

POINT AND SHOOT

A Documentary Film by Two-Time Academy Award® Nominated
Filmmaker, Marshall Curry



Directed by Marshall Curry

Runtime: 83 minutes

info@MarshallCurry.com

www.PointAndShootFilm.com

[Facebook.com/PointAndShootFilm](https://www.facebook.com/PointAndShootFilm)

[Twitter.com/PointShootFilm](https://twitter.com/PointShootFilm)

Tribeca Film Festival – Best Documentary Feature
Gotham Award – Best Documentary Nominee
IDA Award – Best Feature Nominee

Theatrical Opening Dates:

Landmark Sunshine Cinema, New York – October 31, 2014

Landmark NuArt, Los Angeles – November 14, 2014

80+ Cities Nationwide – Nov-Dec., 2014

US Distribution:

The Orchard

Matt Landers

mlanders@theorchard.com

646-747-6735

International Distribution:

ro*co films international

Cristine Platt Dewey

cristine@rocofilms.com

415-332-6471

Synopsis

In 2006, Matt VanDyke, a timid 26-year-old with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, left home in Baltimore and set off on a self-described “crash course in manhood.” He bought a motorcycle and a video camera and began a multi-year, 35,000-mile motorcycle trip through Northern Africa and the Middle East.

While traveling, he struck up an unlikely friendship with a Libyan hippie, and when revolution broke out in Libya, Matt joined his friend in the fight against dictator Muammar Gaddafi. With a gun in one hand and a camera in the other, Matt fought in -- and filmed -- the war until he was captured by Gaddafi forces and held in solitary confinement for six months. Two-time Academy Award nominated documentary filmmaker Marshall Curry tells this harrowing and sometimes humorous story of a young man’s search for political revolution and personal transformation.

Director’s Note

Three years ago, I got an email out of the blue from a young guy named Matt VanDyke. He introduced himself, said he had seen my films, and told me he had recently returned from Libya where he had been helping rebels overthrow dictator Muammar Gaddafi. He said he had over 100 hours of footage from the experience and thought it would make a great documentary.

I was intrigued, but explained that I only worked on projects where I had complete creative independence and control, and he said he understood. A few weeks later he came to New York and spent an afternoon telling his story to my producing partner, Elizabeth Martin (who is also my wife), and me.

Matt was a fascinating person, provocative and hard to pin down. His story was rich with questions about how we become adults, about adventure and idealism, and about the nature of war in the “age of the selfie.” After he left, my wife and I argued for hours about his story and the issues it had raised.

Generating those kinds of discussions is the reason I make documentaries. So we thought, “Let’s make a film that replicates the experience we just had, where the audience sits down with a stranger and hears an amazing, controversial story—and then walks out of the theater to grapple with it.”

When I was younger I used to love hitchhiking because it brought me in touch with people whom I would otherwise never meet—people whose lives and world-views were completely different from mine. I loved asking questions and digging for the stories that made them who they were. And I always found myself stretched by the experience—a tiny bit wiser about the complexity of human experience.

We knew that different people would interpret their 85-minute “car ride” with Matt VanDyke differently. Was he Lawrence of Arabia? Don Quixote? Christopher McCandless from *Into the Wild*? Ernest Hemingway in the Spanish Civil War? Or some combination who had changed and morphed over the course of his life?

The film’s story would raise questions, but it wouldn’t answer those questions for the audience. It wasn’t going to be a *60 Minutes*-style investigative report where I tried to win arguments with my interview subject. And it wasn’t going to be a Hollywood movie, sewn up neatly at the end. In the spirit of *The Kid Stays in the Picture* or *The Fog of War*, I would let the subject of the film offer his take on his story, and invite the audience to wrestle with it on their own. This was going to be a film for people who liked to chew their own food.

So I took a cameraman to Baltimore and over the course of a few months, recorded 20-something hours of interviews with Matt.

As a filmmaker, one of the things that struck me about Matt’s story was the role that cameras played, not simply in documenting his life, but in shaping it.

Salman Rushdie has said that telling stories about our lives gives us control over them—how people see us and how we see ourselves. Today, more and more, we tell these stories with cell phone cameras, posting “selfies” on Facebook and Twitter. And often the images that we create affect who we actually become.

When Matt begins his journey—his “crash course in manhood”—he tries to project a braver, more confident version of himself for the camera, even taking on a tougher sounding name, “Max Hunter.” But what begins as simply “image making” turns into reality, and Matt explains that he actually started to become the character he was playing on film. The filming somehow made it real.

