

# Giving Birth

A VIDEOTAPE BY

Julie Gustafson

John Reilly

To Be Broadcast on PBS and WNET-TV/Channel 13 on Wednesday, January 7, 10 PM

Produced by Global Village in Association with the Television Laboratory at WNET/Channel 13

Funds from the New York State Council on the Arts; Global Village is a non-profit organization funded by NYSCA, National Endowment for the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting

# PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"GIVING BIRTH: FOUR PORTRAITS," VIDEO DOCUMENTARY, ON CHANGING  
ATTITUDES AND METHODS OF CHILDBIRTH, TO BE BROADCAST  
ON PUBLIC TELEVISION FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17

Program Focuses on Four Couples' Experiences, Also Interviews with  
Childbirth Experts, Including Frederic Leboyer, Margaret Mead

NEW YORK -- As medical technology in the last twenty years has radically increased the safety of childbirth, both to mother and child, at the same time the philosophy of childbirth has been changing, as men and women both want to more fully understand, share and experience the births of their children.

Experiences and methods vary. GIVING BIRTH: FOUR PORTRAITS, a graphic video documentary, focuses on four couples and four different types of childbirth -- the standard hospital delivery with high technology and anesthesia, a Leboyer "birth without violence," a Caesarian section, and a midwife-assisted natural birth. Interlaced with the stories of the four couples are interviews with experts on childbirth and its sociological significance, including Dr. Margaret Mead, Dr. Frederic Leboyer, and others.

GIVING BIRTH: FOUR PORTRAITS, produced by Global Village and the Television Laboratory at WNET/Channel 13, New York, will be distributed nationally by the Public Broadcasting Service to its member stations, Friday, December 17, 1976, 9:00 P.M., ET.\* (In New York, WNET/13 will air the program at the same time.)

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\*Please check local PBS stations for correct area broadcast time.

GIVING BIRTH is the second of four video documentaries being produced by the Television Laboratory through the assistance of a grant from New York State Council on the Arts.

GIVING BIRTH was made by a husband-and-wife team, John Reilly and Julie Gustafson. Ms. Gustafson received a Television Laboratory Artist-in-Residence grant to produce the program, which was inspired by the birth of Reilly and Gustafson's first child, Lars Christopher, to whom GIVING BIRTH is dedicated. John Reilly received an independent artist's grant from the New York State Council on the Arts for GIVING BIRTH.

The four couples in GIVING BIRTH represent the spectrum of childbirth techniques and philosophies:

-- Kay and Dave have their child at New York's Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. Although they have trained for a natural birth, through Lamaze childbirth classes, they chose the "high technology" childbirth with a regional anesthesia, the method used by approximately 65 percent of American couples. Computer systems monitor life systems of both mother and child, and specialists are on hand performing a forceps-assisted delivery. The result, says Dr. Stanley James, a specialist in obstetrics and newborn care, is a baby in "optimal condition."

-- Mark and Eleanor are expecting their fourth child. For economic and philosophical reasons, they have decided to have the baby at home, with the assistance of a local doctor, using the Leboyer "birth without violence" method -- the baby is delivered in a quiet room with dim lights, and placed in a warm bath immediately following delivery. "Suffering is something we can do away with," Dr. Frederic Leboyer says in an interview, taped in Paris. "Birth is not a surgical process. It's a very natural process."

-- Lisa and Raymond trained for a natural childbirth, taking Lamaze exercise classes at the New York Infirmary. But their birth does not go as expected, and Lisa undergoes

a Caesarian. She does not see her baby for three days. Her husband is pleased that the operation is a success, but Lisa says, "I wanted to see the baby right away. That's why I wanted a natural birth."

-- Cookie and Alan have also taken Lamaze classes, and they have a natural childbirth at the Booth Maternity Center in Philadelphia, one of the few hospitals in the country with midwife-assisted births, and one of the few that believe in keeping the family together during the birth of the first child. Elizabeth Bing, one of the pioneers of prepared childbirth techniques, discusses the importance of preparation, support in labor and midwives with whom the mothers have one-to-one relationships. Dr. John Franklin, chief of obstetrics at Booth, discusses "protecting birth as an emotional experience ... keeping it out of the test tube."

GIVING BIRTH illustrates the joys and pains of childbirth, and explores the issues and questions surrounding new ideas and techniques. "Something has been interfering with the naturalness of childbirth, possibly for several hundred thousand years, maybe longer," anthropologist Margaret Mead said. "There are cases when childbirth is surgery. But there's no reason why we should take a life process and treat it always like a disease."

GIVING BIRTH shows the childbirth process in its entirety. It will be preceded by an announcement that the program contains language and subject matter of an adult nature.

GIVING BIRTH was produced, directed, written and edited by Julie Gustafson and John Reilly. Assistant director and editor: Gilbert Berat. Executive producer for the Television Laboratory at WNET/13: David Laxton. Supervising engineer: John J. Godfrey. Coordinating producer: Carol Brandenburg.

Writer: M. W.

December 1, 1976

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JOHN REILLY/DIRECTOR



**VIDEO** STUDY CENTER  
OF GLOBAL VILLAGE 454 BROOME ST. NYC 10012/966-7526

THE MAKING OF

GIVING BIRTH: FOUR PORTRAITS

GIVING BIRTH: FOUR PORTRAITS is a videotape documentary by the husband and wife team, John Reilly and Julie Gustafson. Produced by Global Village and The Television Laboratory at WNET, it will appear nationally on PBS in late winter, 1976. Gilbert Berat, a former student at Global Village, was the assistant director and assistant editor. The following article, written by Karen Mooney, is from a taped interview with Julie Gustafson and John Reilly.

JOHN: The birth of our first child, Lars, in September of 1975 was the real catalyst for this work. Our experience was not the joyous one we had expected. We had wanted to give birth naturally and in a humane environment, but the hospital situation in which we found ourselves was so rigid and so oriented towards medicated births and hospital efficiency that we were almost unable to carry out our goal. We were left pretty much to ourselves during a difficult labor; there was no interest or support for our attempts to have a natural childbirth; and we were subjected to all the standard routines of a traditional hospital birth.

