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**“The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers,”
Academy Award®-Nominated Personal Account of Vietnam-Era Turning Point,
Premieres Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2010 at 9 p.m. in Special Broadcast on PBS’ POV**

Inside Story of Daniel Ellsberg’s 1971 Release of the Pentagon Papers
Will Surprise Even Those Who Know the History

A Co-production of ITVS

“It pulses with the suspense and momentum of a sleek thriller — a wily caper flick that just happens to revolve around one of the most crucial chapters in recent American history.”

– Ann Hornaday, *The Washington Post*

When in 1971 Daniel Ellsberg leaked a secret Pentagon history of U.S. involvement in Vietnam to the press, the shockwaves it set off may have been due nearly as much to the leaker as to the information leaked. While Americans were painstakingly digesting the documents’ long and byzantine history — which showed the nation’s leaders, both Democratic and Republican, lying about the facts of the war, proclaiming their desire for peace while seeking a wider war, declaring fidelity to democracy while sabotaging elections, and exhibiting a sweeping callousness to the loss of both Vietnamese and American lives — Ellsberg himself dramatically embodied the country’s division over the Vietnam War.

As recounted in **The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers**, nominated for a 2010 Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature, Dr. Daniel Ellsberg was one of the few people who even had full access to the papers, to which he himself had contributed. Far from being an outsider, the Harvard-educated former Marine officer had worked hard, and brilliantly, in the view of his superiors, as a Pentagon analyst justifying expanded U.S. military action in Indochina. After *The New York Times* became the first newspaper to begin publishing “The Pentagon Papers” on June 13, 1971, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger told his staff that Ellsberg was “the most dangerous man in America who must be stopped at all costs.”

Rick Goldsmith and Judith Ehrlich’s **The Most Dangerous Man in America** has its national broadcast premiere on **Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2010** at 9 p.m. in a special presentation on PBS, concluding the 23rd season of **POV (Point of View)**. American television’s longest-running independent documentary series, POV has received a Special Emmy for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking the International Documentary Association Award for Continuing Series.

To tell this gripping tale, the filmmakers have assembled a who’s-who of participants in the events surrounding the papers’ publication: Mort Halperin, who supervised the “Vietnam War Study,” as it was originally called, at the Pentagon; Nobel Laureate Thomas Schelling, a fellow analyst at the RAND Corporation, a military think tank; Egil “Bud” Krogh, the Nixon White House aide who directed the “Plumbers Unit” of Watergate infamy; Anthony Russo, another RAND analyst who encouraged Ellsberg’s leak of the study and later faced charges of conspiracy and espionage; John Dean, Nixon’s White House Counsel, who ultimately broke open the Watergate case; *The New York Times* reporter Hedrick Smith, who wrote some of the first Pentagon Papers stories; the *Times*’ General

Counsel James Goodale, who gave the go-ahead for their publication in the face of more cautious legal views; Leonard Weinglass, Russo's defense attorney; draft resister Randy Kehler, whose willingness to go to jail to stop the war profoundly affected Ellsberg; Rep. Pete McCloskey (R-CA), who recognized the papers' importance but didn't know what to do with them; and Senator Mike Gravel (D-AK), who during a filibuster against the draft finally got the entire 7,000 pages of the Pentagon Papers into the Congressional Record.

Revelatory archival audio and film footage add the voices and images of Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon; Henry Kissinger; Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara; early Congressional war critic Senator Wayne Morse (D-OR); iconic news figures including Walter Cronkite and John Chancellor, and talk-show host Dick Cavett, who all did so much to define the Vietnam War era.

Among the surprises many will find are Nixon's desire to use nuclear weapons in Vietnam. Another surprise is that even as a civilian analyst, Ellsberg armed himself and went with U.S. soldiers into the field to learn the truth. Most astonishing is just how difficult it was for Ellsberg to get anyone to release the papers once he had leaked them — a difficulty that found him and his wife, Patricia, desperately distributing copies to politicians and news people in the final days before Ellsberg's arrest. Their hope was that wide distribution would make the papers impossible to ignore and render irrelevant a court injunction against their publication.

