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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***NOVA* PRESENTS “AUGMENTED,” A PERSONAL STORY OF HOW TRAGEDY-INSPIRED SCIENTIFIC INNOVATIONS ARE TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE OF PROSTHETICS**

**One-Night, Two-Hour Special Broadcast Includes the 90-Minute Feature Film “Augmented” Followed by Documentary Short “Predicting My MS”**

**Premieres Wednesday, February 23, 2022, at 9 p.m. ET/8C on PBS**

[**pbs.org/nova**](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/?utm_source=promourl&utm_medium=direct&utm_campaign=nova_2019) **|** [**@novapbs**](https://twitter.com/novapbs)

**BOSTON, MA (January 11, 2022)**—On February 23, 2022, the award-winningPBS science series, **NOVA,** a production of GBH, will premiere the feature film “**Augmented**,**”** the powerful story of a rock climber who lost both his legs and went on to pursue a career as a scientist and engineer to design better prosthetic limbs. “**Augmented”** will also be available for streaming online at [pbs.org/nova](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/picture-a-scientist/) and via the [PBS Video app](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/) timed to its broadcast debut.

**“Augmented”** follows the dramatic personal journey ofHugh Herr, an MIT biophysicist who today creates brain-controlled robotic limbs. At age 17, Herr’s legs were amputated below the knee due to frostbite after he and a friend got lost in a snowstorm during an ice climbing trip and nearly died. Frustrated by the limitations of the prosthetic legs available at the time, Herr set out to reinvent them. While still a teenager, he crafted outsized prosthetic limbs that not only allowed him to continue to pursue his rock-climbing passion but also made him an even more adept climber than before.

Then, after training as an engineer, Herr devoted himself to creating more advanced limbs that use motors and electronics to mimic the body’s muscle and nerve control systems. In the course of his work, he realized that the standard way of amputating limbs—essentially unchanged since the Civil War era—inhibits the potential of prosthetics. The film follows Herr’s moving collaboration with Jim Ewing, a friend who was also injured while climbing, and Dr. Matthew Carty, a surgeon at Brigham and Women’s Faulkner Hospital in Boston, MA. With Herr’s team at the MIT Media Lab, including Shriya Srinivasan and Tyler Clites**,** they test a new way of performing amputations that enables robotic limbs to move and feel like the real thing, thereby augmenting the patient’s ability to control the function of their prosthetics. Herr hopes that someday the bionic innovations he and his colleagues pioneer might do more than merely replace lost limbs but possibly even enhance human potential.

**“Augmented”** is a **NOVA** production by STAT, a Boston-based health and science news site, and was directed by Matthew Orr. “Hugh’s story is powerful in many ways, but most importantly, it humanizes this groundbreaking science he is at the forefront of researching,” said director and producer Orr**.** “The film also shows how this innovative science presents many philosophical questions about how this technology can augment human capabilities to run faster, jump higher and beyond. We hope viewers will think about how this bionic tech may affect our lives and society at large in the future.”

“We are so pleased that **NOVA**, which we consider to be the premier science show on television, is presenting this incredible human and scientific story to a national audience,” said producer and STAT managing editor Gideon Gil. “With this film, our hope is to engage the broader public on how innovative science can improve the lives of amputees and people with disabilities.”

“We’re thrilled to bring **‘Augmented’** to PBS viewers,” said NOVA co-executive producer Julia Cort. “It’s such a powerful and provocative film, not only giving viewers a front-row seat to scientific innovation in action but also exploring how technological advances can be directly inspired by personal experience and need.”

“Seeing Hugh’s compassion and watching Jim Ewing place his trust in Dr. Carty and Hugh’s team is truly remarkable,” said co-executive producer Chris Schmidt. “We are so grateful to have the opportunity to tell this story and showcase this exceptional example of human ingenuity and resilience.”

Immediately following **“Augmented**,**”** **NOVA** will premiere the documentary short **“Predicting My MS**,**”** a new, personal film by Jason DaSilva, director of the Emmy-winning documentary *When I Walk*.In 2005, DaSilva was a 26-year-old documentary filmmaker living in New York when he began having trouble walking. He was diagnosed with a rare subtype of multiple sclerosis, primary progressive multiple sclerosis, a disease in which the immune system attacks the protective coverings of nerve cells in the brain and spine, interfering with the nervous system’s ability to transmit signals. MS has no known cure and inflicts a host of progressively debilitating symptoms. In *When I Walk*, DaSilva decided to document the challenges he faced across seven years— “a journey of healing, self-discovery, and love.”

In **“Predicting My MS**,**”** DaSilva explores the science behind MS and looks back reflectively, speaking to medical experts and family members to consider the unlikely chain of circumstances that may have led to his rare condition. But he refuses to think of his situation as “tragic,” as a diagnosis of MS is often labeled. “This is not my story, and I do not choose to define myself this way,” DaSilva says. Instead, he founded a nonprofit, AXS Lab, which works to advocate for people with disabilities, and created AXS Map, a digital tool that enables users to review and rate the accessibility of venues on the web and mobile phones. And he continues to pursue the art and craft of filmmaking, “doing the things I’ve always loved doing. I don’t live a tragic life. I live my own.”