JULIE: The doctor was late, there was a last minute rush to the delivery room, my feet were hoisted up in the air in stirrups, my hands were tied to the delivery table, and worse of all, they whisked Lars away as soon as he was born--ordinary hospital procedure. John was asked to leave, Lars was sent to the nursery, and I was left alone in the hall to recover.

It was a terribly lonely experience for both of us and probably for Lars, too. And yet it was the average hospital experience, improved only a little by the Childbirth Preparation and John's presence.

At home we tried to evaluate what had happened, we read more about birth, talked a lot, and contacted other people who had had or were having children. At one point, John stumbled on what turned out to be a very important pamphlet--Doris Haire's The Cultural Warping of Childbirth.

JOHN: Many of the things I read about in Doris's publication, such as the dehumanization of the birth experience and the routine use of medical intervention, were exactly what had happened to us. And we were agonized to learn that some of the procedures were as potentially dangerous as they were unnerving. We stayed up all night reading, finally coming in touch with our anger and frustration. I suggested to Julie that she do a tape about birth, but then we decided to share the project. I realized it was as much my experience as hers.

JULIE: The idea of this tape was so right for us at this particular point because, although we had helped each other on separate projects, we had never done a whole work co-equally. It was a continuation of the whole process of having the baby, and it was something that we approached in a mutual way. It was part of our life, part of the whole thing of making a family, part of being together and working together. It was really a special endeavor.

JOHN: We started production on the tape in January of 1976. Pretty early on, we decided that it was essential to get close to the couples we were working with, not simply to go in and get one moment or one aspect of a birth, but to get the feeling of the whole experience from pregnancy to bringing the baby home, and to get to know the couples as people, not just as parents.

This is one of the themes that has run through the past work of both of us; we have tried to portray our subjects as strong characters, to let the audience know them, and not simply to use them as examples of one side of an argument or another.

JULIE: In order to explore the range of birth experiences in this country, we chose couples who were approaching their births in radically different ways. One couple opted for a high technology birth, complete with specialists and computers. One couple was planning a home birth, and, barring complications, wanted a "Leboyer" delivery. Another couple chose a

small general hospital for a Lamaze birth; eventually this one turned into a Caesarean. And the fourth couple wanted a midwife to assist them; they chose a unique and innovative maternity unit in Philadelphia.

JOHN: Along with the portraits of the couples, we felt it was essential to have the so-called experts in the field discussing what was influencing the American birth experience. For example, one of the couples was very influenced by Dr. Frederic Leboyer, the French doctor who evolved what is known as "The Leboyer Method." We had an opportunity while in Paris to do an interview with Dr. Leboyer. And we intercut some of his thoughts about birth with that couples' portrait. We also used, in the other portraits, some of the thoughts of Dr. Stanley James, a traditionalist in obstetrics; Dr. Margaret Mead, anthropologist; and Elizabeth Bing, pioneer of Prepared Childbirth in this country.

JULIE: One of the interesting things about doing this work was that we actually taped and researched in a number of areas other than what eventually appears in the tape. In the beginning the tape was to be a kind of exposé of "the American way of birth", so we wanted to cover the entire range of possibilities. We interviewed single mothers, mothers who had been administered various types of drugs, mothers who had experienced different medical situations, and numerous experts. There were those who believed the more technology and artificial support, the better the experience for mother and child; and those who thought practically the opposite, such as Doris Haire, whose work had catalyzed the tape.

JOHN: Both of us were leaning towards a "white paper" approach. Neither of us had ever done that type of work, where a lot of facts are presented, a lot of conclusions are made, where summations and narrations guide the audience. We wanted to try such a style, thinking it would make a stronger statement about birth. Yet as we proceeded, as we and Bert, our assistant, were evaluating the material, we realized that there was a clash between the portraits that were evolving and the white paper style. The strongest material in the work was by far the four or five portraits of the couples.

The final edit of the tape, which Julie did very skillfully with Bert's help, accentuates the natural element of each portrait and brings in the commentative material, the thoughts of the experts, to clarify and bring into perspective what is seen on the screen. So, we were able to work in some of the information that we had envisioned in the beginning, but without the highly structured quality of a white paper.

JULIE: At the suggestion of David Loxton, our producer at The Television Laboratory, the tape opens with a "teaser", a thirty-second clip from each birth. I think in that two minute period one gets a good sense of what the tape is like, one gets involved with the couples.

The first birth is the traditional high technology birth. The couple, Kay and Dave, had chosen Columbia Presbyterian, a highly prestigious teaching hospital in Manhattan, for the security of all the latest technology and the high ratio of specialists to patients. Although they had preparation for a natural childbirth, they ended up using a regional form of anesthesia. Probably 65 percent of American couples take this type of medication, with at least half of them needing the forceps delivery that Kay and Dave have in the tape. This is the first time, as far as we know, that a forceps delivery has been seen on television.

The strength of the portrait style is evident here because one sees and experiences this birth from the same reference point as the couple themselves. The audience learns not only Kay and Dave's rationale for the choice of the environment, but also the quality and the feeling of being attended to, of being taken care of, and done for. It's a very vivid sequence.

Interwoven with the events of Kay and Dave's experience are some comments by Stanley James, an eminent specialist in obstetrics and newborn care, who is firmly committed to this type of birth.

One of the new trends in American birth, particularly strong on the west coast, is to have babies outside of hospitals, and one of the portraits is of a home birth. In some home births, the couples do the delivery themselves; in the case of Eleanor and Mark, there was a medical doctor in attendance throughout the labor and delivery. Mark and Eleanor chose to use the "Leboyer" method, which stresses subdued lighting, a quiet environment, and handling and touching the baby carefully and gently. To capture the naturalness of this situation, we used a low light Nuvicon tube in the camera. The sequence is, therefore, in black and white since color requires so much light.

