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**AARON BROWN RETURNS AS ANCHOR FOR SEASON EIGHT OF [WIDE ANGLE](#), PREMIERING JULY 1 ON PBS**

The Unique International Documentary Series Kicks-Off With *Crossing Heaven's Border* – A Heart-Wrenching Report On North Korean Defectors

**Wide Angle**, THIRTEEN's Emmy Award-winning international affairs series, returns to PBS for its eighth season on Wednesday, July 1 at 10 p.m. (ET) and continues weekly through September 9 (check local listings). This also marks the return of acclaimed news commentator Aaron Brown as the program's anchor and interviewer.

The only series of its kind, **Wide Angle** brings deeper international coverage to American viewers by telling the human stories behind crucial global trends.

**Wide Angle** is a production of THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG – one of America's most prolific and respected public media providers.

On the heels of recent reports that North Korea conducted its second nuclear test, **Wide Angle** lifts the iron veil on those who dare to escape Kim Jong-Il's hermit nation with *Crossing Heaven's Border*, a moving story about North Korean defectors' desperate journeys to freedom, premiering Wednesday, July 1 at 10 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings).

In the past decade, up to 100,000 North Korean defectors have crossed the waters of the Tumen and Yalu Rivers into northeast China to escape the repressive regime of their Communist country. Many live in hiding, work illegally and have no access to education or

medical care. If caught by Chinese authorities, they are repatriated to North Korea, where they face severe punishment, even execution. Only a lucky few succeed in reaching their goal of asylum in South Korea. *Crossing Heaven's Border* reveals the plight of three North Korean defectors through the point of view of intrepid South Korean journalists who filmed undercover for ten months to capture the haunting stories first-hand. With access to an underground smuggling network, the reporters follow a group of defectors – which includes a 19-year-old girl who dreams of becoming a musician and actress in South Korea and a young boy seeking to be reunited with his mother, who has already escaped – on a grueling and dangerous 10-day journey through China and Laos into Thailand, which accepts North Korean defectors as asylum seekers. *Crossing Heaven's Border* also follows a defector living in China who plans a brazen escape to South Korea using a fake passport in order to seek medical assistance for her six-year-old son who suffers from cerebral palsy.

The eighth season of **Wide Angle** will also feature *The Market Maker*, a timely report about an Ethiopian economist who is on a mission to end hunger in her famine-plagued country by implementing the nation's first commodities exchange. Aaron Brown travels to Africa to present history in the making as Eleni Gabre-Madhin works to revolutionize an age-old market system whose inefficiencies have been partly responsible for the country's persistent food shortages.

Other **Wide Angle** episodes this season include the story of a grieving Palestinian father who journeys to visit the Israeli children to whom he has donated his dead son's organs; an intriguing true-life tale straight from the storyboards of a James Bond film revealing the extreme lengths the international community will go to in order to control one of West Africa's most valuable resources: oil; and an updated presentation of last season's award-winning story about midwives in Southern Africa who are trained to perform life-saving surgeries – with Aaron Brown reporting on the ground from Mozambique.

As the season's highlight and finale, **Wide Angle** continues to spotlight the global crisis in access to basic education with the third dramatic installment in its critically acclaimed [Time for School](#) series. *Time for School 3* follows the educational trials and tribulations, successes and failures of seven children in seven different countries, who have been observed by **Wide Angle's** cameras since 2003. This time around, several children, now familiar to **Wide Angle** viewers, are attempting the difficult transition to middle school. And with obstacles ranging from poverty to gender inequality to the armed violence of drug gangs and the Taliban, it's far from certain that they will succeed. A two-part episode, *Time for School 3* airs [September 2](#) and concludes [September 9](#) (check local listings).

**Wide Angle** anchor Aaron Brown will introduce each film and follow many of them with thought-provoking interviews with observers and experts about the issues raised in the documentaries. Brown will also participate in interactive web chats following the broadcasts.

Visit the **Wide Angle** website – [www.pbs.org/wideangle](http://www.pbs.org/wideangle) – for original reporting, web-exclusive videos, and audio interviews that provide further insight into global affairs. Watch full episodes, download podcasts, and read exclusive commentary from Aaron Brown.

**Wide Angle** is a production of THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG. Tom Casciato is Executive Producer. Nina Chaudry is Senior Producer.

Funding for **Wide Angle** is provided by PBS, Ford Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation, Josh and Judy Weston, the Estate of Helen Roseman, Bernard and Irene Schwartz, and The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation. Corporate support is provided by Mutual of America Life Insurance Company.

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