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## Two Bloggers Defy Chinese Censorship in POV's 'Hi Tech, Low Life,' Monday, July 22, 2013 on PBS

Armed with Laptops, Cell phones and Digital Cameras,  
A New Breed of Citizen-reporters Tells the News the Government Won't

*A co-production of ITVS and the Center for Asian American Media*

"It's impossible not to feel connected with these guys and this movie."—Beth Carter, *WIRED*

### **MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET**

National Dates: Stephen Maing's **Hi Tech, Low Life** has its national broadcast premiere on **Monday, July 22, 2013**, at 10 p.m. (check local listings) on the award-winning PBS series **POV (Point of View)**. The film will stream on POV's website, [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov), from July 23 – Aug. 21, 2013. American television's longest-running independent documentary series POV was honored with a 2013 MacArthur Foundation Award for Creative & Effective Institutions.

**High Tech, Low Life** will also be released Tuesday, June 18 on iTunes in North America, with a roll-out on other digital platforms to follow, through the Sundance Institute [Artist Services](#) program and its exclusive aggregation partner, Cinedigm.

The Film: **High Tech, Low Life** follows two of China's first citizen-reporters as they document the underside of the country's rapid economic development. A search for truth and fame inspires young vegetable seller "Zola" to report on censored news stories from the cities, while retired businessman "Tiger Temple" makes sense of the past by chronicling the struggles of rural villagers. Land grabs, pollution, rising poverty, local corruption and the growing willingness of ordinary people to speak out are grist for these bloggers who navigate China's evolving censorship regulations and challenge the boundaries of free speech.

In the face of such grassroots journalism, the government has deployed the "Great Firewall," its Internet censorship system. But Tiger Temple and Zola's success in getting the news out, armed with nothing more sophisticated than laptops, cellphones, digital cameras and bicycles, seems to mock the system.

Embed a trailer, download press materials and learn more at [www.pbs.org/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pressroom).

The Filmmaker: New York-based filmmaker Stephen Maing co-produced and edited the award-winning documentary *Lioness*, which premiered on PBS' *Independent Lens*, and directed the narrative film *Little Hearts*. He works as a director, cinematographer and editor and teaches summer classes in documentary cinematography at the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. Maing, whose parents immigrated to the United States from South Korea, was born in New York and grew up in New Jersey. He graduated Boston University with a dual degree

in film and art history/architectural studies. He is a fellow of the Sundance Documentary Institute and a recipient of grants from the MacArthur Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts and ITVS.

Filmmaker's

Statement:

"In the early years after the Great Firewall was installed, I was intrigued by the stories of young Chinese 'netizens' who were circumventing the online barriers, what they called 'leaping the GFW'," says director Stephen Maing. "I wanted to make a film about youth, activism and technology, but after getting to know Zola and Tiger Temple over the course of four years of filming, I realized their stories revealed a deeper narrative about a new China still trying to reconcile with its painful Maoist past.

"Since completing the film in April of 2012, the number of Internet users has skyrocketed to over 513 million, over 300 million of them using some form of social media. Advancements in online censorship include increased numbers of Internet police and engineers as well as web monitors employed by privately owned Internet companies."

Online:

POV's website for **High Tech, Low Life** – <http://www.pbs.org/pov/hightechlowlife/> – offers a broad range of exclusive online content to enhance the PBS broadcast. Watch the full film online for free for a limited time following the broadcast (July 23 – Aug. 21, 2013), view a video interview with the director, download a discussion guide and other viewing resources, navigate the Great Firewall of China and find out what's happened to the bloggers since the cameras stopped rolling.

Outreach:

POV works with educators, 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 events, go to [www.pbs.org/pov/outreach](http://www.pbs.org/pov/outreach). POV and nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow develop discussion guides with background information to help event organizers facilitate conversations. The **High Tech, Low Life** discussion guide includes background information on the Great Firewall and citizen journalism, prompts for dialogue and a list of further educational resources. Rogow has also developed a lesson plan. Event organizers may email [events@pov.org](mailto:events@pov.org) to request a free loaned DVD to screen at their event.

Related Stories: "Chinese Web activists see new pressure from censors," by John Sudworth, BBC, May 17, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-22566821>

"After the Quake, China Turns to the Web," Jiayang Fan, Elements blog, *The New Yorker*, April 21, 2013. <http://nyr.kr/15BcylK>

"The Economist explains: How does China censor the internet?" *The Economist*, April 21, 2013. <http://tinyurl.com/pkf7l8x>

"How the Great Firewall of China Works" by C. Custer, Tech in Asia, Feb. 28, 2013. <http://www.techinasia.com/great-firewall-china-works-infographic/>

"Censorship's Many Faces," by Yu Hua, *The New York Times*, Feb. 27, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/28/opinion/yu-censorships-many-faces.html>

"Chinese Blogger Thrives as Muckraker," by Andrew Jacobs, *The New York Times*, Feb. 5, 2013. <http://nyti.ms/11F0oBJ>

"Chinese Censors Lift the Veil on Bloggers," by Adam Minter, Bloomberg View, Jan. 4, 2013. <http://bloom.bg/15ALMkk>

Credits: Director/Cinematographer: Stephen Maing  
Co-Producers: Stephen Maing, Trina Rodriguez  
Editors: Stephen Maing, Jonathan Oppenheim  
Original Music: Brendon Anderegg, Brad Hyland, Kevin Micka  
Running Time: 56:46

**POV Series Credits:**

Executive Producer: Simon Kilmurry  
Co-Executive Producer: Cynthia López  
VP, Programming and Production: Chris White  
Coordinating Producer: Andrew Catauro

Festivals: Best Documentary, Little Rock Film Festival, 2012  
Best Documentary Special Jury Award, Independent Film Festival Boston, 2012  
Best Cinematography, Woods Hole Film Festival, 2012  
Emerging International Filmmaker Award, Open City Docs Festival, London, 2012  
Independent Spirit Award, EBS International Documentary Festival, South Korea, 2012  
Official Selection, Tribeca Film Festival, 2012  
Special Selection, Hot Docs, 2012

Visit <http://hightechlowlifeilm.com/> for a complete list of events and screenings.

Pressroom: Visit POV's pressroom, [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom), for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

POV: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and beginning its 26th season on PBS in 2013, the award-winning POV is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. POV has brought more than 365 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide. POV films have won every major film and broadcasting award, including 32 Emmys, 15 George Foster Peabody Awards, 10 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards® and the Prix Italia. 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. Visit [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

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