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A FAMILY AT WAR A POIGNANT PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY DEVASTATED BY THE DEATH OF A BELOVED SON IN THE IRAQ WAR

"Independent Lens," a Film Festival in Your Living Room
Hosted by Edie Falco, on PBS
Tuesday, November 8, at 10 PM (Check Local Listings)

(San Francisco)—**A FAMILY AT WAR** is the heartbreaking story of one family's struggle to deal with their son's death in Iraq and the continuing political fallout from the war. We get to know the young man who died, Jeff Kaylor, through old home movies and the remembrances of his mother, Roxanne, his father, Mike, and his widow and fellow soldier, Jenna Cosby Kaylor. Although they all share a devastating sense of loss, the war rages at the kitchen table because they each feel differently about the conflict that claimed Jeff's life. **A FAMILY AT WAR**, a Danish production directed by Jørgen Flindt Pedersen, will air nationally on the PBS series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday, November 8, at 10 PM (check local listings), in conjunction with the national commemoration of Veterans' Day.

This story begins in Clifton, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D.C., in the home of the Kaylor family: parents Roxanne and Mike and their three children, Patricia, Jeff and Cindy. Son Jeff was educated in the cadet corps at Virginia Tech, where he met his future wife, Jenna. Both graduated as officers in August 2001. Hastened by the sudden buildup of the war against Iraq, Jenna and Jeff arranged a speedy wedding in July 2003. Shortly after their marriage, they were both posted to the Middle East. Jeff was killed on April 7, 2004, in an accident involving the disabling of an Iraqi missile battalion.

"Jeff was just a lot of fun to be around," says his mother, Roxanne Kaylor. "He seemed the most sensitive of all my children. I think that is why I felt close to him—I always wanted to protect him all the time and make sure he was happy."





For Roxanne, the loss of her son leads to rage as she becomes more and more convinced that the war that claimed him was unnecessary and unjust. In her grief, she tries desperately to understand the reasons the United States went into Iraq, constantly watching the news, reading articles and surfing websites. She bombards politicians with letters of criticism and hopes that the president will one day regret his war policies. When she meets the president at a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, she tells him simply that “a young, great person had died.” **A FAMILY AT WAR** captures Roxanne’s growing frustration and her increasing participation in organized resistance against the war with other grieving military families who share her views.

By contrast, Jeff’s father, Mike, has had a long career in the military and is proud of his son and believes in the mission. As he says, “If the United States doesn’t do something, then we’re going to continue to have the events that we have had in the past—the attacks in New York City and the attacks against the Pentagon. There is a direct link, and if you don’t take some action to stop it where it starts, I don’t know how to stop it.” Although Jeff’s death hurts him deeply, Mike makes it clear that he understands that death in war is the price some must pay for accepting the life of a soldier.

Like her father-in-law, and as a member of the military, young widow Jenna accepts that her husband’s sacrifice was for a greater cause, and she has no time for anyone who believes otherwise. Over time, however, the thought of her unrealized life becomes unbearable, and she eventually decides to leave the military.

In **A FAMILY AT WAR**, the Kaylor family allows the director Jørgen Flindt Pedersen, and the audience into their very private universe to put a human face on the stories of loss and sacrifice playing out in communities from coast to coast. As in the Kaylor home, this debate is raging at kitchen tables across the country, and the film provides a valuable look at how hard it is for military families, regardless of their opinions on the war. As Mike concludes at the film’s end, “I’m not too sure that the loss of a son is really worth anything, to tell you the truth. If I had to lose him under some circumstances, these are probably the best circumstances—defending his country, defending his friends in a combat situation in battle. But is it worth losing a son? No, it’s not. I wouldn’t give him up for anybody.”

The interactive companion website for **A FAMILY AT WAR** (www.pbs.org/independentlens/familyatwar/) features detailed information on the film, including an interview with the filmmaker and links and resources pertaining to the film’s subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.



CREDITS



Director	Jørgen Flindt Pedersen
Producer	Malene Flindt Pedersen
Editor	Anders Villadsen
Director of Cinematography	Morten Bruus
Researcher	Mette Rose
Sound Recording Engineer	Rune Palving
Composer	Kåre Bjerkø
Online and Colorgrading	Anders Holck
Production Manager	Casper Oluf Jakobsen
Production Assistants	Mette Wichmann Hansen Azadeh Ahadi

Special thanks to the Kaylor family and Jenna Cosby Kaylor.

Produced by Hansen & Pedersen Film og Fjernsyn, with financial support by the Danish Film Institute and by film consultants Jakob Høgel and Dola Bonfils, in co-operation with DRTV.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

JØRGEN FLINDT PEDERSEN (Director)

Jørgen Flindt Pedersen was born in 1940 in Odense, Denmark. Pedersen was a journalist and foreign correspondent from 1964 to 1987, editor-in-chief of *Det Fri Aktuelt* from 1987 to 1993, and head of TV 2/DANMARK from 1993 to 1999. He has directed more than a hundred documentaries, including *Your Neighbor's Son*, about torture in Greece; *When the State Kills*, about the death penalty; and *The Heritage from Seveso*, about the dioxin scandal in Italy. His latest documentaries are the prize-winning *The Vollsmose Boys*, about young emigrants, and *The Occupied*, portraying a year in the life of five Palestinians.

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

A film festival in your living room, *Independent Lens* is an Emmy Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. Hosted by Edie Falco, the acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of independent producers, which has prompted *Television Week* to call it "entertaining as hell and better than any other documentary series around."

Presented by Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and community engagement campaigns. Further information about the series is available at www.pbs.org/independentlens. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts.

ABOUT ITVS

ABOUT PBS

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Independent Television Service 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 PM 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 ITVS's inception in 1991, its programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing television audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

PBS, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, is a private, nonprofit media enterprise owned and operated by the nation's 349 public television stations. Serving nearly 90 million people each week, PBS enriches the lives of all Americans through quality programs and education services on noncommercial television, the Internet and other media. More information about PBS is available at www.pbs.org, the leading dot-org Web site on the Internet.

PAGE 1:

Left: Wedding photo of Jeffrey and Jenna Kaylor.

Photo: Courtesy of the Kaylor Family / ITVS

Center: Jeffrey Kaylor in Iraq

Photo: Courtesy of the Kaylor Family / ITVS

Right: Roxanne Kaylor at her son Jeffrey's funeral.

Photo: Courtesy of the Kaylor Family / ITVS

PAGE 2:

Left: Jeffrey Kaylor with fellow soldiers in Iraq

Photo: Courtesy of the Kaylor Family / ITVS

Center: Kaylor family meeting with George & Barbara Bush.

Photo: Courtesy of the Kaylor Family / ITVS

Right: Jørgen Flindt Pedersen (Director) of *A FAMILY AT WAR* with a soldier.

Photo: Morten Bruus / ITVS



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