

THE NEIGHBORS' WINDOW

Oscar® Winning Live-Action Short Film
By Four-Time Academy Award® Nominated Filmmaker, Marshall Curry



Written and Directed by Marshall Curry
Starring Tony-nominee, Maria Dizzia (*Orange is the New Black*; *13 Reasons Why*; *What the Constitution Means to Me*)

Runtime: 20 minutes
Full film streaming now on www.TheNeighborsWindow.com

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"The intersection of voyeurism and empathy." –Los Angeles Times

"Packs an emotional wallop." –IndieWire

"An extraordinarily sensitive and moving tale.... In just 20 minutes, The Neighbors' Window captures empathetic performances and functions as a reminder of how powerful it is, amidst the uncertainty of life, to be grateful for where we are, now, today." –Vox

Awards

*92nd Academy Awards® – Winner – Best Live Action Short
Tribeca Film Festival – World Premiere, Official Selection
Palm Springs Shorts Fest - Audience Award, Best Live Action Short
Casting Society Artios Awards - Nominated, Short Film Casting
Traverse City Film Festival - Audience Award, Best Fiction Short
Hollyshorts Film Festival - Best Drama
SCAD Savannah Film Festival - Best Narrative Short
St. Louis International Film Festival - Best of the Fest
Nashville Film Festival - Best Narrative Short
Rhode Island Film Festival - First Prize, Best Live Action Short
Woodstock Film Festival - Best Short Film
Port Townsend Film Festival - Jury Award, Best Narrative Short
Port Townsend Film Festival - Audience Award, Best Narrative Short
Woods Hole Film Festival - Jury Award, Best Fiction Short
Woods Hole Film Festival - Audience Award, Best Fiction Short
Santa Fe Film Festival - Audience Award, Best Narrative Short
Washington West Film Festival - Best Narrative Short
Washington West Film Festival - Best Short Film Director
BendFilm Festival - Best Narrative Short
Pittsburgh Shorts - Best Narrative Short
Kinematic Shorts - Audience Award
Coronado Film Festival - Audience Award
Short Shorts Film Festival - Best International Actress, Maria Dizzia
Sulmona International Film Festival - Best Editing
Atlanta Shortsfest - Best Cinematography, Wolfgang Held*

Synopsis

THE NEIGHBORS' WINDOW tells the story of Alli (Maria Dizzia), a mother of young children who has grown frustrated with her husband (Greg Keller) and her daily routine. When two twenty-somethings move in across the street, she discovers that she can see into their apartment and develops a *Rear Window*-style obsession with their free-spirited lives.

Inspired by a true story, the film was written and directed by Oscar®-winning (and four-time nominated) filmmaker, Marshall Curry. Starring Tony-nominated Maria Dizzia (*Orange is the New Black*, *13 Reasons Why*, *While We're Young*, *What the Constitution Means to Me*); Greg Keller (*Law and Order*); and Juliana Canfield (*Succession*).

Director's Note

For the past fifteen years I've loved directing documentaries, but a year or two ago I began developing an itch to make a scripted film. I wanted to work with actors and a crew on a project where we could control every shot, every plot twist, and every line of dialogue.

I remembered an interview I'd heard years before on *Love + Radio**, in which Diane Weipert described a young couple who'd moved in across the street from her. It was funny and heartbreaking, and it inspired me to write a script that explored the same themes with a new O. Henry-ish ending. I knocked out the first draft in one feverish afternoon and spent the next months revising and reshaping it, tweaking lines until our first day of shooting.

As a New Yorker, I'm fascinated – and frequently moved – by the way my life overlaps with the lives of thousands of strangers. We create intimate connections as we press together on the subways, watch our children at the playground, and peer into each other's apartments. But those intimate connections are always incomplete.

In *The Neighbors' Window* I wanted to explore how these anonymous glimpses into other people's lives affect our feelings about the world and about ourselves. The film is rooted in real physical experiences, but it can also be seen as an allegory about social media – the way we see into each other's lives and take away an idealized view that never really tells the whole story.

* *Love + Radio*'s "The Living Room" was produced by Briana Breen and Brendan Baker. Listen the original episode here: <http://loveandradio.org/2015/03/the-living-room/>

Q&A with Writer/Director Marshall Curry

Q: How did directing fiction compare to directing documentaries? What were the similarities and differences?

A: I think there is a lot of overlap between fiction and non-fiction directing. And I think those similarities have probably grown in recent years as many documentaries have become more cinematic and narrative (or, as my dad would say, “more like real movies”).

The basic language of cinema is the same. You compose shots in roughly the same way and fit them together according to the same rules of editing. But of course in a verite documentary, you have to grab those shots in real time while in a fiction film you can plan them out in advance.