The use of the portraits as the major structure of the tape paid off the most in the home birth. If we had been doing a white paper, we would only have been able to allot maybe three or four minutes to this particular sequence because only a small percentage of American couples are choosing this type of birth. But since we were using portraits, we were able to show the birth in its entirety, as an example of a couple really taking responsibility for their birth and really having the experience they wanted.



One of the very strong images in this portrait is the baby during the Leboyer bath immediately after the birth. The baby's eyes are open and his hands are open and waving in the air, very much in contrast to the babies in the other births whose fists are clenched in tension and fear. By the use of strong and repetitive images such as this one, we didn't have to keep telling the audience with a narration what they were seeing and what conclusions to draw about the births.

JOHN: In each of the births that we taped we were involved in the whole experience and sometimes as it unfolded it would change. For example, the third birth, which was originally to be a Lamaze birth, became a Caesarean section, totally changing the entire experience. This is the element of uncertainty that is in every human situation and hopefully some of that comes across in the tape. Also, since the birth did not proceed as Lisa and Ray had expected it to proceed, the ties between us became very strong. They really had no one to turn to because the hospital in their case was rigid and could only relate to a couple as a medical case. At one point in the tape, after many weary hours of labor, there is a voice in the background coaching Lisa. Although the voice is not identified, it is Julie--there was nobody else in the room at that point who could help Lisa with her Lamaze exercises.

JULIE: The final birth in the tape is one of our favorites. Cookie and Alan had chosen a maternity center where a midwife works with the couple during labor and then delivers the baby. It so happened that Cookie and Alan were almost perfect television subjects. They were quite open and happy to share their experience with us.

In addition, they had chosen one of the most positive ways to have a child. This last portrait contains one of the most delightful sequences we have ever worked with. The happiest moment in Cookie and Alan's life becomes one of the happiest moments in the tape. Again, we let the experience and the couple speak for themselves, and we used the technique of long real-time sequences to portray or reproduce the experience as they saw it.

JOHN: In this birth, the power in the delivery room failed just moments before the baby's head was emerging. We were able to switch the entire system over to battery operation and continued to shoot, with the loss of only a few seconds--saving the whole sequence. Later, in the color correction stage, we were able to color correct for the difference in light values between the quartz lights and the natural light which was coming in the room.

The equipment used in the entire taping, except for the black and white sequences in the home birth, was the Sony three-quarter inch cassette deck, model 3800, and the Sony DXC 1600 color camera. Except for a simple modification made by John Godfrey at The TV Lab to make it more compatible to two inch transfer, the equipment was in its natural, unmodified form. The black and white sequence was shot with a low light camera (Nuvidon tube) attached to the cassette deck. Other than that, we used the standard lens and standard battery. We chose the three-quarter inch cassette realizing it would give the best stability for transfer to quad. The material was then transferred directly from three quarter inch to two inch for editing on two inch.

JULIE: The experience of doing the final edit at The Television Laboratory with John Godfrey and the people working there was interesting and quite different from the way we normally work. In the past we have made our own masters in either one half inch or three quarter inch and done our own titles and effects. But in this case we did a rough edit on three quarter inch and took the material to The TV Lab where the final edit was made by computer--really quite a remarkable system. We went to The Lab knowing exactly what we wanted; there we did what is called a paper edit. I would tell John Godfrey exactly what in or out points I wanted and he would find the point on a time coded copy of our original footage. He would note this in computer language in a log and describe exactly what we wanted to occur at that point. This process took three or four days. Then he typed the log into a program. A few days later we went into the computer editing room at Studio 55, Channel 13's main studio, and watched the whole thing appear right before our eyes, edit by edit. The computer did all the electronic work. When a mistake occurred in the notation or something wildly wrong shows up on the screen, we hollered "stop" and John went back and reprogrammed the computer.

It's truly a remarkable process because we could edit an hour long program in approximately six or seven hours, give or take a few hours for set-up time, which is extraordinary. The long, time-consuming part of the edit occurred under much less expensive conditions, at home, when we did the rough edit on three quarter inch. All we had to pay for to this point was the transfer of the necessary three-quarter inch material to quad, the color correction, and the time to tell the engineer and the assistant director what we wanted. All of this reduced the really expensive two inch editing time to six or seven hours.

When you undertake an editing project like this there are a great many advantages to having a computer system

and an engineer like John Godfrey to work with. Two inch equipment allows fades, dissolves, and special effects. You have the advantage of color correction and time base correction for stability, though we didn't have any serious problems with stability. But at the same time you have to reorient yourself. You have to translate everything you would normally just do alone into another kind of language and tell it to someone else. I found this difficult. Also, an engineer's consideration of time (cost) as opposed to the concerns of an artist sometimes create problems of priority, and it took a while to find a balance between what we really wanted and what was possible. As we worked together on the project, however, I grew to appreciate very much the skill of the team at The Lab and I also learned to stand up for what I really wanted. And, as a result, the final product is very satisfying.

JOHN: The difference in cost between editing on three quarter inch and two inch is enormous. Rental or even purchase of small-format equipment is much less expensive than quad. But because we were working in cooperation with The Television Laboratory, we were able to do the two inch edit. The only other way that the special effects and anything other than a straight cut can be done with small format equipment is to introduce Time Base Correctors into the three quarter inch editing system, something which isn't often done now but which we'd like to try in the future.

Funding for the project came from a grant to Julie from The Television Laboratory/WNET 13 as an artist-in-residence and directly to me from the New York State Council on the Arts for a documentary project. We combined these two grants, plus funding and underwriting from Global Village to do the project. The estimated cost of the project is around \$20,000, with approximately half of that coming from The Lab and NYSCA grants.

JULIE: Throughout the project we were working closely with Bert Berat, a former student of ours, who became very interested in what we were doing. It was a pleasure to have him working with us because he has a very careful and clear way of approaching a production, and his talent as well as his willingness to get up in the middle of cold snowy nights was crucial to the project.