We see American soldiers in Iraq doing the same thing, performing for his camera during a raid, self-consciously trying to come-off as their idealized image of soldiers. And Libyan soldiers as well. Even as they engage in dangerous high-minded acts of self-sacrifice, they want to have footage of themselves looking like the Hollywood action heroes they grew up watching. And at the end of the war, some rebels even pause as they kill a captured Gaddafi to shoot gruesome “selfies” of themselves at the scene.

As I edited the hundreds of hours of footage, I began to notice the power of homemade images in almost every scene, from the Australian adventure footage that inspired Matt’s initial journey, to the Arab Spring activists whose cell phones didn’t just document their revolutions, but drove them. Matt even uses his camera to help control his Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: putting a frame around an experience somehow turns it into something he can control. And toward the end, Matt explains that even though he had been a part of the Libyan rebellion for months, it was seeing himself on national television that truly validated his role as a rebel fighter. Television made it real.

To me, this movie is a provocative adventure story that flashes light on questions that interest me. How should we achieve “manhood,” and how we should even define the term? Where should we place ourselves on the spectrum between a fearful life trapped in a cubicle and ill-considered recklessness?

What is the difference between bravery and thoughtlessness? And what is the complex mixture of selflessness and narcissism that drives us? What is the power of friendship, and what are the dangers of wading into foreign wars?

How does creating and maintaining our online personas affect who we really are? And how is modern war changed by a world in which anyone can be a filmmaker, and anyone can be a movie star?

After our premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival, I walked across the street to have dinner. In the restaurant I could hear two separate tables where people were yelling at each other, arguing about the issues that the film raises—and it was music to a documentary-filmmaker’s ears.

- Marshall Curry (Director/Producer/Editor)

Background / Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How did Marshall Curry and Matt VanDyke meet?

(director, Marshall Curry): I hadn't heard about Matt's story, but one day I got an email from him, introducing himself and saying he had seen my films (*Street Fight*, *Racing Dreams*, *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*). He told me he had returned from Libya where he'd been fighting with the rebels and thought his story would make a good documentary. He and Lauren came to New York and met with my wife (who is a producer on the film) and me, and told us about his adventures and experiences. My wife and I thought it was an amazing tale with provocative questions about war, adventure, idealism, "manhood", and the way we use cameras to craft our images.

I asked him to send me some of his footage, and when I watched it I was amazed by his access to a war and world that most outsiders had never seen. So a few months later I did the first interview which makes up the spine of the film.

Q: How much did you shoot? How long did it take to edit?

MC: Over two long days, I shot twenty-something hours of interviews with Matt. Later we also did a few hours of pick-up interviews that were audio only. Matt had shot over a hundred hours of footage during his travels through Northern Africa and the Middle East. It took me and my team around a year to shape that footage and the interviews into a movie.

Q: Why did you film the interviews in his apartment and in a messy kitchen rather than in a more traditional interview setting?

MC: I knew from the beginning that I didn't want to do a typical bio-pic where I travelled around doing fancy interviews with Matt's old contacts and so on. Instead I wanted the film to feel informal and intimate, like when you meet someone in a bar or on a long bus ride, and they just spill out their tale. I wanted to strip away anything that felt like slick, glossy production and give the audience the feeling that they had just stumbled on this guy at his desk or just stumbled on his girlfriend in the kitchen.

(In reality the scene is a bit more controlled than it appears. It seems like Matt is just sitting in front of a sunlit window, but since the sun would have changed so much over our long interviews, the windows are actually blacked out and lit with artificial lights in the rafters.)

I also decided from the beginning that I wanted to structure the whole film around a single voice in a single interview. I loved the way that *The Kid Stays in the Picture* and *The Fog of War* had done that, and thought it would invite the audience to listen and then interpret for themselves, rather than have the film interpret for them.

Q: Why did you end the film the way you did -- with an unanswered question?

MC: The first time I met Matt I thought he was a fascinating character who raised all sorts of questions about war and manhood and cameras. Most of those questions, of course, are unanswerable, and I didn't want to pretend that there were tidy solutions. I hoped that ending the film with a question like that would communicate to the audience that it didn't matter how Matt felt or how the director felt. What mattered was how *they* felt.

I wanted the audience to know that the film left these questions unresolved on purpose and that they were now invited to leave the theater -- or turn off the TV -- and hash them out with each other. After the film's premiere at Tribeca, I went across the street to have dinner and overheard two separate tables where people were shouting at each other about questions the film had raised, which was music to a documentarian's ears.

