



OPERATION POPCORN to premiere on AMERICA REFRAMED
A film by David Grabias

Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at 8 p.m.
on Public Television's WORLD Channel

[AMERICA REFRAMED](#)

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"If David Grabias' film were fictional, its premise would seem way over the top." — Loey Lockerby, *The Kansas City Star*

April 26, 2016 – (New York, NY) –David Grabias' acclaimed documentary **OPERATION POPCORN** will premiere **Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at 8 p.m.** on WORLD Channel ([check local listings](#)), as part of the fourth season of **AMERICA REFRAMED**, public media's newest documentary series hosted by Natasha Del Toro. The broadcast will be followed by 14 days of free streaming for audiences across the U.S. at www.worldchannel.org/americareframed starting on May 18th.

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During the Vietnam War, the C.I.A. recruited Laotian Hmong to fight the communists. It is estimated that 30,000 Hmong died assisting the U.S. The first wave of Hmong refugees who emigrated to the U.S. grappled with survivors' guilt and, for decades, agonized over human rights violations committed against those left behind, including attacks on unarmed civilians, rape, and torture.

A thrilling and suspenseful tale, **OPERATION POPCORN** explores the fate of 10 Hmong American leaders and a retired U.S. Army officer who are accused of conspiring together to overthrow the communist government of Laos. Seven years in the making, the film sheds light on the fragile relationships between individuals and the American surveillance state.

Told through personal reflections and candid surveillance footage, the film chronicles the incredible series of events triggered by Locha Thao, a businessman and activist. When video is smuggled out of Laos showing that the Communist government is still persecuting Hmong left behind, Thao becomes a zealot determined to help his fellow abandoned people. He explores purchasing weapons



for them to use in self-defense, and when an arms dealer appears and offers to help, Thao soon finds himself and a group of Hmong elders meeting in secret locations to examine caches of guns, grenades, and rocket launchers. When the dealer requests a detailed plan, Thao engages the talent of a low-budget, home-movie director and screenwriter to draft “Operation P.O.P.C.O.R.N.” – the **Political Opposition Party's Coup Operation to Rescue the Nation**.

Some Hmong American leaders, including retired Major General Vang Pao of the Royal Lao Army, opt for using diplomacy to oppose human-rights violations and instruct Thao to stop the plan. But Thao’s stranger-than-fiction caper continues, resulting in federal indictments and accusations of terrorism. With Thao, Vang Pao, and other Hmong leaders facing life in prison, their lawyers argue entrapment, and protestors take to the streets shouting “Free Vang Pao!”

Web and Social Media

AMERICA REFRAMED can be accessed online via <http://worldchannel.org/programs/america-reframed/> and, <https://www.facebook.com/WorldChannel> <https://www.facebook.com/AmericaReFramed>

@worldchannelPTV
@americareframed
@ndeltoro

Film Credits

Director: David Grabias

About AMERICA REFRAMED

AMERICA REFRAMED is a co-production of the WORLD Channel and American Documentary, Inc. and is hosted by journalist Natasha Del Toro.

Season 4 of AMERICA REFRAMED curates a diverse selection of films highlighting innovative and artistic approaches to storytelling from emerging and veteran filmmakers alike. Viewers will be immersed in personal stories from the streets of towns big and small to the exurbs and country roads that span the spectrum of American life. The documentaries invite audiences to reflect on topics as varied as



culture, healthcare, politics, gun violence, religion and more. Several episodes feature a roundtable discussion moderated by host Natasha Del Toro with special guest commentators and filmmakers.

In 2015, AMERICA REFRAMED won a GRACIE Outstanding Series award, and was nominated for an EMMY award as well as an Independent Documentary Association award for best curated series. In its first season, AMERICA REFRAMED received five 2013 CINE Golden Eagle Awards, and one Imagen Awards nomination.

AMERICA REFRAMED Series Credits

Executive Producers: Justine Nagan, Chris Hastings, Chris White
Series Producer: Carmen L. Vicencio
Host: Natasha Del Toro

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AMERICA REFRAMED Co-Producers

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia arts organization 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. AmDoc is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. For more information, visit: www.amdoc.org



The WORLD Channel delivers the best of public television’s nonfiction, news and documentary programming, including original content by and about diverse communities, to U.S. audiences through local public television stations and streaming online at worldchannel.org. WORLD reached 35.8 million unique viewers 18+ last year (55% adults 18-49) and over-indexes in key diversity demographics. Online, the WORLD Channel expands on broadcast topics and fuels dialogue across social media, providing opportunities for broad and diverse audience interaction.

WORLD is programmed by WGBH/Boston, in partnership with American Public Television and WNET/New York, and in association with PBS and National Educational Telecommunications Association. Funding for the WORLD Channel is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Ford Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Kendeda Fund. For more information about The WORLD Channel, visit www.worldchannel.org

Media Contact

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