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season III

thirteen
WNET NEW YORK

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press information

WIDE ANGLE, the award-winning international documentary series, airs Thursdays at 9 p.m. through September 23 on PBS. Each episode features a 45-minute documentary, produced by filmmakers and journalists from the U.S. and abroad with insight into the issues and cultures they are covering. In focusing on the personal stories of real people, the documentaries seek to uncover the human dynamic and impact of events that are often presented by the press as little more than statistics. Through a strong narrative thread and close contact with the protagonists of developing events, each film strives to reveal the humanity behind the headlines. Every film is followed by a one-on-one interview with a foreign policy expert, administration official, or legislative leader who puts the story into context, connecting the dots for American viewers. Mishal Husain, anchor and correspondent for BBC World News, hosts the series.

All titles are *working titles*, all *descriptions are subject to change*, and *all dates are tentative*.

SEPTEMBER 2004 EPISODE DESCRIPTIONS

#207 *Time for School* (Thursday, September 2, 2004 at 9 p.m.)

An update of one of last year's most acclaimed films, *Time for School* spotlights the global crisis in access to education. The facts speak for themselves. More than a hundred million children have never spent a day in school – and one in four does not complete even five years of basic education. Now, 182 nations have promised to provide access to free and compulsory education for every child in the world – by 2015. Last season *WIDE ANGLE* visited Japan, Kenya, Benin, Brazil, Romania, and India to meet children who have managed to enroll in the first year of primary school – in most cases despite great odds. This year's update of *Time for School* will feature the newly shot story of a 12-year-old girl in Afghanistan who is attending classes for the first time with the hope of making up for years of schooling denied her under the rule of the Taliban. *Time for School* introduces viewers to some of the challenges – poverty, child labor, and violence – that millions of children around the world face on a daily basis, providing rich insight into the striking disparities of circumstance and opportunity around the globe.

Producer Judy Katz was the originating producer of Explorer Journal for National Geographic Television, a series-within-a-series in which she sent out Hi-8 cameras with journalists, scientists and lay explorers and helped them tell their own stories. Her work as an independent producer includes And Baby Makes Two, a theatrical-release documentary that also aired on PBS and Oxygen, and Made in America, a PBS series about US competitiveness in various high-tech industries.

#307 *Afghanistan: Hell of a Nation* (Thursday, September 9, 2004 at 9 p.m.)

As Afghanistan struggled to adopt a new constitution, *WIDE ANGLE* filmed behind the scenes at the December 2003 *loya jirga*. The documentary profiles two aspiring Afghan delegates who face political opposition and physical intimidation as they literally risk their lives to participate in the



future of their country. Both labor to deliver their political messages in communities with no mass media and very little infrastructure. *Hell of a Nation* also examines the frantic preparations of the international and Afghan logistics team as it scrambles to register potential delegates, distribute copies of the newly drafted constitution, and hold elections for delegates. The film provides a rare opportunity to observe the difficulties of defining the role of religion in a new democracy and to witness the practical implementation of nation building in a war-torn country. The broadcast is scheduled to coincide with the national presidential and legislative elections planned for September.

*Producer/director **Tamara Gould** is a former executive producer for KQED Television where she oversaw *The Nobel: Visions of Our Century*, California's *Power Play*, and *This Week* in Northern California. She also executive produced the Emmy Award-winning weekly *Independent View* series, and developed and executive produced *SPARK*, an award-winning weekly art series coproduced by KQED and the Bay Area Video Coalition, a noncommercial media production center where she previously served as executive director.*

*Producer **Bonni Cohen**, founder of Actual Films in San Francisco, is currently executive producing *The Rape of Europa*, a PBS film about Nazi art looting during World War II. Cohen recently produced/directed *The Nobel: Visions of Our Century*, a PBS special analyzing 100 years of the Nobel Prize from the perspectives of 11 laureates. For the BBC, she directed/produced *Eye of the Storm*, a portrait of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Former films include *They Drew Fire*, a PBS portrait of WWII combat artists; *The Human Sexes* with Desmond Morris, an Emmy-nominated TLC/Discovery series; and two episodes of the Emmy-winning *Eyewitness* series for PBS.*

#308 *Cocaine, Corruption, Colombia* (Thursday, September 16, 2004 at 9 p.m.)

What could be more dangerous than trying to bring law and stability to Colombia? Supplying 80 percent of the world's cocaine, Colombia's booming drug trade – estimated at \$6 billion a year – has funded a brutal civil war involving leftist guerillas, right-wing paramilitaries, and a government stained at many levels with corruption. With unique access to President Alvaro Uribe Vélez and his Vice President Francisco Santos Calderón, **WIDE ANGLE** explores this multi-layered conflict through their eyes, as the two politicians travel the country, with a powerful security detail, to extend the rule of law and restore the public's faith in government. In a nation where every year 3,000 citizens are kidnapped and up to 3,500 lives are lost in the war, the risks are palpable. And like many Colombians, both men have been personally touched by the country's rampant violence. Uribe's father was killed by a leftist group in 1983 and Calderón was kidnapped by Pablo Escobar, then leader of the Medellín drug cartel, and held for nearly eight months, an ordeal documented by Gabriel García Márquez's *News of a Kidnapping*. The film also profiles an attorney at the ministry of justice who knowingly risked her life to reveal the extent of corruption among the nation's judges. She expects her career to end with exile – or assassination. Who would willingly volunteer for prominent public service – or aspire to govern this crippled country – when the dangers are so extreme?

*Angus Macqueen has produced and directed some of the most prestigious documentaries on British television over the past decade. His films include *Death of Yugoslavia* (winner of the BAFTA and the Gold Baton at duPont Columbia*

Journalism Awards), The Second Russian Revolution, The Hand of Stalin, Dancing for Dollars, and many others. He has directed two films for Wide Angle: The Empty ATM, about the Argentine economic crisis, and The Rock Star and the Mullahs, addressing the conflict between fundamentalist and moderate Islamic voices in Pakistan.

#309 Most of the News That's Fit to Print (Thursday, September 23, 2004 at 9 p.m.)

Twenty-five years after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the struggle for political reform is the big story. **WIDE ANGLE** has gained rare permission to film behind the scenes with the young reporters of Iran's leading reformist newspaper. Founded less than a year ago and already Iran's 4th largest daily, the *Shargh* newspaper (its name means simply *East*) has quickly built a loyal readership among Iran's intellectuals, opinion makers, politicians, and the young. Its photography and design borrow from the *New Yorker* and London's *Independent*; its chief economics editor is 23 years old. With such a youthful staff (the average age is 28), with more female journalists than any other paper, and committed to professional journalism and neutral reporting, *Shargh* is a lightning rod for censorship. Indeed, its own editors evaluate constantly what stories to print without crossing an indefinable line. Authorities have closed the paper down once already, on the eve of the February 19 election, for printing an open letter from reformist MPs to the President criticizing the disqualification of 2,500 reformist candidates. **WIDE ANGLE** follows these daring journalists as they struggle to report the news without incurring the "blade of censorship" they say is an ever-present threat in Iran today.

*Director **Taghi Amirani** has made more than 30 documentaries for Channel 4 and the BBC in the UK, as well as for American and French television. His films include The Dispossessed, an intimate portrait of ordinary Afghan people living in a Taliban-controlled refugee camp on the Afghan/Iran border after 9/11; Watch This Space and The Crash Bash, two films on the historic comet crash of 1994; Mad About Machines, a six-part series exploring relationships between people and household machines; and Inside Mecca, a National Geographic Special set in the Holy City of Mecca. Amirani was born in Iran and lives in London.*

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