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**KENNETH ROSENBERG'S *BEDLAM* TO MAKE ITS BROADCAST
DEBUT ON PBS'S *INDEPENDENT LENS* IN APRIL 2020**

Psychiatrist and Filmmaker Kenneth Rosenberg Examines the Mental Health Crisis Through Intimate Stories of Those In-and-Out of ERs, Jails and Homeless Camps in Los Angeles, While Searching for Answers to His Own Late Sister's Mental Illness

'Bedlam' Will Be featured in Independent Lens's Indie Lens Pop-Up Screening Series, Spanning More Than 50 Cities in the U.S., in Addition to Live Online Panels Available to Stream



Credit: Upper East Films

(San Francisco, CA) — In an effort to get to the bottom of the current mental health crisis in the U.S., psychiatrist and documentarian Dr. Kenneth Paul Rosenberg chronicles personal, poignant stories of those suffering from mental illness, including his own family, to bring to light this epidemic and possible solutions. Shot over the course of five years, ***Bedlam*** takes viewers inside Los Angeles County's overwhelmed and vastly under-resourced psych ER, a nearby jail warehousing thousands of psychiatric patients, and the homes — and homeless encampments — of people affected by severe mental illness, where silence and shame often worsen the suffering.

Heralded by *The Hollywood Reporter* as “a damning indictment and a call to action,” and “lucid, harrowing and urgent,” ***Bedlam*** premieres on *Independent Lens* on Monday, April 13 at 10pm ET ([check local listings](#)) on PBS, PBS.org and the PBS Video App.

Today, one in five adults – over 40 million Americans – live with a mental illness. Most people with a serious mental illness (SMI) like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or severe depression cycle through a revolving door of insufficient care due to lack of funding, personnel and space. For the 20,000 of those suffering with SMI in Los Angeles, the epicenter of this crisis, their only refuge is the emergency room of the Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center. Rosenberg follows the lives of three patients in particular who find themselves with a chronic lack of institutional support while weaving in his own story of how the system failed his late sister, Merle, and her battle with schizophrenia.



Featuring interviews with experts, activists, individuals living with a mental illness, and their families, the film builds on historical footage and commentary related to mental health, exploring

the rise of this issue on a national scale in the mid- and late 20th century. Between the 1950s and 1980s, mental institutions began shutting down due largely to decreased federal funding. As a result, untold numbers of mentally ill people landed on the streets and, inevitably, stumbled on the cracks in American society that have led to the misuse of jails, tens of thousands of people sleeping in parks and on sidewalks, and too many stories of loved ones lost while the clock ticks on solutions from policy makers and Big Pharma.

“I made this film because I felt like there is something to learn from both my family’s story and the firsthand accounts of those who live with mental illness and are victims of this vicious cycle of insufficient treatment,” said Rosenberg. “I wanted to understand my sister and what she went through every day while living with schizophrenia, but most importantly, I wanted to make a film that acts as a call to action for better treatment of the mentally ill. Our public broadcast on *Independent Lens* is a fitting platform to sound this call to communities all over the U.S.”

In addition to the film’s central theme examining the treatment of the mentally ill and the disintegration of care and tools provided to them here in the U.S., Rosenberg highlights the cross section between mental health and mass incarceration by drawing attention to the fact that the largest mental institution in the U.S. is the Los Angeles County Jail. Among those interviewed are Patrisse Cullors, whose brother is featured prominently in the film as he battles his severe mental illness. Cullors goes on to become a founder of Black Lives Matter during the making of the documentary, fusing her deep devotion to caring for her brother’s mental health with her activism against racial injustice.

“Ken offers viewers a harrowing, intimate account of the current mental health crisis unfolding every day in cities around the country,” said *Independent Lens* executive producer Lois Vossen. “***Bedlam*** is an important film, and a story that is beautifully told using Ken’s own personal journey. Care for the mentally ill is an issue that deserves discussion, and our goal with the public broadcast of this documentary is to prompt new conversations around this crucial topic.”

Bedlam received co-production support from ITVS through its Open Call funding initiative, which supports projects through completion for broadcast on public television. Beginning in March, [Indie Lens Pop-Up](#), a neighborhood screening series from *Independent Lens* dedicated to engaging communities in conversations around the issues explored in ITVS documentaries, will feature ***Bedlam*** in over 50 cities across the U.S. The screenings, some of which will be able to stream live online, will be followed by moderated Q&As with Rosenberg, experts and leaders from local community organizations.

Visit the [Bedlam](#) page on *Independent Lens* for more information.



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About the Filmmaker

Dr. Kenneth Paul Rosenberg has been making award-winning documentaries since medical school. While a medical student at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, he also studied film at NYU. He co-produced and co-directed (with Ruth Neuwald Falcon) *An Alzheimer's Story*, a film about living with Alzheimer's disease, filmed over the course of eighteen months. After his residency in Psychiatry at the Payne-Whitney Clinic at New York Presbyterian Hospital, he did a Fellowship in Public Health, during which he directed and produced *Through Madness*, a film on serious mental illness, for PBS. While a practicing psychiatrist, Ken produced and directed films for HBO, including *Why Am I Gay?: Stories of Coming Out In America* (Oscar Documentary Feature Shortlist), *Back From Madness*, and *Drinking Apart*, and executive produced *Cancer: Evolution to Revolution* (Peabody Award-winner). He is also the editor of medical textbooks and author of popular books including *Bedlam: An Intimate Journey Into America's Mental Health Crisis*, which was published by Avery/Penguin Random House.

CREDITS

Director	Dr. Kenneth Paul Rosenberg
Producers	Dr. Kenneth Paul Rosenberg Peter Miller
Executive Producers	Sally Jo Fifer Lois Vossen
Co-Producer	Joan Churchill
Writer	Peter Miller
Editor	Jim Cricchi
Music	Danny Bensi Saunder Jurriaans
Cinematography	Joan Churchill

About Independent Lens

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 PM. The acclaimed series, with Lois Vossen as executive producer, features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens. Join the conversation: [facebook.com/independentlens](https://www.facebook.com/independentlens) and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](https://twitter.com/IndependentLens).

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