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TWO ITVS-FUNDED FILMS RECEIVE OSCAR® NOMINATION FOR BEST DOC FEATURE

Public Television Claims Two of Five Nominations in the Doc Feature category with 'Hell and Back Again' and 'If A Tree Falls'

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — (January 24, 2012) — Independent Television Service (ITVS), the nation's largest public funder of independent film, announced today that two of its acclaimed productions, *Hell and Back Again* (Danfung Dennis, Producer/Director; Mike Lerner, Producer; and Martin Herring, Producer) and *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* (Marshall Curry, Producer/Director; Sam Cullman, Co-Director) have received 2012 Academy Award® nominations for Best Documentary Feature.

Both films will make their way to a national television audience on PBS later this year. *Hell and Back Again* will premiere on the Emmy Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens* on May 24, 2012. *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* premiered on the Emmy Award-winning PBS series *POV* on September 13, 2011, and will be rebroadcast on PBS in 2012.

"We are simply thrilled to see two extraordinary films receive this honor, and we are proud to bring both to a national audience on PBS," said Sally Jo Fifer, President and CEO of ITVS. "We are also grateful for the far-sighted commitment of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, whose support makes ITVS's investment in these projects possible."

ITVS funds and presents more than 60 documentaries each year, with most films broadcasting on leading PBS series including *Independent Lens*, *POV*, *FRONTLINE*, *American Masters*, and others. *Hell and Back Again* is the second consecutive Oscar® nomination for *Independent Lens*, which last season brought us the acclaimed film *Waste Land* — a best documentary nominee in 2011. This is the fourth nomination for an ITVS-funded film premiering on *POV*; previous nominees include *My Country, My Country* by Laura Poitras; *The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers* by Rick Goldsmith and Judith Ehrlich; and 2006's *Street Fight*, also by this year's nominee Marshall Curry.

"These nominations show once again that public media is where the real action is—the critical issues of our democracy," added Fifer. "These honors prove that many of the best stories and programs come from independent producers who are supported by diverse communities and a sense citizenship, not by commercially-driven media seeking to satisfy commercial advertisers—that's the real difference."

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Hell and Back Again

The film follows the U.S. Marines Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, as they launch a major assault on a Taliban stronghold in Southern Afghanistan. Within hours of being dropped deep behind enemy lines, Sergeant Nathan Harris's unit is attacked from all sides. Cut off and surrounded, the Marines fight a ghostlike enemy and experience immense hostility from displaced villagers. Frustration grows on both sides, as any common ground, or success, seems elusive.

The parallel story begins with Sergeant Harris's return home to his wife in the U.S., after he is severely wounded. He's in terrible physical pain, and becomes addicted to his pain medication. But his psychological pain may be worse, as he attempts to reconcile the immense gulf between his experiences at war, and the terrifying normalcy of life at home. These two stories intertwine to communicate both the extraordinary drama of war and the no less shocking experience of returning home, as a whole generation of Marines struggles to find an identity in a country that prefers to be indifferent.

<http://www.itvs.org/films/hell-and-back-again>

If a Tree Falls: A Story of Earth Liberation Front

Daniel McGowan was a member of the Earth Liberation Front, the radical environmental group that the FBI calls the "number one domestic terrorism threat" in America. In 2007, McGowan went to prison for his role in two multimillion-dollar arson attacks on Oregon timber facilities. ***If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*** looks behind the curtain at the ELF and explores two pressing issues in America today — environmentalism and terrorism.

<http://www.itvs.org/films/if-a-tree-falls>

About ITVS

Mandated by Congress in 1988 to bring documentary films featuring underrepresented voices to public broadcasting, Independent Television Service (ITVS) is a global media organization that funds, presents, and promotes award-winning documentaries on public, cable, and foreign television, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy Award-winning series *Independent Lens*. ITVS is supported by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about unique individuals, communities, and moments in history. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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About *POV*

Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and beginning its 23rd season on PBS in 2010, 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 throughout the year, *POV* has brought more than 275 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.

About PBS

PBS, with its nearly 360 member stations, offers all Americans — from every walk of life — the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and online content. Each month, PBS reaches more than 118 million people through television and nearly 21 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 other performances. PBS' broad array of programs has been consistently honored in 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. PBS' premier children's TV programming and its website, pbskids.org, are parents' and teachers' most trusted partners in inspiring and nurturing curiosity and love of learning in children. More information is available at www.pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org websites on the Internet.

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