Contacts:
POV Communications: 212-989-7425. Emergency contact: 646-729-4748
Cynthia López, clopez@pov.org, Cathy Fisher, cfisher@pov.org,
POV online pressroom: www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom

POV's "The Edge of Dreaming" Plumbs Depths of Science, Death and Dreams, Tuesday, Aug. 24, 2010, on PBS

Can Dreams Predict the Future? What Happens When a Scottish Mother Dreams That She Will Be Dead Within the Year?

"A profound piece of work that is earthy and redemptive at the same time as being reflective, questioning and diligent. . . . a poetic masterpiece." — Stuart Delves, *Eye for Film*

Film Is Accompanied by Award-winning StoryCorps Animated Short "Q&A"

Can dreams predict the future? **The Edge of Dreaming** is a year in the life of a woman objectively researching death who finds that her research has taken over her life. Literally. Amy Hardie, a wife, mother and maker of science films, was involved in a documentary investigation of death when she had a startling dream — her beloved horse George was dying. She awoke disturbed enough to go out into the field and check on George. She found him dead, though he had shown no signs of illness. As unsettling as this was, Hardie's rational temperament led her to see it as a coincidence. Then, in another dream, her deceased partner of many years, the father of her oldest child, warned her she would die at age 48 — the following year.

Hardie's documentary research took on new urgency. The first dream had come true. Did that mean she really was under a death sentence? Hardie documented the entire year, exploring neuroscience and family life and recording her increasing alarm as eventually her lungs began to fail. In **The Edge of Dreaming**, thoughts and dreams combine with neuroscience as Hardie explores every avenue to prevent her dream from coming true.

Amy Hardie's **The Edge of Dreaming** has its American broadcast premiere on **Tuesday, Aug. 24, 2010**, at 10 p.m. on PBS as part of the 23rd season of **POV** (**Point of View**). Airing with the film are the award-winning animated short about a boy with Asperger's syndrome, **Q&A**, which is part of the innovative StoryCorps oral history project on PBS, and another short to be announced. POV continues on Tuesdays through Sept. 21 and concludes with a fall special. (Check local listings.) American television's longest-running independent documentary series, POV is the winner of a Special Emmy Award for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking and the International Documentary Association Award for Best Continuing Series.

"Some people love to find meaning in their dreams," says Hardie early in the film. "I don't think I do." In **The Edge of Dreaming**, however, dreams force themselves into Hardie's research on death, as death comes into her life. The death of George the horse (who in the first dream asked Hardie if she was ready to start filming) was one amazing coincidence. But the second dream, with her late companion Arthur delivering the message that she, too, would soon be dead, shook her out of her rational skepticism. "Arthur was too real," she says. And this happened, after all, in her 48th year.

To address her growing dread, Hardie turns first to the science of dreams. In this post-Freudian age, it turns out dreams are almost as mysterious as they have ever been. Dr. Irving Weissman, a

professor of developmental biology and director of the Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine at Stanford University School of Medicine, offers an evolutionary perspective. “Dreams have something to do with reality or we wouldn’t have evolved and retained them,” he says, and he goes on to tell a story of having once dreamed about doing a dance he didn’t know how to do and then, upon awaking, finding he could perform it. Professor Mark Solms, a neuropsychologist best known for his pioneering research into the brain mechanisms of dreaming and REM sleep, tells Hardie, “Dreams give us information we know subliminally but don’t want to know. Our prefrontal cortex may not accept it, but it sneaks into our consciousness in dreams. So our dreams can be signals from the real world.”

All of this is of little comfort to Hardie. In fact, the science seems to support her growing realization that her progressive lung illness is somehow caught up with the reality of the dream. Her family offers emotional ballast, and so her dread of her 48th year is balanced by an idyllic life — a happy couple doing work they love and living in the Scottish hills with three kids, a dog, a cat and, until a short time before, a horse. Hardie’s husband, psychoanalyst Peter Kravitz, has a vast knowledge of Jungian theory, as well as a sophisticated theoretical framework helpful in understanding his wife’s struggles. Initially, he strongly believes that she is taking her dreams too literally. Hardie decides not to tell her daughters about the dream so as not to frighten them. But at school one daughter learns to read palms, and looking at Amy’s hand, she announces cheerfully that her mother will have a “happy life, but a short one.” When Hardie has a third dream, showing how she will die, even her husband loses his composure. As her lungs deteriorate further and she is hospitalized, she realizes she has to take urgent action.

Ultimately, this self-proclaimed skeptic and science filmmaker has a session with a Brazilian shaman, Claudia Goncalves, who is practicing in Scotland. Throughout **The Edge of Dreaming**, Hardie mixes the techniques of documentary research with more abstract sequences and animation to capture her inner experience. During Hardie’s session with Goncalves, both she and the film plunge deeply into her dreams in an attempt to disable their potency. The result is a cathartic and emotional resolution that may or may not show dreams in a more rational light. For Hardie, her 48th year turns out to be the year that rocks her scientific reductionism and expands her sense of what science really is.

