



For Immediate Release

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P.O.V.'s "The Fall of Fujimori," Incisive Study of Power and Corruption, Airs Tuesday, July 18 on PBS

Filmmaker Ellen Perry Granted Unprecedented Access to Former Peruvian President
And International Fugitive Alberto Fujimori

"[An] excellent documentary. . . . 'The Fall of Fujimori' offers, among other things, the latest proof that nonfiction filmmaking can be stranger than any make-believe." – A.O. Scott, *The New York Times*

"Perry creates a smart, insightful and revelatory portrait of one of late 20th century's more enigmatic world leaders. . . . a classic in the psychology of power." – John Anderson, *Variety*

The extraordinary tale of fugitive former Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori took a strange twist in November 2005 when he arrived unexpectedly in Chile. Wanted on 21 Peruvian and Interpol warrants for corruption, murder and human rights abuses, Fujimori had remained free courtesy of the Japanese government, which had welcomed him as a prodigal son in 2000 and subsequently blocked his extradition. Then, almost five years to the day after he fled Peru for Japan and faxed his resignation from the presidency—a getaway seen by many Peruvians as both shameless and traitorous—Fujimori appeared in Chile on a tourist visa, vowing to return to Peru to run for president in April 2006. He was, instead, promptly arrested, and is now fighting extradition. Peru's National Election Board formally rejected his bid on Jan. 10, 2006.

Fujimori's appearance in Chile was shocking to some of the Peruvian public and the world's political observers; some saw it as a ploy for attention prior to the upcoming election. **The Fall of Fujimori**, a remarkable new film by Ellen Perry having its broadcast premiere on public television's P.O.V. series, goes a long way toward explaining why he returned to South America. Including candid interviews with the elusive Fujimori, filmed in Japan before his return to South America, **The Fall of Fujimori** demonstrates once again how much stranger truth is than fiction—especially in the minds of history's players. With a methodical recounting of Fujimori's turbulent rise and fall, including never-before-seen footage from his regime, the film provides a cautionary tale about the uncertain hazards of populist politics amid terrorism, Third-World poverty, civil conflict, and authoritarian government in the name of democracy.

Ellen Perry's **The Fall of Fujimori** has its national broadcast premiere **Tuesday, July 18, 2006** at 10 p.m., as part of the 19th season of public television's groundbreaking P.O.V. series. (Check local listings.) American television's longest-running independent documentary series, P.O.V. is public television's premier showcase for point-of-view, nonfiction films.

Fujimori appears nervous, gracious, diffident and anxious to tell his story when he sits down for an interview with filmmaker Perry in January 2004 at an unnamed Tokyo hotel. The interview came about after a year-and-a-half effort by Perry to speak with the fugitive ex-president, who was well protected by a coterie of staff and family. Perry, in Tokyo in a last-ditch effort to see Fujimori,

received only 30 minutes' notice of his willingness to meet with her. Yet for all the cloak-and-dagger proceedings leading to the interview, Fujimori is disarmingly accommodating and unfailingly polite, alternating between bold statements of his accomplishments and denials of the allegations against him. That first interview turned into weeks of talks, including visits to Kumamoto, Japan, the birthplace of Fujimori's ancestors, and to a small mat-weaving factory, where he demonstrated his way with common people.

The story Fujimori tells is that of the unknown university academic who ran a grassroots campaign that carried him to the presidency of Peru, and who then vanquished the country's worst enemies—terrorism and hyper-inflation. He recalls the man who, despite his education and class, forged a common bond with Peru's poor, and who even used his foreign ancestry as proof that he was an “outsider” to power—much like Peru's Indian and overwhelmingly poor majority. Fujimori smiles as he recalls the nickname they gave him—“el Chino,” the Chinaman—bestowed with sweeping popular disregard for the fine point of Fujimori's Japanese roots.

In Fujimori's telling, once in office, he was the man who took the tough action needed to avert bloody revolution and save democracy in Peru—even if he'd had to suspend democracy to seize dictatorial powers, in his famous *auto-golpe*, or “self-coup.” As for excesses or instances of corruption, Fujimori says that he was played false by his lieutenants, especially the much-feared Vladimiro Montesinos, chief of National Intelligence Service (SIN).

The story of Peru under Fujimori is much more complicated than he allows, as we learn from a variety of on-the-spot witnesses whose interviews are interwoven with Fujimori's, along with a wealth of archival materials documenting Peru in the 1990s. Among those interviewed are Peruvian journalists Luis Iberico, Enrique Zileri, and Gustavo Goritti; Fujimori's eldest child, Keiko Sofia Fujimori, who took over as first lady when his wife divorced him (and in January 2006 declared her candidacy in the April 9 congressional election taking place with the country's presidential election); Peruvian Congresswoman Martha Chavez; Fujimori's former press secretary Carlos Orellana; Fernando Rospigliosi, former head of Peruvian National Intelligence; Robert Goldman, former president of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; and Anthony Quainton, U.S. Ambassador to Peru 1989-92. Fujimori's ex-wife Susana Higuchi, who actually ran against him for president while they were still married, gives unusual testimony, via archival interviews, to the impact of politics on a once middle-class family.

Much of what Fujimori has to say is validated by history: his rise to power on an uncanny connection with Peru's poor; his success in reining in both inflation and the most dangerous of Peru's two guerrilla groups, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), whose rebels, led by another ex-professor, Abimael Guzman, controlled over 40% of the country in 1990. But in the war on Sendero and the weaker MRTA (Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru), evidence indicates that Fujimori's government crossed the line into a “dirty war” of death squads and human rights abuses; Fujimori now faces extradition to Peru for charges including authorizing a paramilitary death squad accused of murdering 25 people.