The Most Dangerous Man in America is a comprehensive look at the release of the Pentagon Papers and the political firestorm that may have sealed Americans' disenchantment with the war, and which certainly sealed the fate of the Nixon Administration. But the film is also an intensely intimate look into the conscience of a gifted and intelligent man who wrestled personally and professionally with what he came to see as the contradictions between American ideals and American power in Southeast Asia. The story is illuminated with special insight from Ellsberg's wife of 40 years, Patricia Marx Ellsberg; his son Robert (from a previous marriage), who as a boy helped with the onerous job of photocopying the voluminous papers; historian Howard Zinn, one of a group of radical academics who supported and befriended Ellsberg; and Gandian peace activist Janaki Tschannerl, who helped Ellsberg work through his transformation from, as newscasts of the day put it, "hawk to dove."

There is also a love story underneath all the public turmoil: When Patricia and Ellsberg first dated, she introduced him to the anti-war movement. But her view of the work he was doing for the Pentagon led to a breakup. Years later, after his change of heart, he reunited with Patricia and together they faced the trial that might have sent Ellsberg to prison for life.

And throughout **The Most Dangerous Man in America**, there are Ellsberg's own words, spoken with remarkable clarity and consistency in both old news footage and in contemporary interviews. He reveals the emotional side of what has become a life-long evolution in his work and philosophy, yet he never loses sight of the substantive issues at stake, the lives being saved or not saved, the integrity of the Constitution, the catastrophe of war. What emerges is a man of high ideals and exceptional determination who still has a keen sense of guilt for his former role in promoting war.

Identified as the probable source of the leak of the Pentagon Papers on June 16, 1971, Ellsberg was pursued by the FBI. It was a manhunt of such massive proportions that it was described as the largest since the infamous Lindbergh baby kidnapping. Ellsberg and Patricia hid out in Cambridge, Mass., for two weeks, while successfully distributing copies of the study to *The Washington Post* and other newspapers (resulting in its publication in 17 additional newspapers) and to Senator Mike Gravel, who tearfully read from it and entered it into the Senate record. Daniel Ellsberg turned himself in at the Federal Courthouse in Boston on June 28, 1971.

Initially under the Espionage Act, Ellsberg faced up to 20 years in prison. By the time conspiracy and other counts were added to the indictment, Ellsberg was facing 115 years and Russo 35 years. But

the government case against the two men was so compromised by questionable or illegal government actions that Judge Matthew Byrne threw the indictment out on May 11, 1973 — a victory for free speech and the right of people in a democracy to know what their leaders are doing, and an event that is cited in court cases to this day. Not least of the government's illegal actions was the formation of the White House "Plumber's Unit," whose first and foremost target was not the Watergate Democratic headquarters but the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist. Not trusting the rule of law, Nixon wanted to dig up dirt on Ellsberg to, as he put it, "convict the son-of-a-bitch in the press."

The Most Dangerous Man in America is a dramatic recounting of a watershed turn not only in the struggle over the Vietnam War but in Americans' understanding of issues of war and peace, the vitality of democracy and higher notions of duty and patriotism. Ellsberg would likely point out that it is not a new turn in American thinking. He's fond of quoting Henry David Thoreau, America's first theorist and practitioner of "civil disobedience," who advised his fellow citizens to "cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence."

"Both Judith and I had done films about people of conscience who stood up for their beliefs and dared challenge the status quo," says Goldsmith. "And we both felt the story of Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers might have something important to say to audiences today, especially anyone under 50, who wouldn't personally remember or even know about these events."

"I think we, among some other filmmakers, felt that it was amazing no one had made this story," adds Ehrlich. "It seemed like such a natural political thriller, without having to concoct anything — here was someone who had made this act of conscience that ended up bringing down a president. And we thought — those of us who lived through those times — that we knew this story, but the more we learned about it, the more we thought, 'What a great lesson about standing up for what's right.'"

The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers is a production of Kovno Communications and Insight Productions.