Also, the fact that it was a mutual project of both John and I made it very satisfying in a number of ways. We two complement each others skills, temperament, and work habits. John brings to the partnership more than ten years of experience in documentary film and video. He has a flair for analysis and a concern for style. I was responsible for the day-to-day process, making arrangements and dealing with most of the production elements, the equipment and the relationship with the couples.

Even though each of us had specific ideas about interviewing certain people and addressing specific elements, we never fundamentally strayed from the basic theme and the idea that we discussed so much. And we feel that the tape has been very rewarding, both in the sense of accomplishing what we feel is a very good documentary on birth and in our own collaboration on the project.

(THE MAKING OF GIVING BIRTH: FOUR PORTRAITS is an article to be published in Videoscope, Winter 1976 issue.)

# Giving Birth

## Four Portraits

PRESS RELEASE

For information contact

Karen Mooney, 212/966-7

To be aired on PBS network on December 17, 1976, 9:00 PM

"Giving Birth: Four Portraits" is a videotape documentary by the husband and wife team, John Reilly and Julie Gustafson. Inspired by the birth of their own child, it is a moving and personal look at birth in America. "Giving Birth" was produced by Global Village in association with the TV Lab at WNET/13 on the new generation of color portable 3/4" video equipment.

"Giving Birth: Four Portraits" will be one of the first video documentaries aired on Public Television's new Friday night documentary series. It is the first televised program on this subject that honestly and graphically shows what birth is like for most Americans. The one-hour special is based on the birth experiences of four actual couples. It truthfully shows both the positive and negative situations which are an integral but rarely seen part of this life event.

The one-hour documentary covers the range of choices available in America: there is a high technology birth, complete with computers, anesthesia, and forceps; a home birth with a "Leboyer" delivery; a natural childbirth which eventually becomes a Caesarean section; and a midwife delivery in an innovative maternity center in Philadelphia.

**GLOBAL VILLAGE 454 BROOME ST NYC 10012**

## GIVING BIRTH: FOUR PORTRAITS/2

Long uninterrupted sequences from the pregnancies and births and interviews with each couple give shape to the work. The four portraits reveal much about this misunderstood event as well as give us some extraordinary television moments: the extraction of a baby with forceps; a wide-eyed newborn in a "Leboyer" bath; a jubilant father after an emergency Caesarean section; and a couple who cry when handed their baby moments after the birth.

Interwoven with the portraits are the thoughts of Dr. Frederic Leboyer, author of Birth Without Violence; Elisabeth Bing, pioneer of Prepared Childbirth; Dr. Stanley James, a leading proponent of the traditional hospital birth; and anthropologist, Dr. Margaret Mead. The interview with Frederic Leboyer is one of the highlights of the work. Interviewed at his home in Paris, he makes an impassioned plea for the humanization of the average birth experience.

Funding for the project came from a grant to Julie Gustafson from the Television Laboratory as an artist-in-residence and to John Reilly for an independent artist grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. The rest of the project was funded and underwritten by Global Village. Gilbert Berat, a former student at Global Village, was the assistant director and assistant editor. David Loxton was executive producer for the TV Lab, Carol Brandenburg, associate producer, and John Godfrey, supervising engineer.

Global Village was the first video group in America. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to experimenting with the potentials of television. In recent years it has produced a number of documentaries, among them "The Irish Tapes", which has been seen on Public Television, and "The Politics of Intimacy". Global Village is conducting a national series of workshops at Public Television stations as well as offering courses through the New School for Social Research. Global Village is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

We cordially invite members of the press and other interested persons to call us for a pre-screening. Contact Karen Mooney at 212/966-7526.

**GLOBAL VILLAGE** 454 BROOME ST NYC 10012

Los Angeles Times

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1976

## TV REVIEW

'Giving Birth'  
on Channel 28

BY LEE MARGULIES

Times Staff Writer

Wonder of wonders that childbirth is, the controversy that has erupted around it is incongruous, to say the least. At issue is what methods of delivery are best—in the hospital or at home, with medication or without, isolating the newborn or letting them remain with their mothers.

Both aspects—the beauty of those miraculous moments and the heated debate outside the delivery room—are smoothly integrated in a sensitive, intelligent program on KCET Channel 28 tonight called "Giving Birth." It airs from 9 to 10 p.m.

The videotape documentary is divided into four parts, each focused on a couple who has chosen a different delivery method than the others. Kay and Dave are doing a conventional hospital birth with local anesthesia; Eleanor and Mark are having their baby at home, utilizing Dr. Frederic Leboyer's "birth without violence" techniques; Lisa and Raymond learn the Lamaza method of natural childbirth but wind up with a Caesarian; Cookie and Alan are assisted by a midwife at a maternity center.

Each segment features footage of the mother's labor and delivery, interviews with the couple afterwards about how they think the delivery went, and interviews with experts about that particular type of delivery. The intercutting is splendid.

What emerges is a well-balanced series of portraits that are interesting, informative and intellectually stimulating.

"Giving Birth," made by Julie Gustafson and John Reilly for WNET in New York, is forthright in its depiction of the births, particularly in the cases of Eleanor and Cookie. We see them pushing and straining, sweating and panting with the effort, and then suddenly a baby's head emerges. The body quickly follows and behold, a new human being is miraculously among us.

Forceps are used to pull Kay's son out, since she is under a local anesthetic and can't push it all the way, and Lisa is completely unconscious for her Caesarian, but those first moments of the newborn entering the world are marvelously captured in all four cases. It isn't difficult to share the parents' ecstasy.

And how much more moving it is than the live birth that was shown in ABC's recent television movie "Having Babies," in which the writer and producers crassly intruded on the moment by having the parents spout trite dialogue about the future of their marriage while lush music swelled in the background.

## Pain Always Present

Among the people interviewed by the videotape makers are anthropologist Margaret Mead, Dr. Frederic Leboyer, Dr. Stanley James and Elizabeth Bing. All make their points calmly and reasonably.

