

## **BEDLAM TO AIR ON PBS'S INDEPENDENT LENS IN APRIL 2020**

***Psychiatrist and documentarian Dr. Kenneth Rosenberg brings us face-to-face with America's mental health crisis through the intimate stories of doctors, patients, and families, including his own***



NEW YORK; January 7, 2020 -- Psychiatrist and award-winning documentarian Dr. Kenneth Paul Rosenberg (WHY AM I GAY?: STORIES OF COMING OUT IN AMERICA; BACK FROM MADNESS; DRINKING APART) has directed and produced a new feature-length documentary, **BEDLAM**, which will premiere on *Independent Lens* Monday, April 13 at 10pmET ([check local listings](#)) on PBS, PBS.org and the PBS Video App. **BEDLAM** explores the historical, political, and economic forces that have brought about the greatest social crisis

of the twenty-first century, while weaving in Rosenberg's personal journey which was profoundly impacted by a family member with a serious mental illness.

One in five adults – over 40 million Americans – lives with a mental illness, and today most people with a serious mental illness (SMI) like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or severe depression cycle through a revolving door of tragically insufficient care. Through intimate stories of patients, families, and medical providers, including those of Dr. Rosenberg and activist, co-founder of Black Lives Matter and founder and chair of [“Yes on R” campaign](#), Patrisse Cullors – **BEDLAM**, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival to a standing ovation, is a documentary that immerses us in the national crisis surrounding care of people with serious mental illness.

“Our families deserve proper care and compassion. We deserve access to quality mental healthcare in L.A. County,” said Patrisse Cullors. “**BEDLAM** makes this case better than anything I know, and the film's broadcast is beyond urgent.”

Former Congressman, founder of The Kennedy Forum and chair of Mental Health for US Patrick J. Kennedy said, “**BEDLAM** dives deep into our nation's mental health crisis in a way that's never been done before, providing much-needed context, clarity, and hope.”

Filmed over five years, **BEDLAM** brings us inside one of America's busiest psychiatric emergency rooms, into jails where psychiatric patients are warehoused, and into the homes – and homeless encampments – of members of our communities with serious mental illness, where silence and shame often compound personal suffering. The etymology of the film's title – now synonymous with “mayhem” and “chaos” – dates to the 15th century as one of the oldest and most notorious mental institutions in the world.

While Dr. Rosenberg was training to be a psychiatrist in the late 1980s, state mental hospitals, which had reached peak occupancy in the 1950s, were being closed at an alarming rate, with many patients having nowhere to go. Today, the last refuge for many people with serious mental illness is the emergency room of the Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center in Los Angeles. There, Dr. Rosenberg begins to chronicle in **BEDLAM** what it means to be a person living with mental illness in America today, integrating his own moving story of how the system failed his sister, Merle, who had schizophrenia. As he says in the film, “I never intended to share my family's story. But I now realize that we can't fix something that we can't face.”

Most notably, **BEDLAM** connects two crises of our own making over the last few decades: mass incarceration and the nation's woefully inadequate response to the care of people with serious mental illness. The largest mental institution in the United States today is the Los Angeles County jail. Our criminalization of mental illness goes much deeper – allowing sick people to languish in the streets, calling the police to pick them up, isolating them like caged animals, denying them the care their sickness requires, and then medicating them with soporific drugs from the mid-twentieth century.

**BEDLAM** follows Dr. Rosenberg's [book](#) with the same title published by Penguin Random House in October of 2019. The film and book feature over 100 interviews with mental health experts and 100 interviews with patients and families. The book is not only a rallying cry for change, but also a guide for how we move forward with care and compassion, with resources that have never before been compiled, including legal advice, practical solutions for parents and loved ones, help finding community support, and information on therapeutic options.

Viewers are encouraged to join the conversation: [#BedlamFilmPBS](#)

**BEDLAM** is directed, produced and written by Kenneth Paul Rosenberg. MD; produced and written by Peter Miller; edited by Jim Cricchi; cinematography and co-produced by Joan Churchill; location sound and co-produced by Alan Barker; music by Danny Bensi and Saunder Jurriaans; executive producers are Sally Jo Fifer and Lois Vossen; additional camera by Buddy Squires and Bob Richman; additional editing by James Holland. **BEDLAM** is a co-production of Upper East Films, LLC and Independent Television Service (ITVS), with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

**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 and faculty member at Cornell Medical Center, 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* which was published by Avery/Penguin Random House.

**ITVS** is a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization that has, for over 25 years, funded and partnered with a diverse range of documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning films and then airs them for free on PBS via our weekly series, *Independent Lens*, as well as on other PBS series and through our digital platform, OVEE. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. For more information, visit [itvs.org](http://itvs.org).

**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](http://pbs.org/independentlens). Join the conversation: [facebook.com/independentlens](https://facebook.com/independentlens) and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](https://twitter.com/IndependentLens).

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