Q: Did Matt get his camera back with footage after he was captured?

MC: No -- Matt's captors took his camera, and he never got it back. Fortunately, however, just a few days before he was captured, he had backed up his footage on a hard drive and stashed it in Benghazi. That's how we have all of the footage leading up to his capture. When he was released, he bought a new camera, so that's how we have all of the footage afterward.

There is no footage of Matt in prison, though, so I decided to use animation to illustrate that period. After the war, Matt had found his old prison cell and shot photos and footage of it, so we knew exactly what it looked like. The film's animator, Joe Posner (who had worked previously with me on *If a Tree Falls*), used that footage to build a 3D animation of the cell. Matt said it was creepy the first time he saw the film, because the

animation was so accurate and well-done, even down to the graffiti on the walls. All of the elements inside of the 3D animated environment -- the hands and feet and Matt's hallucinations -- were done with painstaking hand-painted cell animation. The sound design for this section was done at Skywalker Sound.

Q: *Matt VanDyke is listed as a producer on the film. What exactly does that mean?*

MC: I thought it made sense to recognize the producing work that had gone into shooting the footage during his travels, since that made up so much of the final film. However, I had complete creative control and independence in directing and editing the film, and I raised all of the money to make the film from independent sources (PBS/POV/ITVS, BBC, Cinereach, Tribeca Film Institute, Influence Film Foundation, NY State Council on the Arts, etc.)

Q: *What has Matt been doing since returning home from Libya?*

MC: After coming home, Matt re-connected with his family. He then decided to go to Syria to film the war there and made a short film called *Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution*, which has received awards from film festivals around the world. In 2015 he started an organization called the Sons of Liberty International to train Christians in Iraq who are fighting ISIS.

Q: *Are Matt and Lauren still together?*

MC: No, they split up in 2014.

About the Filmmaking Team

Marshall Curry, Director, Producer, Editor

Marshall Curry is a two-time Academy Award nominated documentary director. He got his start directing, shooting, and editing *STREET FIGHT*, which follows Cory Booker's first run for mayor of Newark, NJ. It aired on PBS, the BBC, HBO Latin America, and was nominated for an Academy Award and an Emmy. After *STREET FIGHT*, Curry was the director and producer, as well as one of the cinematographers and editors, of *RACING DREAMS*, which follows two boys and a girl who dream of racing in NASCAR. The film won numerous awards, including Best Documentary at the Tribeca Film Festival and is being developed into a fiction film by Dreamworks. Curry's third documentary (director, editor, writer), *IF A TREE FALLS: A STORY OF THE EARTH LIBERATION FRONT*, follows an environmentalist who faced life in prison for burning two timber facilities. It won the Sundance Film Festival award for Best Documentary Editing and was nominated for an Academy Award. Most recently, Curry was Executive Producer (and additional editor) of *MISTAKEN FOR STRANGERS*, a heartbreaking

comedy rock-doc about sibling rivalry in the band, The National. It was the opening night film at the Tribeca Film Festival, where it received rave reviews.

Elizabeth Martin, Producer

Though Elizabeth Martin has worked with Marshall Curry on all his previous documentaries, this is the first film that she has produced. Previously, Elizabeth founded and served as Executive Director of WomensLaw.org, a nonprofit organization providing legal information and support for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault throughout the United States. In this capacity, Elizabeth and WomensLaw.org received a Webby Award, the Sunshine Lady Foundation Peace Award, and a Celebrating Solutions Award. She has been profiled in several articles and books on social change and philanthropy, including most recently, Giving 2.0, by Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen.

Matt VanDyke, Cinematographer, Producer

Matthew VanDyke has spent years in North Africa and the Middle East, traveling (often by motorcycle) and filming various projects. He joined the rebel army during the Libyan Revolution, documenting his experiences in the war while fighting in it. During the war he was captured and held as a prisoner of war for nearly six months in two of Libya's most notorious prisons, before escaping from prison and returning to combat on the front lines. After the war in Libya, VanDyke went to Syria where he shot and directed the award-winning short film, NOT ANYMORE: A STORY OF REVOLUTION, which won over 80 awards and was screened in more than 250 film festivals around the world. In addition to being a documentary filmmaker, VanDyke appears regularly in the media and as a speaker at various events.