James, chief of neonatology at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York, where Kay and Dave go for their delivery, argues that medication has an important role to play in childbirth because pain is always present and if the mother is extremely apprehensive about it, the baby can be damaged. He also says there is too great a risk in delivery to warrant having a baby anywhere but in a hospital.

Leboyer, on the other hand, expresses disdain for the way American hospitals treat childbirth as a surgical operation. "Birth basically has got nothing to do with surgery," he says. "It's a very natural process."

Miss Mead contends that the use of drugs and advanced equipment in a hospital is sometimes called for but should only be used when absolutely necessary. A woman who can't experience the birth and isn't allowed to breast-feed her baby relatively soon may never establish the maternal ties that are essential for the child's well-being, she says.

Miss Bing, an advocate of prepared childbirth, says the routine use of drugs is dangerous because anything the mother ingests goes right to the baby. If women would learn how to cope with the fear and tension they associate with labor pain, through mental preparation and the trust of a midwife or loved one nearby, they could experience the pleasurable aspects of childbirth to the fullest, she says.

## Dark, Warm, Quiet Room

Equally as intriguing as these discussions is the scene in which Mark and the doctor take the newborn baby and gently place him in a warm bath—a practice Leboyer advocates. As we watch the baby stop crying and relax in his liquid surroundings, Leboyer explains in a voiceover that he believes the child's trauma in birth stems from fear, not physical discomfort, and that by keeping the room dark, warm and quiet—unlike the standard hospital delivery room—and providing the bath immediately after birth, the baby is exposed to conditions that are closer to what he experienced in the womb and thus significantly less frightful.

"Giving Birth" is a solid piece of work. One could quibble about points of view it leaves out—the opposition to Leboyer's theory, the horror stories some mothers tell about hospital deliveries—but all the basics are here and that's plenty. Julie Gustafson and John Reilly have made a documentary that satisfies both the mind and the emotions.

As it happens, ABC presently is at work on another program that will feature a live birth. But this one-hour story is being developed as an Afterschool Special and is aimed at children.

"My Mom's Having a Baby," scheduled to air Feb. 16 at 4 p.m., will present an honest account of where babies come from, says producer Bob Chenault. In the story, a 9-year-old boy and two friends go to the family pediatrician, played by a real pediatrician, Dr. Lendon H. Smith, to learn what is happening to his mother.

Chenault says the program will be explicit and honest—using the words vagina, penis, uterus, intercourse—but not inoffensive or dull. The script was in development for two years and had input from educators and psychologists, he said.

"This kind of film has been needed for some time," the producer said. "It's going to be a good educational program."

# Press Notice

OF GLOBAL VILLAGE 454 BROOME ST NYC 10012/966-7526

NEWSDAY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1976

## tv preview

By John Cashman

In case you didn't know, there are eight viewing days until Christmas. That means that television is on the last leg of its month-long reminder that Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without buying a lot of things you wouldn't ordinarily buy if it wasn't Christmas.

It is also a time when television goes heavily into the brotherhood of man, dewy-eyed remembrance of times past, plastic snow, performers and their families celebrating the holiday on tape in October and reruns of instant animated classics created last year—and football.

And it is a time when WNET, ever the antic gadfly of the medium, decides to run with a graphically obstetrical eye-view of four babies aborning. If you ever wanted a definition of counterprogramming, this is it.

### TONIGHT

CBS opens the evening in the proper seasonal spirit with three consecutive children's annuals, "Toys on the Town" (Ch. 2, 7:30-8 PM), "Frosty the Snowman" (Chs. 2 and 3, 8-8:30 PM) and "Twas the Night Before Christmas" (Chs. 2 and 3, 8:30-9 PM). It's a three-way parlay of toys, talking snowmen and cute mice, which should have a lock on the sugar-plum visionaries.

But from there on out, the seasonal spirit passes to ABC with the TV movie "Young Pioneers Christmas" (Chs. 7, 8, 9-11 PM), with NBC staying with its regular action shows and CBS premiering an offbeat but winning tongue-in-cheek contemporary western called "Pocket Money" (Chs. 2 and 3, 9-11 PM), a 1972 movie-movie that gives Paul Newman and Lee Marvin a chance to successfully play against their screen personas.

## The viewing days wreathed with holly

"Young Pioneers Christmas" is a sequel to last March's plain "Young Pioneers," a kind of Little Soddy on the Prairie that scored just behind ABC's pilot film for "Charlie's Angels" in audience popularity. Tonight's continuation of the story of young David (Roger Kern) and Molly (Linda Purl) against the barren wilds of the 1870s Dakota Territory will probably rate as high.

It's a nice movie about nice people with a multiple variation of "The Gift of the Magi" for a blatantly catch-in-the-throat ending. But it plays well, and David and Molly and their few neighbors are obviously terrific persons. There is only one lapse into gratuitous punching and stuff, and for the first hour you may wonder if the movie has

anything to do with Christmas. But hang in. It does.

For old, old times' sake, "Chico and the Man" (Ch. 4, 8:30-9 PM) is featuring 80-year-old Jim Jordan as an old muffler mechanic. Who is Jim Jordan? Fibber McGee (and Molly), that's who.

Meanwhile, over at the medium alternative, WNET, there is "Giving Birth: Four Portraits" (Ch. 13, 9-10 PM), a fascinating, if flat-out clinical, look at four expectant mothers and the earliest baby movies you will ever see. It is explicit, absolutely real and nonseasonal. Men should see it. Women should see it—if not tonight, then in rerun in a less festive season. It is not for the faint of heart or stomach. For such persons, the program could wipe out their sex lives.