Why did he decide to suspend Congress and the judiciary in his “self-coup” and assume dictatorial powers? How could he claim to save democracy by overturning it? And what was the country to make of Fujimori's wife accusing her in-laws of graft?

Ultimately, the release of an unprecedented series of tapes showing Montesinos coolly bribing lawmakers with stacks of cash on behalf of Fujimori unravels his regime and sends Fujimori into a bizarre chase of Montesinos and then into exile. Montesinos, a convicted spy for the CIA and former lawyer for drug lords, was universally regarded as Fujimori's right-hand man, the shadow behind the throne ever since he had made the tax troubles facing Fujimori in his first election go away.

The Fall of Fujimori is an unprecedented portrait of a Latin-American dictator and his 10-year reign in a country beset with poverty, class division, spiraling violence, and corrupt leaders. "Making **The Fall of Fujimori**, I often didn't know if I was making a film, or in one," says director Ellen Perry. "In Lima, CIA operatives and the Peruvian secret police followed me. While interviewing an arms trafficker in San Jorge prison, I was knocked off my feet by a 7.2 earthquake. But the risks were worth it. Fujimori's story has all the dimensions of a tragedy, both personal and collective, and has a lot to say about politics in an age of mounting terrorism."

The Fall of Fujimori was supported by a grant from the Sundance Institute Documentary Fund with additional funding by the Mathias Lloyd Spiegel Foundation and Robert Schmitt.

About the filmmaker:

Ellen Perry **Producer/Director/Writer**

Ellen Perry began her directing career in the documentary genre, following a similar path as such filmmakers as Stanley Kubrick, Barbet Schroeder, and William Friedkin. **The Fall of Fujimori**, her most recent film, premiered at Sundance in 2005 and began its theatrical release in 2006 at Film Forum in New York. It won awards in North America and Europe, was nominated by the Writers Guild for Best Documentary Screenplay, and was an official selection at over 40 film festivals worldwide.

Perry's first feature documentary, **Great Wall Across the Yangtze**, aired nationally on PBS in 2000. The critically acclaimed film tells the story of the Three Gorges Dam under construction in China. Narrated by Martin Sheen, the film was four years in the making and was secretly shot without government permission. Perry penetrated China's heartland to reveal the profound changes the dam will bring to the local people and ecosystem. A *TV Guide* "Pick of the Week," **Great Wall** was screened at numerous festivals in America and abroad, including the Berkeley Film Festival, where it won the Grand Festival Award.

Perry is currently in pre-production on a feature-length fiction film, **A Beautiful Story**, which she co-wrote. An Atlanta native, she attended the University of Southern California School of Cinema and Television Production and resides in Los Angeles.

Credits:

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| Producer/Director/Writer: | Ellen Perry |
| Executive Producer: | Stephen Moffitt |
| Associate Producers: | Robert Mailer Anderson, Lindsay Sablosky |
| Cinematographers: | Junji Aoki, Mel Henry, Ellen Perry |
| Editor: | Kim Roberts |
| Music: | Mark Adler |

Running Time: 86:46

Awards & Festivals:

- Sundance Film Festival, 2005 – World Premiere
- Independent Film Festival of Boston, 2005 – *Grand Jury Prize*
- Toronto International Latin Film Festival, 2005 -- *Audience Choice Award*
- Biografilm Festival, Bologna, Italy, 2005 – *Director's Choice Award*
- Milan Film Festival, Italy, 2005 – *Special Jury Prize*
- Writers Guild of America Awards, 2006 – Documentary Screenplay Nomination

- Official Selections: Atlanta, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles Latino International, Detroit, SouthSide, Hawaii International, Sydney, Melbourne, Milan, São Paulo, Sheffield, Lima, Brasilia, Florida, Hot Docs, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Leeds, Camden, Hamptons, Asian Pacific American, Asian American International, Seoul, Kathmandu, Leipzig Film Festivals, 2005



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 19th season on PBS, the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. Airing Tuesdays at 10 p.m., June through October, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought nearly 250 award-winning documentaries to millions nationwide, and now has a Webby Award-winning online series, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. Since 1988, P.O.V. 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 about P.O.V is available online at www.pbs.org/pov.

P.O.V. Interactive (www.pbs.org/pov)

P.O.V.'s award-winning Web department produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. It also produces a Web site for every P.O.V. presentation, extending the life of P.O.V. films through community-based and educational applications, focusing on involving viewers in activities, information and feedback on the issues. In addition, www.pbs.org/pov houses our unique *Talking Back* feature, filmmaker interviews and viewer resources, and information on the P.O.V. archives as well as myriad special sites for previous P.O.V. broadcasts.

P.O.V. Community Engagement and Education

P.O.V. provides Discussion Guides for all films as well as curriculum-based P.O.V. Lesson Plans for select films to promote the use of independent media among varied constituencies. Available free online, these originally produced materials ensure the ongoing use of P.O.V.'s documentaries with educators, community workers, opinion leaders and general audiences nationally. P.O.V. also works closely with local public television stations to partner with local museums, libraries, schools and community-based organizations to raise awareness of the issues in P.O.V.'s films. *Youth Views*, P.O.V.'s youth engagement initiative, expands these efforts by working directly with youth service organizations.

Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Ford Foundation, PBS and public television viewers. Funding for P.O.V.'s Community Engagement activities and the *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston, and Thirteen/WNET New York.

American Documentary, Inc. (www.americandocumentary.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. Cara Mertes is executive director of American Documentary | P.O.V.

TAPE REQUESTS: *Please note that a broadcast version of this film is available upon request, as the film may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.*