“It was great to work on **‘Predicting My MS’** since I got a chance to interview different doctors and researchers about all the potential risk factors that could lead to someone contracting MS,” said Director Jason DaSilva. “I also got to share with the world some of my reflections about my diagnosis and the work I do to support people with disabilities. This piece is a culmination of self-reflection and an inquiry into what risk factors could’ve potentially led to my MS diagnosis. I hope that my journey of discovery will help other people come to the understanding I did, that MS is caused by many different factors and is still a mystery, and that they should not lay blame upon themselves.”

This one-night, two-hour special focuses on individuals whose experience with disability propelled them to investigate and innovate, all to improve the quality of life for others who face similar challenges.

**“Augmented**,**”** a 90-minute feature documentary, premieres Wednesday, February 23, 2022, at 9 p.m. ET/8C (check local listings) on PBS, followed by the documentary short **“Predicting My MS**.**”** Both filmswill be available for streaming concurrently with broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [pbs.org/nova](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/picture-a-scientist/) and the [PBS Video app](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. Additionally, **“Predicting My MS”** will be available for streaming on [NOVA’s YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/user/NOVAonline). PBS station members can view many series, documentaries and specials via [PBS Passport](https://www.pbs.org/passport/videos/). For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](https://help.pbs.org/support/solutions/5000121793) website.

**“Augmented”** is a **NOVA** Production by STAT for GBH. Written by Gideon Gil, Heather MacDonald and Matthew Orr. Produced by Gideon Gil, Heather MacDonald, Matthew Orr and Dominic Smith. Directed by Matthew Orr. Executive producers for **NOVA** are Julia Cort and Chris Schmidt.

**“Predicting My MS”** is a NOVA Production by AXS Lab for GBH. The correspondent is Jason DaSilva. Produced and directed by Jason DaSilva. Produced by Naomi Middleton. Co-produced by Leigh DaSilva. Executive producers for **NOVA** are Julia Cort and Chris Schmidt. **NOVA** is a production of GBH.

Series Funding for NOVA is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Brilliant Worldwide, Inc., the David H. Koch Fund for Science, the NOVA Science Trust, and public television viewers.

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**About NOVA**

[**NOVA**](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/?utm_source=promourl&utm_medium=direct&utm_campaign=nova_2019) is the most popular primetime science series on American television, demystifying the scientific and technological concepts that shape and define our lives, our planet and our universe. The PBS series is also one of the most widely distributed science programs around the world, and is a multimedia, multiplatform brand reaching more than 55 million Americans every year on TV and online. **NOVA**’s important and inspiring stories of human ingenuity, exploration and the quest for knowledge are regularly recognized with the industry’s most prestigious awards. As part of its mission to make the scientific enterprise accessible to all, **NOVA** is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all its work, from the production process to the range of stories we tell and the voices we amplify. In addition, science educators across the country rely on **NOVA** for resources used in the classroom as well as in museums, libraries and after-school programs. **NOVA** is a production of GBH Boston; more information can be found at [pbs.org/nova](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/?utm_source=promourl&utm_medium=direct&utm_campaign=nova_2019), or by following **NOVA** on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NOVApbs/), [Twitter,](https://twitter.com/novapbs?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor) or [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/novapbs/?hl=en).

**About PBS**

[PBS](http://www.pbs.org/), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS’ broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry’s most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirms that PBS’ premier children’s media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV–including a 24/7 channel, online at [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org/), via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org/), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](https://twitter.com/pbs), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pbs) or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](http://www.pbs.org/anywhere/home/). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pressroom.pbs.org/) or by following [PBS Communications on Twitter.](https://twitter.com/PBS_PR)

**About GBH**

GBH is the leading multiplatform creator for public media in America. As the largest producer of content for PBS and partner to NPR and PRX, GBH delivers compelling experiences, stories and information to audiences wherever they are. GBH produces digital and broadcast programming that engages, illuminates and inspires, through drama and science, history, arts, culture and journalism. It is the creator of such signature programs as **MASTERPIECE**, **ANTIQUES ROADSHOW**, **FRONTLINE**, **NOVA**, **AMERICAN EXPERIENCE**, *Arthur* and *Molly of Denali,* as well as WORLD Channel and a catalog of streaming series, podcasts and on-demand video. With studios and a newsroom headquartered in Boston, GBH reaches across New England with GBH 89.7, Boston’s Local NPR®; CRB Classical 99.5; and CAI, the Cape and Islands NPR® station. Dedicated to making media accessible to and inclusive of our diverse culture, GBH is a pioneer in delivering media to those who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired. GBH creates curriculum-based digital content for educators nationwide with PBS LearningMedia and has been recognized with hundreds of the nation’s premier broadcast, digital and journalism awards. Find more information at [wgbh.org](https://www.wgbh.org/).

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