**VIDEO**  **STUDY CENTER**  
**JOHN REILLY/DIRECTOR**



# Press Notice

OF GLOBAL VILLAGE 454 BROADWAY ST NYC 10012/966-7526

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1976

## TV WEEKEND

By JOHN J. O'CONNOR

**C**HRISTMAS is coming, and the network goose is fat on specials—a good many of them repeats from years past. On the counterprogramming front, ABC, the network for children of all ages, is letting Wonder Woman, in tomorrow night's episode, do battle with a gorilla devised by the Nazis to conquer the world. If the gorilla reminds some viewers of King Kong, who is being released in a new movie this week, that may or may not be a coincidence.

As for alternatives, one is called "Giving Birth: Four Portraits," and it can be seen tonight at 9 on Channel 13. This is a videotaped documentary produced by Global Village's husband and wife team of John Reilly and Julie Gustafson. Using the recorded experiences of four couples, the hour is dedicated to the producers' son, who was born last year, and it exudes the astonishment and initial elation characteristic of most new parents. Each couple illustrates a different birth process: the hospital setting, with partial anesthetic; a delivery at home with minimum paraphernalia, a Caesarean operation and a midwife delivery at a new kind of maternity center.

Each birth is presented in graphic closeup, and a preface advises that the program "contains language and subject matter of an adult nature." The producers maintain that this is "the first televised program" that honestly shows positive and negative aspects of "this life event." But births have already been shown in extensive detail on television, most notably on a late-night ABC special with David Hartman a couple of years ago. And the use of graphic detail remains questionable. Birth is indeed a life event, but so is death. In either case, for purposes of essential analysis and discussion, lingering closeups are not absolutely necessary.

But "Giving Birth" is most valuable in suggesting alternatives within the birth experience. Along with the portraits, the documentary offers helpful interviews with various experts. Dr. Frederic Leboyer, author of "Birth Without Violence," is interviewed in Paris, and he stresses the fact that "birth is not a surgical process." Margaret Mead adds her own touch of common sense: "It is sheer ideology to insist that you should always use drugs or you should never use drugs" during delivery.

**VIDEO** ○○○○ **STUDY CENTER**  
**JOHN REILLY/DIRECTOR**

# Press Notice

OF GLOBAL VILLAGE 454 BRCDME ST NYC 10012/966-7526

## audio video playback

Tape on birth turns viewer into participant

LEENDERT DRUKKER



I've just previewed a most remarkable video tape, one that rescues the documentary from its current humdrum. "Giving Birth: Four Portraits" breaks away from the customary video babble, the easy way out, the endless interviews. Instead of the usual superficial treatment, it lives through the preparations, the birth classes and exercises, the anticipation, the labor itself, and then the emotional release. The result is an outstanding dramatic document, an experience that's the next thing to going through labor itself. And that's exact-

ly what its makers had in mind—an "experiential" rather than a political or sociological treatise.

The one-hour documentary was taped by the husband-and-wife team of John Reilly and Julie Gustafson. It evolved from personal experience—the birth of their son Lars, to whom it is dedicated. They had planned it to be a natural birth, without resorting to medication. However, when the time came, they found that the hospital was not properly geared for it. Natural childbirth was against the hospital's routine; the overworked staff just didn't encourage it, preferring to take the easy way by drugging. Their personal desires were ignored: Julie didn't see the baby for 12 hours, John not for six days except through a glass window.

Analyzing afterward what had happened, they concluded that for a natural childbirth they would have had to put themselves into a different, more conducive setting. They learned about the various options available to expectant mothers, and out of this research came the tape—an expression in the medium they know best. You may remember John from "The Irish" *continued on page 140*

Popular Photography® FEBRUARY, 1977, Volume 80, Number 2

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Happy end: Ecstatic mother greets newly born baby—one of four "portraits" in tape on "Giving Birth."



Tapes" (see "AV Playback" in the June 1975 issue); he is the director of the Video Study Center of Global Village. Julie is on its faculty; she received funding from the Television Laboratory of WNET, New York, as artist-in-residence. With John getting funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, they pooled their resources; the rest of the project was underwritten by Global Village. Their purpose was a serious one: to actually show the options available.

A true labor of love, their tape covers four different births. The first one is the usual high-technology delivery, said to be followed in 65 percent of the cases in the U.S. The next one is a home delivery by a physician; the third a hospital birth that turns into an emergency, calling for Caesarean surgery; and the fourth is a midwife delivery in the innovative Boothe Maternity Center in Philadelphia. The tape gives leading professional advocates of each of these approaches the opportu-

nity to state their case. Interwoven with the "portraits" are the views of Dr. Frederic Leboyer, author of *Birth Without Violence*, in Paris; Elisabeth Bing, pioneer of prepared childbirth; Dr. Stanley James, proponent of traditional hospital birth; and anthropologist Dr. Margaret Mead.

Surprisingly, the team had little difficulty securing the cooperation of the couples, the practitioners, and institutions. In fact, under the intensity of the experience, the camera was forgotten; even the two 1,000-watt quartz lamps proved no distraction. However, a condition for taping the home delivery was that they would not bring any lighting equipment: the only illumination was available light—with the shades drawn down. They solved it by substituting a highly sensitive Nuvi-con tube for the standard one, and by taping in black-and-white.

*continued on page 148*

**VIDEO** ○○○○ **STUDY CENTER**  
**JOHN REILLY/DIRECTOR**

# Press Notice

OF GLOBAL VILLAGE 454 BRIDGEM ST NYC 10012/966-7526

John seizes on the point to plea for funding the independent producer. "A station would never have been willing to compromise that way. If it can't be done in color, it is out."

He and Julie also stress the time and effort they devoted to their production. They spent two weeks with a family to get the one right moment. They developed a closeness that shows.

"We have the flexibility and inclination to spend as much time on a project as it requires. Usually a news crew assigned by a station can't afford to do that because of union problems, restrictions on time and money. The result is a stereotype documentary, one that doesn't get involved with people; it tends to treat it at other levels.

"As independents we have the freedom of choosing a subject and in stressing what we feel is the correct approach. We don't have to go by the policy of the station, which might say, for example, you have to narrate, you have to use music, you have to do such and such because that's the way we make documentaries, that's the policy of the station. They treat documentaries the same way as news: nothing can be on the screen for more than 30 seconds. The result is a shallowness of coverage."

