

'P.O.V.'s' 'Baby' dramatically conceived

By ERIC MINK

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FORGET the summer repeats, the network discards and the second-rate filler programing. One of the reliable brights spots of any television year is public TV's award-winning "P.O.V." series of personal, independent documentary films.

The new "P.O.V." season starts tonight with "Baby, It's You," written, produced and directed by Anne Makepeace.

At its core, "Baby" is a film about families. Makepeace, a woman in her late 40s, documents what happens when she and her similarly aged husband, writer Peter Behrens, decide to make a serious attempt to have a baby

★★★½

P.O.V.: BABY, IT'S YOU. Tonight, 10 o'clock, Ch. 13.

together. Science must assist in the process, which involves hormone injections, sperm collection, egg harvesting, and tiny video cameras in tubes inside tubes.

It is not an easy path, physically or emotionally, and Makepeace records both aspects with remarkable honesty. But she also tries to put her very personal story in the context of the families in which she and her husband grew up. By doing so, she adds to her film elements of melodrama, humor and real tragedy, which elevate it above the familiar multi-part fertility sagas aired by local newscasts during

ratings periods.

One of Anne's brothers, for example, is a New York investment manager who wants to become a polygamist and live in both New York and Utah. Another brother raises goats and lives in a train-wreck of a house in the Appalachian Mountains.

One of Peter's sisters lives with her female lover in Montreal, where they're rearing the daughter they conceived with help from a sperm bank. His other sister is an accomplished artist who recently broke up with her boyfriend, then discovered she was pregnant with his child, then had an abortion.

All of which makes "Baby, It's You" as surprising as it is touching and rewarding.