



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on June 20, 2013

FRACKNATION: A Journalist's Search For the Fracking Truth

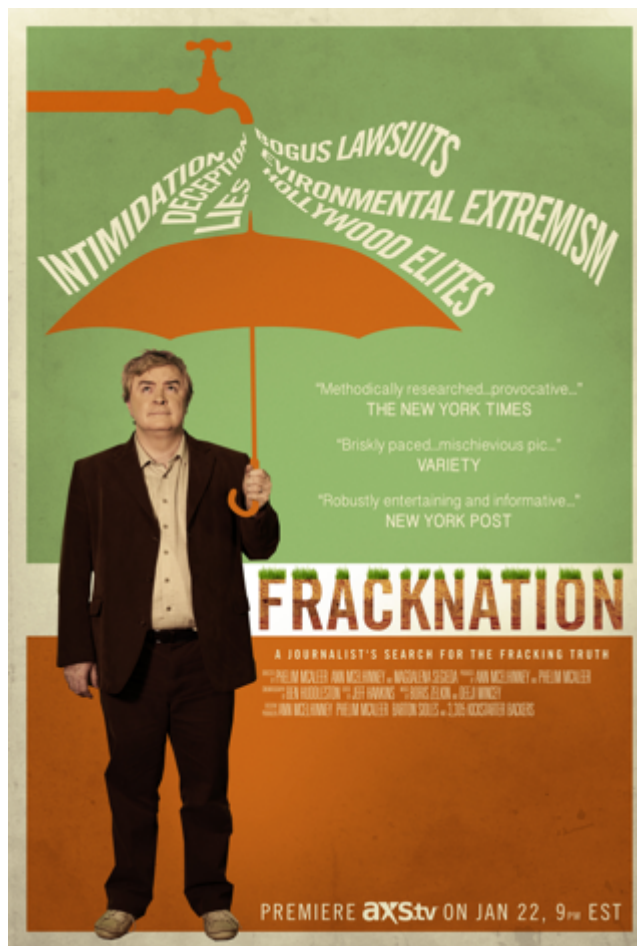
More intensely than almost any other nation, we Americans are dependent on energy — to run businesses, heat and light homes and buildings, power the many forms of transportation we frequently take for granted, and more. Worry over recent years that the world is running out of energy, especially the sources known as fossil fuels, has reached virtually everyone. Worry about dependence on questionable and erratic foreign suppliers should also concern every citizen.

But a new process for extracting oil and gas from deep below the surface of the earth has allayed many fears. This process, known as “fracking,” has made available vast amounts of energy deposits that should calm all the worries and lead to a brighter and more secure future. These shale deposits can already be found beneath 34 of our nation’s states. Tapping the newly available resources has begun, but so has a well-funded and well-publicized campaign claiming that fracking will contaminate water supplies, foul the air, and even cause earthquakes.

Addressing these concerns while touting the worth of this method of obtaining energy deposits (it has been known for at least 60 years) is the hour-long documentary entitled [FRACKNATION](#). Not only are all the doomsday claims of various disasters debunked, the well-produced program dwells on fracking’s capability to harvest the vast amounts of energy right here within the United States. As one of the experts interviewed in the film stated, “Shale deposits are a gift from God.”

[FRACKNATION](#) was produced and narrated by Irish-born Phelim McAleer with the help of two associates. (They have also produced [Not Evil Just Wrong](#), a documentary about the claims of Al Gore.) [FRACKNATION](#) takes viewers on a journey that includes visits both to fracking’s proponents and foes, interviews with government officials, commentary from scientific experts who challenge the health scares, background about the chief opponent of the process, and even a credible suggestion that Vladimir Putin’s Russia stands to be an important beneficiary if fracking can be discredited and banned.

The documentary earned its financing from small donations collected over many years, much of it through the website Kickstarter. In contrast, fracking’s chief adversary Josh Fox is a film producer who wouldn’t answer McAleer’s inquiries, has enjoyed financial support from some of Hollywood’s leftist





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celebrities, and receives favorable coverage in various elements of the mass media. Fox's film entitled *Gasland: Can You Light Your Water on Fire?* dwells on fracking's unproven dangers in rural Pennsylvania where water supplies are supposedly polluted so greatly with methane and other contaminants that the water coming into a kitchen sink from a well can be set on fire. Fox's film has been nominated for an Oscar and has won an Emmy award. Widespread media coverage about it has informed America that the dramatic effect of tapwater igniting is common. But *FRACKNATION* cites several counter arguments, including the conclusion of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection that "there is no evidence in Pennsylvania of fracking ever having contaminated drinking water."

Coverage by the *New York Times* of Pennsylvania's supposedly dire predicament eventually led to the newspaper's own angry ombudsman to label reports from the *Times* as "unethical." But showings of Fox's *Gasland* have encouraged the unwary to demand an end to fracking, the ultimate goal of Fox and his allies. McAleer's film shows, with a great deal of credibility, that the claims in *Gasland* are baseless. Yet mention is made of a plan by HBO to produce a *Gasland* sequel produced by Fox.

When he visited with Carol Collier, the director of the Delaware River Basin Commission (serving portions of Pennsylvania and New Jersey), McAleer asked why her name appeared on a document used by Fox to render importance to *Gasland*. Collier sought at that point to terminate the interview. Moreover, the commission she leads has been able to mandate a moratorium on the use of the fracking process in the two-state area near the river. With trips to California and Texas, in addition to his foray into Pennsylvania, McAleer presented the attitudes of several experts who debunked the various claims that fracking causes cancer and even leads to earthquakes.

Noting that much of Europe depends on Russia for natural gas supplies, *FRACKNATION* showed Russian President Putin attacking the fracking process and becoming "agitated" when asked if harvesting shale gas in Poland would pose a threat to the virtual gas monopoly held by Russia's Gazprom. He even expressed his own curious concern for Americans when he told his questioner to look to the United States for the supposed damage already caused by fracking.

For many years, the United States has been importing its energy, frequently from nations and regions where hatred for or jealousy about the American way of life is common. Fracking could reverse that situation and, in the process, ensure preservation of our nation's independence. The information packed into this film can surely help the cause of fracking and thereby help the cause of energy and national independence.

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