"Four Portraits" was months in the making. They began planning it after Lars' birth in September 1975, and shot it from January to April. Julie started cataloging and roughly editing the 1/4-in. tape in March. With Television Lab's John Godfrey, the relevant footage was finally transferred in July through color and time-base correctors to two-in. tape. The tape was time-coded, and every in-and-out point—such as dissolves and audio cuts—programmed in the computer. It was finally edited, sequence-by-sequence, in only eight hours. For Julie, who had been used to painstaking editing by hand, it was quite a revelation.

By the time you read this, you may have seen "Giving Birth: Four Portraits" for yourself on Public Television; if not, never mind. You no doubt will get another chance. This is one documentary that, in one form or another, should make the rounds for a long time. Like Cinerama's roller-coaster ride, you participate—but it also educates and, withal, leaves you feeling that there is something really wonderful left on earth after all. ●

**VIDEO** ○○○○ **STUDY CENTER**  
**JOHN REILLY/DIRECTOR**

# Press Notice

OF GLOBAL VILLAGE 454 BROOME ST NYC 10012/966-7526

THE JERSEY JOURNAL, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1976

## The Journal previews tonight's TV

9:00 **DB**, 49 SPECIAL

"Giving Birth: Four Portraits."

Be prepared for absolute candor in this splendid program on the act of giving birth. Not only does it offer graphic first-hand experience, on-camera, of the differing methods four women have chosen to use, it also explores them in some detail from the medical, physical and spiritual points of view. One woman elected to go to the hospital for her delivery where she was given "regional block" anesthesia (medication to assist the mother only late in labor). The second woman has her fourth child at home (her first three were delivered in the hospital), where she enjoyed natural childbirth and the feeling of warmth in her home, at a cost her husband could afford. The third woman (hospitalized) required a Caesarean section after natural childbirth proved ineffectual; and a fourth was treated by a midwife in an institution which uses midwives for delivery. Perhaps the most exciting moment of the hour is supplied by a newly born infant whose cries subside immediately as he is placed in a warm tub of water — a method of painless birth for the child, subscribed to by the famous Dr. Frederic Leboyer.

**VIDEO**  **STUDY CENTER**  
**JOHN REILLY/DIRECTOR**

# Press Notice

OF GLOBAL VILLAGE 454 BROOME ST NYC 10012/966-7526

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the village VOICE March 8, 1976

## SCENES

BY HOWARD SMITH & BRIAN VAN DER HORST

### Make Your Baby a Star

If you were about to have a baby and chose to have it at home, in New York State you'd be breaking the law. Unless you could convince a doctor to be present for the event. That makes it legal. But it would be a rare physician indeed who would be willing to partake in this kind of trouble. In this state, malpractice insurance doesn't cover nonemergency childbirth at home.

This situation has caused a problem for the documentary called "The American Way of Birth," that John Reilly and Julie Gustafson are making for Channel 13, to be aired in May. So far they have filmed babies being born through natural childbirth, Caesarian section, and a couple who went to a small suburban hospital, but now they want to cover the intimacy of a home birth. So far they haven't been able to find anybody. They've interviewed all kinds of expectant couples, but so far, no luck.

Reilly and Gustafson first became interested in this subject with the Lamaze birth of their own child five months ago. Their hospital experience led them to investigate all the conflicting methods that exist today. "We are ranked 15th in infant mortality in the world," says Reilly. "For a sophisticated, rich country—that's too much." The team has already interviewed

Leboyer, Margaret Mead, Elizabeth Bing, and other experts in the field, as well as dozens of families and physicians. To cover all alternatives, they are also looking for someone who is giving birth "by appointment"—a technique losing favor because of the chemicals necessary to induce labor although still being used by those who demand the convenience.

But the one that Reilly and Gustafson are really concerned with is the home birth. "We don't care if it's doctor-supervised or illegal," says Reilly anxiously, "We'd really like someone to call us soon (at 966-7526). It may take nine months to have a child, but we only have two to finish our documentary."

**VIDEO**  **STUDY CENTER**  
**JOHN REILLY/DIRECTOR**

# Video Classics:

## A Guide to Video Art and Documentary Tapes

by Deirdre Boyle

### Giving Birth: Four Portraits

by Julie Gustafson and John Reilly

1976. 60 min. color.

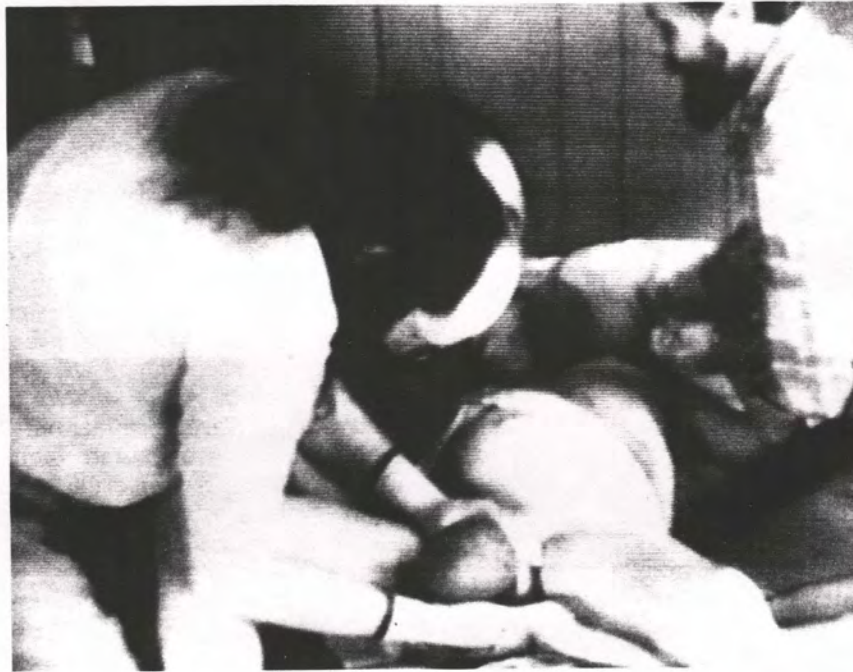
Distributors: EAI, Global Village. Formats: ¾", VHS, Beta.