All of the control you have in fiction – over what people say, where they stand, how a room is decorated – is really gratifying. It allows you to be precise with every frame. But it also means that every detail has to come out of your head. You have to make decisions about things that just decide themselves in a documentary.

I think with a documentary, the main thing you are fighting against is *chaos*. Reality is sprawling and disordered, and you have to wrestle it into scenes that follow a narrative arc, that have dramatic twists and natural-feeling dialogue. But in a fiction film, you are fighting against *cliché*. Everything naturally wants to be something that you have seen and heard before, and it takes a lot of effort to keep material surprising and fresh.

It’s interesting, when I edit a documentary, I assemble a rough-cut and then work to make it feel more like a fiction film; I want my documentaries to have the narrative structure and tight polish of fiction. But with fiction, I assemble a rough cut and then work to make it feel more like a documentary; I want my fiction films to have the unvarnished, surprising, organic feel of nonfiction.

Q: How did you assemble the cast and crew?

A: After writing the script, the first person I connected with was Wolfgang Held, the Director of Photography. He is a brilliant cinematographer who shoots fiction and non-fiction, and his work is beautiful, understated and naturalistic, which is exactly what I wanted for the story. We had worked together on documentary projects, so we already had a rhythm and respect for each other. He knew my likes and dislikes, as well as my strengths and weaknesses -- so he made the perfect partner.

Around the same time, I met Maria Dizzia. It turns out, she and I had had the same high school drama teacher, though I’m a few years older than she is, so we didn’t know each other then. Our drama teacher had been an influential mentor and friend to both of us, and when he got married, Maria and I sat next to each other at the reception. It took me some time to summon the courage to send the script to her, but when she read it and agreed to play Alli, I knew she’d be perfect – and she was.

I met most of the rest of the team through friends and friends-of-friends. When I’m making a documentary, I like to work with a skeleton crew, so it was new for me to have dozens of people

running around the set. But the team was terrific. There's no real commercial market for a short fiction film, so everyone was there because of creative passion, and that came through in the way that the team worked together and in the final product as well.

Q: How did you like working with actors?

A: I loved it. It's hard to overstate how talented Maria Dizzia, Greg Keller and Juliana Canfield are. Their performances are so subtle and understated – but also really powerful. I had spent a lot of time obsessing about the script and imagining the tone and delivery of each line. But when I finally heard the words coming out of the actors' mouths it was startling. They didn't feel like *my* lines anymore. They felt like *the character's* lines.

When I was much younger, I acted in some plays – *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hair*, *Equus*, and others – which is indirectly how I met Maria. (Fun fact: one of those plays was an avant-garde production of Tom McGrath's *Animal* where I played an ape who speaks in verse opposite Peter Dinklage.) Anyway, even though it was a long time ago, that experience gave me sense of what it's like to be an actor and informed the way I directed.

I also think that directing documentaries helped me work with the actors. When I am shooting a documentary, I try to create a supportive environment where people can comfortably reveal themselves. It's similar to a fiction set where you are trying to create a safe environment where actors can feel comfortable exploring their feelings.

In both cases, I am trying to zero in on moments that feel emotionally honest -- a revealing glance, or a tiny strain in a voice -- and steer away from moments that feel performed or inauthentic.

Q: What were the biggest challenges in making the film?

A: Shooting this film was probably the most creatively intense four days I have ever had. Making a documentary is about patience and relentless observation; you have to wait and watch what happens. But with a fiction film, you can't just wait and watch. You have to decide everything: Should we shoot another take? If so, how exactly should it be different? And you have to make those decisions quickly, because you are working against the clock.

Making any film is always logistically challenging, but this one felt particularly so. We had to find two apartments that actually faced each other, and on our second day of shooting, the Board of one of the buildings threatened to shut down our production. We also had an unexpected blizzard hit in the middle of shooting which wreaked havoc on a lot of our carefully laid plans.

W.C. Fields famously said, "Never work with animals or children," but the four children who we worked with – an infant, a 16-month-old, and two spirited four-year-old twins – were really sweet. We had to recalibrate the pace and style of our shooting when they were on set, but everything was improved by a sense-of-humor and a steady flow of candy bribes.

Q: What's the role of music in the film?

A: I wanted to be very spare with the music, because I felt there was power in the film's silences and empty spaces. So there is no underscore at all, and there are long sequences where all we hear is the rustling of clothes and the distant muted sounds of traffic. But there are two pieces of music in the film – an original cue at the end by James Baxter and a montage in the middle, built around the song *Nobody Else Will Be There* by The National.