About the Filmmakers:

Rick Goldsmith, Co-producer/Co-director

Veteran filmmaker Rick Goldsmith produced and directed the Academy Award®-nominated documentary feature "Tell the Truth and Run: George Seldes and the American Press" (1996), broadcast nationwide on public television and cablecast on the Sundance Channel. He also co-produced and co-directed "Everyday Heroes" (2001), a documentary feature about AmeriCorps (the domestic Peace Corps). Goldsmith was writer and editor on two recent one-hour documentaries, Judith Schaefer's "So Long Are You Young" (2006) and Abby Ginzberg's "Soul of Justice: Thelton Henderson's American Journey" (2005), which was broadcast nationwide on public television in February 2008. He was born and raised on Long Island, N.Y., and came of age during the war in Vietnam. He studied architecture and dabbled in film at the Rhode Island School of Design. In 1975, he traveled west and has lived in the Bay Area ever since.

Judith Ehrlich, Co-producer/Co-director

Judith Ehrlich co-produced and co-directed the award-winning PBS/ITVS documentary "The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It" (2001), a story of men guided by principle to take the unpopular position of pacifism during World War II. Daniel Ellsberg served as an advisor on that film. Ehrlich has also made dozens of prize-winning educational films and radio documentaries over two decades on subjects including the peace movement, education, citizen participation and low-income housing. Her clients include The American Friends Service committee; the National Park Service; American Red Cross; ACLU; the Packard Foundation; and the California State Library System. She is currently producing and directing a film on the internment and relocation of Italian Americans during World War II for PBS broadcast. Ehrlich was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., and grew up in Napa, Calif. She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with honors in political science, and

holds a master's degree in education with honors from the University of Vermont. She teaches documentary film at Berkeley City College.

About Daniel Ellsberg:

Daniel Ellsberg was born on April 7, 1931 and grew up in Detroit. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Harvard University in 1952 and later earned a Ph.D. in economics with his thesis, "Risk, Ambiguity and Decision," which described a paradox in decision theory now known as the Ellsberg Paradox. He was an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1954-57. From 1959-64, he was a strategic analyst at the RAND Corporation and a consultant to the Defense Department and the White House, specializing in the command and control of nuclear weapons, nuclear war plans and crisis decision-making. Ellsberg joined the Defense Department in 1964 as special assistant to Assistant Secretary of Defense John McNaughton, who reported to President Lyndon Johnson's Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Ellsberg's reports on Viet Cong atrocities helped McNamara justify plans for bombing North Vietnam.

Wanting to see the war first-hand, Ellsberg transferred to the State Department in 1965 and served for two years at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, evaluating pacification on the front lines. He returned to the RAND Corporation in 1967, where he worked on the top-secret McNamara study "U.S. Decision-making in Vietnam, 1945-68," which later came to be known as the Pentagon Papers — a study that more than confirmed Ellsberg's growing objections to the war. In October 1969, with the help of RAND colleague Anthony Russo, Ellsberg began photocopying the 7,000-page study. From the fall of 1969 through the spring of 1971, he offered copies of the study to several members of Congress, with little result.

In April 1970, Ellsberg left RAND in order to avoid implicating his colleagues in his efforts, and took a position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). That summer, Ellsberg married Patricia Marx, a syndicated radio host and anti-war activist whom he had met six years earlier. She supported his decision to risk jail by making the study public. In March 1971, Ellsberg showed the study to reporter Neil Sheehan of *The New York Times*, which began publishing excerpts from the top-secret document, now dubbed "The Pentagon Papers," on June 13, 1971. Identified as the source of the leak, Ellsberg turned himself in at the Federal courthouse in Boston on June 28, 1971. He was charged under the Espionage Act with "unauthorized possession" and "theft" of the Pentagon Papers. Russo was included in the indictment when he refused to testify against Ellsberg.

The Russo-Ellsberg trial began Jan. 3, 1973, and lasted four months. On May 11, 1973, presiding Judge Matthew Byrne dismissed the indictment because of massive governmental misconduct, including the revelations that the White House "plumbers" had burglarized the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist, Dr. Lewis Fielding, and that Nixon aide John Ehrlichman had offered the position of FBI director to Judge Byrne.