**Credits:** *Assistant Director/Assistant Editor* Gilbert Berat *Assistants* Karen Mooney, Linda Rubin, Susan Landrey, Robert Sirignano, Anita Karl. *Produced by* Global Village in association with the Television Lab at WNET/13: *Supervising Engineer/Videotape Editor* John J. Godfrey *Associate Director* Henry Neimark *Production Manager* Barbara Greenberg *Production Assistant* Ruth Bonomo *Production Secretary* Stephanie Wein *Coordinating Producer* Carol Brandenburg *Executive Producer* David Loxton. *Thanks* The parents and their children, Doris Haire, Dr. David Kliot, Theresa and Angie Corrao, Col. Evelyn Skinner and The Salvation Army's Booth Maternity Center, New York Infirmity, Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital, Ken Marsh, Woodstock Community Video, The Mother's Center, Ruth Lubic, Maternity Center Association, Helene Browne, Laura Berat, Edna Reilly, Monica & Joe Rogers, Ann Butler. *Funding* New York State Council on the Arts.

**Awards:** Best Documentary, Athens Film Festival; Bronze Award, Information Film Producers of America.

Giving birth is a different experience for every family and every child, and this tape offers a direct, head-on look at the range of experiences and delivery options available. All the parents here were trained in Lamaze childbirth techniques, but each couple's experience varies. The first birth is in a high-tech urban hospital where an epidural anesthetic is given and a forceps delivery results. In the second portrait, a fourth child is born at home using the Leboyer method. Inserted is an interview with Dr. Frederic Leboyer, author of *Birth without Violence*, explaining that birth is a natural process, not a surgical one. Shot with a low-light camera in black-and-white, the sequence conveys a warm, quiet, and relaxed environment, in sharp contrast with the preceding brightly lit hospital delivery room. The

parents of the third baby planned for a natural birth, but after eight hours of hospital labor without progress, a caesarean section is performed (off-screen). Although the father is ecstatic, the mother appears forlorn; she will be deprived of her baby until several days later. The final portrait is a celebration of birth at an innovative maternity unit where a midwife-assisted Lamaze birth is seen. Elizabeth Bing, pioneer of Prepared Childbirth in the United States, discusses natural childbirth at the tape's end.



Gustafson and Reilly, a husband-and-wife video team, decided to make this tape after the birth of their son, Lars. Their hospital experience had been an upsetting one, and it led them to research what other options might have been available. Not surprisingly, their attitudes toward emergency-oriented hospital practices, which they say often ignore the mother and routinely include medication that can be dangerous to the infant, are much in evidence in the tape. But they never minimize the need for adequate medical care, especially when a real emergency arises. And the evidence that they present—healthy babies and happy parents—in the home and maternity unit sequences underscore why such deliveries are popular today.

The producers considered doing a white paper report, but they finally opted for the more intimate and informative portraits, which give graphic views of four different births that are far more informa-



tive than many training films and tapes made for expectant parents. It is obvious that a personal relationship has been formed with each couple, and this intimacy is communicated in the tape. One mother, left otherwise alone in the labor room, is gently coached in her breathing by Gustafson.

The tape, produced for public TV, begins with a teaser sequence—snippets of the four births—a television-style opener that has become a trademark in their subsequent work. John Reilly was a cofounder of New York's Global Village, a video production and resource center that has come to be identified with independent documentary production for public television. Julie Gustafson, who met Reilly as a student at Global Village, brings a deft eye, keen sensitivity, and a social conscience to her work. (See also *THE IRISH TAPES* and *THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS*.)

## Global Groove

by Nam June Paik

1973. 30 min. color.

Distributors: EAI, MOMA. Formats: 3/4", VHS, Beta.

**Credits:** *Cast:* Pamela Sousa, Kenneth Urmston, Allen Ginsberg, Peggy Anne Lombard, Susan Kay Bottoms, Charlotte Moorman, Alan Schulman, Jud Yalkut, Sun-Ock Lee (Korean), Cecelia Sandoval (Navajo), John Cage *Narration* Russell Connor *Excerpts from:* "Ginsberg/Audrich" by Nam June Paik, Paul Challacombe; "Tribute to Anonymous Beauty," "Helicopter and Skating Films," "Meta-Media," and "Paradise Now" (with The Living Theatre) by Jud Yalkut; "Kontakte" by Karlheinz Stockhausen; "First Fight" by Bob Breer; "Tribute to John Cage" by Nam June Paik, WGBH-Boston; "Paik-Moorman Experiment" by Jackie Cassen, WNET/13; "The Medium Is the Medium" by WGBH Boston; "Nigeria, 1971" by Percival Borde, Binghamton Experimental Television Center. Produced in association with the Television Lab at WNET/13: *Producer* David Loxton *Director* Merrily Mossman *Production Manager* Darlene Mastro *Lighting Director* Carl Vitelli *Stage Manager* Terry Benson *Production Assistant* Diane English *Engineering Personnel* Lou Bruno, Victor Caravella, Bob Carucci, Al De Paul, Walter Edel, William Kockler, Dino Mastrojohn, Knut Olberg, Frank Pollizotto, Jesse Spain. *Thanks* Performing Arts Foundation, John D. Rockefeller III Fund, Paik-Abe Synthesizer, Rutt/Etra Synthesizer, Binghamton Experimental Television Center, Ltd., Robert Diamond.

Nam June Paik is video's preeminent artist. He was born in Korea and trained as a classical musician, going on to study electronic music with Karlheinz Stockhausen in Germany during the Fifties. Profoundly influenced by the theories of avant-garde composer John