IJM. Her child has shown no signs of HIV.

**Harleen Walia** - Assistant director of Sanlaap, a rescue and rehab center for young girls in Calcutta. Information on Sanlaap is available online at [www.sanlaap-sa.org](http://www.sanlaap-sa.org).

**Matthew Friedman** - Trafficking expert and author who now lives in Thailand where he is working to combat trafficking and the sex tourism industry.

**Gary Haugen** - Founder and director of the International Justice Mission. Gary and IJM continue to perform brothel raids throughout Asia and Africa and act as prosecutors against brothel owners like Mumtaz. Information on IJM can be found at [www.ijm.org](http://www.ijm.org).

**Anuradha Koirala** - Founder and director of Maiti Nepal. Since the film's completion, Maiti Nepal received a grant from Sonia Kihl Foundation in Germany to rebuild the Kathmandu center, which now houses a hospital, school and rehab center. For the first time, small amounts of HIV medication are becoming available. Funds for these treatments and other operational expenses are still badly needed. In 2002, Maiti Nepal was awarded the International Children's Award in recognition of its nine year long struggle to end trafficking of Nepali women and children. More information on Maiti Nepal is available at [www.maitinepal.org](http://www.maitinepal.org).

**Mumtaz** - The notorious brothel owner is now spending her days looking out from the inside of a prison cell. Her view is identical to those that she at one time imprisoned inside the cages of her brothel.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT SEXUAL TRAFFICKING

### HOW do children become sex slaves?

Children who come from the lowest rung of the economic ladder in their society are at the most risk. Education may be reserved for boys, so girls are especially vulnerable and accessible to traffickers.

There are three basic ways in which persons are trafficked: a girl is sold by a family member, friend or neighbor; a girl is tricked into going to another country with the promise of a job or a marriage proposal; or a girl is kidnapped and forcefully taken away. Once in the hands of brothel owners and pimps, the girls are subjected to a tortuous "break in period" that often includes multiple gang rapes, beatings, deprivation of food, and being burned by acid or cigarettes. The abuse can continue for weeks or until the girl complies with the wishes of the brothel.

### **WHY do they stay in the brothels?**

Brothel owners will go to any extreme to protect their lucrative “property.” Brothels employ guards and enforcers to keep the girls from leaving. Those who do escape are beaten or murdered then used as examples for the others. Girls are disoriented and psychologically tortured until they lose the will to run away.

Sometimes there is a supposed option for girls to buy their way out of servitude—they must work for the brothel until they earn the price for which they were purchased. But the girls are charged for shelter, food, clothing and medical expenses. Their debt continually escalates and in reality, they have no hope of ever earning their freedom.

### **WHAT is the size of the problem?**

Child sex slavery is a global problem. The United Nations estimates that approximately one million girls and women are forced into the commercial sex industry each year. It is a highly sophisticated industry in almost every country, including the United States. In Nepal an average of nearly 20 children a day are trafficked to India and the Middle East with 300,000 Nepalese child prostitutes in India and 650,000 child prostitutes in Asia under the age of 16. Once oriented into the sex trade, a girl might find herself forced to have sex with up to 20 clients a day.

### **WHAT is the impact of trafficking?**

The human rights violations associated with the trafficking of persons are staggering, resulting in a form of modern day slavery. Likewise, the public health implications are also significant. Many sex workers are forced to have unprotected sex. In Bombay upwards of 80% percent of the sex workers are HIV positive. Many of the victims live in horrible conditions and suffer from a full array of chronic infectious diseases. Girls who manage to escape from the sex trade and return to their villages are often not accepted into their communities—they are considered “spoiled.” In order to survive, they are forced to go underground where they continue selling sex.

### **WHAT can be done to help the girls?**

First and foremost, more girls need to be rescued from brothels. Then they need housing, medical attention and marketable skills to allow them to earn a living and spiritual renewal. Some can be returned to their home villages and others need a place to die with dignity. They also need strong legal allies who can prosecute cases and create anti-slavery laws that are actually enforced. Outreach is needed at the village level to warn families and expose local traffickers.

### **WHO is leading the fight against child sex slavery?**

**THE DAY MY GOD DIED** highlights the work of some of the most effective non-governmental agencies working on the problem of child sex slavery. Read more about their efforts at:

International Justice Mission: [www.ijm.org](http://www.ijm.org)

Maiti Nepal: [www.maitinepal.org](http://www.maitinepal.org)

Sanlaap: [www.sanlaap-sa.org](http://www.sanlaap-sa.org)

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

**ANDREW LEVINE** (Director/Producer) is a two-time grant recipient from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. He has traveled the world and spent the past four years working on **THE DAY MY GOD DIED**. In the process, he has compiled statistics and interviews from international agencies such as Unicef, the United Nations, the Global Survival Network and the International Justice Mission; worked closely with the US/AID & the State Department; negotiated the collaboration of Congressman Jim McDermott, former Secretary Madeleine Albright and the Reebok Human Rights Foundation along with refugee camps for child castaways with AIDS.

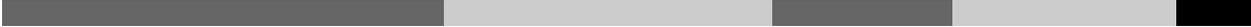
Levine has worked in Hollywood with Norman Lear, Once Upon A Time Film Productions and at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. In 2000, he directed and produced *The Price of Youth*, a ten-minute expose chronicling the slave trade between Nepal and India. The short was produced with Peter Gabriel's renowned human rights organization, Witness. The film was discovered on the web and both he and clips from the film appeared on *Oprah*. Levine has a film studies degree from the University of Utah. He has written screenplays and has produced and directed short independent films. He originally hails from Boston, but has resided in Utah for the past 15 years.

## ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

**Independent Lens** is an Emmy Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. Hosted by Susan Sarandon, the acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. **Independent Lens** features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history, which prompted Nancy Franklin to write in *The New Yorker*: "Watching **Independent Lens**... is like going into an independent bookstore—you don't always find what you were looking for but you often find something you didn't even know you wanted." Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites, and national publicity and community outreach campaigns. Further information about the series is available at [www.pbs.org/independentlens](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens). **Independent Lens** is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts.

## ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series **Independent Lens** on Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting [www.itvs.org](http://www.itvs.org). ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People.



## ABOUT PBS

PBS is a private, nonprofit media enterprise that serves the nation's 349 public noncommercial television stations, reaching nearly 90 million people each week. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is the leading provider of educational materials for K-12 teachers, and offers a broad array of educational services for adult learners. PBS' premier kids' TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online ([pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org)), continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at [pbs.org](http://pbs.org), the leading dot-org Web site on the Internet. PBS is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia.

*Support provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Paul & Phyllis Fireman Foundation.*



ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People.

Pressroom for more information and/or downloadable images: [www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos](http://www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos)  
Program companion website: [www.pbs.org/daymygoddied](http://www.pbs.org/daymygoddied)