I knew all along that I wanted to use The National song so I played it on set for the actors and crew before we shot those scenes, so everyone would know the feeling and pace that we were going for.

The guys in the band are old friends – I worked at an internet design firm in the 90s with the singer, Matt Berninger, before they started the band and before I started making films (their first concert was at our company Christmas party). Their music is evocative and smart and has played a large role in almost all of my documentaries. I also executive produced and did some editing on a documentary about them called *Mistaken for Strangers* which was the opening night film at Tribeca a few years ago.

Q: Will you keep making documentaries or have you crossed over to the dark side?

A: I love documentaries, and hopefully I'll be able to keep making them until I am an old man. I have a few new projects – scripted and unscripted – in development now.

About the Cast and Crew

Marshall Curry -- Director, Writer, Editor

Marshall Curry is an Academy Award® winning (and four-time nominated) director, cinematographer, and editor. His films cover a wide range of interests and include *Street Fight*, about Cory Booker's first run for mayor of Newark, N.J.; *Racing Dreams*, which tells the story of two boys and a girl who dream of becoming NASCAR drivers; *If A Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, which chronicles a radical environmental group; *Point and Shoot*, about an American who leaves home to join the Libyan revolution; and *A Night at The Garden*, about a Nazi rally that filled Madison Square Garden in 1939. His films have won top honors at Sundance and Tribeca, played in theaters and on television around the world, and earned two Emmy nominations and two Writers Guild of America nominations. Curry also Executive Produced and helped to edit *Mistaken for Strangers*, a comedy documentary about the indie rock band, The National.

Maria Dizzia -- Alli

Maria Dizzia is a Tony-nominated actress based in New York City. She currently stars in the Los Angeles production of *What the Constitution Means to Me* and recently made her directorial debut with the Amios theatre company in their production of *The Loneliest Number*. Her New York theatre credits include: *If I Forget*, *The Layover*, *Belleville* (2013 Drama Desk Nomination), *Uncle Vanya*, *Cradle and All*, *In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)*, (2010 Tony Award nomination); *The Hallway Trilogy*, and more. Maria portrayed Polly on three seasons of Netflix's *Orange is the New Black*. Her other film and television credits include: *The Deuce*, *Bull*, *Red Oaks*, *While We're Young*, *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, *Margin Call*, *Rachel Getting Married*,

Horace and Pete, *Royal Pains*, *The Newsroom*, *The Good Wife*, *Master of None*, *Louie*, *Fringe*, and *Law & Order*. She will be featured in the new upcoming HBO series *The Undoing* and the independent feature *I Was In Your Blood*. She can currently be seen in *13 Reasons Why* streaming on Netflix. Maria received her MFA from the University of California, San Diego.

Greg Keller -- *Jacob*

Greg has spent his career originating roles in New York Theater, on and off Broadway. He has acted opposite Jane Fonda, Dianne Wiest, Cynthia Nixon, Rebecca Hall, Linda Lavin, Jeff Goldblum, Alicia Silverstone, Ally Sheedy, Alan Cumming, Katherine Waterston, and Maria Dizzia, to name a few.

Juliana Canfield -- *The Neighbor*

Juliana Canfield will star opposite Diane Lane and Barry Keoghan in the upcoming FX series *Y: The Last Man*, based on the comic series of the same name. She recently wrapped the upcoming Apple anthology series *Amazing Stories*, produced by Amblin Television, and can be seen in a recurring arc on HBO's *Succession*, opposite Jeremy Strong. On stage, she has starred in Theater for a New Audience's *He Brought Her Back in a Box*, Colt Coueur's *Zurich* opposite Paul Wesley, and New York Theater Workshop's *The House That Will Not Stand*, directed by Obie Award winner Lileana Blain-Cruz. She holds a BA from Yale College and an MFA from the Yale School of Drama.

Jonathan Olson -- *Producer*

Jonathan Olson is a New Jersey-born film and advertising producer. Based in New York, Jonathan has been in the industry for nearly a decade working for companies like RT Features, Smuggler, Reset Content, Anonymous Content, and many others. His credits include *Port Authority*, starring Fionn Whitehead and Executive Produced by Martin Scorsese; and *Weightless*, starring Alessandro Nivola and directed by Jaron Albertin.

Julia Kennelly -- *Producer*

Julia Kennelly is a film producer of both narrative and branded content. She has worked for New York-based production companies Archer Gray, Juniper Jones, Public Record, Broadstreet, KYLE nyc and MikMak, among others. Julia has produced advertising work written about in AdWeek and TIME, and she has a passion for narrative films that tell stories about people who are not often visible in the mainstream media. Films she's produced have been in competition at the Tribeca Film Festival, the Atlanta Film Festival, Outfest and Palm Springs Shortsfest. Julia is currently line producing an upcoming premium network documentary series, to air early in 2020.

