



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# TV and movie birth scenes misinform real moms

[Date, City]

Breathe! Push! Hurry! Give me drugs! Oh no! I love you! I hate you! Help! Are we bonding yet?

There are more pregnant women watching TV birth scenes than attending childbirth classes. So when labor starts, they may be surprised by the real thing.

A new documentary film, "Laboring Under An Illusion: Mass Media Childbirth vs. The Real Thing," contrasts actual birth footage with the fictionalized commercial version. In over 100 video clips, anthropologist Vicki Elson explores media-generated myths about childbirth.

"I tried to make a documentary that lets people make up their own minds," says Elson. "I also tried to make it funny, because the subject can be so intense. If you watch TV and movie birth scenes, you can get wrapped up in the drama, so I juxtaposed the clips so that the new context lets you look at it from a little distance and see how you've been manipulated."

"I Love Lucy was the first of many madcap dashes to the hospital," says Elson. "But in real life, labor takes an average of 12 hours, and going the hospital before labor is well established has been shown to increase the risk of cesarean section. Recently, Juno, Waitress, and Knocked Up offered both compassion and misinformation about dealing with the physical pain of labor. But it's not just fiction: even so-called 'reality' shows about birth are

enhanced with narration and music and camera angles that can distort the story of the mother's actual experience."

As a childbirth educator for 25 years, Elson observes how culture affects birth experiences. In this film, she contrasts fiction with reality. "To understand what it's really like to have a baby, we have to debunk the silly and scary images served up by the profit-driven media. In reality, birth is hard work, sometimes simple, sometimes complicated, but always miraculous and unforgettable."

"Laboring Under An Illusion" will be screened [date, time, place, cost/donation/benefit]. For more information, visit [your website or phone number] and [www.birth-media.com](http://www.birth-media.com).

[If applicable: After the film is shown, the filmmaker will be on hand for questions and discussion.]

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Suggestions:

Use the headline as the subject line in your email.

Paste the press release into the body of the email.

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## Laboring under an Illusion

### Mass Media Childbirth vs. The Real Thing

A Documentary by Vicki Elson, MA, CCE