“This film actually began nine years ago, when my mother died unexpectedly,” says Hardie. “I knew I needed to learn about death and, as a filmmaker specializing in science documentaries, I committed myself to filming every aspect of my investigation. Then came my dreams, which gave the film a new urgency and propelled it into a more emotional and poetic space. I realized I was really in danger — and that I had to get back inside my dream in order to change the dream.”

The Edge of Dreaming is a production of Amy Hardie/Passion Pictures/Hardworking Movies.

About the Filmmaker:
Amy Hardie, Director/Co-producer
A documentary director/producer with several international awards, Amy Hardie graduated from the National Film and Television School with the BP Expo award for best U.K. graduation film. She set up the Scottish Documentary Institute in 2004 with Noe Mendelle, and also created Docspace, dedicated to increasing the audience for serious documentaries. **The Edge of Dreaming** is her first personal film.

Hardie’s international credentials include seven awards for her documentaries and 19 international festival presentations since 2003 including at IDFA (Netherlands), Hot Docs (Canada), AIDC (Australia) and Sundance (United States). She has been an invited international jury member for the Nordisk Panorama, European Golden Link, Soho Reels, BAFTA New Talent, DokumentART, DocAviv and the international Grierson Awards. She co-curated the documentary program for the new Nobel Peace Center in Oslo and ran the innovative *metacinema* workshops. She has written articles for the international documentary magazines *Vertigo* and *DOX*, and has been included in the

top 100 advocates for documentary in *RealScreen* (2005) and in the top 100 cultural contributors in *The List*, Scotland (2004).

Recently, Hardie has focused on collaborations with leading scientists, including Irving Weissman, director of the Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine at Stanford University School of Medicine; Shinya Yamanaka, who recently received the Albert Lasker Award for Basic Medical Research; Adam Zeman, whose new book, *A Portrait of the Brain*, was selected by the *Financial Times* as one of the two top science books of the year; Mark Solms, recipient of the International Psychiatrist Award of the American Psychiatric Association and the George Sarton Medal; and Nobel laureate Martin Evans.

Credits:

Director:	Amy Hardie
Animator:	Cameron Duguid
Producers:	George Chignell, Lori Cheatle, Doug Block
Editors:	Ling Lee, Mike Culyba, Colin Monie
Cinematographers:	Amy Hardie, Ian Dodds, Hardie Family
Aerial Photography:	Jim Hardie, Aerolab
Music, Sound Design:	Gunnar Oskarsson, Jim Sutherland
Running Time:	72:00

POV Series Credits:

Executive Producer:	Simon Kilmurry
Executive Vice President:	Cynthia López

Awards & Festivals:

- International Documentary Film Festival (IDFA), Netherlands, 2009 – *Nominated for Best Feature Documentary*
- DocsBarcelona, Spain, 2010
- Zagrebdox International Film Festival, Croatia, 2010
- International Nicosia Documentary Festival, Cyprus, 2010
- Thessaloniki Documentary Festival, Greece, 2010
- Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, Durham, N.C., 2010
- BAFICI (Buenos Aires International Independent Film Festival), Argentina, 2010
- DocAviv, Israel, 2010
- MakeDox, Macedonia, 2010
- Guth Gafa International Documentary Festival, Ireland, 2010

About StoryCorps' "Q&A":

Joshua Littman, a 12-year-old boy with Asperger's syndrome, interviews his mother, Sarah. Joshua's unique questions and Sarah's loving, unguarded answers reveal a beautiful relationship that reminds us of the best — and the most challenging — parts of being a parent.

Credits:

Producer/Director:	Mike Rauch
Animator/Director:	Tim Rauch
Audio Producer:	Michael Garofalo
Running Time:	4:00

Awards:

- ASIFA-East Animation Festival – *Best in Show*
- Austin Film Festival – *Jury Award, Documentary Short*
- Short Short Story Film Festival – *Audience Award*
- Nashville Film Festival – *Best Short Documentary*

Three additional StoryCorps animated shorts will air this season on POV: **Germans in the Woods** on Aug. 31 and **The Human Voice** and **Icing on the Cake** on Sept. 7. The StoryCorps animation series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 23rd season on PBS, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September, with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 275 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at www.pbs.org/pov.

POV Interactive (www.pbs.org/pov)
POV's award-winning Web department produces special features for every POV presentation, extending the life of our films through filmmaker interviews, story updates, podcasts, streaming video and community-based and educational content that involves viewers in activities and feedback. POV Interactive also produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *POV's Borders.* In addition, the *POV Blog* is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss and debate their favorite films, get the latest news and link to further resources. The POV website, blog and film archives form a unique and extensive online resource for documentary storytelling.

POV Community Engagement and Education
POV works with local PBS stations, educators and community organizations to present free screenings and discussion events to inspire and engage communities in vital conversations about our world. As a leading provider of quality nonfiction programming for use in public life, POV offers an extensive menu of resources, including free discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. In addition, POV's *Youth Views* works with youth organizers and students to provide them with resources and training so they may use independent documentaries as a catalyst for social change.

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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.

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