Matt Hamachek, Additional Editor

Matthew Hamachek began his career working on the Oscar-nominated documentary STREET FIGHT with Marshall Curry and went on to collaborate with Curry again on several films including, RACING DREAMS (Tribeca Film Festival Best Documentary), and IF A TREE FALLS: A STORY OF THE EARTH LIBERATION FRONT, which won the Documentary Editing award at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary. Hamachek also won the editing award at the 2013 Sundance film festival for GIDEON'S ARMY. Since then he has edited MISTAKEN FOR STRANGERS about the band The National, and CONSOLE WARS (Executive Producers Scott Rudin and Seth Rogen) about the battle between Sega and Nintendo in 90s. He is currently editing Matthew Heineman's (ESCAPE FIRE) film CARTEL LAND.

James Baxter, Composer

James Baxter is an electronic musician and composer known primarily for his work with Marshall Curry on his Oscar-nominated documentaries, STREET FIGHT and IF A TREE FALLS: A STORY OF THE EARTH LIBERATION FRONT. He also scored the short ANTI-MUSE and produces music as "alrightSpider". James studied music at Yale and audio engineering at Full Sail.

Joe Posner, Animation

Joe Posner works at the intersection of documentary film and motion design. He has contributed design and animation to several documentary films including Eugene Jarecki's chapter of FREAKONOMICS (2010) about Roe v. Wade, and Marshall Curry's previous film IF A TREE FALLS: A STORY OF THE EARTH LIBERATION FRONT (Oscar Nominee, 2011). He also created a series of animated political video essays called OP-VIDEO for Newsweek & The Daily Beast and directed shorts for Marketplace and Brown University. He recently became Video Director for Ezra Klein's new explanatory journalism site Vox.com.

Film Credits

Directed, Produced and Edited by	Marshall Curry
Produced by	Elizabeth Martin
Cinematography and Produced by	Matthew VanDyke
Executive Producer	Vijay Vaidyanathan
Associate Producer	Daniel Koehler
Additional Editing by	Matthew Hamachek
Cinematography by	Alan Jacobsen
Animation by	Joe Posner
Original Music by	James Baxter
Additional music by	The National
Digital Intermediate Colorist	Will Cox
Digital Intermediate Online Editor	Owen Rucker
Digital Intermediate Producer	Caitlin Tartaro
Post Production Services	Final Frame
Post-Production Sound Services	Skywalker Sound
Supervising Sound Editor, Re-Recording Mixer	Christopher Barnett
Sound Designer	Al Nelson
Sound Effects Editor	Dug Winningham
Digital Editorial Support	Danny Caccavo, Scott Levine
Vice President and General Manager	Josh Lowden
Director of Production	Jon Null
Director of Engineering	Steve Morris
Bidding and Scheduling	Charlotte Moore
Assistant Editor and Story Consultant	Daniel Koehler
Post-Production Coordinator	Justin Levy
Post-Production Assistant	Mark Rattelle
Assistant Animators	Jessica Hutchison Lyla Ribot Heather Faye Kahn

3D Modeler	Robert Cavallo
Additional Camera	Daniel Britt Nuri Funas Iselin Gambert Ross Kauffman Daniel Koehler
Written by	Marshall Curry
Titles, Poster & Website Design Photo Retouching & Website	Jean Kim Yun Rhee
Archival Consultant	Hilary McHone
Interns	Joshua Bogatin Julia Edelman Aaron Eidman Anna Savittieri
Legal	Karen Shatzkin Shatzkin & Mayer, PC
Executive Producer for POV Co-Executive Producer for POV Executive Producers for BBC	Simon Kilmurry Cynthia Lopez Nick Fraser Kate Townsend
Executive Producer for ITVS Supervising Producer for ITVS	Sally Jo Fifer Richard O'Connell
Supported by	Cinereach Danish Broadcasting Corporation Gucci Tribeca Documentary Fund Influence Film Foundation New York State Council on the Arts Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Fiscal Sponsor	IFP
Featuring	Matthew VanDyke Lauren Fischer Nuri Funas Ali Mohamed Zwi

Music

"Afraid of Everyone"

Written by Matthew D. Berninger and Aaron Brooking Dessner

Performed by The National

Licensed Courtesy of 4AD Ltd.