Elizabeth Martin -- *Executive Producer*

Elizabeth Martin produced *Point & Shoot* with Marshall Curry and has worked with him in various capacities on all of his documentaries. 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 *Giving 2.0* by Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen.

Wolfgang Held -- *Director of Photography*

Wolfgang Held has been working as a Director of Photography in New York City since the mid 1990s. He has photographed many narrative films, including Sacha Baron Cohen's hit comedy *Bruno*; *The Tic Code*, directed by the late Gary Winick; and Rob Morrow's *Maze*, starring

Academy Award Nominee Laura Linney. He has also photographed numerous award-winning documentaries including Marshall Curry's *Racing Dreams*; the PBS series *Carrier*, for which he won an Emmy for Cinematography; *Children Underground*; *Metallica: Some Kind of Monster*; the Showtime series *The Fourth Estate*; Alex Gibney's *Enemies*; and a 9-hour Netflix docuseries *Untitled Justice* in collaboration with The Innocence Project.

James Baxter -- *Composer*

James Baxter is an electronic musician and composer who has worked with Marshall Curry on his three Oscar-nominated documentaries, *Street Fight*; *If A Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*; and *A Night at The Garden*. He also scored the short *Anti-Muse* and produces music as "alrightSpider." James studied music at Yale.

Film Credits

Written, Directed and Produced by	Marshall Curry
Starring	Maria Dizzia Greg Keller Juliana Canfield
Produced by	Jonathan Olson Julia Kennelly
Executive Produced by	Elizabeth Martin
Director of Photography	Wolfgang Held
Edited by	Marshall Curry
Camera Operator	Thorsten Thielow
Original Music by Additional music by	James Baxter The National
Associate Producers	Bess Hauser Ben Goldberg
Production Manager 1st Assistant Director 2nd Assistant Director Casting Director Production Designer Costume Designer	Philip Frye Stacey Haid Nick Rizzuto Henry Russell Bergstein Joseph Polacik Jocelyn Pierce
Cast	
Alli	Maria Dizzia
Jacob	Greg Keller
The Neighbor	Juliana Canfield
The Neighbor's Husband	Bret Lada
Whitney	Sadie Zamulinsky
Tanner	Tanner Zamulinsky
Infant Luther	India Earhart
1 Year Old Luther	Niko Perrin
Funeral Home Worker #1	Peter Farrell
Funeral Home Worker #2	Christian Cervantes
Neighbor's Friend #1	Lorelei Smith
Neighbor's Friend #2	Alisha Bhaumik
Neighbor's Dad	Paul Niebanck
Party Guests	Byron Grant Dionne Robinson Ian Kelly Amanda Kimbo

Xavier Brown
Archil Gugberidze
Frederique McGregory
Ian McCauley
Maria Manrique
Michael Baratta
Clare Reidy

Production Coordinators

1st Assistant Camera
2nd Assistant Camera / DIT
Gaffer
Key Grip
Set Decorator
Set Dresser
Assistant Set Dresser
Wardrobe Assistant
Hair and Makeup Artist
Production Sound Mixers

Melany Walter
Rob Alicea
Ed Shimko
Ronny Kabbot
Atsushi Takaoka
Matt Atwood
Kris Stanley
Samantha Bringas
Nicole Bunis
Clare Reidy
Lani Barry
Fred Helm
Mike Silvestri
Emily Cheeger
Sandy SooHoo
Kamera Kollektiv NYC

Script Supervisor
Set Photographer
Camera Gear Courtesy of

1st Team Production Assistant
Production Assistants

Mike Baratta
Erica Beach
Kelly Beam
Alisha Bhaumik
Xavier Brown
Tarik Hudson
Amanda Kimbo
Anthony Lamboy
Matt Liebergall
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Marci Weisler
Ziggy

Special thanks to Diane Weipert whose true story was the inspiration for this fictional film. Diane recounts her story on *Love + Radio's* "The Living Room," produced by Briana Breen and Brendan Baker. Listen to the original podcast episode [here](#).

Music

"Nobody Else Will Be There"

Written by Matthew D. Berninger and Aaron Brooking Dessner

Performed by The National

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Photos

High-resolution photos and film poster are also available from:
www.TheNeighborsWindow.com



Maria Dizzia (Alli)



Maria Dizzia (Alli) and Greg Keller (Jacob)



Maria Dizzia (Alli) and Greg Keller (Jacob)