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“If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front” Investigates the Making And Unraveling of a Radical Environmental Group, Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2011, On PBS’ POV Series

Working-class Kid from Queens Becomes an Environmental Arsonist, Faces Life in Prison, In Academy Award®-nominated Director Marshall Curry’s New Film

A Co-production of ITVS

“A sterling example of journalistic documentary, clearer, fairer and more engrossing than any of the sensationalistic newspaper or magazine stories about E.L.F.” — Andrew O’Hehir, Salon.com

MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET

National Dates: **If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front** has its national broadcast premiere on **Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2011**, at 10 p.m. on the [POV \(Point of View\)](http://www.pbs.org/pov) documentary series on PBS. (Check local listings.) The film will also stream in its entirety **Sept. 14 – Oct. 14** on the POV website, www.pbs.org/pov/ifatreefalls. Now in its 24th year, POV is American television’s longest-running independent documentary series and is the winner of a Special Emmy for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking, the IDA Award for Best Continuing Series and NALIP’s 2011 Award for Corporate Commitment to Diversity.

The Film: **If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front** explores two of America’s most pressing issues — environmentalism and terrorism — by lifting the veil on a radical environmental group the FBI calls America’s “No. 1 domestic terrorism threat.” Daniel McGowan, a former member of the Earth Liberation Front, faces life in prison for two multimillion-dollar arsons against Oregon timber companies. What turned this working-class kid from Queens into an eco-warrior? Marshall Curry (Oscar®-nominated [Street Fight](http://www.pbs.org/pov/streetfight), POV 2005) provides a nuanced and provocative account that is part coming-of-age story, part cautionary tale and part cops-and-robbers thriller.

A Sundance award-winner, the film is a co-production of Marshall Curry Productions and Lucky Hat Entertainment.

Embed a trailer, download press materials and learn more at www.pbs.org/pressroom.

POV Website: POV’s **If a Tree Falls** companion website, www.pbs.org/pov/ifatreefalls, offers a streaming video trailer of the film, a list of related websites, organizations and books, a lesson plan, discussion guide and these special features:

- A live chat with Curry on Wednesday, Sept. 14 at 2 p.m. ET, to be archived.
- Photo gallery of film stills;
- An extended video interview with Marshall Curry;
- Additional video;

- A look at eco-terrorism cases and a comparison of their outcomes before and after 9/11;
- Court documents from the trial;
- Test your knowledge of War on Terror terminology.

Outreach: POV works with public television stations and national and community groups across the country to foster dialogue around the issues presented in our films. For a list of upcoming screening events go to <http://www.pbs.org/pov/outreach>. POV and nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow are developing a discussion guide with background information to help event organizers. Cari Ladd, M.Ed., is creating a lesson plan. Educators may record and show **If a Tree Falls** in their classrooms for one year following the premiere broadcast.

Filmmaker's Statement:

"I'm always intrigued when reality cuts against my expectations or stereotypes," says Marshall Curry. "How did this guy — who could be anyone's little brother, or employee, or next-door neighbor — wind up facing life in prison for 'eco-terrorism'? The goal of the film is to help people understand the emotions and experiences that led people to do what they did. To me, films are about stretching us to see the world from a different perspective.

"The film has a point of view, but it is a complex point of view that acknowledges the ethical and legal and emotional complexity of the situation," Curry continues. "Everyone who knows a lot about this topic — from the E.L.F. members to the people who were chasing them — acknowledges that the deeper you go, the murkier the water gets."

Bio:

Marshall Curry (Director, Producer)

Marshall Curry's Emmy and Oscar®-nominated **Street Fight**, which he directed, produced, shot and edited, aired on POV in 2005. The film chronicles Cory Booker's first run for mayor of Newark, N.J. against incumbent Sharpe James and won numerous awards, including Audience Awards at the Tribeca Film Festival, AFI/Discovery SilverDocs and Hot Docs. It also received the Jury Prize for Best International Documentary at Hot Docs and was nominated for a Writers Guild of America Award. In 2005, Filmmaker Magazine selected Curry as one of "25 New Faces of Independent Film," and he was awarded the International Documentary Association's Jacqueline Donnet Emerging Documentary Filmmaker Award. In 2007, he received an International Trailblazer Award at MIPDOC in Cannes. His most recent film, **Racing Dreams**, about kids competing in NASCAR's "little league," won numerous awards, including Best Documentary Feature at the Tribeca Film Festival, and will air on POV in winter/spring 2012.

Curry has been a guest lecturer at Harvard, Duke, New York University and other colleges, and he has served on juries for the International Documentary Association, Tribeca Film Festival and Hot Docs. Prior to working as a filmmaker, he taught English in Guanajuato, Mexico, worked in public radio and taught government in Washington, D.C. He is a graduate of Swarthmore College and was a Jane Addams Fellow at The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, where he wrote about the history, philosophy and economics of nonprofits. Curry lives with his wife and children in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Related Stories: "Activist or Terrorist, Rendered in Red, White and Green," by John Anderson, *The New York Times*, June 8, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/12/movies/if-a-tree-falls-documentary-by-marshall-curry.html>

“The ‘Cautionary Tale’ of Eco-Radicals,” by Robert Levin, *The Atlantic*, June 23, 2011. <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2011/06/the-cautionary-tale-of-eco-radicals/240925/>

“Gibson Guitar Wails on Federal Raid over Wood,” by James R. Hagerty and Chris Maher, *The Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 1, 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903895904576542942027859286.html>

“Two Sides to Every Story: If a Tree Falls,” by Kristin McCracken, *Tribeca Film*, June 21, 2011. http://www.tribecafilm.com/news-features/Marshall_Curry_If_a_Tree_Falls.html?HuffPo

“Ecoterror resurfaces with Seattle arsons,” by Brad Knickerbocker, *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 4, 2008. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2008/0304/p01s16-usgn.html>

“Eco-Terror Indictments: ‘Operation Backfire’ Nets 11,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, January 20, 2006. <http://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2006/january/elf012006>

Credits: Director: Marshall Curry
Co-director: Sam Cullman
Producers: Marshall Curry, Sam Cullman
Cinematographer: Sam Cullman
Editors/Writers: Matthew Hamachek, Marshall Curry
Music: James Baxter

Running Time: 86:46

POV Series Credits:

Executive Producer: Simon Kilmurry
Co-Executive Producer: Cynthia López
Vice President, Production and Programming: Chris White
Series Producer: Yance Ford

Festivals: World Premiere, 2011 Sundance Film Festival — U.S. Documentary Editing Award

Pressroom: Visit POV’s pressroom, www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom, for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

POV: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 24th 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.

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