Ellsberg wrote about his experiences and analysis of the war in Vietnam in his 1972 book, *Papers on the War*. He re-visited these experiences in his 2002 book, *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers*, which reached best-seller lists across the nation and won the PEN Center USA Award for Creative Nonfiction, the American Book Award and the Bay Area Book Reviewers Association Prize for Nonfiction and was a finalist for *The Los Angeles Times* Book Prize.

Since the end of the Vietnam War, Ellsberg has served as a lecturer, writer and activist on the dangers of the nuclear era, government wrongdoing and the urgent need for patriotic whistle blowing. He has been arrested while protesting more than 70 times over the past four decades. In December 2006, he was awarded the Right Livelihood Award, known as the "Alternative Nobel Prize," in Stockholm. He was acknowledged "for putting peace and truth first, at considerable personal risk, and dedicating his life to a movement to free the world from the risk of nuclear war."

Ellsberg lives near Berkeley, Calif., with his wife, Patricia. He has two sons and a daughter and five grandchildren.

About Patricia Marx Ellsberg:

Patricia Marx Ellsberg is Ellsberg's second wife. The daughter of toy magnate Louis Marx, she was a nationally syndicated reporter for public radio and an opponent of the Vietnam War when she first dated Ellsberg, who was working at the Pentagon, in 1965. They married in August 1970. Patricia is a social-change advocate with decades of experience in the peace and energy movements and often speaks with her husband at anti-war and anti-nuclear events. A practicing Buddhist, she teaches and writes on the subject.

Credits:

Co-directors: Judith Ehrlich, Rick Goldsmith
Co-producers: Judith Ehrlich, Rick Goldsmith
Cinematographers: Vicente Franco, Dan Krauss
Editors: Michael Chandler, Rick Goldsmith, Lawrence Lerew
Writers: Lawrence Lerew, Rick Goldsmith, Judith Ehrlich, Michael Chandler;
Based in part on the book *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* by Daniel Ellsberg
Original Music: Blake Leyh

Running Time: 116:46

POV Series Credits:

Executive Producer: Simon Kilmurry
Executive Vice President: Cynthia López

Awards & Festivals:

- National Board of Review, 2009 – *Freedom of Expression Award; named one of Five Best Documentaries*
- International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam, 2009 – *Special Jury Award*
- Mill Valley Film Festival, 2009 – *Audience Award*
- Sydney Film Festival, 2010 – *Audience Award, Best Documentary*
- Palm Springs International Film Festival, 2010 – *Audience Award, Best Documentary*
- Boulder International Film Festival, 2010 – *Best Feature Documentary Award*
- San Luis Obispo International Film Festival, 2010 – *Best in Fest Award*
- DocAviv, 2010 – *Special Jury Mention*

(For a complete list of festivals, go to www.mostdangerousman.org.)



The Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on PBS. ITVS was created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and provide for underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained at www.itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 23rd season on PBS, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September, with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 300 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at www.pbs.org/pov.

POV Interactive (www.pbs.org/pov)

POV's award-winning Web department produces special features for every POV presentation, extending the life of our films through filmmaker interviews, story updates, podcasts, streaming video and community-based and educational content that involves viewers in activities and feedback. POV Interactive also produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *POV's Borders*. In addition, the *POV Blog* is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss and debate their favorite films, get the latest news and link to further resources. The POV website, blog and film archives form a unique and extensive online resource for documentary storytelling.

POV Community Engagement and Education

POV works with local PBS stations, educators and community organizations to present free screenings and discussion events to inspire and engage communities in vital conversations about our world. As a leading provider of quality nonfiction programming for use in public life, POV offers an extensive menu of resources, including free discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. In addition, POV's *Youth Views* works with youth organizers and students to provide them with resources and training so they may use independent documentaries as a catalyst for social change.

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American Documentary, Inc. (www.amdoc.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.



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