By Arrangement with Beggars Group Media Limited

Published by BMG Firefly on behalf of Val Jester Music and ABD 13 Music

All rights administered by BMG Rights Management (US) LLC

"Mistaken for Strangers"

Written by Matthew D. Berninger, Aaron Brooking Dessner, and Bryce David Dessner

Performed by The National

Licensed Courtesy of 4AD Ltd

By Arrangement with Beggars Group Media Limited

Published by BMG Firefly on behalf of Val Jester Music, ABD 13 Music, and Hawk Ridge Songs

All rights administered by BMG Rights Management (US) LLC

"Hard to Find"

Written by Matthew D. Berninger and Bryce David Dessner

Performed by The National

Licensed Courtesy of 4AD Ltd

Published by BMG Firefly on behalf of Val Jester Music and Hawk Ridge Songs

All rights administered by BMG Rights Management (US) LLC

"Let it Burn"

Composed and performed by Alessandro Cortini and BC Smith

Courtesy of Callbox LLC

Film Footage

Lawrence of Arabia

Dir: David Lean, Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc., 1962.

Footage Courtesy of Big Mouth Productions and Red Light Films

Born for Adventure, Parts 1 and 2

Dir: Alby Mangels, Home Cinema Group, 2003.

World Safari 1

Dir: Alby Mangels, Home Cinema Group, 1978.

World Safari 3

Dir: Alby Mangels, Home Cinema Group, 1993.

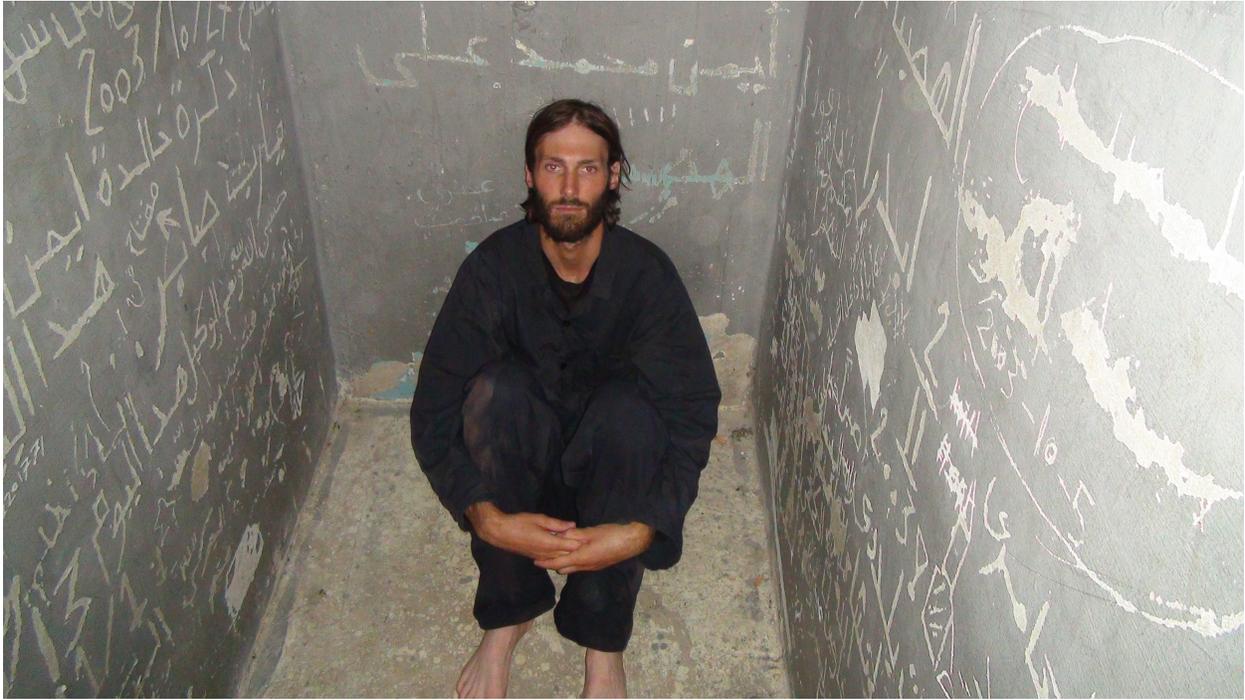
For more on Alby Mangels: www.AlbyMangels.com

Point and Shoot is a co-production of Marshall Curry Productions, American Documentary (POV), and The Independent Television Service (ITVS), with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), in association with Matthew VanDyke and BBC/Storyville.

A Marshall Curry Productions, LLC film © 2014 Marshall Curry Productions

Photos

For more photos, see: <http://pointandshootfilm.com/press.html>



Matt VanDyke at Libyan prison cell



Ouagadougou Conference Center during the siege of Sirte, Libya

