

## **Gasland Director Presents Anti-Fracking Hoax as Evidence in New Film**

Court found fire-spouting hose to be a hoax created for publicity

BY: Lachlan Markay July 8, 2013 10:00 am

Environmental filmmaker Josh Fox presents a hoax perpetrated by a Texas activist designed to malign an innovative oil and gas extraction technique as sensational evidence of its catastrophic environmental impact.

Fox's new film, *Gasland Part II*, features a powerful scene showing a Texas landowner lighting the contents of a garden hose on fire. The incident is presented as evidence of water contamination from a nearby hydraulic fracturing operation.

According to a Texas court, the scene was actually a hoax devised by a Texas environmental activist engaged in a prolonged battle with a local gas company to falsely inflate the supposed dangers of the oil and gas extraction technique, also known as fracking.

Fracking has revolutionized the American oil and gas industry. Experts predict that the resulting boom in traditional energy sources will allow the United States to overtake OPEC giant Saudi Arabia in oil production by 2020.

*Gasland Part II*, a sequel to Fox's Oscar-nominated 2010 documentary *Gasland*, will premiere on HBO on Monday night.

Like the first *Gasland*, which showed a Colorado landowner setting his tap water on fire, the sequel appears to falsely inflate the dangers of hydraulic fracturing to local groundwater supplies.

The iconic flaming faucet scene from the first *Gasland* was criticized as misleading by some who noted that area residents had reported flammable tap water for decades. When asked why he did not inform viewers of that fact, Fox said he didn't think it was relevant.

*Gasland Part II* goes a step further: Rather than presenting naturally occurring phenomena as the result of hydraulic fracturing, it trumpets as evidence a scene deliberately concocted to frighten residents and attract media coverage.

Texas' 43rd Judicial District Court found in February 2012 that Steven Lipsky, "under the advice or direction" of Texas environmental activist Alisa Rich, "intentionally attach[ed] a garden hose to a gas vent—not a water line" and lit its contents on fire.

"This demonstration was not done for scientific study but to provide local and national news media a deceptive video, calculated to alarm the public into believing the water was burning," the court found in response to a defamation complaint brought by Range Resources, the company conducting hydraulic fracturing operations in the area, against Lipsky and his wife.

Rich is a long-time critic of Range Resources. She collaborated with the Environmental Protection Agency to issue an endangerment order against the company, which was subsequently withdrawn when the agency could not demonstrate that local water contamination was the result of oil and gas activities as opposed to natural factors.

EPA's withdrawal supported the findings of state environmental regulators, which determined that the small amounts of methane in Parker County water were naturally occurring.

The EPA official who presided over the Range order would eventually resign after comparing his enforcement approach to Roman crucifixions. He now works at the Sierra Club, a radical environmentalist group.

Beyond presenting an environmentalist hoax as evidence of water contamination, the film contains a number of additional factual inaccuracies and omissions.

A Gasland spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment.

Link: <http://freebeacon.com/gasland-director-presents-anti-fracking-hoax-as-evidence-in-new-film/>